

# TRADE OFFS



## Week Two: The Greatest – Study Guide

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Being good at something isn't bad. We've been taught to strive to be the best we can possibly be at something, whether at home, school, work or even church. There is tremendous pressure in our culture to be the greatest at something at all cost and without consideration of others. Jesus has a reverse order approach to being the greatest—first be the least. This concept was so backward that even His disciples didn't get it until after He became the least for all of us and died for our sins.

### Where Am I Today?

- 1) We have all wanted to be great, or even the greatest, at something. The desire to come in first or be the best on the field or at work can be a natural thing. Where in your life, past or present, have you made the goal of being the greatest more important than anything else?

### Into the Bible

- 2) In order for Jesus' plan of choosing to be the "least" to be as profound as it was, He had to first establish that He is the "greatest." Read **Luke 9:37-43(a)**. How could the disciples not be able to cast out this difficult demon, when they had experienced success with this in the past? After the man's son was returned to him healed, what was the crowd's reaction?

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- 3) Jesus displayed His greatness to everyone around, but then immediately reminded the disciples that His mission had not changed. Read **Luke 9:43(b)-45**. How is it that the disciples were unable to process Jesus' statement in verse 44, after witnessing His great display of power in the boy's life? How was Jesus beginning to model the idea that the "least will be the greatest"?
  
- 4) Read **Luke 9:46-50**. In two different instances, the disciples were unable to connect Jesus' power to His heart of humility. What can a small child with no rights, privileges or social status of his or her own teach us about Jesus' view of greatness? What point did Jesus make to John about teamwork in the kingdom of God when others were doing ministry differently than they were at the time?

### How Does This Apply

- 5) In order to experience the benefit of putting less value on yourself so that you can be great for God, you have to deal with the issue of pride. Jesus says that if you accept His reverse-order way of life, live humbly and put others first, He will show you His greatness now, and into eternity with Him. In what specific area are you ready to give up being the best so that He can work more powerfully in your life?



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- 6) Jesus' ministry on earth was the perfect example of how powerful humility truly is. It is a foreign concept to our nature, but following Jesus in this way enables us to see through our pride, to forgive and be forgiven, and ultimately love people unconditionally as He did. Think of a situation where your focus on being the greatest at something has caused conflict with others. What step can you take this week to show Christ's heart of humility in the situation?
- 7) When we get past the need to be the greatest, we often find others who were already on board with us. While God has gifted each of us uniquely, and we all do things a little differently, He never intended us to go on mission for Him by ourselves. How could making teamwork a priority at home, work or church change the direction or outcome of a situation in your life?

### Continue Learning on Your Own

- 8) From early Christianity to the Church in present day, the movement has branched off, split and become divided into many different denominations. Read **Galatians 1:6-9**, **2 John 9**, **John 17:20-23** and **1 Corinthians 1:10-13**. Aesthetic differences, worship styles, programs and even interpretation of scripture can separate one church or denomination from another. What two main principles in these Bible verses are we cautioned about and told to be unified and completely solid on?

