



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Face Value: Four Features that Further Your Faith – Part 4

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Main Idea – In order to reflect God, the Gospel of Mark teaches we should develop a heart and mindset to serve others.

First Impressions

- First impressions can sometimes be correct. Other times, first impressions are false impressions that do not accurately reflect the person or circumstance.
- In the Bible, God has provided a number of impressions of Himself that give insight into what He is like.
- For example, **Ezekiel 1:4-6, and 10**, and **Revelation 4:7-8** both present images of four faces that represent God's nature.
- It has been observed that each of the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) correspond to one of the four faces of God in Ezekiel and Revelation.
- The Gospel of John corresponds to the lion face, with a steadfast love for God. The Gospel of Luke corresponds to the human face, with a steadfast love for other humans. The Gospel of Matthew corresponds to the eagle face, with a steadfast pursuit of excellence.
- The fourth face – and the subject of this lesson – is the face of the ox, which corresponds to the Gospel of Mark. The ox is a work animal that serves mankind in some capacity.

Reflecting God requires a process

- Rarely can one immediately reflect God upon receiving salvation. Usually, a process of growth and awareness is required.
- **2 Corinthians 3: 17-18 – Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. (NKJV)**
- As we grow in faith, we should work to reflect God in everything we do.
- The Holy Spirit will help us as we grow by actually interceding for us in the throne room of God the Father. **Romans 8: 26-27 – Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.**

The Face of the Ox

- The Gospel of Mark corresponds to the face of the ox. Oxen are servant animals. They work to the benefit of others. Christians' purpose is to help others because that was Jesus' purpose. **Mark 10: 45 – For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.**
- Mark wrote about many of Jesus' miracles. Mark emphasized what Jesus did more than what Jesus said.
- Mark, the person, was a helper in the Apostle Peter's ministry in the early years of the church. Mark likely learned about Jesus' ministry work through the stories Peter would tell him.
- Because Mark was Peter's helper, he likely was impressed by the stories of how Jesus also served other people.
- Ironically, because it is generally believed Mark's gospel was the first one written, the later gospels of Matthew and Luke incorporated some of what Mark had already written. So, in that way, the Gospel of Mark was a "servant" to the later gospels.

The mind of a servant begins with an attitude

- The Christian's attitude should be to have a heart for servanthood, so that we can be like Jesus.
- **Matthew 5: 43-45 – You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.**

To have the heart of a servant:

1. Be enjoyable. Be a happy person. Enjoy life. Enjoy other people.
 - a. **1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18 – Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.**
 - b. **Psalm 27:6 – And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me; therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the Lord.**
2. Be positive. Speak life. Have a can-do attitude.
 - a. **Hebrews 11:1 – Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.**
 - b. There is a substance to positivity. Faith leads to a positive mindset, which

- is the evidence the faith exists.
- c. Faith gives us the ability to be happy in all situations, regardless of the immediate circumstances.
 - d. **2 Corinthians 6:10 – as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.**
 - e. **1 Corinthians 5: 6-8 – So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.**
3. Be loyal – to God and to your family, friends, and church.
 - a. Believe the best about others and about the situations in which you find yourself.

Jesus was a servant up to the very end of His time here on earth.

- **John 21 tells the story of Jesus preparing a breakfast of fish for His disciples on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. After they had eaten breakfast, Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved Him. Perhaps, this was Jesus' way of allowing Peter to begin the process of repentance, and redemption from the guilt he felt, from denying Jesus three times on the evening before the crucifixion (see Mark 14: 65-72).**
- Just like Jesus, you can serve others – regardless of your position in life, or even your place in a church's hierarchy.
- God has made it possible for all of us to do what is most important – to help others.
- All of the other attributes of God (love for Him, love for other humans, the pursuit of excellence) become stronger when we have a servant's mentality to help others.

Reflective Questions for Face Value, Part 4

1. In John 21, Jesus gave Peter the formula for overcoming his guilt and possible feelings of inadequacy. What was that formula, and how do you suppose Peter received it?
2. Pastor Stephen said the heart of a servant begins with an attitude. How would you describe that attitude? Does this attitude mean that you consider yourself less worthy, or inferior, to someone else?
3. Growing in our understanding of the four faces of God is a process. Where would you describe yourself in the process of learning to reflect God's servant nature?