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Are you supposed to be a minister?

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CORE VERSES

And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

Matthew 20:27-28

When Jesus challenges His disciples to radically change their perspective on greatness and leadership, He doesn't present abstract principles or philosophical ideas that have no basis in real life. In fact, He presents His own life as proof and the primary example of the validity of this upside-

down mentality. In Philippians 2:5-11, we see Jesus' servanthood, humility, and obedience as a model to follow on the path to greatness. As the greatest servant leader ever, Jesus never asks us to do something He has not first modeled for us Himself.

USE THE SPACE BELOW TO HELP YOU REMEMBER THESE VERSES. FEEL FREE TO WRITE, DRAW, OR DESIGN IN WAYS THAT MAKE SENSE TO YOU.

READ MATTHEW 20:20-28.

Are you familiar with the concept of selective hearing? It happens when you hear your mom say, "Dinner is ready" but somehow don't catch it when she says, "Clean your room." We tend to hear what we want to hear.

This week's passage is a great example. If you back up to the end of Chapter 19, you'll hear Jesus tell the 12 disciples that they will one day sit on 12 thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel with Him. They definitely heard that.

But then if you read the few verses before our passage, you'll hear Jesus say He was going to be arrested, mocked, flogged, crucified, and then resurrected. Somehow, the disciples completely skipped over that. James and John were still stuck on this idea of ruling with Jesus, and they didn't want to miss the chance to call "shotgun."

So, apparently, they got their mom to ask Jesus to make a huge promise (v. 21). We know from other passages that their mom was a lady called Salome, and she may have been Jesus' mom's sister — His aunt. If so, that would make James and John His first cousins. Maybe they thought that if He was king, they should be next in line to the throne.

That's what it meant in their culture to sit on the left and right hand of the king. Those were the highest-ranking spots.

Notice that Jesus doesn't get mad. First, He tells them they don't know what they're asking (v. 22). Then He asks if they can take the heat He's about to face, to "drink His cup." They say, "sure,"

and He says, "You will, but it's not up to Me who sits where. That's the Father's call" (v. 23).

Then, when the other 10 disciples hear what happened and get mad at James and John about making a play to be above them (v. 24), Jesus turns the whole world upside down with His response.

Notice again, though, that He doesn't get mad. He also doesn't say that James and John were wrong to want to be great. He doesn't condemn their ambition. Instead, He says they were chasing greatness in the wrong way.

In Jesus' kingdom, the greatest won't be the ones with the most authority and power—like in the regular, human world (v. 25). Instead, the greatest will be the servants, the slaves of all, the ones who give themselves up to meet the needs and goals of others (vv. 26-27).

Jesus was the greatest, the King, and He came to serve the most people in the biggest way by literally giving His life away (v. 28).

Want to be great? Want to be the greatest, even? That's OK. It's a good goal. The way to make it happen is to become a better servant to more people—to your siblings, parents, church, and the world.

God built us to be servants. Those who serve best will be great in His kingdom. Those who serve only themselves won't be very great at all.

CORE CONCEPTS

God desires for each of His people to be a servant.

SERVICE:

Working to help other people to meet their needs and/or accomplish their objectives

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE OVER THE NEXT TWO DAYS

- » OTHER THAN THE DISCIPLES, WHO ARE THE FIVE GREATEST CHRISTIANS OF ALL TIME IN YOUR MIND? WHY?
- » WHAT CHRISTIAN DO YOU KNOW THAT SERVES AS A MODEL OF MINISTRY FOR YOU?
- » HOW HAS GOD UNIQUELY GIFTED YOU TO SERVE OTHER PEOPLE? (HINT: SEE LIST ON DAY 1.)
- » WRITE YOUR OWN QUESTION: