

# QUESTIONS JESUS ASKED

## Discussion Questions **LEADER GUIDE**

Week of 2/18/24

**Text:** Mark 9:33-37

**Icebreaker:** What makes a person “great” in our society? Name a few examples.

1. Read Mark 9:33-37. What stands out to you from these verses or from the sermon you heard this week? Why?

2. Why do you think Jesus asks this question in verse 33? What do you imagine the disciples felt or thought based on their response in verse 34?

This passage demonstrates how powerful a question can be! Jesus appears to stun the disciples as he raises an issue they were hoping he didn't notice...or had perhaps forgotten. Their silence suggests they may have been felt ashamed or convicted. They seem to know that their argument was out of step with Jesus's ways.

*Application:* Don't we know what it's like to desire greatness!? Has this desire ever caused you to be at odds with other people in your life? Explain.

Think of how a competitive spirit or ambition has caused us to hurt others or led us to not even consider how our “rise” impacts those around us. Maybe a desire to advance through the ranks in our career has robbed our relationships with family and friends. Maybe it has inspired conflict with others at the office who are also seeking to advance. Perhaps we have neglected or mistreated people around us who—in our self-focused mindset—have failed to help us succeed.

3. Jesus says in verse 35 that, “If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.” In what ways does Jesus's instruction redefine what true greatness is about?

You might remind the group of how you all answered the icebreaker earlier on in your discussion. Think of how contradictory v. 35 is to how we normally define greatness! Others have summarized this as “a race to the back of the line.” Greatness, according to God's kingdom, does not cost those around us. In fact, it elevates and advances those around us, which can be pointed out in the application question below.

*Application:* What could it look like for us to “be last of all and servant of all” in the different spheres of our lives (at home, in our workplace, in social settings, etc.)?

4. Jesus illustrates in verses 36-37 the teaching of verse 35. What is it about a child that helps express Jesus's point?

We might think of this differently, depending on our experience. In an age of “helicopter parenting,” epic birthday parties, and high-cost youth sports, it might be easy to miss Jesus's point. In general, children—and especially *young* children—in Jesus's day (and

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ours as well, depending on where you look) had little status. Children are vulnerable because they need the care and provision of others to survive. Children can't repay a caring adult...in the moment, at least. Children don't have a list of achievements that would make us want to be associated with them to impress others. Children don't have much to offer but they do require a lot of care.

*Application:* Who are the people around us who are not considered great by the standards of our day? Who around us is vulnerable and weak and without status?

This is where we should think more broadly about who the weak and vulnerable are in our day. Who has little status and is dependent on others for survival?

5. Overall, do you think Jesus is instructing the disciples (and us) to stop desiring greatness or is he redefining what greatness looks like? Explain what you think.

Jesus is redefining greatness from the perspective of God's kingdom.

*Application:* How might this passage impact the way we relate to others around us? How might it change our goals and ambitions?

This could cause us to rethink our goals so that we scrap them altogether, but it might also lead us to pursue the same goals in a different manner or with a different attitude. The call here is not for a CEO of a company (for example) to be ashamed of her position, but that she would use her position to "be last of all and servant of all."

It would be good for your group to pray for each other as you seek to live this out!