

FIGHT

FOR YOUR FAMILY
DECLARING WAR ON OUR SIN



JAN 30 - MAR 1

(5) "Selfishness"

HIGHLIGHT: *Mark 10:35-45 and Selected Verses from John 20 and 21*

H

Below are excerpts from the overall passage for use with the APPLICATION and RESPOND. It will be beneficial for the group to read the whole passage to understand the entire context.

Mark 10:35-45 (NLT)

35 Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came over and spoke to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do us a favor."

36 "What is your request?" he asked.

37 They replied, "When you sit on your glorious throne, we want to sit in places of honor next to you, one on your right and the other on your left."

38 But Jesus said to them, "You don't know what you are asking! Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of suffering I am about to drink? Are you able to be baptized with the baptism of suffering I must be baptized with?"

39 "Oh yes," they replied, "we are able!" Then Jesus told them, "You will indeed drink from my bitter cup and be baptized with my baptism of suffering. **40** But I have no right to say who will sit on my right or my left. God has prepared those places for the ones he has chosen."

41 When the ten other disciples heard what James and John had asked, they were indignant. **42** So Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. **43** But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, **44** and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. **45** For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."

John 20 (NLT) *Emphases are mine*

2 She [Mary] ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple [John], **the one whom Jesus loved.**

4 They were both running, **but the other disciple out ran Peter and reached the tomb first.**

8 Then the other disciple **who had reached the tomb first** also went in.

John 21 (NLT) *Emphases are mine*

7 Then the **disciple Jesus loved** said to Peter, "It's the Lord!" ...

20 Peter turned around and saw behind them **the disciple Jesus loved—the one who had leaned over to Jesus during the supper...**

21 Peter asked Jesus, **"What about him, Lord?"**

22 Jesus replied, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, **what is that to you? As for you, follow me.**

EXPLAIN

The purpose of this section is to deepen everyone's understanding of the Word.

The FIGHT FOR YOUR FAMILY series began with "pride." This week, we end with "selfishness." We have been called to take a good look at ourselves and our own fleshly (sarxy) tendencies. The fight for my family begins with an examination of my heart.

Pride and selfishness—the bookends that keep jealousy, anger, and unforgiveness on the throne of my mind (heart), making a transformed life virtually impossible.

"Selfishness is the greatest curse of the human race." - William Gladstone

"Self is the only prison than can ever bind the soul." - Henry Van Dyke

"Jealousy and selfish ambition [generate] disorder and evil of every kind." - *The Bible*

James 3:14-16; see Philippians 1:15-17

This week's study is not so much a Bible study as a character study of two of Jesus' most prominent disciples (Peter and John) with the intention of reminding ourselves that there will never be a time in our earthly lives when we are free from the enemy who wants to devour us (1 Peter 5:8; Ephesians 6:10-12). One of his greatest tools is our fleshly nature and its desires (1 John 2:16).

It is not our desire to "trash" these followers of Jesus, but to demonstrate that none of us is immune to selfishness. All of what I say is speculation; no one knows the mind of another person. But as we look at these men, it may help us to see how prone we are to fall into the trap of the devil, and see the need for vigilance as we fight for our families.

Mark 10:35-45

This is not the first time that the disciples engage in a discussion as to who will be greatest in the reign of the Messiah. This discussion took place not long before Jesus' crucifixion. Matthew indicates that James' and John's mother was part of this discussion (Matthew 20:20). James and John want Jesus **to do them a favor (Mark 10:35)**. That's an understatement. The ESV strikes a different tone: "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." Whether they intended to be *demanding* we don't know, but when the word was leaked that James and John were making a power play the Bible says that **the ten other disciples were indignant** (to be greatly afflicted)—v.41. One might wonder about Peter's feelings (other than indignation). He had been part of the inner circle (5:37; 9:2; 14:33). Did he feel shut out; thrown under the bus. We can't know for sure. But it is probably fair to say that Peter and the other nine were interested in what James and John wanted. They just didn't say it first.

Selfishness in me is likely to create resentment and frustration in those closest to me (see James 3:15-16). And selfishness is so powerful—even in the best of us. Eve (having never sinned and living in a perfect environment) fell prey to selfishness: "she *wanted, so she took*" (Genesis 3:6). And we all know the results of that decision.

John 20 and 21 *You might want to read the full chapters in which the selected verses are found.*

Selfishness is often exposed by "one-upmanship." A better story, accomplishment, award, title, etc. It's still a worship of self. Whether the following examples prove selfishness or not they probably remind us our turn playing the game of "one-upmanship."

20:2, 4, 8 These verses are John's account of Resurrection Morning. Whether intended or not, there seems to be a hint of self-promotion in John's words: **the one whom Jesus loved (v.2); the other disciple outran Peter (v.4); the disciple who reached the tomb first (v.8)**.

21:7, 20-22 These verses tell the story of another appearance of Jesus to His disciples—somewhere between Resurrection Sunday and the Ascension of Jesus. We see a hint of competition between Peter and John. Perhaps it started when they both were in the fishing business as competitors—long before becoming Jesus' disciples. Personalities may lend to this tendency. There was a reason that James and John were called Sons of Thunder. Peter had a tendency to mouth off in ways that probably irritated the other disciples. Natural tendencies that go unchecked can fester—and undo whatever progress has been made. Jesus indicates to Peter that his death will glorify God (v.19), and, seeing that John is following them, turns his attention to John's future: **"What about him, Lord?" (v.21)**. To which Jesus replies, **"What is that to you? As for you, follow me" (v.22)**. "The wise man is wise enough to know his own weaknesses, while the foolish man either refuses to acknowledge his faults or assumes he can succeed in life without paying attention to them" (Stuart Briscoe). There is a way that leads to life—even in our families (see Proverbs 9:9-12).

A**APPLY**

Be comfortable with some silence as people think back to the sermon or reread the text. Answer honestly. You don't have to answer every question.

1. What stuck out to you in what you heard in the sermon or read in the text?
2. What is so appealing in making it about **me** (selfishness), whether it is in our actions, our thoughts, or how we talk?
3. Has someone's selfishness caused heartache or wreaked havoc in your own life? What were the results of their selfishness?
4. Has your **own** selfishness caused heartache or wreaked havoc in your own life? What were the results of your selfishness?
5. How do Jesus Christ and the Gospel help us move away from selfishness?

R**RESPOND**

Be comfortable with some silence as people think back to the sermon or reread the text. Answer honestly. You don't have to answer every question.

1. Jesus died so that you might no longer live for yourself, but live for Him (see 2 Corinthians 5:14-15). In Jesus Christ, you have been given all you need to live a godly life (see 2 Peter 1:3-4). As you know, though, the war still rages. Your flesh still cries out and works against you. We never have to ask "if" we are selfish, but "how" we are selfish. This week, pray for insight in regards to your battle with selfishness. Journal about what is being revealed to you. Who should you ask for forgiveness and how can you begin to change the way you think?
2. Throughout this series, you have been challenged to fight for your family (or relationships in general). In what specific ways have you been challenged? How have you been drawn closer to Jesus Christ? How have you been encouraged? Have you felt defeated in any way? What growth have you seen? Plan to get together with another group member (same gender) this week (outside of group time) and talk through this together. Be specific! This conversation should be more specific than you would be able to have in large group time, since it will just be two of you.