

JANUARY 3

## *The Way up Is Down*

*Matthew 20:21, 25-28*

JOURNEY BACK WITH ME for a moment to one of the many scenes that demonstrated just how ordinary Jesus' disciples were. What makes this account interesting is that mother of two of the disciples. She's Mrs. Zebedee, wife of a Galilean fisherman and mother of James and John. Her bold request still makes me smile:

In your Kingdom, please let my two sons sit in places of honor next to you, one on your right and the other on your left.

MATTHEW 20:21

Isn't that typical? Can't you just picture this bold Jewish mother taking over the meeting and venturing her whopping request? She wanted her sons to have prominent places in the new kingdom startup. Now don't be too tough on Mama Zebedee. She's proud of her two sons . . . obviously! Her motive was probably pure. But the occasion presented a teachable moment Jesus used to show what *greatness* looks like in God's eyes.

Jesus said:

You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.

MATTHEW 20:25-28

My friend and ministry mentor, the late Howard Hendricks, often said: "The church doesn't need any more leaders—what the church needs today is *followers!*" I wholeheartedly agree.

In God's Kingdom, the way up is always down. Next time you call a meeting and feel tempted to sit at the head of the boardroom table, consider sitting somewhere in the middle. You'll not only model Christ's example of humility, you may create a teaching moment of your own.