

IDOLS



COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE WEEK THREE: "POWER" | MARK 10:35-45

SERIES OVERVIEW

God deserves the whole world's worship. Unfortunately, unworthy substitutes are usually the recipients of that worship in our lives. From golden calves to purple and gold, our world has never had a shortage of things, people or ideas competing for the throne of our lives. In his book, *Counterfeit Gods*, Tim Keller writes, "An idol is anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give." In this series, we'll identify these idols in our lives, discover how they fail, and seek to dethrone these lies that we love.

THIS WEEK

Abraham Lincoln once said, "Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power." Very few people will explicitly admit they want power, but inwardly, most people crave it. We want to be in control. We want to do what we want. We want to be appreciated. Unfortunately, this type of thinking and living becomes the very thing we worship. One pastor once said, "The idol of power tells us that our ultimate value comes when we have power and influence over others." We want power, but are we willing to let God have it instead?

ICEBREAKER

What lengths have you seen people go to in order to gain power?

BACKGROUND

At first glance, Mark 10 is a collection of different things Jesus was doing with no connection. First, we see Jesus' teachings on divorce, then rebuking the disciples for turning away children, the scene with the rich, young ruler, and then to the passage at hand concerning the foretelling of His death, burial, and resurrection with a small scene about rank in the Kingdom. A closer look though may shed some light on what may seem as disconnected events. In each section, there is an underlying element of power. The Pharisees' were trying to trap Jesus with a question on divorce: Was it permitted or not? Jesus' answer has an eternal harkening to it, that it was not always this way; this, being men allowed to divorce, but that Israel was given over to their sin because they wanted the power to divorce for any reason. After rebuking the Pharisees, the next scene has parents coming to bring their children to be blessed by Jesus, only to have the disciples try and turn the children away. Jesus sets up Mark 10:35-45 by saying that the Kingdom belongs to the meek and humble, not the proud and self-powerful. Enter, the rich young ruler. He believes he is, well, awesome. He isn't. And Jesus shows him what is really in his heart. Finally, we come to our passage at hand.

READ MARK 10:35-45

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Jesus mentions that the Gentiles “lord” their power over people (Mk 10:42). How does this happen in our world?
2. During the time of the Judges, Abimelech, son of Gideon, leveraged his family relationships to create a path to rule for himself (Judges 9:1-2). How does the pursuit of power change the way we interact with people??
3. How does the idol of power show itself in your personal context (as a stay-at-home mom, at your workplace, with your spouse, etc)?
4. Christians are to honor those with spiritual authority (Church leadership in Hebrews 13:7, Parents in Ephesians 6:1-3). How can spiritual authority be abused in each of these spheres and how should it be used?
5. How does Jesus change our understanding of power (Mk 10:43-45; Acts 1:8; Phil. 2:1-11)?

APPLICATION

- **LAY DOWN YOUR LIFE:** Simply put, Jesus put others ahead of himself. What are ways that you can lay down your life for your spouse, kids, or co-workers this week?
- **CHANGE YOUR GOAL:** If the goal of your life is to gain power, the path of your life will be lonely and excruciating. However, if the goal of your life is to bring glory to God in the entire world, dying to self becomes much easier as you allow Christ’s life to live through you (Gal. 2:20). As you enter your workplace tomorrow or your home after work, ask yourself who you are seeking to please.