

***LIFE OF A SERVANT*****Status, Service, Surgery and the Salt Talks****Mark 9:33–50***“If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.”* Mark 9:35**Day 1: Read Mark 9:33–41.**

1. After reading this passage, go back through and reread every statement of Jesus; and then write out what Jesus says a disciple of his should look like.
2. What are the disciples arguing about? Why is this ironic, especially in light of what has just happened in vss. 30–32? What does this reveal about their understanding of servanthood? What might their silence in response to Jesus’ question mean?
3. Just as Jesus knows what the disciples are arguing about, he knows what you argue about. Think back over the last few weeks and relay an argument in which you found yourself defending your position or rights. If you haven’t already brought peace to that situation, pray now for God’s empowerment to do so.

**Day 2: Read Mark 9:33–37.**

4. In the midst of the disciples’ jockeying “for first place position”, what paradoxical statement does Jesus make to highlight what is actually the most prestigious position in His kingdom? (vs. 35)
5. To reinforce the lesson of true greatness, Jesus brings a child into their midst and announces: “Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me.” What is Jesus endeavoring to teach his disciples? (Hint: think of the position and rights of children in Jesus’ day)
6. Conversely, what are we doing when we are indifferent or dismiss that same ‘child’? Allow God to examine your heart to expose which “children” you are not welcoming in Jesus’ name.
7. How did Jesus envision that the servant-driven structure of the Christian community would work? (1 Corinthians 12:12–26)

**Day 3: Read Mark 9:38–41.**

8. In this incident, what is John most interested in preserving? How might John’s attitude (“he was not one of us”) emerge and cause damage in the church today? (Romans 15:7)

9. Explore a little more deeply what Jesus meant when he stopped John in his tracks with his reproof. (vs. 40) Since this isn't a watering down of the gospel, what is Jesus' implication? (Matthew 12:30)
  
10. In verse 41 Jesus implies that a small act of compassion can take on cosmic proportions. Why? As you think of relationships that you are in, write down a particular "cup of water" that you need to bring in Jesus' name.

**Day 4: Read Mark 9:42–48.**

11. List the "it would better" and "it is better" phrases in these verses.
  
12. Let the horror of these phrases wash over you, and then express in your own words the seriousness of allowing sin to fester untreated, in your life.
  
13. Jesus is not calling his disciples to physically mutilate their bodies to prevent them from sinning. How are Jesus' injunctions meant to challenge believers, in thought and practice? (Romans 6:13, 19; 12:1–2) How have they challenged you?

**Day 5: Read Mark 9:33-50.**

14. What are some of the uses of salt, and how might this tie into Jesus' teaching on discipleship? (Leviticus 2:13; Ezekiel 43:23–24)
  
15. The phrase, "Everyone will be salted with fire," appears only in the Gospel of Mark. How will disciples of Christ be "salted with fire"? (1 Peter 1:6–7; 4:12)
  
16. What is salt good for if it has lost its saltiness? How does this relate to disciples of Christ? (Matthew 5:13)
  
17. From this passage, list some of the things that cause our salt factor to ebb.
  
18. This section begins with believers arguing among themselves and now culminates with the encouragement to "be at peace with each other" (vs. 50). Why do you think this is how Jesus chooses to end this teaching on the cost of discipleship? (Galatians 5:13b–15)
  
19. "Have salt in yourselves..." (vs. 50). What do salty relationships look like? (Philippians 2:3–7)

