



ESSENTIAL SPIRITUAL PRACTICES



SIMPLE HABITS.
A DEEPER LIFE.



Sunday
November 15, 2026

Psalm 1
Mark 10:35-45
1 Peter 4:10

Example Teaching Rhythm

Welcome and Connect: 10 Minutes

This helps people feel connected and more comfortable participating in the study and discussion.

Look Forward: 5-10 Minutes

Share any important church events, service opportunities, or upcoming group plans. Keep this brief but clear.

Look at Scripture: 25-35 Minutes

This is the main focus of Community Groups. Read the selected scripture together and guide the group through discussion questions and observations.

Prayer: 10 Minutes

Invite members to share prayer requests and praises, then pray together as a group. This is a time to support one another.

Explaining the H.E.A.R Method

The acronym **HEAR** stands for **Highlight, Explain, Apply, and Respond**. Each of these four steps aims to cultivate an atmosphere to hear God speak.

Highlight - After praying for the Holy Spirit's guidance, read the passage of scripture, and highlight each verse that speaks to you.

Explain - Explain what the text means. Ask questions like:

- Who wrote this, to whom, and why? What does this reveal about God? What do the key words actually mean? What did this call the original audience to, and what does that reveal for me?

By asking questions, with the help of God's Spirit, and by using helpful study resources, you can understand the meaning of a passage or verse.

Apply - Application is the heart of the process. Everything you have done so far culminates under this heading. As you have done before, work to uncover the significance of these verses and the implications they have. Ask questions like:

- What does this passage reveal about God, yourself, or the world that you need to embrace or sit with? Does this passage challenge an attitude, assumption, or habit that needs to change? Is there something to do? Is there someone to love?

Respond - Your response to the passage may take on many forms. Ask: Is there something to pray? - Let the passage shape your prayer, not just inform it. Use the "Five Daily Prayer Prompts" to guide you in your response.

Service Consciously following the Servant.

Introduction

James and John may have the worst timing in the Gospels. Jesus is walking ahead of his disciples up the road to Jerusalem, and Mark says the ones following are afraid. For the third time, Jesus tells the Twelve what is waiting for him there: he will be handed over, mocked, flogged, and killed. Then James and John walk up and say, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” They have just heard the word killed, and the next thing out of their mouths is a request for a promotion. What they ask for is the best seats in his kingdom, one on his right and one on his left (Mark 10:32-37).

Two weeks ago we started this series with Scripture, where God speaks to us. Last week was prayer, where we answer as children who depend on the Father. This week the practice leaves the quiet room. Scripture and prayer can stay private, but service gets tested in public, where our neighbors can see it. Trusting God’s Word is easy over coffee. You find out what you believe when someone needs a ride on a Tuesday night.

That’s why service matters more than it first sounds. A neighbor may never read your Bible or hear you pray, but they will notice who showed up with a meal, who stayed late to stack the chairs, and who drove across town without being asked. Whatever they end up concluding about Jesus, they conclude partly from you.

By “service” we mean more than a slot on a church schedule. It includes the slot. It also includes the meal for a neighbor with a new baby, the hard errand for an aging parent, and the thankless job at work nobody assigned you.

It’s tempting to read about James and John and feel a little better than they were. Don’t. These two had walked away from their fishing nets to follow Jesus. They were serving, and they were also keeping score. Most of us have done both on the same afternoon.

So carry one question through today: when I serve, who am I following, and where do I hope to be seated? We want each person to leave knowing what they’ve been given to serve with, and who they follow when they use it.

Discussion Questions + Illustration

Select a question or two below to open up discussion.

- Who is the first person you call when you need help moving, or a ride from the airport? What makes them easy to ask?
- Think of someone who served you without making a big deal of it. What did they do?
- When did you last help with something nobody saw? What was that like, honestly?
- When a job needs doing at a gathering, are you more likely to jump in, hang back, or look for the exit?
- Finish this sentence and compare answers around the room: “When someone asks me for help, my first thought is...”

Around A.D. 260, a plague swept through Alexandria in Egypt. Dionysius, the city’s bishop, wrote a letter describing how the Christians there responded. He says that many of them, with no thought for their own safety, took charge of the sick, cared for them in Christ’s name, and buried the dead. Many caught the disease from the people they nursed and died. Dionysius also reports that those around them often pushed the sick away and fled. He judged the deaths of these believers little different from martyrdom.

- Those believers had no guarantee they would live, and they stepped toward the sick anyway. What do you think kept them going? Hold onto that. We will come back to it after we look at what Jesus says.

Highlight | Ps. 1, Mark 10:35-45; 1 Pet. 4:10

Psalm 1 gives us two roads. The blessed person is like a tree planted by streams of water, bearing fruit in its season. The wicked are like chaff the wind blows away, and they will not stand in the judgment or in the congregation of the righteous. The LORD knows the way of the righteous, and the way of the wicked will perish.

In Mark 10, James and John come to Jesus with a blank check: “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” Then they ask for seats at his right and left in his glory. Jesus asks if they can drink his cup and be baptized with his baptism. They say, “We are able.” He tells them they will drink it, but the places at his right and left are not his to give. They belong to those for whom they have been prepared. When the other ten hear about it, they are furious. So Jesus calls all twelve together. Rulers among the Gentiles lord it over people, he says, “But it shall not be so among you.” Whoever wants to be great must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. Then comes the reason: “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (v.45).

Peter writes to scattered believers already facing hostility for their faith. He tells them to love one another earnestly and to show hospitality without grumbling. Then: “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace” (1 Pet. 4:10). Whoever serves does it “by the strength that God supplies,” so that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

- Which verse or image stands out to you most, and why?
- In Mark 10, what do James and John want, and what does Jesus say he came to do?

Explain | Consider the Context

Three times Jesus has told the Twelve he is going to die, and three times it bounces off. Peter rebukes him, they argue over greatness, and now James and John ask for thrones. Mark wraps this stretch in two healings of blind men (8:22-26; 10:46-52) to tell us who the real blind men are.

The other ten are furious because they wanted those seats too. Everyone on that road was running the same fantasy; two just said it out loud.

Jesus answers, “You do not know what you are asking.” The cup is God’s judgment, and he drinks it alone in Gethsemane. Mark finally tells us who sits at his right and left in glory: two criminals on crosses (15:27).

In Daniel 7, a figure like a son of man is given authority over every nation, and every people serves him. Jesus takes that title and says, “I came to serve.” He picked the towel. His ransom frees captives from death and the fear that keeps people living small, guarded lives.

Peter writes to people with every reason to keep their heads down: each of you has been handed something, so spend it on each other in God’s strength.

- Why do you think James and John ask for places of honor right after hearing about his death? Why were the other ten so angry?
- Peter says a gift is “received.” What changes when serving starts with something handed to you?

Apply | Discuss as a Group

What this teaches us about God: the one with the most right to be served is the one who serves. He went first and paid the price to set captives free. We can’t drink that cup, but he calls us to follow him toward people at a cost. And before Mark 10:45 is a pattern to copy, it is a receipt. You are one of the “many” he paid for. If you’re not sure that’s you, the invitation is open today.

That also answers Alexandria. Those believers served “in Christ’s name,” and the fear of death that holds most people back had lost its grip on them. They weren’t running on willpower either, since Peter says the strength is supplied.

What it teaches us about ourselves: we like being noticed, thanked, and needed, so we serve when it’s convenient or when someone is watching. Others of us sit out because we’ve decided we aren’t gifted, even though Peter says “each” has received one. Notice what Jesus does with James and John. He doesn’t scold them for wanting greatness. He redirects it: a towel, a basin, and a cross. The honor is real, and the Father is the one who gives it (John 12:26), so we can quit grabbing for it.

Psalms give us the picture. The blessed person is a tree planted by streams, and a tree never eats its own fruit. It is fed from a source, and the fruit is for someone else. The psalm ends with a congregation, because nobody serves alone.

- Back to Alexandria: what does Jesus’ death free us to do that fear would talk us out of?
- Where do you hope for a seat (credit, thanks, a say) when you serve?
- What gift have you kept to yourself, or let someone else cover?

Respond | How should I live/pray?

This week, put these passages to work in four ways.

Receive before you serve. Read Mark 10:45 out loud each morning and thank Jesus for what the ransom bought you out of: your sin, and the fear of death that makes people hold back from loving at a cost. Then ask him to show you one way to serve out of gratitude instead of obligation.

Answer his question. Jesus asked James and John, “What do you want me to do for you?” Pray it back to him in your own words, and say plainly where you’ve been hoping for credit, comfort, or control. Then flip it the way Paul did after Jesus met him on the road: “What shall I do, Lord?” Listen for one concrete thing, and do it this week.

Name your gift and use it. Peter says every one of us has one. Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 show how wide the range runs, from teaching and giving to mercy and helping. Ask two people who know you well where they see God using you, then take one step and ask God to supply the strength for it. Pick a place where nobody will notice, and don’t announce it. Leave the credit with the Father, who sees what is done in secret.

Serve alongside someone. Jesus sent his disciples out two by two, and Peter ties service to hospitality given without grumbling. Invite a friend or a group member to serve with you, whether at church, in your neighborhood, or for someone who can’t repay you. When you finish, tell each other what you saw God do.

- Which of these four will you start this week, and what might it cost you?
- Who could you serve this week where no one will see or thank you?

Response Tool: Five Daily Prayer Prompts

As you leave today, let these five questions carry the weight of your response into the week ahead – not as a checklist, but as an ongoing conversation with God. Introduce the five daily questions as a simple spiritual practice that can help us intentionally live out our faith in our workplaces, homes, families, and communities.

- God, where do you want me to go?
- God, who do you want me to see?
- God, what do you want me to say?
- God, what do you want me to pray?
- God, how do you want me to serve?

After this time of reflection, transition into a time of prayer requests. Allow time for members to share and, if appropriate, allow others in the class to pray for each other.

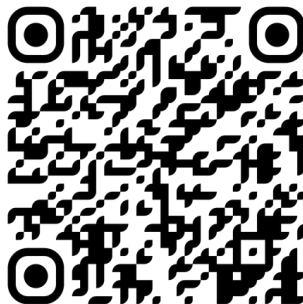
Additional Commentary

- ‘edah (“congregation,” עֵדָה, Ps. 1:5): God’s assembled people, the same word used for Israel gathered in Exod. 12:3. The psalm opens on one “man” and ends in a crowd.
- yada’ (“knows,” Ps. 1:6): relational, covenant knowing, as in Amos 3:2. We serve already known by him.
- katakyrieuo (“lord it over,” Mark 10:42): to exercise power over people. Peter uses the same verb to warn elders in 1 Pet. 5:3.
- diakoneo / doulos (vv.43-45): diakoneo means “to wait on,” and Acts 6:2 uses it for serving tables. It is the verb Jesus picks for what he came to do. A doulos is a slave with no standing of his own.
- The cup and baptism (vv.38-39): pictures of suffering and judgment (Isa. 51:17). James was the first apostle killed (Acts 12:2), and John ended up on Patmos “on account of the word of God” (Rev. 1:9).
- “Serve” in Daniel 7:14: Aramaic pelach, which can mean “serve” or “worship.” All peoples serve the Son of Man, who says he came “not to be served.”
- lytron (“ransom,” v.45): in the Greek Old Testament, the price to redeem a life (Exod. 21:30). It appears in the New Testament only here and in Matt. 20:28. Anti means “in place of,” and “many” echoes Isa. 53:11-12.
- charisma (“gift,” 1 Pet. 4:10): from charis, “grace,” so something given, not earned. Poikilos (“varied”) also describes “trials” in 1:6, so grace comes in as many colors as the pressures do.
- choregeo (“supplies,” 1 Pet. 4:11): from choregos, the wealthy citizen who financed an entire Greek chorus. God funds the service he assigns (cf. 2 Cor. 9:10).

Community Group Resource Page

Visit our website to view our **leadership resources**.

From Community Group training and resources to Discipleship Group starter guides, we want to equip you to make disciples.



Additional Study

Watch/Listen

Bible Project - Mark



See a collection of videos, classes, and articles that dive into [Mark](#).

Bible Project - 1 Peter



See a collection of videos, classes, and articles that dive into [1 Peter](#).

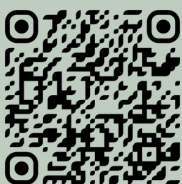
Overview

Enduring Word - Mark 10



Text commentary, written materials, and audio/video recordings over [Mark 10](#).

Got Questions - Spiritual Gifts



Biblical Q&A, articles, translations, audios, videos, apps, podcasts and more on [Spiritual Gifts](#).

Expand

Bible Reference - Mark 10



Explore chapter and verse commentaries to deepen your understanding of [Mark 10](#).

Bible Hub - 1 Peter 4:10



Parallel translations, language tools, commentaries, and much more on [1 Peter 4:10](#).

Deepen

Logos Factbook - Service



Logos Factbook shares information resources and articles about [Service](#).

Blue Letter Bible - Mark 10



Original texts, Translations, Cross-Refs, Commentaries, Dictionaries + more on [Mark 10:35-45](#).

