



## Preparation for Ministry

(Mark 1:9-13)

**Bottom Line:** We must all be diligent to prepare for the ministry that God has called us to.

**What kind of preparation did you go through for your current job/career? This applies to stay-at-home moms, students, etc., as well! How have you been prepared to do what you do? Or, how are you currently being prepared? Do you feel it was beneficial to your success? How have you continued to learn and grow in your field?**

We don't come into this world knowing everything there is to know about how to live life. There are things we need to be taught in order to get the most out of life. There are also things we need to learn about the Christian life in order to be the most effective in ministry, which is the work that Paul says every Christian has been called to, not just pastors and missionaries (Ephesians 4:12). Unless you're born into an independently wealthy family and you never have a need to get a job, then if you're going to work to make a living, you'll need to spend some time getting some training. This is true of secular life, but it's also true of the Christian life. In fact, it was even true of Jesus' life.

**Read Mark 1:9-13. What two events of Jesus' life are recorded for us here? What do you think their significance is?**

**Read Matthew 3:13-15. Why was Jesus baptized even though He didn't need to repent of His sins? What does this teach us about the importance of Jesus' baptism?**

There are several reasons why Jesus was baptized. In His own words, it was to "fulfill all righteousness." Jesus' *entire* life was lived in devotion to the Father *on our behalf*. Don't miss that last sentence. Jesus wasn't baptized for His own sake, He was already righteous. He was baptized for *our* sake, to fulfill the righteous requirement that *we* are obligated to fulfill, of which being baptized is a small part (Matthew 28:18-20). Jesus' baptism was the beginning of His public ministry: His fulfilling of righteousness for the sake of those He came to save.

**Just like Jesus began his public ministry by being baptized. We acknowledge our public profession of faith in Christ through baptism. Have you been baptized? Why or why not? The Bible teaches that baptism is a rite reserved for those who have *previously* repented and placed their faith in Christ. Has your baptism taken place *after* you were saved?**

**Read Matthew 4:1-11, 17. Jesus' ministry was inaugurated at His baptism, but He didn't begin to preach until after his temptation in the wilderness. How do you think His time in the wilderness prepared Him for the rest of His ministry?**

When Jesus was in the wilderness, He fasted for forty days. After this fasting, Satan came and tempted Him. Jesus was most certainly at His weakest physically, having not eaten anything for forty days. But the spiritual preparation that Jesus went through allowed Him to withstand Satan's temptations and overcome this trial.

# mark

C O M E F O L L O W M E

**Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-7. What is God's intention in our trials? How does our enduring temptation and hardship help us in our work of doing ministry? Have you ever been able to help someone go through a similar trial as you?**

**What do you think Jesus did to spiritually prepare for the temptation that He was about to face? What can you do to prepare yourself to fight against temptation?**

If we don't prepare ourselves to fight against temptation, then when temptation comes and we inevitably give in, we are weakening our effectiveness for ministry, and if it continues long enough and the sin becomes flagrant enough, it may even disqualify us from ministry altogether.

**Do you feel called to a specific type or kind of ministry? Ministry to men? Women? Children? Worship ministry? Maybe even vocational ministry? Evangelism? Teaching?**

**Regardless of what you may feel called to, you are called. What can you do, beginning now, to step into the work of ministry that God calls all of His children into?**

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**Reflection:** Read these aloud, using your discretion about which questions should be pondered and which questions should be discussed.

**Have you ignored your responsibility to engage in ministry? Don't let any preconceived ideas about that word confuse you about what ministry is; ministry is simply comforting and encouraging others with the hope of Jesus Christ in the Gospel. Do you see this as something that you are responsible to do? If not, why? A lack of love for other Christians, let alone other people in general, is a symptom of a heart that is still hard and self-centered, that hasn't been awakened by God (John 13:35; 1 John 2:11; 4:20). Do you need to begin your ministry by beginning a relationship with God? If you repent of your sin and place your trust for forgiveness in the work of Jesus on your behalf, then call upon the Lord and you will be saved.**

**How can you engage in the ministry that God has called you to? And don't limit your options to just participating in more church activities. How can your *lifestyle* be more ministry-focused and aligned with the Great Commission? There may be certain areas that you need to grow in like love for others, hospitality or friendliness, knowledge of the Bible, a desire for holiness, a hatred of sin, a concern for the lost, etc. Will you bring these weak areas to God and ask Him to change you? But even more importantly, will you be willing to do whatever it takes to actually *be* changed in those areas?**

**Do you desire a deeper dive into the things of God than what small-group and Sunday services provides? Have you considered being mentored and discipled in the way of Jesus by participation in a D-Group? If you desire this, why don't you sign up this week?**