

Leverage Your Life

Deepen Devotion

Mark 3:13-14

We are in a series that's all about leveraging (using something to maximum advantage) our lives for the mission of God where we live, work, & play.

Today, the message is directed toward 1) those who are not convinced that they should be leveraging their lives, 2) those who are either unmotivated or terrified to leverage their lives, and 3) those who are completely exhausted from attempting to leverage their lives for the mission of God where they live, work, and play. God has a word for all three of you today from Mark 3...

Have you ever run out of gas? When was the last time your phone battery died? What good is your car without fuel or your phone with no battery? They are basically useless to you because they cannot accomplish what they were made to do without power. Similarly, we are powerless to accomplish the purpose for which we were created without "fuel."

Main Idea: Leveraging our Lives for the Mission of God where we Live, Work, and Play is Fueled by our Deepening Devotion to Jesus

"And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach." **Mark 3:13-14**

3 Elements of Deepening Devotion found in Mark 3:13-14

I. Example of Jesus – "And he went up on the mountain..." Mark 3:13a

Jesus was on mission, but that mission was fueled by the intimacy he had with the Father, evidenced by his continual time spent in prayer! The gospel of Luke provides more detail on Jesus' trip to the mountain...

"In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God." **Luke 6:12 – Jesus was relentless in prayer, and...**

"...I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me." **John 5:30b – Jesus' devotion to the Father was grounded in obedience to the Father!**

Jesus did not spend time with the Father whenever he got around to it, instead his time with the Father was like breath for his lungs, food for his stomach and water for his parched lips. And he is our example...

"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." **Galatians 2:20**

Notice that Jesus had a time (all night) and a place (a mountain) to meet with God. This is instructive for us, so pick your daily time and your daily place to meet with God. And I recommend two elements: 1) Engage with the Bible, and 2) Talk with God...

II. Intimacy with Jesus – "...and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him..." Mark 3:13b-14a

Jesus invites everyone, everywhere into a personal relationship with himself. Then, he assigns them specific tasks to do and roles to fill. But, BEFORE and THROUGHOUT those tasks and roles, he is primarily concerned that they remain in an intimate, personal relationship with him! This is everywhere in the New Testament...

"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." **Matthew 4:19**

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus." **Acts 4:13**

"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." **John 15:5**

Apart from intimacy with Jesus, not only will we be ineffective in the mission, unmotivated for the mission, and exhausted from the mission but we will be prone to employ the tactics & ways of the world contrary to Christ in the fulfillment of the mission (i.e., crusading, colonizing, putting too much hope in government/politics, hate, violence, etc.) But, when we accept Jesus' invitation to intimacy with himself, we can do God's work God's way!

"If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples." **John 15:7-8 // Intimacy with Jesus**

III. Ministry for Jesus – "...and he might send them out to preach." Mark 3:14b

Exp: The natural result of being with Jesus is doing ministry for Jesus. It is very clear that Jesus drew the disciples in so that he might send them out to preach (herald, proclaim) the good news. When I encounter a brother or sister that has no interest in sharing the good news with others, I immediately know that they are not walking intimately with Jesus!

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus...For we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." **Acts 4:13, 20 – Intimacy to Ministry!**

A duck injured his wing & fell into a farmer's yard (bad luck). But the farmer's daughter took care of it, bringing it into the house and bandaging its wounds. When the duck heard his flock flying over the house, he ran over to the door pecking to go out and tried to fly but its wing wasn't healed enough so he couldn't. A few months later, he heard his flock flying south for the winter and waddled outside to join them but was too fat to fly. After a few months of a duck diet, he got back into shape. But this time when he heard his flock flying overhead, he didn't even try to join them. He had gotten so used to life as a pet, he forgot he was a wild duck and missed his purpose.

You have a purpose to leverage your life for the mission of God wherever you live, work, and play. But so many of us get so comfortable in this world we forget who we are...and what Jesus has modeled and called us to: intimacy that leads to ministry!

“You are the light of the world...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

Matthew 5:14a, 16b – It’s who we are, and what we do!

Main Idea: Leveraging our Lives for the Mission of God where we Live, Work, and Play is Fueled by our Deepening Devotion to Jesus.

The world around us doesn’t know it, but they desperately need us to recognize Jesus’ example, walk intimately with HIM, and let that fuel our ministry to THEM! That’s what the world needs more than anything else right now...Jesus, the body of Christ embodying him in every dark corner!

But, Jesus is not only the example, he’s the pathway for deepening devotion. His perfect life, vicarious death, and victorious resurrection makes leveraging our lives possible and vital to the world around us.

Whether you are not convinced you should be leveraging your life, terrified about the prospect of leveraging your life, or exhausted from all your attempts to leverage your life...deepening devotion with Jesus is the answer!

You might not believe that Jesus wants a close, personal relationship with you because you have messed up and don’t deserve it. But you would be wrong. Jesus is inviting you into a relationship with him that will fuel your ministry for him. Let’s make it our aim to abide in Him!

Sources and Further Reading Opportunities:

- *CSB Study Bible* – Trevin Wax, General Editor (2021)
- *New Bible Commentary* – Carson, France, Motyer, & Wenham (1994)
- *New American Commentary: Mark* – James A. Brooks (1991)
- *Bible Exposition Commentary* – Warren Wiersbe (1996)
- *The Gospel of Mark* – William Barclay (1976)
- *Tony Evans Study Bible* – Tony Evans (2019)
- *The Spurgeon Study Bible* – Charles Haddon Spurgeon (2017)
- *Word Pictures in the New Testament* – A.T. Robertson (1933)