SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 5 *March 19, 2023*
"Others First"

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for Jesus and his example of how to leverage our authority for benefit of others. And Father, we really want to get this right, but too often we leverage our power and influence for ourselves. So would you help us to be more like Jesus – to humble ourselves and put others first? We pray this in the powerful and matchless name of Jesus. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Mark 9:30-36 (NIV)

³⁰ They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, ³¹ because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise." ³² But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.

³³ They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the road?" ³⁴ But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.

³⁵ Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all."

³⁶ He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them...

Mark 10:35-38, 40-45 (NIV)

³⁵ Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask."

³⁶ "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.

³⁷ They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory."

³⁸ "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"

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INTRODUCTION

Fear invites us to follow the path of self-preservation. However, if we follow that path long enough, we will neither preserve nor have anything to show for our lives. The original disciples of Jesus had the same tendencies at times. On one occasion, Jesus reminded them of what it means to follow him by saying four powerful words that still apply to his followers today: "Not so with you."

Against all odds, the followers of a crucified teacher with no territory, military, or authority survived and multiplied. And they did so because they embraced a counterintuitive leadership principle: the first go last. That feels unnatural, but when we see it, we admire it. Christians are called to it. And it begins with a question: How can I help? When you leverage your power and resources for the benefit of those with less power and resources, you're not far from the Kingdom of God.

QUESTIONS

1. How would you define greatness in leadership? Talk about one of the best leaders you've followed. What qualities made that person worth following?

2. Read Mark 9:30–36 on page 1. Jesus redefines great leadership in Mark 9:35. Does his definition seem realistic and achievable in your world? Why or why not?

3. If Christians embraced Jesus' words in Mark 10:42-45 (on page 1), how might it change the church's reputation in the world?

4. If you redefined great leadership based on Jesus' upside-down definition, what would you have to change about how you lead? What might you have to sacrifice? What might you gain?

5. Read Mark 10:42-43 on page 1. Do you need to do a better job of serving someone you lead? If so, what would it look like to leverage your influence on that person's behalf? Who do you need to ask, "How can I help?"

FINAL APPLICATION

What is one thing you can do this week to demonstrate "not-so-with-you" leadership at home? At work? At church? In the community?