

JESUS' TOUCHSTONES FOR TRUE DISCIPLES

I. Mark 8:31-38 Mark 9:30-37 Mark 10:32-45

A. We've said here many times over the years that the Gospel is as pivotal to our sanctification as it is to our salvation. We'll say it some more today. We're saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. This same grace, this same faith, and this same Christ are just as necessary for the redemptive process of being changed into our Lord's likeness, commonly called sanctification.

B. All the floodlights of the 66 books are shining down upon the cross of Christ and His empty tomb. Dead people don't make themselves alive in Christ. And those whom He makes alive don't transform themselves into our Lord's image. The same Spirit who regenerated us is the same Spirit who transforms us. We never graduate from the Gospel. Getting saved for many of us was quite an event. That new birth thrust us into a new life in Christ. But the event and the process are both debtors to the Gospel. The Gospel is ever of first importance. Paul writes to believers in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4: *1 Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. 3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...*"

C. We'll see today three occasions where Jesus tells His disciples He's going to be put to death and then rise from the dead. Mark not only shares specifics of those encounters but also how Jesus follows up His prophetic predictions with teachable moments regarding discipleship. The nitty gritty specifics of this discipleship process are different for everybody. But Jesus' vision for what His disciples will be attitudinally, motivationally, and behaviorally are made very clear. After each prediction about dying and rising, Jesus calls a huddle and gives His touchstones of what a true disciple will look like. So let's enter that huddle...

D. Mark 8:31-38 (ESV) is Jesus' first prediction: *31 And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 And He said this plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. (This was right after Peter recognized Jesus as the Christ!) 33 But turning and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man." ('God is God, He knows what He's doing, and you don't Peter!') (Then Jesus gives us touchstones of what a true disciple will look like.) 34 And calling the crowd to Him with His disciples, He said to them, "If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. 35 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. 36 For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? 37 For what can a man give in return for his soul? 38 For whoever is ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." (Are any of you ashamed of Jesus or ashamed of His words?)*

E. Mark 9:30-37 (ESV) is Jesus' second prediction: **30** They went on from there and passed through Galilee. **(Home turf!)** And He did not want anyone to know, **31** for He was teaching His disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And when He is killed, after three days He will rise." **32** But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask Him. **33** And they came to Capernaum. **(Jesus' HQ)** And when He was in the house He asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" **34** But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. **(Then Jesus gives us more of His touchstones of what a true disciple will look like.)** **35** And He sat down and called the twelve. And He said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." **36** And He took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them, **37** "Whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me."

F. Mark 10:32-45 (ESV) is Jesus' third prediction: **32** And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, **(What'll happen there?)** and Jesus was walking ahead of them. **(Jesus isn't walking into a trap--His eyes are wide open! The stadium lights are already lit!)** And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, He began to tell them what was to happen to Him, **33** saying, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him over to the Gentiles. **34** And they will mock Him and spit on Him, and flog Him and kill Him. And after three days He will rise." **(Mock, spit, flog, kill, then rise!)** **35** And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to Him and said to Him, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask of You." **36** And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?" **37** And they said to Him, "Grant us to sit, one at Your right hand and one at Your left, in Your glory." **38** Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" **39** And they said to him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized, **40** but to sit at My right hand or at My left is not Mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." **41** And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. **(Then Jesus gives us some more of His touchstones of what a true disciple looks like.)** **42** And Jesus called them to Him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. **43** But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant **(Gk. diakonos)**, **44** and whoever would be first among you must be slave **(Gk. doulos)** of all. **45** For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

G. So the Gospel is the bedrock foundation of our faith regarding both salvation and sanctification. 'He who began a good work in us and He who is faithfully bringing His work to fruition,' is a masterful disciple-crafting Artist. So what are Jesus' touchstones for true disciples? What's He after in terms of attitude, motivation, and behavior? How'd the Twelve turn out? How'd the authors of the gospels and epistles turn out? How'd all the redeemed ones they wrote about turn out? They turned out well because they were in good hands!

H. Let's review: According to Jesus, true disciples are increasingly those who...

1) Those who realize the road to Glory runs through Golgotha. Those who deny themselves vs promote themselves; who are Christ-centered vs self-centered.

2) Those who will lose themselves for the sake of the Gospel. It may not mean martyrdom, but losses, perhaps significant ones, are possible. It could result in cold shoulders. It could mean negative posts on social media. There may be the loss of popularity or influence; perhaps material losses; or passed over for promotions; refused positions or nixed for great opportunities. Listen to Paul in Philippians 3:8-9 (NIV) talk about his losses: **8** *What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ* **9** *and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ--the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.*

3) Those who are unashamed of Christ. Those who recognize He bore the shame of our sin on the cross. And this makes any shame we might bear pale in comparison. Hebrews 12:1-3 (NLT) says: **1** *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.* **2** *We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the Champion who initiates and perfects our faith. (Who initiates and Who perfects our faith?!) Because of the joy awaiting Him, He endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now He is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne.* **3** *Think of all the hostility He endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up.*

4) Those content to be among the last and the least. This did not represent James and John in the beginning. Nor the rest of the Twelve. But did Jesus get what He was after with those brothers? Most gave their last full measure!

5) Those who are trans-generational. Those who see the hearts of children as fertile ground. Those willing to sow the best of their seeds into little ones. Earlier in Chapter 10 Jesus rebuked His disciples because they tried keeping children away. Jesus said, *"The Kingdom belongs to such as these."* Let's be sure always make room for children & youth. *(I'm praying for every good seed we've ever sown to germinate!)*

6) Those willing to suffer, willing to sacrifice, do with less, or even without. Can you imagine walking into a believer's hut in a poor third world village and hearing them say, *"We're asking God to enlarge our shanty so we can have the open concept, wood floors throughout, and all stainless steal appliances?!"* Martin Luther said: *"Riches are the least worthy gifts which God can give man, yet men toil for them day and night, and take no rest. Therefore, God frequently gives riches to foolish people to whom He gives nothing else."* (Let's look to the lilies not to luxuries.)

7) Those who are given to serving. In the Kingdom realm, the *great* are servants. The *first* are slaves. Want a front row seat?! Some folks just have the gift of serving. But the rest of us who aren't "bent" that way have to be bent. Metals undergo severe heat to make them bendable. Interested? True disciples ultimately find their way to love and love is at its very best when serving others.

*** The Gospel makes former enemies, disciples, even friends! And true disciples will look more and more and more like Jesus as we grow and mature. That's His heart for us. May it also be our heart for us!**

*** Close with Prayer...**

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

Mark 8:31-38 (ESV)

31 And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. **32** And He said this plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. **33** But turning and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man." **34** And calling the crowd to Him with His disciples, He said to them, "If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. **35** For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. **36** For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? **37** For what can a man give in return for his soul? **38** For whoever is ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

Mark 9:30-37 (ESV)

30 They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And He did not want anyone to know, **31** for He was teaching His disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And when He is killed, after three days He will rise." **32** But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask Him. **33** And they came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" **34** But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. **35** And He sat down and called the twelve. And He said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." **36** And He took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them, **37** "Whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me."

Mark 10:32-45 (ESV)

32 And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, He began to tell them what was to happen to Him, **33** saying, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him over to the Gentiles. **34** And they will mock Him and spit on Him, and flog Him and kill Him. And after three days He will rise." **35** And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to Him and said to Him, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask of You."

36 And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?" **37** And they said to Him, "Grant us to sit, one at Your right hand and one at Your left, in Your glory." **38** Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" **39** And they said to him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized, **40** but to sit at My right hand or at My left is not Mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." **41** And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. **42** And Jesus called them to Him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. **43** But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, **44** and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. **45** For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 (NIV)

1 Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. **2** By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. **3** For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, **4** that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures..."

Philippians 3:8-9 (NIV)

8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ **9** and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ--the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

Hebrews 12:1-3 (NLT)

1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. **2** We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the Champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting Him, He endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now He is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne. **3** Think of all the hostility He endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up.

Quote by Martin Luther

"Riches are the least worthy gifts which God can give man, yet men toil for them day and night, and take no rest. Therefore, God frequently gives riches to foolish people to whom He gives nothing else."

Bonus Stuff

Discipleship - Paul Washer

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n9f_ORbRpZ0

How Does Jesus Disciple A Disciple? - John MacArthur

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSy7sFLdKvI>

Francis Chan on Discipleship

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0zLGI_vwIXE

It Will Cost You Everything - Tim Conway (Grace Community Church, San Antonio, TX)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5JQOBMi4QS8>

Matthew 18:1-6 (ESV)

1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” **2** And calling to Him a child, He put him in the midst of them **3** and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. **4** Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. **5** “Whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me, **6** but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

Mark 10:13-16 (ESV)

13 And they were bringing children to Him that He might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. **14** But when Jesus saw it, He was indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to Me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. **15** Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” **16** And He took them in His arms and blessed them, laying His hands on them.

Luke 22:24-30 (NLT)

24 Then they began to argue among themselves about who would be the greatest among them. **25** Jesus told them, “In this world the kings and great men lord it over their people, yet they are called ‘friends of the people.’ **26** But among you it will be different. Those who are the greatest among you should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant. **27** Who is more important, the one who sits at the table or the one who serves? The one who sits at the table, of course. But not here! For I am among you as one who serves. **28** “You have stayed with Me in My time of trial. **29** And just as My Father has granted Me a Kingdom, I now grant you the right **30** to eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom. And you will sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Philippians 1:6 (AMP)

6 I am convinced and confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will [continue to] perfect and complete it until the day of Christ Jesus [the time of His return].

Ephesians 2:8-10 (ESV)

8 For it is by grace [God's remarkable compassion and favor drawing you to Christ] that you have been saved [actually delivered from judgment and given eternal life] through faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [not through your own effort], but it is the [undeserved, gracious] gift of God; **9** not as a result of [your] works [nor your attempts to keep the Law], so that no one will [be able to] boast or take credit in any way [for his salvation]. **10** For we are His workmanship [His own master work, a work of art], created in Christ Jesus [reborn from above--spiritually transformed, renewed, ready to be used] for good works, which God prepared [for us] beforehand [taking paths which He set], so that we would walk in them [living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us].

Quote by C.S. Lewis

"Give up yourself and you will find your real self. Lose your life and you will save it. Submit to death, death of your ambitions and favourite wishes every day and death of your whole body in the end submit with every fibre of your being, and you will find eternal life. Keep back nothing. Nothing that you have not given away will be really yours. Nothing in you that has not died will ever be raised from the dead. Look for yourself, and you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin, and decay. But look for Christ and you will find Him, and with Him everything else thrown in."

Quote by C.S. Lewis

"One of the dangers of having a lot of money is that you may be quite satisfied with the kinds of happiness money can give and so fail to realise your need for God. If everything seems to come simply by signing checks, you may forget that you are at every moment totally dependent on God."

Quote by C.S. Lewis

"Prosperity knits a man to the world. He feels that he is finding his place in it, while really it is finding its place in him."

Quote by George Mueller

"God judges what we give by what we keep."

Quote by Albert M. Wells

"Sharing what you have is more important than what you have."

Quote by Martin Luther

"I have tried to keep things in my hands and lost them all, but what I have given into God's hands I still possess."

Quote by John MacArthur

"God made all of His creation to give. He made the sun, the moon, the stars, the clouds, the earth, the plants to give. He also designed His supreme creation, man, to give. But fallen man is the most reluctant giver in all of God's creation."

Quote by William Barclay

"The one thing that all men need to learn about joy is that joy has nothing to do with material things, or with a man's outward circumstances. It is the simple fact of human experience that a man living in the lap of luxury can be wretched, and a man in the depths of poverty can overflow with joy."

- William Barclay, *Daily Bible Study/Philippians*, p. 88.

Quote by Donald Horban

"We don't need to increase our goods nearly as much as we need to scale down our wants. Not wanting something is as good as possessing it."

Quote by Jay Kesler

"Things are to be used and God is to be loved. We get into trouble when we begin to use God and love things."

Quote by David Livingstone

"I place no value on anything I have or may possess, except in relation to the kingdom of God. If anything will advance the interests of the kingdom, it shall be given away or kept, only as by giving or keeping it I shall most promote the glory of Him to whom I owe all my hopes in time or eternity."

Childlikeness

By Hugh Duncan

Robert Fulghum wrote in the Kansas City Times, "Most of what I really need to know about how to live, and what to do, and how to be, I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sandbox at nursery school. "These are the things I learned: Share everything. Play fair. Don't hit people. Put things back where you found them. Clean up your own mess. Don't take things that aren't yours. Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody . . . When you go out into the world, watch for traffic, hold hands, and stick together. " This writer has captured part of what Jesus meant when He said, "Unless you become like little children, you won't enter the kingdom of heaven."

What is Progressive Sanctification?

S. Michael Houdmann

<http://www.gotquestions.org/progressive-sanctification.html>

Question: *"What is progressive sanctification?"*

Answer: The word translated "sanctification" in most Bibles means "separation." It is used in the New Testament, according to Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, of the separation of the believer from evil, and it is the result of obedience to the

Word of God. Progressive sanctification is what gradually separates the people of God from the world and makes them more and more like Jesus Christ.

Sanctification differs from justification in several ways. Justification is a one-time work of God, resulting in a declaration of “not guilty” before Him because of the work of Christ on the cross. Sanctification is a process, beginning with justification and continuing throughout life. Justification is the starting point of the line that represents one’s Christian life; sanctification is the line itself.

Sanctification is a three-stage process – past, present, and future. The first stage occurs at the beginning of our Christian lives. It is an initial moral change, a break from the power and love of sin. It is the point at which believers can count themselves “dead to sin but alive to God” ([Romans 6:11](#)). Once sanctification has begun, we are no longer under sin’s dominion ([Romans 6:14](#)). There is a reorientation of desires, and we develop a love of righteousness. Paul calls it “slavery to righteousness” ([Romans 6:17-18](#)).

The second stage of sanctification requires a lifetime to complete. As we grow in grace, we are gradually – but steadily – changing to be more like Jesus ([2 Corinthians 3:18](#)). This occurs in a process of daily spiritual renewal ([Colossians 3:10](#)). The apostle Paul himself was being sanctified even as he ministered to others. Paul claimed that he had not reached perfection, but that he “pressed on” to attain everything Christ desired for him ([Philippians 3:12](#)).

The third and final stage of sanctification occurs in the future. When believers die, their spirits go to be with Christ ([2 Corinthians 5:6-8](#)). Since nothing unclean can enter heaven ([Revelation 21:27](#)), we must be made perfect at that point. The sanctification of the whole person—body, soul, and spirit—will finally be complete when the Lord Jesus returns and we receive glorified bodies ([Philippians 3:21](#); [1 Corinthians 15:35-49](#)).

God’s work in sanctification involves all three members of the Trinity. God the Father is constantly at work in His children “to will and to work for His good pleasure” ([Philippians 2:13](#)). He changes our desires, making us want to please Him, and He empowers us to do so. Jesus earned our sanctification on the cross and, in essence, has become our sanctification ([1 Corinthians 1:30](#)) and the “perfecter of our faith” ([Hebrews 12:2](#)). The Holy Spirit is the primary agent of our sanctification ([1 Corinthians 6:11](#); [2 Thessalonians 2:13](#); [1 Peter 1:2](#)), and He is the one who produces in us the fruit of sanctification ([Galatians 5:22-23](#)).

Our role in sanctification is both passive and active. Passively, we are to trust God to sanctify us, presenting our bodies to God ([Romans 6:13](#); [12:1](#)) and yielding to the Holy Spirit. “It is God's will that you should be sanctified” ([1 Thessalonians 4:3](#)), and God will have His way.

Actively, we are responsible to choose to do what is right. “Each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable” ([1 Thessalonians 4:4](#)). This

involves putting to death the “misdeeds of the body” ([Romans 8:13](#)), striving for holiness ([Hebrews 12:14](#)), fleeing immorality ([1 Corinthians 6:18](#)), cleansing ourselves from every defilement ([2 Corinthians 7:1](#)), and making every effort to supplement our faith ([2 Peter 1:5-11](#)).

Both the passive role and the active role are necessary for a healthy Christian life. To emphasize the passive role tends to lead to spiritual laziness and a neglect of spiritual discipline. The end result of this course of action is a lack of maturity. To emphasize the active role can lead to legalism, pride, and self-righteousness. The end result of this is a joyless Christian life. We must remember that we pursue holiness, but only as God empowers us to do so. The end result is a consistent, mature Christian life that faithfully reflects the nature of our holy God.

John makes it clear that we will never be totally free from sin in this life ([1 John 1:8-10](#)). Thankfully, the work God has begun in us He will finish ([Philippians 1:6](#)).

Recommended Resources: [Pleasing God: Discovering the Meaning and Importance of Sanctification by R.C. Sproul](#) and [Logos Bible Software](#).

- While he is not the author of every article on GotQuestions.org, for citation purposes, you may reference our CEO, S. Michael Houdmann.