



## Week 3: Better than Better

Most of us attempt to get better through resolutions for self-improvement. But while resolutions tend to be self-focused, actual greatness requires us to make *other* peoples' lives better. Jesus showed a better way to greatness.

### Discussion

#### Start Talking

What is your favorite month of the year? Why?

What is the longest you have ever stuck with a New Year's resolution? Which one did you give up on the quickest?

Who or what comes to mind when you hear terms like, "the greatest?"

#### Looking Back

What have you done differently (whether as a result of our discussions, or otherwise) so far this year in order to make 2019 'better'?

What changes could you still implement?

When you think back on years' past, how would you change your approach to the whole "starting over" process that seems to ensue every January?

#### What About You?

1. How do you personally define 'greatness?' In your own life? In others? What qualities come to mind?
2. We can often identify our unspoken assumptions about greatness by examining our personal priorities, what we're striving for. What qualities in yourself would your family, friends, and coworkers honestly say you prioritize?
3. How does our culture seem to define greatness in your experience?
4. Do you see our cultural standards for greatness as primarily helpful or primarily hurtful?
5. Do you think there is any inherent conflict between improving ourselves and improving things for other people?

#### Looking It Up

— Read the following passage in which Isaiah describes the greatness of the coming Messiah.

Isaiah 53: 2-5, 12

1. What do we learn about the priorities and character of God from this description?

— Review the scripture from today's sermon to get a glimpse into the disciples' conceptions of greatness.

Mark 10: 35 — 38, 41 — 45

2. What does James and John's request reveal about their unspoken priorities, and their conceptions of greatness?
3. What do you think we learn about the disciples based upon *their* reaction to this unreasonable request?
4. Does Jesus' re-definition of greatness here strike you as reasonable? Attainable? Practical? Why or why not?
5. Think through an average week. Based upon your actions, in what ways are your aspirations for greatness like those of the disciples? James and John? In what ways are they different?
6. What would it take to re-orient daily life in the 21st century around Jesus' definition of greatness?

### Putting It All Together

1. What does "working to be in last place" look like for you?
2. What are a few real, tangible ways for you to pour yourself out in service of your friends, coworkers, community in 2019?
3. What are the first measurable steps you'd need to take to get started?
4. Most of us start the year with good intentions, but it's easy to experience 'mission creep' as time drags along. Who will you ask for accountability in 2019? Who will you regularly invite to speak out when they notice you drifting from 'service' back to 'self' this year?
5. With Jesus' conception of greatness in mind, what would a "greater" 2019 look like in hindsight? If you had the opportunity to look back from the future, how would you hope to have leveraged your time, resources, and abilities to make other lives better this year?