



NG Study Guide: Mark 10:32-52 “What Do You Want?” [6.27.21]

Love God + know the Bible better:

1. Read the passage cited above, and try to answer the questions below before your group meets.
2. *Leader note: Please review the brief instructions for leaders at the bottom.*

The Study

Thesis: Imagine Jesus asking you, “What do you want?” How might you reply? It is a fascinating thought to consider. Presumably our answer(s) reflect our present challenges, concerns, aspirations, and our relationship with Jesus. In this section, Jesus asks that question twice [36, 51] and the responses are *insightful* to the nature of God and people. Insight is a deep understanding of a person or thing. When King David’s son Solomon ascended to the throne, God invited him, “Ask! What shall I give you?” Solomon requested godly wisdom to rightly lead God’s people rather than wealth, power, influence, or pleasure. The request pleased God, and He granted Solomon’s request such that he was the wisest man to walk on the planet other than Jesus [1Ki. 3:1-14]. In addition God blessed Solomon in ways that he had not even asked for.

Subject: Jesus gives insight and sight. **Object:** See Jesus and follow Him.

1. Insight on Jesus’ Sacrifice [32-34]

³² Now they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed. And as they followed they were afraid. Then He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him: ³³ “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; ³⁴ and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.”

Fulfilled predictive prophecy comforts believers that God has everything under control.

Jesus and his disciples continue through Judea towards Jerusalem. Jesus was leading the way and they were amazed [32]. *And as they followed they were afraid* [32]. They were amazed at Jesus’ courage knowing the religious leaders hostility towards Jesus. Jesus explained to the disciples for the third time His betrayal, death and resurrection [32-35].

The reference to *mocking, scourge and spit upon* [34] were intended to remind His disciples of Isaiah 53, and the description of the suffering Messiah. Mark mentions *deliver Him to the Gentiles* [33], and Matthew records Jesus predict the method of execution as crucifixion [Matt. 20:19]. Had the Jews tried to execute Jesus the method would have been stoning. All of the events related to Jesus death burial and resurrection are foretold in the Old Testament, and fulfilled by Jesus to comfort us, and to confirm that He is the Christ and His gospel is true.

Jesus sacrifice reveals God’s love and goodness.

As Jesus told them the things that would happen, it is Luke who records that the disciples didn’t understand [Lu. 18:34].

Perhaps they thought that Jesus was somehow speaking metaphorically, or about some distant future time, or they did not pay attention. What we know is they were confused.

Life can be confusing, especially during (intense) hardship. You might wonder whether God is good, and whether He truly cares. Whenever we don't understand, we can look to the cross and the resurrection and *know* that God loves us and cares deeply for us. **Jesus made the way for humanity to be restored in relationship with God at the cross [45].**

2. Insight on Jesus' Service [35-45]

³⁵ Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask." ³⁶ And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?" ³⁷ They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory." ³⁸ But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" ³⁹ They said to Him, "We are able." So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; ⁴⁰ but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared." ⁴¹ And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. ⁴² But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. ⁴³ Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. ⁴⁴ And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Jesus' followers are humble servants [35-41].

James and his brother John approached Jesus saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask" [35]. Intuitively, there seems to be something wrong with this scenario, and the chutzpah.

Nevertheless, we have to admit that sometimes our prayers are eerily similar.

Matthew records that the mother of James and John (per Church tradition, Jesus' aunt) came with her sons to ask [Matt. 20:20]. Jesus' responds, *What do you want Me to do for you?* [36]. *They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory* [37]. The right and left hand were places of prestige, power and glory. They expect Jesus to establish an earthly kingdom when they arrive in Jerusalem; and they are in essence asking to be the Vice President, and Secretary of State.

But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask [38]. They did not realize the problem of their motives. There are times that we don't realize that our prayers or requests of God are amiss, and our motives are self-centered rather than Christ-centered [Ja. 4:3]. Jesus asks whether they were willing to share His fate, *Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?* [38]. They acknowledge they are able [39] without realizing what they are signing up for. Jesus confirmed that they would share His suffering [39] (James was the first martyr [Ac. 12:2], and John was boiled in oil before being banished to the island Patmos). Jesus affirmed the positions of authority or promotions are God's to give [Ps. 75:6-7]. When the other disciples heard what James and John did they were indignant [41].

Jesus' example of selfless service [42-45].

Then Jesus interceded to preserve unity and correct their attitudes [42]. Lording authority was the way of the Roman Empire, characterized by the pursuit of wealth, power, prominence, and pleasure. This type of selfish ambition is characterized by the world and those who have no relationship with God, and has no place among God's people [43].

Jesus makes clear that serving others is a key to greatness in God's kingdom, *whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant* [43]. *And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all* [43-44]. Note, this same lesson was shared by Jesus in the last chapter [9:31-37]. God is gracious to remind us of His truths so that we can gain insight and apply the lessons.

Jesus is our example, *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many* [45]. This is the pivotal verse in Mark's gospel. The One who is truly worthy to be served, instead humbly models sacrificial, selfless service [Phil. 2:3-8].

3. Insight on Jesus giving sight [46-52]

⁴⁶ Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging. ⁴⁷ And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁸ Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁹ So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, "Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you." ⁵⁰ And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.

⁵¹ So Jesus answered and said to him, "What do you want Me to do for you?" The blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight." ⁵² Then Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.

Recognize Jesus as the Christ [46-48].

Jesus and the twelve traveled south along the Jordan River from the Galilee, and came to *Jericho* [46], about fifteen miles east of Jerusalem. There was a *great multitude* of pilgrims [46] making their way from all over Israel towards Jerusalem for the imminent Passover Festival commemorating God's deliverance of His people from their servitude in Egypt. As they departed Jericho, there was a *blind man who sat by the road begging* [46]. Matthew records that there were two blind men [Matt. 20:2], but Luke and Mark focus on *Bartimaeus* meaning "son of Timaeus" or "highly prized."

The ancient world was a very difficult environment for people with disabilities. When Bartimaeus realized that Jesus was passing by, he began to cry out for help begging for mercy [47]. As many told him to be quiet he cried out all the more [48]. Desperate people persist in crying out to God. Twice Bartimaeus refers to Jesus as *Son of David* a uniquely Messianic title. He recognized that Jesus is the Christ. He was physically blind, but had spiritual insight.

Respond by trusting Jesus [49-50].

Jesus stopped and told His disciple to call the man over [49]. The disciples give the encouraging message to Bartimaeus, "*Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you*" [49]. He responded by *throwing aside his garment, and came to Jesus* [50]. He is so confident that Jesus will show mercy that he threw aside his garment. Picture a long loose cape or cloak that would be worn over clothing. A beggar would spread out the garment over their lap to receive charity from those who passed by. In effect, he expects that Jesus is going to radically change his life for better.

Receive insight and follow Jesus [51-52].

Jesus asked, "*What do you want Me to do for you?*" (the same question posed to James and John) [51, 36]. Bartimaeus calls Jesus *Rabboni* literally "my Great One" but conveying the idea of Lord (The only other person to refer to Jesus this way in the Bible is Mary Magdalene [Jn. 20]). Bartimaeus asked to receive his sight [51]. The request was humble, dependent upon God, and there is no desire for self-glory, unlike James and John [Cf. James 4:13]. Jesus declared, "*Go your way; your faith has made you well*" [52]. His trust or insight as to who Jesus is and what Jesus will do, and Jesus' compassion [Matt. 20:34] was the reason for Bartimaeus' transformation. Immediately *he received his sight* [52]. This is the last healing miracle recorded in Mark's gospel. As Bartimaeus discovered that he truly was "highly prized" by God, and saw Jesus clearly, he *followed Jesus on the road* [52]. To follow Jesus means, to learn of Him, from Him, yield to Him, and seek to imitate Him.

So, if Jesus asked me, "what do you want?" I would say, "please keep helping me to follow you better." Really, that would be what is best for me, my wife, our sons, our friends, and our community; and what would honor God.

Study Guide Qs.

Q1. Consider the insights on Jesus' sacrifice [32-34]. What thoughts or feelings come to mind?

Q2. Consider the insights on Jesus' service [35-45]. What thoughts or feelings come to mind?

Q3. Consider the insight on Jesus giving sight [46-52]. What thoughts or feelings come to mind?

Q4. If Jesus asked you, "What do you want me to do for you?" what might you request?

"Digging Deeper" (optional or alternative study)

1. A fascinating consideration of the subject of predictive prophecy in the Bible:

https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/stewart_don/the-case-for-christianity/09-predictive-prophecy.cfm.

2. Here are some helpful thoughts on what it means to follow Jesus:

<https://www.gotquestions.org/follow-Christ.html>.

Love your neighbor *outside* the group better:

1. Who would like to share how they sought to befriend or build relationship with their neighbors where they live, work, study, or play this past week?

2. Are there some needs that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor outside the group?

3. Here is a neighboring idea(s) for us to consider for the week(s) ahead:

Ask a neighbor "If God asked you what do you want me to do for you? How would you respond?"

Look to share your response to the same question.

Love your neighbor *inside* the group better:

1. Are there some needs in our group that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor within the group?

2. What might we do about that need to help?

Prayer [Loving God and Neighbors better]:

Close the NG meeting with a time of group prayer. Encourage each participant to pray, but don't force anyone to pray. Encourage the group to keep their prayers brief so that each person can pray.

Leader Notes:

1. Seek to involve as many group participants as possible. A good group discussion time allows people to get to know the passage and one another better.

2. Feel free to pre-select the discussion questions that you want to focus on in case there isn't enough time to answer them all.

3. The "Digging Deeper" section provides some optional or alternative study and discussion activities. As a group leader, you can choose to focus on the "Digging Deeper" section, include part of that section in your group meeting, or not use it at all. Try to give the group sufficient notice so they can be prepared for the meeting.

4. Every time you meet consider asking:

a. What about this passage is particularly exciting, challenging, or confusing? If a leader is uncertain about a question of doctrine or theology don't hesitate to follow-up with your coach during the week. Then revisit the issue(s) when the group gathers next time.