

**Sermon or Lesson: How Jesus Interacted With His Disciples, Part 9** (NIV based)  
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Select Disciples Get Privileged Information And Instructions

PASSAGES: Matthew 17:1-9, with Mark 9:2-10; Luke 9:28-36

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INTRO: In your activities and contact with various ministry leaders in churches or organizations, do you ever wonder why this particular person is the leader, and how did it come about for this person to be placed in this position? What does this person know that others do not? Why is this person the leader when it is obvious that there are others who could be the leader?

These questions can be quite perplexing to even theorize a reasonable answer to. From the Bible passage we are going to examine today, let's see if we can come up with some explanations about what God does in regard to giving privilege.

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READ: Matthew 17:1-9  
(with cf. Mark 9:2-10; Luke 9:28-36)

[Lesson Question: Which disciples did Jesus take with Him up a high mountain and what were they going to do?]

SECTION POINT: Jesus extended privilege to select disciples, taking them with Him up a high mountain.

- - Jesus took Peter, James, and John with Him. (Matthew 17:1)
  - - Jesus led them up a high mountain by themselves. (Matthew 17:1)
  - - They were going to pray. (Luke 9:28)
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[Lesson Question: Why did Jesus only take those three disciples and what does this imply about how equally Jesus treated all of the twelve disciples?]

SECTION POINT: Jesus made a choice by His discretion to select only three out of the twelve disciples to grant this privilege to.

- - Apparently at His discretion, the rest of the disciples were not invited nor selected to see what Jesus was about to do.
  - - The evidence is that Jesus granted privilege to these three disciples and not to the others, thereby choosing not to treat them all equally.
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[Lesson Questions:

- - During this event in which privileged information was being disclosed to the three select disciples, did they fully comprehend everything while it was being disclosed or happening?

- - What was the response by these three disciples when this privileged information event was being exposed and disclosed to them?
- - Was Peter's evaluation and input right on target with what God intended?]

SECTION POINT: During this event, privileged information was being disclosed to the three select disciples, but they did not fully and correctly comprehend everything while it was being disclosed or happening.

- - Only these three disciples were privileged to witness the transfiguration of Jesus, letting them visually see some of the hidden glory of His deity. (Matthew 17:2)
  - - These disciples were sleepy and not fully awake at the beginning of this event. (Luke 9:32)
  - - During this visual disclosure, Peter spoke impulsively without thinking. (Luke 9:33)
  - - Peter voiced his well-intended but faulty personal opinion, interpretation, idea, and agenda regarding the information disclosed to them by God the Father. (Luke 9:33)
  - - The Father told Peter to shut up, observe, and listen. (Matthew 17:5)
  - - Therefore, Peter's thinking and input during the event were not in alignment with what God the Father intended even though Peter was specifically selected by Jesus to receive this extraordinary privilege.
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[Lesson Questions:

- - Did Jesus want this privileged information made readily available to the other disciples? Why?
- - Did the disciples understand all of Jesus' instructions in conjunction to this privileged information?]

SECTION POINT: Jesus did not want this privileged information disclosed to anyone else, including the other disciples, and His instructions were not fully understood by these three disciples.

- - As they were going back down the mountain, Jesus distinctly instructed these three disciples not to tell anyone what they had just witnessed, until He was raised from the dead. (Matthew 17:9)
  - - There was a timing issue that Jesus wanted followed before others were informed (Matthew 17:9), implying that the premature leaking of this privileged information would disrupt the plan for His impending crucifixion (Matthew 17:12).
  - - Those three privileged disciples did not understand all of Jesus' instructions in conjunction to this privileged information. (Mark 9:10)
  - - Evidently, explanation sufficient for their thorough understanding was not forthcoming at that time. (Mark 9:10-13; cf. Matthew 17:10-13)
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IMPLICATIONS:

True for today, God still engages in this approach of letting some select persons in a church congregation receive privilege from Him, which can be in the form of such things as:

- - privileged status or rank;
- - privileged duties or functions;

- - privileged spiritual gifting or abilities;
- - privileged ownership of bountiful resources;
- - privileged understanding of how to correctly interpret Scriptures;
- - or privileged discernment to detect and identify what God is doing in a church or ministry, in advance before anyone else in that church or ministry becomes aware of it.

- - Even though select persons have received privilege from God for leading the local church congregation or ministry, they may not understand everything about what God wants to do or is doing. (see Mark 9:10)

- - Also, the select persons may not be immediately aware that they are receiving privileged direction from God at the time God is revealing it. (see Luke 9:32)

- - The select persons are responsible before God to set aside or quench their own personal opinions, agendas, inclinations, preferences, and etc. to instead pursue what God has or is laying out for them and the rest of the congregation. (see Luke 9:33)

- - People in churches usually expect or assume that the primary persons who receive some aspect of privilege from God are those in the top leadership of the local church and are in right and healthy personal relationship with God.

- - However, this expectation may not necessarily be correct to reality because God can and does extend various aspects of privilege through any persons He so chooses in a church, even those who are not currently holding an official privileged position in the church.

- - Moreover, God can even bring in someone from the outside whom He has extended an aspect of privilege to.

- - Therefore, leaders in a church should be humble, and watching for God to reveal who He is extending an aspect of privilege to and to what extent or ways that aspect of privilege is to impact the church's ministries.

- - To assume God always gives privilege to just one person or a few select people is an unwise attempt to limit God and to inadvertently quench His activities.

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**BIG IDEA:** God does not treat all disciples the same. By God's intention and design, God selects some to be given an aspect of privilege over others.

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#### APPLICATIONS:

- - Do you get arrogant or jealous or critical when God selects someone else to be given an aspect of privilege to, perhaps doing ministry more effectively than you do?
- - Worse yet, do you reject obvious evidence that God has privileged someone for the benefit of your church and its ministries because the source was not you or one of your cohorts?

- - What criteria do you use to test whether an apparent aspect of privilege that someone is presenting is from God or not?
  - - Or do you assume that because you are a prominent person in your ministry, you are the only person God dispenses an aspect of privilege to for your ministry and that your course of action is correct and all others are off the mark?
  
  - - Do any of you staunchly defend the position you currently hold in a church or ministry, knowing deep down inside that God is now wanting you to step aside and relinquish your position to someone else whom He has specifically prepared to supersede you in that position? Like Saul refusing to relinquish kingship to God's selected privileged replacement David in the Old Testament?
  - - If so, do you think it is wise to so relish the status, reputation, power, and control of your position that you are willing to defy God's purposes and efforts for your church or ministry?
  
  - - Do you crave to hold a position that results from the receiving of some aspect of privilege from God, with its accompanying exalted status or authority in a church or ministry?
  - - Do you let selfish ambition drive you to manipulate or intimidate in order to get or keep the aspect of privilege you want or have in your church or ministry? i.e. You are doing the selecting that you are to be given privilege in your church or ministry rather than God doing the selecting.
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Works Cited:

Bible. "The Holy Bible: New International Version." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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