

F.O.L.L.O.W.E.R.S.


VS

Fans

(Lead)


LIFE LESSON

Our focus for today is going to be on leading, or on being the kind of person who leads others for Jesus, or to Jesus. Now, for those who don't know, the original twelve disciples were still just fans of Jesus at His death; they weren't followers yet, even though Jesus had been training them for nearly three years. In fact, all of them were still clinging to their collective idea that the Messiah would be a military commander that would overthrow Rome and re-establish Israel as a dominate nation. So when it came to leadership, they all were expecting Jesus to lead them into epic battles like "King David", with ranks of leaders underneath Him. So with that thought in mind, look at what James and John asked for...

 **Mark 10:35-41 (NLT)** *Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came over and spoke to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do us a favor." "What is your request?" he asked. They replied, "When you sit on your glorious throne, we want to sit in places of honor next to you, one on your right and the other on your left." But Jesus said to them, "You don't know what you are asking! Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of suffering I am about to drink? Are you able to be baptized with the baptism of suffering I must be baptized with?" "Oh yes," they replied, "we are able!" Then Jesus told them, "You will indeed drink from my bitter cup and be baptized with my baptism of suffering. But I have no right to say who will sit on my right or my left. God has prepared those places for the ones he has chosen." When the ten other disciples heard what James and John had asked, they were indignant.*

➔ **If you were one of the other disciples, how would you have reacted to what James and John asked, and why?**


One of the biggest motivators in the disciples lives at this point, was that they still wanted to stand out or be honored amongst others. Or in other words, they all were still wanting to be thought of as a "big deal" by others, and they weren't alone. For example, there was this one time when Jesus (and the disciples) received an invitation to dine at the house of a prominent Pharisee, or leader of those known as the teachers to the Jews. Here's what happened at that dinner...

 **Luke 14:7-11 (NLT)** *When Jesus noticed that all who had come to the dinner were trying to sit in the seats of honor near the head of the table, he gave them this advice: "When you are invited to a wedding feast, don't sit in the seat of honor. What if someone who is more distinguished than you has also been invited? The host will come and say, 'Give this person*

your seat.' Then you will be embarrassed, and you will have to take whatever seat is left at the foot of the table! Instead, take the lowest place at the foot of the table. Then when your host sees you, he will come and say, 'Friend, we have a better place for you!' Then you will be honored in front of all the other guests. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."


➔ **In your own words, sum up what Jesus was trying to teach everyone, or how can we apply what He was saying to today?**

In spite of Jesus teachings at this dinner about self-exaltation and honor, James and John, and the other disciples, were all still angling towards that very thing, just like what anyone else in the world would do. Or in other words, because they were still so consumed by ego, all of them were selfishly looking for the "benefits package" that came with being selected to team Jesus. Here's another example of their enormous egos...

 **Mark 9:33-37 (NLT)** *After they arrived at Capernaum and settled in a house, Jesus asked his disciples, "What were you discussing out on the road?" But they didn't answer, because they had been arguing about which of them was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve disciples over to him, and said, "Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else." Then he put a little child among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, "Anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not only me but also my Father who sent me."*

➔ **Again, in your own words, sum up what Jesus was trying to teach the disciples, and how can we apply what He was saying to our lives?**

Much like the disciples, we all have a selfish and ego-centric nature that must be overcome. Which means, all of us will struggle with wanting to be honored at some point, or will wrestle with the desire to be considered "great" amongst our peers to some degree. And the only way to overcome these selfish desires, is by doing what Jesus said, and with the help of His Holy Spirit, instead of seeking honor from others, honor others by serving them. And notice the service example Jesus provided was in serving someone else's small child. This was probably Jesus' way of saying to expect no immediate personal returns or benefits, as is often the case when serving a small child that belongs to someone else. So back to the favor James and John asked of Jesus...clearly, they remembered nothing of what Jesus said to them about leadership, or about honor, or about exalting themselves. So here's how Jesus responded to their request...

 **Mark 10:41-45 (NLT)** *When the ten other disciples heard what James and John had asked, they were indignant. So Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone*

else. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."

➔ **Based on all that we've learned so far, how do you think you're doing when it comes to being the kind of leader Jesus wants? Or how could you be doing better?**

Leadership amongst those who are followers of Jesus, must be drastically different from the leadership that this world promotes. For example, the leadership equation the disciples originally believed in, was that **Leadership = Servants**. And let's be honest, when we're being served, it's obviously honoring, and there isn't a one of us that doesn't want to experience that, so we must resist the temptation to embrace that leadership equation. Instead we must remember that Jesus taught us to never seek honor, but in humility, honor others instead. Or in other words, the leadership equation Jesus consistently taught, was that **Leadership = Service**. So whether we see ourselves as leaders or not, please know that what **GOD** wants from those who call ourselves followers, is that we would embrace His leadership equation and start honoring others with the way we serve them. And to help us stay focused on that throughout this series, we should all meditate as often as possible, on what Peter said...

MEDITATION PASSAGE FOR THE WEEK

Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example. And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor.

1 Peter 5:2-4 (NLT)

F.O.L.L.O.W.E.R.S vs FANS

LESSON GOAL: Help kids understand Jesus' definition of leadership and how it's different than what the world wants us to believe about being a leader

MEMORY VERSE:

But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant | **MARK 10:43 NLT**

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE "GREAT"?

This week we're talking about how being a follower of Jesus means being a leader to others around us. But often, when we hear the word "leader", we think of someone in a position of power or authority. Maybe someone who has a lot of employees or people who follow them. For many of the disciples, their expectation of a leader was someone like a king or military leader who would rule over others and "crush" their enemies. That's what they expected from their Messiah and it seemed like at least a few of them expected some of that "greatness" to rub off on them so they could be honored like Jesus.

Jesus spent a lot of his time with the 12 original disciples trying to help them understand that wasn't the kind of leader he was, nor the kind of leader he wanted them (or us) to be.

Look how he responded when James and John asked to be seated in places of honor next to him:

James and John came to Jesus. They were the sons of Zebedee. "Teacher," they said, "we would like to ask you for a favor." "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked. They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right hand in your glorious kingdom. Let the other one sit at your left hand." "You don't know what you're asking for," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup of suffering I drink? Or can you go through the baptism of suffering I must go through?" "We can," they answered. Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink. And you will go through the baptism I go through. But it is not for me to say who will sit at my right or left hand. These places belong to those they are prepared for." The other ten disciples heard about it. They became angry at James and John. Jesus called them together. He said, "You know about those who are rulers of the Gentiles. They hold power over their people. Their high officials order them around. Don't be like that. Instead, anyone who wants to be important among you must be your servant. And anyone who wants to be first must be the slave of everyone. Even the Son of Man did not come to be served. Instead, he came to serve others. He came to give his life as the price for setting many people free." | **MARK 10:35-45 NIRV**

James and John wrongly assumed that to be like Jesus meant being honored and praised, but Jesus wanted them to understand that he came to serve others, not rule over them like a tyrant and have others serve and honor him. He earned his place of honor in God's kingdom because of the sacrifice he would make for all of us on the cross.

The other disciples were annoyed when they overheard the conversation, but the fact that Jesus gathered them all together to explain what he expected of them, suggests that they were probably mad because James and John were asking for what they all wanted.

Another example of the disciples not “getting it” was when they were walking along the road to Capernaum and they were arguing with each other about which of them was the “greatest.” Again, Jesus pulled them aside and tried to explain what true leadership is:

Jesus and his disciples came to a house in Capernaum. There he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the road?” But they kept quiet. On the way, they had argued about which one of them was the most important person. Jesus sat down and called for the 12 disciples to come to him. Then he said, “Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last. They must be the servant of everyone.” Jesus took a little child and had the child stand among them. Then he took the child in his arms. He said to them, “Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me. And anyone who welcomes me also welcomes the one who sent me.” | **MARK 9:33-37 NIRV**

In the past few weeks, we’ve learned how important is it to Jesus that we love each other (even our enemies) and that we should keep learning about him so we can share his message of good news with others. Both commands are reflected in the way Jesus views leadership. The greatest leaders act more like servants than rulers – they care for and serve others and lead other to Jesus by their actions. All of us have people in our lives who look up to us and follow our lead, so no matter who you are or what kind of job or friends or team mates you have, you can lead those around to Jesus by loving and serving those around you.

Be shepherds of God’s flock, the believers under your care. Watch over them, though not because you have to. Instead, do it because you want to. That’s what God wants you to do. Don’t do it because you want to get money in dishonest ways. Do it because you really want to serve. Don’t act as if you were a ruler over those under your care. Instead, be examples to the flock.

| **1 PETER 5:2-3 NIRV**

DISCUSSION | REVIEW

- Name some characteristics of what most of the world thinks make a good leader?
 - What are the characteristics that Jesus expects us to have as leaders?
- When we're leading others, sometimes our actions speak louder than words. What is one thing you can do this week to be a leader like Jesus (show kindness/mercy, help around the house/at school, be kind to a younger friend/sibling, let someone go ahead of you in line at school or an event, let someone else have the "good spot" on the couch, etc.)
- What is one thing you learned today that you can share with a friend?