
a *Grace Notes* course

The Gospel of Mark

an expositional Bible study

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Lesson 3

Mark 3:1-35

Grace Notes

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The Gospel of Mark

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Instructions for Completing the Lessons

There are sixteen (16) lessons in the MARK course curriculum, one lesson for each chapter.. There will be questions in the Quiz for each lesson on the topics that are named here.

Begin each study session with prayer. It is the Holy Spirit who makes spiritual things discernable to Christians, so it is essential to be in fellowship with the Lord during Bible study.

Instructions

Read the introduction to the study of Mark.

Study the Mark chapter for this lesson, by reading the verses and studying the notes. Be sure to read any other Bible passages that are called out in the notes.

Before taking the Quiz, **Review** all of the notes in the Mark lesson.

Go to the Quiz page and follow the instructions to complete all the questions on the quiz. The quiz is "open book". You may refer to all the notes and to the Bible when you take the test. But you should not get help from another person.

When you have completed the Quiz, be sure to SAVE your file. If your quiz file is lost, and that can happen at Grace Notes as well, you will want to be able to reproduce your work.

To send the Quiz back to Grace Notes, follow the instructions on the Quiz page.

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Chapter 3

Through this series of confrontations with religious leaders that Mark includes in Chapters two and three, we see Jesus Christ presenting truth.

Basically, he was shutting down the arguments of these Pharisees, scribes, and other supposed leaders of spiritual Israel.

NOW WHEN YOU FIND YOURSELF IN THE WRONG IN your attitude, you have an important choice to make. You can either repent, change your mind and line up your thinking with what is right - or you can dig in, and in stubborn arrogance allow your wrong attitude to result in wrong action.

Principle: There is nothing wrong with being wrong, but there is everything wrong with staying wrong.

A.W. Tozer related a story about a governor of a mid-western state who disguised himself and went into prison for a day to learn of the conditions (no one told him only senators and congressmen go to prison):

While talking with a personable young convict, he felt a strong desire to pardon him. What would you do, he asked casually, if the governor were to offer you a pardon? The convict said, The first thing I'd do is cut the throat of the judge who sent me here. The governor was saddened as he broke off the conversation and left. That convict stayed in his cell.

The arrogant, religious legalistic leaders of Jesus day and the those of the same ilk today are no different than that convict. Jesus gave the chance after chance, he provided pardon after pardon for their sins, yet they decided to dig in and their decision to continue in error lead to the actions of decadence.

No where in the gospels do we see the evil, vile character of the Pharisee more clearly than in Mark 3:1-6.

Mark 3:1

He entered again into a synagogue; and a man was there whose hand was withered.

And Jesus entered again into the synagogue (of Capernaum).

Jesus' purpose is still his priority, he came to proclaim the truth and in doing so he took the opportunity to teach in the synagogue.

The word for AGAIN is PALIN _which looks at the repetition of an act as these acts lead to a specific goal.

Like hammering in a nail, the repetition of hammering is towards the goal of making the nail flush with the surface of the wood.

Jesus repetition of going to the synagogue was to arrive at the goal of revealing himself as the Savior

In the second half of verse one we have some curious exegesis:

The presence of the man is indicated by both a verb and an adverb making his presence in the synagogue very specific, as if he is there for a specific reason.

We also have two participles to indicate that his hand had been crushed.

The participle shows action and the first one is passive indicating that his had had been crushed by someone else. It is also a feminine participle that shows the hand received the crushing from a source apart from the man or his actions.

In other words: This was no accident.

And then we add that statement to verse two:

Mark 3:2

They were watching Him to see if He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him.

And they (Pharisees and Herodians of verse 6) watched him carefully [to see] if on the Sabbath he will heal him, in order that they might accuse him.

That is a tremendously loaded statement!!!

The wording indicates that what we see going on in verse 1 and 2 is part of a plot to get Jesus to heal this man on the Sabbath.

The circumstances strongly suggest that these religious leaders crushed this man's hand to see if Jesus would heal him.

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They crushed his hand and sent him to the synagogue and then sat back and watched -

Principle: Evil has no regard for the innocents. These evil men were willing to sacrifice this man's hand just to catch the Lord Jesus Christ in what they determined was a sin, healing on the Sabbath.

They have come to this point of decadence because of their constant rejection of the truth presented by the Lord, they are, as we will see, hardened in their souls.

1. Of the 360 Sabbath day laws established by the rabbis, one prohibited healing by touch on the Sabbath.
2. This absurd law had nothing to do with the Old Testament law of God. It was man's plan given a position superior to God's plan.
3. This combination of evil and legalism was doubly decadent and lead to a plot to catch the Lord in a supposed fault.

The word for *accuse* is KATJGOREW and is used in the New Testament for the evil accusation of those who opposed the Lord and the evil accusations of Satan against believers in Revelation 12:10.

The prefix KATA means to be against so the idea here is that they were already against the Lord and just waiting and plotting to catch him in a fault.

Principle: They had pre-judged the Lord and his actions and were now out to find justification for their pre-judgment,

Application: As Christians we are not to judge others much less pre-judge others based upon our own bias and prejudice.

But too often we do. We have our standards, some that are even anti-biblical, and we judge others by those standards.

We become judgmental, assuming, and involve ourselves in unrealistic Ambition, Competition, and Expectation.

Mark 3:3

**He said to the man with the withered hand,
Get up and come forward!**

In the synagogue Jesus calls to the man to Rise in the midst of the people.

A command and the man was obedient to that command.

With this Jesus now has a visual aid of this man with a painfully withered hand standing in the midst of the people.

In his perspicacity he will use the evil plot to communicate compassion and truth.

Jesus, in his discernment, doctrine + the situation, knew exactly what was going on.

Mark 3:4

And He said to them, Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill?" But they kept silent.

Then Christ directs two questions to the Pharisees:

1. To do good or to do evil?
2. To save life or to kill?

But they were silent: They could not answer even the most simple question.

The answer to both questions is obvious, but because they were involved in this conspiracy of evil, they could not even answer the simplistic of questions.

Illustration: Have you ever caught your child in a lie, and as you question them they do not even give answers to the simple unrelated questions.

Another place you can see this is in a congressional or senate hearing.

Did you live in Washington, D.C. at that time?
Could you repeat the question - I did not understand the question - I refuse to answer that on the grounds -

Later on James would write that we believers must: Let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation (James 5:12).

What Jesus did was bring the confrontation down into some very simple terms and some very absolute terms:

While the world sees everything in various shades of gray, God deals in absolutes :

1. Either saved or unsaved

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2. Either spiritual or carnal
3. Either divine viewpoint or human viewpoint
4. Either divine good or human good
5. Life or Death

As Christians with doctrine we can live our lives according to God's absolutes. We can know the truth and we can know what really matters in life, the absolutes.

Too many believers today see a God who is sloppy in his dealings with mankind. A God who holds no absolutes. But God's Word tells us that He has determined certain absolutes and we are under that determination.

Some think that if you get close to salvation, you will make it. There is no close about it - you are either saved or unsaved, that is it.

Mark 3:5

After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, Stretch out your hand. And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

The Lord's response to their silence and their decadence:

Anger is ORGEI which is legitimate anger that is based upon knowledge and understanding.

The word LOOKING is an aorist middle participle which looks at resulting anger in a point of time, and precedes the next participle.

Grieving must have a cause and here the cause is their hardness of heart.

HARDNESS is the word PWRWSIS which was a type of marble found in the ancient world. Eventually it was used for a callous formed on a broken bone or on a hand.

We would call it scar tissue on the soul, or hardness of heart.

The human soul is a delicate thing and a terrible thing to waste:

Principles on scar tissue:

1. We tell our children to Just say no - Knowing that the more you say no to the influences of evil, drugs, sex, booze, the easier it becomes to keep on saying NO.

2. Just as saying no to evil brings resistance, saying no to spiritual things builds resistance to spiritual things.

3. As you say no to God, no to the Savior, no to the Word of God, no to Bible class you build a resistance to the relationship God wants with you.

4. Every time you exercise negative volition to the things of the spirit of God and say NO, you build scar tissue on your soul. It becomes easier and easier to say NO.

5. Solomon referred to this in Proverb 5:12-14

How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me! I was almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation and assembly.

6. Just as scar tissue is insensitive to feeling, scar tissue on the soul results in insensitivity to God and to others. This insensitivity is seen as these religious leaders in Mark 3 planted an man with a withered hand in the synagogue to try to trap the Lord in a supposed fault.

7. Scar tissue is removed for the unbeliever at salvation and for the believer as he takes in the Word of God. For too many Christians, saying NO to God and his perfect plan of spiritual growth has become too easy through their scar tissue and insensitivity.

Mark 3:6

The Pharisees went out and immediately began conspiring with the Herodians against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.

The reaction of the religious leaders:

And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

They could have given the glory and praise to God, but they did not - instead the Pharisees took counsel with the Herodians to destroy Jesus.

1. Pharisees: Religious Jews
2. Herodians: Secular political Jews

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Principle: These two groups had nothing in common, even hated each other under normal circumstances.

But they had a common enemy and they were willing to join together to destroy the Lord.

The word for DESTROY means to utterly destroy and when used of a person means to kill -

So these religious leaders who tempted Christ to heal on the Sabbath, contrary to their laws, thought nothing of plotting a death on the Sabbath.

That is hardness of heart, scar tissue of the soul, to refuse to allow healing on the Sabbath and yet to plan a murder on the Sabbath.

How does a person get into such a decadent way of thinking? By refusing the truth that is presented and today scores of Christians are refusing to hear the truth of God as it is taught from his word -

Your soul is too important to waste, don't let scar tissue make you into a Pharisee.

In the section from 3:7-15, Mark covers an extended period of time by describing the Galilean ministry of Jesus and his disciples.

Here is where we see the move from growth to ministry on the part of the twelve disciples.

They were trained and while this training would continue even long after the ascension of Christ, they were ready to minister to others.

Jordan Grooms said: That if God calls you to minister to others do not stoop to be a king.

And every believer in Jesus Christ is called to a ministry, both collectively and individually. We all have the ministry of ambassadors of Christ, we all have the ministry of evangelism and reconciliation, and as well we all have spiritual gifts that allow us to minister to others in a specific and peculiar way.

But too many Christians today walk away from their ministry and stoop to become kings -

Mark 3:7, 8

Jesus withdrew to the sea with His disciples; and a great multitude from Galilee followed; and also from Judea,

and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and beyond the Jordan, and the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon, a great number of people heard of all that He was doing and came to Him.

This is still part of Jesus' first preaching tour of Galilee. There would eventually be three separate tours of this northern region of Palestine.

As our Lord left Capernaum and went to the shore of the sea of Galilee we see that Mark makes special note to include his disciples -

Soon we will see that Jesus will ordain twelve men to be with him and to send them out to communicate the Word of God.

The word DISCIPLE is the word MAQEITEIS and is found 261 times in the NEW TESTAMENT. but every time is in either the Gospels or the Book of Acts. It is not once used in any epistles or the Revelation.

It is usually translated with the idea of one who learns from another. A student or a pupil. But it is really much stronger than that.

A disciple was devoted to his teacher. A disciple gave unhindered loyalty and obedience to his teacher.

And if the teacher is the perfect Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, that is fine - but if the teacher is an imperfect man who may or may not be controlled by the Word and the Spirit, there is a problem.

The ancient Greeks held this word in such high esteem that the noted Socrates refused to have disciples feeling he was unworthy.

A disciple could only be a disciple to a DIDASKALOS which in secular Greek was a Master teacher or great and high regard - higher than even Socrates.

The concept of this word was so highly regarded that the latter Greek philosophers abandoned its use for other words such as friend, follower, child.

In the Rabbinical Judaism of Jesus' day, the disciple was to the Rabbi as a servant or slave to a master. He would serve him as a servant as well as learn from him. Only after a disciple had spent years learning from a Rabbi who was considered a

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HA-KAM, a scholar, could have authority to teach.

Why am I telling you all this:

Well, today the church seems to be throwing around a lot of talk about disciples, discipling, discipleship.

And they are all out of step with the Word of God.

If you are going to disciple someone you must put yourself in a position of being wiser than Socrates, as scholarly as the most revered Rabbis, and on equal footing with the Lord Jesus Christ -

We are disciples, but we are disciples to the Lord Jesus Christ and not to any man. It is to him that we pledge loyalty and upon him we declare total dependence.

And you cannot be totally dependant upon the Lord Jesus Christ if you are also dependant upon some group leader who sees you as his disciple and who is your discipler.

Now Jesus had disciples and we can be disciples today, disciples of Jesus Christ.

But our Lord is seated at the right hand of the Father, he is not here to directly teach us or disciple us.

Hence, the relationship we now have with Christ is different than the relationship the twelve disciples had.

We have a relationship of AMBASSADORS of Christ:

2 Corinthians 5:20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

At the end of verse 8, after telling of all the areas of Palestine from which these people came, Mark includes a statement of motive -

Hearing the things he does, they came to him.

We have a participle and a main verb. The participle is the word HEARING WHAT HE DID and the main verb is that they CAME TO HIM.

Still the same old problem, the people came to Jesus not because of his message of truth but because of the miracles he did. In the minds of the

people, the gracious miracles became a distraction to what Jesus Christ was really all about - He came to proclaim the truth.

Mark 3:9-12

And He told His disciples that a boat should stand ready for Him because of the crowd, so that they would not crowd Him;

for He had healed many, with the result that all those who had afflictions pressed around Him in order to touch Him.

Whenever the unclean spirits saw Him, they would fall down before Him and shout, You are the Son of God!"

And He earnestly warned them not to tell who He was.

[The notes are missing for verses 9 to 12. wd]

Mark 3:13

And He went up on the mountain and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him.

In Luke 6:12 we are told that Jesus accompanied his solitude in the mountains with prayer.

Both in Luke and here in Mark his purpose is very clear. He is choosing twelve disciples, followers who will not only continue to learn from him but also be sent to minister in His name.

Mark 3:14, 15

And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He could send them out to preach, and to have authority to cast out the demons.

The King James word ORDAINED sounds very special but really it is just the simple word for making someone into something, giving of an office, or appointing.

Twelve: The number of tribes of the Old Testament and since the message will go to and the kingdom be offered to the Jew first, it was fitting that twelve disciples take the message to the twelve tribes.

Each activity mentioned is a present, infinitive indicating that it came as a result of something

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else. The something else is the training that they had received and would continue to receive.

Principle: Growth must precede ministry and ministry must be a result of growth.

1. To proclaim: As Jesus' primary function of ministry was to proclaim the truth, he now delegates this to his disciples. They now will also proclaim the truth.

And as Ambassadors of Christ we also have that ministry

2 Corinthians 6:7 Paul is a minister of God: By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left.

Ephesians 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

2 Timothy 2:15 Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2. To have authority: The authority here is EXOUSIA which is delegated power or authority.

The disciples were not to have their own power but the power of God. They were not to stand in their own strength but in the strength of God.

Just as we as Ambassadors of Christ stand firm dependant upon him.

2 Corinthians 12:10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

2 Timothy 2:1 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

Mark 3:16-21

And He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom He gave the name Peter),

and James, the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James (to them He gave the name Boanerges, which means, Sons of Thunder) and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot; and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him.

The listing of the twelve disciples. [There are no discussion notes for this passage. wd]

Mark 3:20,21

And He came home, and the crowd gathered again, to such an extent that they could not even eat a meal.

When His own people heard of this, they went out to take custody of Him; for they were saying, He has lost His senses.

And He came into a house, and again the crowd comes together so that they were not able to eat bread.

Here is the multitude mentioned back in verse 7-8 who came out of every quarter of ancient Palestine.

They had partially dispersed but now that Jesus was at a specific house, the crowd gathered around again.

Remember three things about this crowd:

1. They followed after Jesus for the wrong reason: They were impressed by the miracles and not by the message.
2. They were demanding of Jesus, wanting him to heal them and wanting him to perform for them.
3. They were rude, to the point that they almost mobbed Jesus in verse 9. And now they will not even leave him alone long enough for him to eat.

But Jesus continued to minister to them -

Just as we have seen with the religious antagonist who repeatedly attacked Jesus, he is patience, he has his priority in mind, and he continue to give out the truth.

Even when it is not appreciated nor accepted, even when he is attacked and rudely treated, even when he cannot eat, the message he had to proclaim was more important.

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And having heard (about the strain of the Galilean ministry) his relation (mother and brothers mentioned later on in verse 31) went forth to seize him, because they said, He is besides himself.

His family, those physically related to him were concerned about him.

They could see that Jesus was under stress, harassed by crowds, rudely treated, and not eating. So they went out to grab him, get him away from the crowds, and they even concluded that he was besides himself.

The phrase beside himself is OTI EXESTEI .

Means to be bewitched, or amazed to the point of being irrational. Besides self, incapable of caring for self.

Literally means to be displaced, put out of position. It is contrasted in 2 Corinthians 5:13 with a sound mind, so this would mean to be unsound mentally.

So the earthly family of Christ concluded that he was not of a sound mind, that he was not able to care for himself.

Their solution was to take him away from the people, but that was contrary to the priority of Christ which was to proclaim the truth to the people.

So his family thinks he is mentally unsound, the next section tells us that the religious leaders thought he was of Satan

If you have some enemies you are to be congratulated, for no man ever accomplished much without arousing jealousies and creating enemies.

In the ministry of our Lord we will see the great things he accomplished as well as the enemies who opposed him.

The curious incident of verses 20 and 21 sets a foundation for the Lord's statements at the end of this chapter. We will for the moment skip these two verses and take them up following our current lesson.

In Mark 3:22-30 we have the first time the religious crowd openly accuses Jesus of being an agent of Satan.

They have attacked the work of Christ, the message of Christ, the followers of Christ, and now they attack the power of Christ. But as we will see, this type of denunciation carries with it very far reaching consequences - the consequences are called the Blasphemes against the Holy Spirit.

Mark 3:22

The scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebul, and He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons.

And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the ruler of the demons he expels the demons.

Here in Mark 3 the scribes make this accusation. In Matthew 12:31-32 and in Luke 11:14-21 the same accusation is made by the Pharisees. You see the religious crowd did not like Jesus Christ. They saw him as a threat to their power base, a threat to their control over the people, and even a threat to their economic system of graft and corruption.

So they attacked. Through these controversies in Mark, chapter two and three, we see them getting more and more hardened in their attitude towards the Savior.

Beelzebub: A heathen deity believed to be the prince of all evil spirits. The word actually means the god of dung, referring to all moral impurity. The Philistines saw this deity as the god of flies. Since Satan is the ruler of all the fallen angels and demons, this is a synonym for Satan himself.

So these scribes and later the Pharisees ascribe the mighty works of Christ to Satan.

We saw in Mark 3:5 that the Lord was grieved over the hardness of their hearts, this scar tissue on their souls resulting in an ignorance of God and an insensitivity towards others.

Mark 3:23

And He called them to Himself and began speaking to them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?

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The Lord basically tells these scribes, who were very bright men, the lawyers and recorders of their day, that they were not making sense.

And he called them unto him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?

And he then gives them two parables, a principle, another parable, and an application directly to them.

He goes from parables of reason to statements of warning.

Mark 3:24

If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

First parable: And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

Mark 3:25

If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.

Second parable: And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

Mark 3:26

If Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but he is finished!

These two parables and the principle regarding Satan demonstrate the inconsistency of the statement of the scribes.

Interesting to note that these learned scribes were champions of logic - but in the face of Christ their logic, their training, breaks down.

Principle: All the education in the world, all the I.Q. you may have cannot interpret Christ and his message - that requires FAITH.

And these scribes did not have faith in the person of Christ.

As for the parables: The Lord's simple statements of truth show that division within anything cannot stand.

Mark 3:27

But no one can enter the strong man's house and plunder his property unless he first

binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house.

Third parable: Again we have a simple truth. To rob someone you first have to tie them up in order to take their goods.

In the parable the Lord has entered into the domain of Satan and he has bound him, and now the Lord can plunder the evil house of Satan. This cannot be done if Jesus was empowered by Satan.

Later in his ministry the Lord will tell his disciples that they will have the power to call upon God to bind the strong man, Satan, and render ineffective his works on earth.

Mark 3:28-30

Truly I say to you, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter;

but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin

because they were saying, He has an unclean spirit

We have had parables and principles, now we get down to the specifics of the situation:

There are Five Sins Against the Holy Spirit:

1. Acts 5:3 Lying against the Holy Spirit: The story of Ananias and Sapphira lying to the apostles regarding their pledge. Here you are led by the spirit to do one thing and then rationalize your way around what you have been led to do.
2. Grieving the Holy Spirit: Ephesians 4:30. Production of P.A. Sins from the area of weakness of the Sin Nature
3. Quenching the Spirit: I Thessalonians 5:19. Production of Human Good from the SIN NATURE This is not Establishment Good but human good with its motives and influences of sins. Examples: legalism, giving money to gain approbation, doing good out of guilt to soothe the conscience.
4. Resistance of the Holy Spirit: One of the two sins against the Holy Spirit produced by the unbeliever. Acts 7:51 The Holy Spirit convicts the unbeliever. of sin, righteousness, and judgment

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(John 16:7-11). In this sin the unbeliever. resists this convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit. And rejects Jesus Christ as Savior.

5. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit: This is resistance but not just to the ministry of the spirit but to the spirit himself.

In Mark 3, Matthew 12, and Luke 11 the religious crowd is evaluating the supernatural ministry of Christ but rather than find its source in the divine they attribute it to the Satanic.

As long as they continue to blaspheme the Holy Spirit in that manner, they will never even get to the point of being convicted by the Holy Spirit in order to make a decision regarding Christ.

Hence, this sin can and is being produced today by the unbeliever. who gives a nod to the supernatural but attributes it to power other than the one true God.

They are under a self inflicted condemnation and liable for eternal sin - never convicted of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

Application: I would go so far to say that an unbeliever can resist the Holy Spirit many times and can do so for years, but once they go so far as to blaspheme the Holy Spirit, I think they are the living lost - so hardened with scar tissue that the only belief system they will ever hold would be demonically induced and influenced.

These scribes attributed the divine power of God in Christ to an unclean spirit.

They recognized the supernatural, but did not seek the right source of such unexplained power.

AND PEOPLE ARE DOING THE SAME thing today. They see the supernatural, but do not seek God and His Son Jesus Christ, but rather invent deities after their own images, spirits, ancient masters, even gods from other space - never coming to the point of conviction by the spirit of sin, God's absolute righteousness, and the potential of eternal judgment.

Paul Little, the Christian writer has observed that collapse in the Christian life is seldom a blowout, it is usually a slow leak.

In Mark Chapter three we are going to see the danger of distraction, that potential of collapse

that is a slow leak of losing perspective, shifting priorities, and no longer pursuing the proper goal.

Now in Mark 3:20 and 21 and then Mark 3:31 through 35 we see the establishment of a precedent - a precedent of priority and avoidance of distraction. -

So in verses 31 through 35 he clarifies his position and establishes a precedent for distraction avoidance.

Mark 3:31

Then His mother and His brothers arrived, and standing outside they sent word to Him and called Him.

A.T. Robertson describes this as a pathetic picture of those who do not understand what Christ was all about.

They want to take Him away, to care for Him, and while they may have noble intentions, their intentions are wrong.

Mark 3:32

A crowd was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You.

The crowd relates the presence of his family to Him:

The crowd saw nothing unusual in this. They do not see this as a distraction. In calling to him they used the middle voice, IMPERATIVE MOOD OF COMMAND of Behold, IDOU.

They would have assumed that he would have gone with them and that this would even be for his benefit. But it would have been a distraction to his purpose.

Mark 3:33-35

Answering them, He said, Who are My mother and My brothers?

Looking about at those who were sitting around Him, He said, Behold My mother and My brothers!

For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother.

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Jesus is going to use this situation to establish a principle:

By making this statement, our Lord demonstrated avoidance of distraction - the distraction of family.

Distraction defined:

1. Simple dictionary definition is: A mental intrusion or cause of confusion especially in the attainment of a goal or desire.
2. Lack of concentration and disorganization are the ingredients of distraction
3. Distraction keeps you from doing or accomplishing what you have previously decided you want to do.
4. Distraction is in the area of want to's, not Don't want to's. This brings up an interesting concept. You never want to do what you set out to do in the midst of distraction, you will, in distraction, opt for the distraction. That is what distraction is all about. Having made a decision to want to do something, you are distracted from that goal or desire. However too many Christians never even decide they want the very best that God has for them.
5. Every believer has goals which are unique to them, individually. These require flexibility as the Lord directs and guides you in His perfect plan for your life.
6. But all believers have a goal mandated to them by their Heavenly Father - The goal of spiritual growth:
2 Peter 3:18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever.
7. With the pursuing of that goal without distraction, all other activities of the Christian way of life fall into place including witnessing, prayer, giving, worship, and ministry to others.
You see, our Father made it very simple for us. Grow in the Grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ and everything else will fall into place - unless you are distracted.

Distraction can come from either legitimate or illegitimate sources

We could develop an entire list of legitimate things in life that can distract you from what is really important. And as we go through the Gospels we will see some of these.

Here, the potential distraction is from a very legitimate source, family -

Jesus' family wanted him to stop what he was doing and go with them. But what he was doing was more important than being with his family.

How can family be a distraction:

1. Your family may discourage you from going to a church.
2. Your family may distract you from going to a church where the Word is taught (traditional family church).
3. Your family may discourage you from some form of ministry or Christian service
4. Parents: Your children can be a distraction to your spiritual growth. Put your children's pleasure over where you are supposed to be or over what you are to be doing in the plan of God.
5. Or you may just put your relationship with your family above your relationship with your Lord:

Matthew 10:36-37 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

Now when your family is an encouragement to you as you grow in Christ and as you serve him, that is great. But if you let your family become more important than sticking with the Lord and His word, you have become distracted.

Alexander Hamilton: "Men give me some credit for genius. All the genius I have lies in this: When I have a subject in hand, I study it profoundly. Day and night it is before me. I explore it in all its bearings. My mind becomes pervaded with it. The efforts that I make are what people are pleased to call the fruits of genius. Rather, they are the results of Concentration."

The secret to success in any endeavor is total concentration.

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Jesus Christ is concentrating on his mission, to proclaim the truth.

His family thinks he cannot care for himself, the religious crowd thinks he is demon empowered, the crowds are following him to see miracles - it would seem that everyone except his disciples had no idea of what our Lord was doing nor why.

Examples of Distraction

These are legitimate activities that can become a distraction and thus are wrong activities when placed above your intake of the Word of God.

1. Jobs, business, money: God is your heavenly Father and He has the responsibility to provide for you in logistical grace.

Philippians 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

We may occasionally have to put a job or business responsibility above Bible class but that is only occasionally.

Key question: Ask ourselves, does God want us to do this rather than be in class growing in grace?

2. Recreation, sports, hunting, leisure time activity:

All legitimate activities of life and necessary. We even noted in John 2 that the Lord and His disciples attended a wedding feast and at other times enjoyed the company of dinner parties.

I Timothy 6:17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.

But when these keep you out of class they become distractions to your spiritual growth

3. Family, friends, visitors: We must place our relationship with the Lord above our relationships with people.

Matthew 10:37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

The husband and father of the home is required to provide for his family the means of spiritual growth.

Principle: You don't ask children if they want to come to Bible class and husbands, you don't ask your wives - you state, we are going to Bible class tonight.

4. Illnesses of self or others: While some illness indeed require you to stay down for the count, too often we let little physical problems distract us for the opportunities we have for spiritual growth.

Also watch out for your children who end up not feeling well every time Bible class rolls around. If its a communicable illness then a parent should stay home with them unless they are old enough to stay home by themselves.

Again, don't let Satan win the round by using illness to distract you.

Philippians 4:12-13 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.

When you start to feel ill or a family member starts to feel ill to the untimely point of distraction from Bible class, remember that it is the Lord who can strengthen you.

5. Fatigue: You get too tired or you get too busy to accomplish the goal of the Christ Centered Life which is to grow in Christ through the inculcation of Doctrine:

Principle: If you are too often too tired or too busy for Bible Class you are too busy.

You may be tired but are you too tired to eat, to vegetate in front of the T.V.?

Paul in 2 Corinthians 7:5-6 talked about being physically tired:

For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforts those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus.

6. Homework: Your kids may pull this on you. They say they have too much homework to go to Bible Class.

But this is a matter of enforced priority with your kids. You can teach them what is really important

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in life by teaching them that the study of the WORD OF GOD. comes first.

Yes: Bible Class is more important than School.

Usually just a problem of organization of time and concentration

7. Church - Wrong one, no teaching, no growth: There is no virtue in going to Church. Many believers go to Churches where they walk away with nothing more than an hours rest.

The church is to be a place where you take time out of the ordinary Christian Life to come and be taught and encouraged.

The only expression or application of the doctrine in your soul in church is worship but too often we have nothing in the soul to apply in worship.

Church distraction comes when you stay in a church for all the wrong reasons. Family or friends or atmosphere or tradition or whatever - and yet get nothing that you can take with you and live your Christian life.

8. Social Causes - Even good ones: In our society and in our culture there are many good causes you could get involved with.

But Satan has used social and political issues to distract many believers. You can't go to Bible class when you are sitting on a picket line or sitting in the slammer.

Social causes are legitimate but the extent of our involvement but be regulated by our greater priority which is to grow in Christ.

We can vote, we can write letters, we can speak out, but not to the point of distraction.

9. Routine leading to Boredom: We all like activity and excitement. Nothing wrong with adding a little spice to life.

But the Christian life is a life of routine on the one hand and tremendous excitement on the other.

ROUTINE: Learning the WORD OF GOD., growing in Doctrine

EXTRAORDINARY: The Application of Doctrine in your life.

Some people church hop for excitement, go here and go there looking for excitement rather than

digging in for the long haul of learning the WORD OF GOD., the very mind of Christ.

How to avoid distraction: Setting a priority and sticking with it. Okay, sounds great, but how do we do that?

1. First of all you have to decide what is really important in life. Whatever you hold as being important will establish a priority in your life.

We are limited in our determination of what is and what is not important.

Illustration: What you thought was important a few years ago may have no value to you today.

Reason: As we mature, as we grow, especially in the plan of God, our desires change

But as Christians we can look to our Heavenly Father and he in His Word has told us what is truly important in life:

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

God who has created us, our Father who provided His Son as our Savior tells us what is really important.

By faith we are to seek His kingdom and we are to seek His righteousness and everything else will fall into place.

2. We can see the establishment of priority in the Life and Ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Right here in Mark 3:35 Jesus tells us what is really important to him, even more important than family, brothers and sisters and even mother: those who do the will of God.

Principle: Jesus Christ set you as a priority in His life even to the point of going to the Cross for that which he established as being truly important in life.

3. If Jesus set us as a priority we must set Him as the priority in our lives:

Jesus Christ must become the most important person in your life. And then His Word, the Bible, will become the most important thing in your life.

4. The pattern of Priority can be in four stages:

a. Thinking and concentration on priority #1

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- b. Then organize your life around priority #1
- c. Then organize your thinking around priority #1
- d. Concentrate on the details of priority #1

Principle: You already do this, your life is organized around, and your thinking is concentrated on some priority in your life, something you think is the most important person or thing in your life - but if it is not the Lord and His Word you are spending a lot of time and energy involved with the wrong priority and your are distracted from what is really important, your Lord and His Word.

The next step is taking the priority to the Lord: Only he can give you the strength to stick with the priorities of life.

He will motivate you, encourage you, teach you, stabilize you so you can have the endurance necessary to reach his goals for you.

PASSAGES: Three Brave Men of God:

JOB

Job 13:23 How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin.

DAVID

Psalm 25:4-5 Make me to know thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.

Psalm 39:4 LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is: that I may know how frail I am.

HABAKKUK

Habakkuk 3:19 The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.

JOB, DAVID, AND HABAKKUK all knew what the truly important things in life were, that their relationship with God went far beyond any temporal or human priorities.

And they had the BOLDNESS to go before God and say MAKE ME attain to all that you have for me.

Mark Lesson 3 Quiz

Instructions

The following questions relate to your study of this lesson.

To answer a question, type your response in the space provided after the word "Answer:". A question may be True/False, multiple choice, fill in the blank, or short answer type.

The last question requires you to write one or two paragraphs in "essay" form. Use the space provided; it will expand to accommodate your response.

You have choices about sending the quiz back to Grace Notes.

- If you received an email file containing the quiz, you can use the REPLY feature of your e-mail application to open the quiz. Enter your answers in the reply message. Then SEND the message to Grace Notes.
- You can enter your answers on these pages, then send the whole file back to Grace Notes as a file attachment. This is handy, but these lessons will average 100K to 200K in size. As an alternative,
- After you answer the questions here, copy and paste the whole list of questions into a new MS Word document; then, send the new file to Grace Notes as an attachment. The new file will, of course, be much smaller than this main file.
- Finally, you can print the Quiz pages on your printer and send your response back to Grace Notes in the regular mail. If you do this, send the mail to:

Grace Notes

% Warren Doud

1705 Aggie Lane

Austin, Texas 78757 USA

Whichever transmission method you use, when Grace Notes receives your completed Quiz, the next lesson will be sent to you, by the same means you received this one. EXCEPT: when you have sent in the FINAL QUIZ, we will send your certificate to you, by regular mail.

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Questions on Mark Lesson 3

1. Jesus almost never taught in synagogues, because there was so much opposition to the gospel among the Jews. [True/False]

Answer:

2. Why were the Pharisees (and others) so eager to catch Jesus healing on the Sabbath?

Answer:

3. Who were the Herodians?

Answer:

4. What is it that brought religious and non-religious Jews together, in spite of the fact that they despised each other?

Answer:

5. What was the principle ministry of Jesus' disciples?

Answer:

6. What are the three "tools" of the Apostle Paul's ministry (2 Cor. 6)?

Answer:

7. Memorize the names of the twelve disciples. For your answer, write the names from memory.

Answer:

8. The scribes from Jerusalem claimed that Jesus cast out demons [A. by witchcraft; B. by exorcism; C. by being used by the ruler of demons; D. by religious ceremony].

Answer:

9. What is the goal that God mandates for every believer?

Answer:

10. Even the legitimate things of life, details of life like family, friends, job, social life, can distract us from spiritual accomplishment. [True/False]

11. Give three examples of the types of distraction that can come into a Christian's life.

Answer:

12. How can a Christian avoid distractions?

Answer:

End of Quiz