

Read: Mark 9:30-37

Me First!?

Mark 9:30-34

They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise.” But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.

They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the road?” But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

“It’s my turn.” “No, it’s not. It’s my turn to pick.” “That’s not fair, you just had a turn.” “Fine, you can pick this time, but then I get the next three times.” “What? That’s crazy!”

Gabe and Owen argued like this nearly every day. The brothers got so upset, they even started pushing each other before their father finally stepped in. What were they arguing about, you ask? Emptying the dishwasher. That’s right, they fought about the dishwasher because each boy wanted to pick the top part to empty since it had less dishes. In other words, they were arguing about who would do less work.

That’s not all though. Gabe and Owen often argued about who did more chores on Saturday, who got the last glass of chocolate milk, whose turn it was to sit in the front seat of the car, and so much more.

Does any of this happen at your house? Sometimes we get love totally backwards! Instead of loving other people like our siblings or our parents or our friends, we act selfishly and put ourselves first. When we should be loving others or loving God first, we are so quick to think of ourselves first!

The disciples did the same thing in the story today. Jesus was trying to teach them about his great love—how he would suffer and die for them and for all people. But they didn’t understand what he was saying. Why not? Because they were too busy arguing about who was the greatest! Their selfishness kept them from seeing who really is the greatest of all—Jesus, who loves us so much.

May God forgive us for all the times we selfishly love ourselves more than we love other people or more than we love God. Thank God that Jesus suffered and died to take away those sins! May that humble love of Jesus help us to love each other just like he loved us!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- What does it mean to be selfish?
- Can you think of the most recent time that you have been selfish?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Identify a way that people show a “me first” attitude at home, at school, or at their jobs.
- Identify as many ways as you can that Jesus showed a “you first” attitude during his life and ministry.

Questions for Middle School and Above

- 1 John 4:19 says, “We love because he first loved us.” Explain what that means in your own words.
- Explain this statement: Being humble is not thinking less of yourself, but rather thinking of yourself less.

Closing Prayer:

Dear Lord, help me to love you and to love others with the same kind of selfless love that you have shown to us. Amen.

Hymn: CW 484:1 – Brothers, Sisters, Let Us Gladly

Brothers, sisters, let us gladly
Give to God our all, our best—
Service hearty, thorough, honest,
With a living love impressed.
All our duty, all our striving,
All our time to him belong;
Praise him, then, with true devotion;
Come before him with a song.