

# Gospel Gems from Mark



## Chapter 10: Defining discipleship

In this chapter Jesus clarifies what it means to be his follower. He addresses issues of marriage, wealth, ambition and human pride. In each case he shows us that following him will mean living by very different standards than the world offers--all motivated by his selfless sacrifice for us.



### **Gospel Gem #1: What about marriage? (10:1-12)**

What was the motivation for the Pharisees' question about divorce?

What important point does Jesus' make about the Old Testament laws that regulated divorces?

What is the basic reason why marriage is intended to be for life?

NOTE: In Mathew's account (Matthew 19:1-9) Jesus adds the phrase "except for marital unfaithfulness" which recognizes that not only divorce but also adultery can sever the marriage bond. Paul speaks in a similar way about malicious desertion and abandonment (1 Corinthians 7:15).

Do Jesus' words make divorce an "unforgivable sin"? Explain.

By upholding God's design at creation as the standard for human marriage and sexuality, what further applications can be made from Jesus' words (and other Scriptures)?



### **Gospel Gem #2: "Tough love" for a rich young man (10:17-31)**

What point is Jesus making by his comment on being called "good teacher"?

Why did Jesus answer the man's question by pointing him to the commandments, rather than to Gospel promises of forgiveness of sins?

What was the man's reaction, and what additional command did Jesus give him? How did he then respond?

What two points is Jesus making about riches in verses 24-27?

What additional promise and warning does Jesus offer in verses 29-31?

While we have not been commanded to give all we have to the poor, in a way Jesus' standard still applies to us. Explain.

How does this story serve as a mirror of God's law for us? How does it guide us in Christian living?



**Gospel Gem #3: Defining greatness (10:35-45)**

Note that in the last chapter (9:33-34) the disciples had been rebuked for arguing about who was the greatest. Why does that make James and John's request especially disappointing? What was also underhanded about the way they presented their question?

What does Jesus mean by his "cup" and "baptism" in verse 38? What did he mean by telling James and John that they would indeed share them (verse 39)?

What lesson did these two and the other ten disciples all need to learn (again)?

How does Jesus use a beautiful Gospel promise to guide and remind us of this? (verse 45)

How does this whole story radically redefine Christian ambition?

**Bonus questions (if time)**

The story of Jesus and the little children is more than just a beautiful and touching scene. What important truths does Jesus teach in it? (10:13-16)

How did blind Bartimaeus display his faith in his prayer, and what can we learn from it? (10:46-52)

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## Chapter 10: Defining discipleship - answer page

In this chapter Jesus clarifies what it means to be his follower. He addresses issues of marriage, wealth, ambition and human pride. In each case he shows us that following him will mean living by very different standards than the world offers--all motivated by his selfless sacrifice for us.



### Gospel Gem #1: What about marriage? (10:1-12)

What was the motivation for the Pharisees' question about divorce? *It was not a sincere question, they were "testing him" (v. 2) They may have wanted Jesus to make a controversial answer to hurt his popularity, or even to get him in trouble with King Herod, who had executed John the Baptist for preaching about this topic (6:14-29).*

What important point does Jesus' make about the Old Testament laws that regulated divorces?

*The law about divorce (Deuteronomy 24:1-4) was an accommodation to the Israelites' sinful hard heartedness that God included in civil law. It didn't change the original will of God about marriage that had been established and expressed at creation.*

What is the basic reason why marriage is intended to be for life? *"What God has joined together, let man not separate." Every marriage is a divine act of God, and once established he does not give human beings the authority to destroy it.*

NOTE: In Mathew's account (Matthew 19:1-9) Jesus adds the phrase "except for marital unfaithfulness" which recognizes that not only divorce but also adultery can sever the marriage bond. Paul speaks in a similar way about malicious desertion and abandonment (1 Corinthians 7:15). *In other words, it is always a sin to break a marriage, but in these certain cases the sinful conduct actually destroys the marriage prior to the legal recognition of it via divorce.*

Do Jesus' words make divorce an "unforgivable sin"? Explain.

*In vv 11-12 Jesus is not addressing the issue of repentance; he's laying out the basic principle that neither the husband nor wife can escape God's original marriage commandment for them simply by remarrying a new partner. Jesus died for all sin, and through repentance and faith there is forgiveness for this sin as well. When someone wrongly divorces their spouse and later repents of this, the best course of action for them will depend on the individual situation and it would be important to talk to a pastor about the most godly path to pursue.*

By upholding God's design at creation as the standard for human marriage and sexuality, what further applications can be made from Jesus' words (and other Scriptures)?

*By upholding the design in Eden as God's standard, Jesus (along with the rest of the Bible) declares other, human-made arrangements to be sinful. This would include homosexual 'marriage' and all*

*other expressions of sexuality outside of marriage (see Hebrews 13:4, 1 Cor. 6:9-11, among other verses).*



**Gospel Gem #2: "Tough love" for a rich young man (10:17-31)**

What point is Jesus making by his comment on being called "good teacher"?

*He wasn't denying his own holiness, but making the man realize the implications of calling Jesus "good."*

Why did Jesus answer the man's question by pointing him to the commandments, rather than to Gospel promises of forgiveness of sins? *The man did not realize he needed any forgiveness (v 20). He needed to be shown his sin before he could have any interest in a Savior from sin.*

What was the man's reaction, and what additional command did Jesus give him? How did he then respond? *When he denied all sin, Jesus told him to sell all he had and give the money to the poor, and follow him. The man left sadly--but at least now understanding that he hadn't fully kept even the first commandment. His wealth had become his god! We aren't told if this stern preaching of the law ever led to real repentance, but Jesus had at least brought him closer to the truth about himself.*

What two points is Jesus making about riches in verses 24-27?

*1) Our sinful nature naturally wants to worship wealth, and possessing it only exacerbates the problem by leading us to only consider earthly goals. Without God's intervention, this sinful attitude would condemn us. 2) God's saving grace and power can overcome even this inescapable situation.*

What additional promise and warning does Jesus offer in verses 29-31?

*The heavenly blessings a gracious Father promises far "overcompensate" for anything we must sacrifice in this life in order to follow Jesus. However, we shouldn't blindly assume that we are entitled to anything!*

While we have not been commanded to give all we have to the poor, in a way Jesus' standard still applies to us. Explain. *Every Christian is called to put God and his will ahead of our own, including in the area of finances. We must be prepared to sacrifice anything and everything rather than compromise our faith or Christian confession. In a way we do surrender it all to Jesus and his will!*

How does this story serve as a mirror of God's law for us? How does it guide us in Christian living?

*It powerfully points out our natural greed and the tremendous spiritual danger that it presents. We pray for God to transform our selfish hearts by his grace! Set free, we can freely share rather than merely try to hoard and accumulate for ourselves.*

**Gospel Gem #3: Defining greatness (10:35-45)**



Note that in the last chapter (9:33-34) the disciples had been rebuked for arguing about who was the greatest. Why does that make James and John's request especially disappointing? What was also underhanded about the way they presented their question? *They had not only failed to listen to Jesus the first time, but they tried to hide their real desire behind a generic question, "Will you do whatever we ask you?"*

What does Jesus mean by his "cup" and "baptism" in verse 38? What did he mean by telling James and John that they would indeed share them (verse 39)? ***Both of these terms refer to the suffering that Jesus would soon undergo. Later in life both of these brothers would suffer severe persecution for Jesus' sake, and James would die as a martyr (Acts 12:2).***

What lesson did these two and the other ten disciples all need to learn (again)?

***True greatness in Jesus' eyes and in his kingdom is found in humbly helping others in their needs, rather than having power or control or in being publicly honored by others.***

How does Jesus use a beautiful Gospel promise to guide and remind us of this? (verse 45)

***This verse clearly expresses the purpose of Jesus' coming into the world--to give his life as our Savior by which he was paying the ransom to free us from the penalty of death. This same self-sacrificing act also inspires and guides us to live humble lives of service to others.***

How does this whole story radically redefine Christian ambition?

***Both in the church and in our lives in society, we make it our goal not to be praised and recognized for our own greatness or achievements but to humbly supply the physical and spiritual needs of others.***

#### **Bonus questions (if time)**

The story of Jesus and the little children is more than just a beautiful and touching scene. What important truths does Jesus teach in it? (10:13-16) ***He expresses that little children can have faith; in fact, their trust is a model for believers of all ages. His invitation to "let the children come", when combined with his command to baptize "all nations", stands as an invitation to all parents to bring their children and infants to him in the Sacrament he has given us!***

How did blind Bartimaeus display his faith in his prayer, and what can we learn from it? (10:46-52)

***"Son of David" - this phrase expressed confidence that Jesus was the promised Messiah-King that God had promised to send. "Have mercy" shows humility that he didn't deserve Jesus' help. His refusal to be silenced and instead shout louder also demonstrated his determined faith.***