

Main Idea: In Mark 1:35-45 we see the intentional life of the One worth following. It’s here we see Jesus giving attention to three areas in His life.

- I. Consider the private life of the One worth following (35-38).
  - A. He prayed (35).
    1. A good quiet-time must be quiet.
    2. A good quiet-time takes time.
    3. A good quiet-time is about God, not us.
  - B. He clarified His mission (36-38).
    1. Our purpose isn’t determined by people.
    2. Our purpose is determined by God.
- II. Consider the public life of the One worth following (39).
  - A. He preached.
  - B. He confronted the enemy.
- III. Consider the inter-personal life of the One worth following (40-45).
  - A. He was approachable (40).
  - B. He was compassionate (41-42).
    1. He felt for the hurting.
    2. He touched the untouchable.
    3. He took action to restore.
  - C. He was devoted to His mission (43-45).
    1. His goal wasn’t popularity.
    2. His goal was to fulfill the Scriptures.

Make It Personal: Three responsibilities...

1. We need to know why we are here.
2. We need to exhibit balance.
3. We need to know Jesus.

There are so many reasons why Jesus is worth following with all we are and have. In Mark 1:35-45 we’ll be seeing a reason that may not be one you’ve considered recently, but it’s compelling. His *intentional life*. So many religious leaders start well, do amazing things, but then sadly, drift, or even crash and burn. Not Jesus. In today’s text, we’ll see Him as He gives careful attention to three areas in His life.

*Scripture Reading: Mark 1:35-45*

Gordon MacDonald wrote the following parable, *The Persona*:

“Once a foolish man built a boat. His intention was that it would be the grandest, the most talked-about boat that ever sailed from the harbor of the boat club of which he was a member. Thus, he determined to spare no expense or effort...

As he built, the foolish man outfitted his craft with colorful sails, complex rigging, and comfortable appointments and conveniences in its cabin. The decks were made from beautiful teakwood; all the fittings were custom-made of polished brass. And on the stern, painted in gold letters, readable from a considerable distance, was the name of the boat, the *Persona*.

As he built the *Persona*, the foolish man could not resist fantasizing upon the anticipated admiration and applause from club members at the launching of his new boat. In fact, the more he thought about the praise that was soon to come, the more time and

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<sup>\*\*</sup>Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

<sup>1</sup> For a previous look at this passage, see the Mark series in 2004.

attention he gave to those aspects of the boat's appearance that would attract the crowd and intensify excitement.

Now—and this *seems* reasonable—because no one would ever see the underside of the *Persona*, the man saw little need to be concerned about the boat's keel or, for that matter, anything that had to do with the issue of properly distributed weight or ballast. Experienced sailors might wince at this, but one must remember that the boatbuilder was acting with the perceptions of the crowd in his mind—not the seaworthiness of the vessel. Seaworthiness seems not an important issue while in a dry dock.

On one of those occasions when he was sorting out his priorities of time and resources, he said to himself, 'Why should I spend money or time on what is out of anyone's sight? When I listen to the conversations of people at the club, I hear them praising only what they can see. I can never remember anyone admiring the underside of a boat.'

So driven by such reasoning, the foolish man built his boat. And everything that would be visible to the people soon began to beam with excellence. But things that would be invisible when the boat entered the water were generally ignored. People did not seem to take notice of this, or if they did, they made no comment.

The builder's suspicions were correct: the people of the boat club understood and appreciated sails, rigging, decks, brass, and staterooms. And what they saw, they praised. Sometimes he overheard people say that his efforts to build the grandest boat in the history of the club would someday result in his selection as commodore...

When the day came for the boat's maiden voyage, the people of the club joined him at dockside. A bottle of champagne was broken over the bow, and the moment came for the man to set sail. As the breeze filled the sails and pushed the *Persona* from the club's harbor, he stood at the helm and heard what he'd anticipated for years: the cheers and well-wishes of envious admirers who said to one another, 'Our club has never seen a grander boat than this.'

Soon the beautiful *Persona* was merely a blip on the horizon. And as it cut through the swells, its builder and owner, who at this moment seemed anything but a foolish man, gripped the rudder with a feeling of fierce pride. What he had accomplished! He was seized with an increasing rush of confidence that everything—the boat, his future as a boat-club member (and probably as commodore), and even the ocean (why not when one is feeling confident?)—was his to control."

What happened to the man and his boat, which I'll share at the end of this message, is as predictable as what happens to any person who ignores the condition of his soul. It's so easy to give attention to the seen and ignore the unseen, to pour our energies into what we consider important only to disregard what is essential.

This morning we're going to examine the balanced life of the One worth following. Jesus, the perfect servant of God, lived a balanced life while on earth. The Bible calls us not only to believe in Him but also to walk in His steps. We need to know Him as Savior first, and then as example.

Most of us struggle to maintain the kind of balance in life God intends. Some of us work too much. Some of us play too much. Most people I talk to say their lives are a whirlwind of activity, even good activity, but at the end of the day they have a gnawing sense that something's out of whack.

We need to take a good look at Jesus, to consider carefully how Jesus lived His life. Doing so is not a duty, but a great joy. What a life He lived, the perfect life! And as we'll see in Mark 1:35-45, the Lord devoted attention to three areas in His life, as must we. There was His private life, His public life, and His inter-personal life. We're going to spend the majority of our time on the first area, for it's often neglected, and it's the key to the other two areas.

#### I. Consider the private life of the One worth following (35-38).

We read in verse 35, "And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place [NIV 'a solitary place'], and there he prayed." With that brief statement Mark gives us wonderful insight into the portion of Jesus' life that was unseen and hidden from public view. He says that Jesus got up early in the morning. How early? *Very* early. The text says it was still dark. So 4:00, maybe 5:00.

To appreciate the significance of that comment, we must recall what the previous day had been like for Jesus. It was a Sabbath day. Jesus had gone to the synagogue in Capernaum, taught there in the morning and even liberated a demon-possessed man to the amazement of the crowd (21-28). After leaving the synagogue Jesus walked to Simon and Andrew's home for the noon meal (29). There He healed Simon's mother-in-law. That evening after the sun went down the whole town gathered at the door (33), and Jesus healed many sick people and drove out many demons. It was no doubt well into the night when the last person finally left and Jesus was able to lay down and rest His weary body.

What do you do after a busy day of serving God and people? There's nothing wrong with rest. In fact, it's needed, by God's design. But there is something we need more than rest, and that is to devote proper attention to our *private life*.

I'm not talking about *me-time*, which the world insists we need, which is not true. I'm talking about carving out *Him-time*, which is what we see Jesus doing here, carving out time to be alone with His Father.

Jesus accomplished two vital activities in His private time with His Father.

**A. He prayed (35).** Mark says he left the house, went to a solitary place, and there *prayed*. The term is *proseuchomai*. It simply means "to call on God." But the tense indicates continuous action. Jesus didn't merely recite prayers. He called on His Father, and called on His Father, and called on His Father.

What did He say to His Father? We're not told here. No doubt, the prayer-times were highly personal, and Scriptural, which means they were also highly missional. More about that in a moment.

In the Old Testament, we find an interesting Messianic prophecy in Isaiah 50:4, "The Sovereign LORD has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught."

Just think. For Jesus, this was a morning by morning priority. He woke up, and spent time with His Father, as a demonstration of His absolute love for, and dependence upon His Father and the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

There's certainly a lesson here for us. Wiersbe is right, "Workers who are too busy to pray are too busy, and God will not bless their efforts (John 15:5). If the Son of God had to spend time in prayer while ministering on earth, how much more do we need to pray!"<sup>2</sup>

I was a teenager when I first heard the term, *quiet time*. That's a good way to think of what we're seeing here. Jesus began His day with a purposeful quiet time. Do you? If Jesus viewed time with the Father as a vital way to begin the day, we'd better take note.

By His example, Jesus shows us three marks of a good quiet time.

1. *A good quiet-time must be quiet.* He left the house. Why? Most first century Jewish homes offered little privacy, so to find a place suitable for alone time with the Father, Jesus left the house. He went to a solitary place, a place where there would be no distractions.

Such a simple matter, but how important! "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength." The greatest command. But it's hard to fulfill that command when we're so bombarded by human voices and worldly noises. God created us for Himself. "Be still and know that I am God," He says in Psalm 46:10.

Oh, how vital it is to pursue this stillness in the presence of our Father! To begin every day this way, and also, to begin every week this way, corporately in the presence of our Father. Being still before Him, and then calling upon Him. This is the rhythm of life, and it was true in the life of Jesus our Savior.

Is it your normal rhythm? Yes, there will be exceptions at times, but is it your normal pattern to spend daily *quiet time* with God, with television off, cell phone off, even with the music off, just you and your Father? A good quiet time must be *quiet*.

2. *A good quiet-time takes time.* How much time? There's no magic number, but Jesus did leave the house very early in the morning. I don't get the sense that this means He woke up five minutes early, but that He intentionally created an unhurried season of time to be alone with His Father. And the parallel text of Luke 5:16 indicates Jesus did this often. It says, "But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed."

It's easy to talk about prayer, teach about prayer, and to tell others to pray. But, let's be honest, it's not easy to do what Jesus did. A quality quiet time doesn't just happen. It takes self-denial to carve out uninterrupted time to be with our Father. We may need to get to bed earlier, which means we need to turn things off earlier, so we can then get up earlier, ready to enjoy meaningful time with our Father.

3. *A good quiet-time is about God, not us.* In his biography of Jesus' life, Mark includes three accounts where Jesus is at prayer, this one at the beginning of his gospel, another near the middle (6:46), and still another towards the end (14:32ff). And each time we see Jesus at prayer in Mark's gospel it was in a setting of trial.

The *Bible Knowledge Commentary* explains, "All three were occasions when He was faced with the possibility of achieving His messianic mission in a more attractive, less costly way. But in each case He gained strength through prayer."<sup>3</sup>

In the two other places in Mark's gospel where Jesus prayed, the Lord was facing a crisis, a specific crisis. In 6:46 He prayed after the feeding of the 5,000 when the crowds were cheering for Him. You say, "That doesn't sound like a crisis." It is if you

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<sup>2</sup>Wiersbe, W. W. 1997, c1992. *Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament*. Victor Books: Wheaton, Ill.

<sup>3</sup>Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. 1983-c1985. *The Bible knowledge commentary: An exposition of the scriptures*. Victor Books: Wheaton, IL

remember Jesus didn't come to gain crowds. He came to die for sinners. The temptation was real. Would He change the mission His Father had given Him?

In 14:32-41 the crisis is more obvious. There we see Him in Gethsemane. Would He drink the cup or not? And so He prays, "Father, not my will, but Yours be done." A good quiet time is about God, not us, about advancing His will in and through our lives, not ours.

It's no different in our text. There's a crisis at hand. You say, "What crisis? The whole town just came to Simon's house to see Jesus. How is that a crisis?"

Answer this. Why did they come? Out of their devotion to Jesus? No. Because they believe in Jesus? No. They came because they want something *from Jesus*. To be healed. To see a miracle. Perhaps to hear Jesus talk more about His kingdom, not the part about how their lives needed to change, but the part about Him getting rid of the bad things they didn't want in their lives, like the Romans, and diseases.

Oh yes, the crowds were coming to Jesus, and they were big crowds. But they had a very different agenda in mind than the agenda that the Father had given to His Son. And so the Son leaves the crowds to be alone with His Father.

Friends, one of the times we most need unhurried quiet times with our Father is when things are going *well*, or at least, on the surface *seem* to be going well. With this "crisis of success" at hand, Jesus went where He always went in times of need, to the One who loved Him with an unconditional and eternal love, to the One who gave Him a mission to fulfill. He went to His Father. When crisis hit, Jesus prayed.

And certainly, it wasn't just in crisis. Jesus prayed often. He gave constant attention to His private life, namely to His time with His heavenly Father. Again, can we afford to do less? Why would we want to do less?

Something else happened in Jesus' private life, something revealed by what happened next. First, He prayed. And in so doing...

**B. He clarified His mission (36-38).** Watch what happened to Jesus in verses 36-38, "And Simon and those who were with him searched for him,<sup>37</sup> and they found him and said to him, 'Everyone is looking for you.'<sup>38</sup> And he said to them, 'Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.'"

It's not easy to protect your quiet time with God. Here Mark uses the verb *katadiokein* to tell what Simon and his buddies did to interrupt Jesus' prayer time. The term literally means, "to track down" or "hunt," and usually involves a hostile sense. Simon and the others seem to think Jesus will be glad to know that "everybody wants to see you!" Little did they realize that it was this shallowness that drove the Lord away from them to pray in the first place.

Friends, Jesus is not interested in being what *we want* Him to be, a quick fix, a good luck charm, a Genie in a bottle. He is who He is, the Lord of lords. And His Father is seeking those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24).

In Luke's parallel account, we're told that it wasn't just Simon and the disciples who were searching for Him, but the *multitudes* too (Luke 4:42). And Luke indicates their motive. He says they "tried to keep Him from going away from them." In other words, the good people at Capernaum wanted Him all to themselves.

Wouldn't you? If you found a Genie-in-a-bottle, is your first instinct to share your three wishes with others? No, sinners don't share, apart from grace. And sinners we all

are. And this is why Jesus has come, not to be a Genie-in-a-bottle, but to be our Savior, to “give His life as a ransom payment for sinners” (Mark 10:45).

Note carefully Jesus’ response. In the ESV, “For that is why I came out.” The NIV captures the sense, “That is why I have come.” Why did He come? *To preach*, He emphasized. Wessel says it well, “Healings and exorcisms had their place, but they were not to usurp the primary purpose for which Jesus had come.”<sup>4</sup>

Let this sink in. Yes, Jesus can heal, cast out demons, and perform miracles. And He did, to substantiate His unique identity as the Messiah. But that’s not the main reason He came. He came to earth, as verse 14 says, to preach the good news of God’s salvation and, as verse 15 indicates, to call men and women to repent and believe.

The sad reality, then as now, is that people can be distracted from seeing the truth about Jesus. It happens when they focus on and seek the spectacular, such as healings and demon casting and so forth. Jesus would have no part of it *then*, and we must avoid it *today*.

This highlights a vital reason why we, as did Jesus, need to give attention to our private lives. We need to pray and in so doing, to clarify our mission or purpose.

1. *Our purpose isn’t determined by people.*
2. *Our purpose is determined by God.*

Jesus loved people, without question. But Jesus didn’t let people determine His life. He wasn’t swayed by popular opinion. He didn’t live to make people like Him. He lived to fulfill the purpose His Father designed for Him.

Here’s where we often get into trouble. We either don’t know that we have a God-given purpose, or we lose sight of it. What is our purpose? Listen to Jesus in Matthew 6:33, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.” Paul says the same thing in another way, in 1 Corinthians 6:20, “Glorify God in your body.”

That’s our purpose. It’s why we are here, in all we do to seek first God’s kingdom, to bring glory to God.

Many years ago, I did an exercise that I recommend. I prayerfully sought to come up with a one sentence answer to the question, “What is God’s purpose for my life?” And the outcome was this. My purpose in life is *to know Christ and to make Him known to others*. That statement has served me well, when I’ve had to make important decisions, or faced significant challenges, as well as seeking to make the most of the rather mundane and ordinary moments of life.

Knowing your purpose makes a huge difference when you’re trying to decide what to do with your time, talents, and treasures. The question must always be, “Which choice will best accomplish my God-given purpose?”

Be assured that Jesus knew His purpose. This is the balanced life of the One worth following. Everything hinges upon what’s happening behind closed doors, in the private life.

## II. Consider the public life of the One worth following (39).

Verse 39 says, “And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.” Don’t miss the significance of that simple statement. It indicates that Jesus did in His public life exactly what His Father clarified for Him in His private life. He engaged in two activities...

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<sup>4</sup> W. Wessel, p. 629.

**A. He preached.** And specifically, He preached in the synagogues of Galilee.

**B. He confronted the enemy.** How? He cast out demons. He set people free from their captivity by confronting the evil one and his wicked hosts and sending them away.

Mark says that the Lord left Capernaum and traveled throughout Galilee, going to synagogue after synagogue, doing the very same thing He had done in Capernaum. First and foremost, He *preached*, proclaiming the Word of God over and over again. And then He demonstrated His power over the opponent of that message by casting out demons. This will be His ministry all the way to the cross, where He will take care of our enemies of sin and Satan once and for all.

This is the public life of the One worth following. Jesus was an itinerant preacher, who went from place to place, proclaiming the good news of God. What was His message? Mark gave us the message back in 1:15, “The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe this good news.”

It’s no secret that in our day, preaching has fallen on tough times. Some think it’s a poor communication approach. Who wants to hear someone lecture? But then we look at Jesus, and what is He doing? He’s preaching. Everywhere He goes, He preaches.

In fact, when people came to Jesus, and their motive was *not* to hear His Word but merely to experience healing, or see Him perform miracles, He wasn’t impressed. In fact, He left them. He went other places and *preached*.

This is such a needed reminder for us. The critics keep saying, “People won’t come to church to hear the Word preached. Their attention spans are too short. They’ve been hurt by other authority figures. We need other methods today.” But then we see our Master, and what is He doing? He’s preaching, but not just preaching. He’s also recruiting and training others to preach. And He will eventually say to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel.”

This is the public ministry of the Master. And when He faces a potential distraction to it, He says, “Let’s go somewhere else, so I can preach. That’s why I have come.”

Faith comes by hearing the Word, the simple message of Christ. The Lord has chosen preaching to be the means for the salvation of His people (see 1 Cor 1:20-25).

With that in mind, let’s make this personal. Today you are hearing the preaching of God’s Word. Do you long to be forgiven of your sins and have the gift of eternal life? Then believe this message, repent of your sins, and receive Jesus Christ, the One who died for your sins and then conquered death, as your Savior and Lord.

What does a balanced life look like? We’re looking at the balanced life of the One worth following. We’ve considered His private life, and His public life.

### III. Consider the inter-personal life of the One worth following (40-45).

Jesus didn’t simply see masses of people. He saw the individual, too, and that’s powerfully illustrated in the following encounter. In this particular scene, we’ll discover three traits that characterized how Jesus related to people.

**A. He was approachable (40).** “And a leper came to him, imploring him [NIV ‘begged him on his knees’], and kneeling said to him, ‘If you will, you can make me clean.’” Luke’s account indicates the man was “full of leprosy.”

Leprosy is a terrible disease, then as now. The suffering was social as well as physical. The law required that the leper wear torn clothes, let his hair remain unkempt, cover the lower part of his face, and cry out wherever he went, “Unclean! Unclean!”

This man had lived in total isolation for who knows how long, as an outcast. No wife's kiss. No children's hug. Not even a friend's handshake, for years. He was walking death, a man without hope and purpose.

But then he heard about Jesus, and according to Mark, "he came" to Jesus. That in itself was against the law. He came and fell on his knees and made his plea. He had no doubt Jesus could heal him, only a question of willingness. "If you are willing," he said, "you can make me clean."<sup>5</sup>

Why did this leper dare approach Jesus? The fact that he did says something very significant *about Jesus*. Jesus was approachable.

**B. He was compassionate (41-42).** "Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, 'I will; be clean.' And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean."

With minimum words, Mark opens our eyes to the beautiful compassion of Jesus. Notice the threefold sequence.

1. *He felt for the hurting.* The NIV says, "Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man." The Greek word is *splagchnizomai*, a verb meaning "to be moved in the inward parts, to have pity, to have one's heart go out to." That's Jesus. He felt for hurting people. He felt deeply, inwardly, personally. His heart went out to the needy. But not just his heart.

2. *He touched the untouchable.* In their accounts, Matthew, Mark, and Luke all mention this startling point. Jesus reached out His hand and *touched* the leper. Undoubtedly, this was the first loving touch this man had felt in years. Someone observed that Jesus could have flung the gift of healing to him, as we fling a bone to a dog, but that's not Jesus.<sup>6</sup>

It was actually against Jewish law to touch a leper. Such action made a person unclean. But Jesus placed love over ceremonial law.

There's something quite significant about Jesus' touch. When Jesus touched corruption, it didn't defile Him. To the contrary, His touch made defilement go away.

That's why he came, as J. D. Jones observes, "This is a parable of what Jesus was doing all through His life. He was continually 'touching the leper.' What was His incarnation? It was a case of 'touching the leper.' He 'took hold' upon the seed of Abraham. He was found in the likeness of human flesh. And yet He contracted no defilement... Jesus never brought a smudge or a stain upon His perfect purity. Instead of that His purity cleansed the sinners and lepers whom He touched."<sup>7</sup>

3. *He took action to restore.* Verse 42 again, "Immediately, the leprosy left him and he was cured." This was no gradual process, but immediate cleansing.<sup>8</sup>

Some people *feel*, but that's as far as their compassion goes. Not Jesus. He felt. He touched. He took action to restore. That's true compassion.

Which makes what He did next rather shocking. It also opens our eyes into another trait possessed by our Lord. It's actually the same one we just saw moments ago.

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<sup>5</sup> Only twice in the Old Testament do we find lepers being healed (Miriam in Numbers 12:10ff and Naaman in 2 Kings 5:1ff). But this leper believed God through Jesus could do for him what so many other lepers died longing for.

<sup>6</sup> J. D. Jones, p. 39.

<sup>7</sup> J. D. Jones, pp. 40-1.

<sup>8</sup> The New Testament doesn't speak of the *healing* of leprosy, but rather of *cleansing*.



**C. He was devoted to His mission (43-45).** Verse 43 says, “And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once.”

Ponder that statement for a moment. The NIV says, “Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning.” The verb “sent away” is intense—in other places it’s used of casting out demons. The words “strong warning” come from a term that originally meant “to snort like a horse.” It indicates there was anger or indignation in Jesus’ voice, perhaps because Jesus knew the man was not going to obey what he was about to hear.

Here’s what Jesus told him. Verse 44 records, “And said to him, ‘See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to them.’”

Why the secrecy? Once again, it has to do with His mission. He’d come to die for sinners, not get a crowd, and the latter is what He knew He’d have if the healed leper spread the word. To put it simply...

1. *His goal wasn’t popularity.*

2. *His goal was to fulfill the Scriptures.* Jesus told the man to go see the priest because that’s what the Law said to do to verify a leper was cleansed. Leviticus 14 said the priest was to offer two clean birds, and on day eight two male lambs, one ewe lamb, a grain offering, and a log of oil. Jesus came to fulfill the Law, not negate it.

Jesus said to do this “as a testimony to them” (NIV). That significant phrase can be taken in two ways—positively (a “convincing witness”; a “proof” in the ESV) or negatively (a “convicting or incriminating witness”).

Again, Jesus didn’t come to heal everybody. He came to proclaim the good news of God (verse 14), and to call people to repent and believe (verse 15). The miracles were attention-getters which substantiated His Messianic authority. But be assured of this. He, the Messiah, had not come to put on a show, but to reconcile sinners to God.

I’ll reiterate. Plenty of folks are willing to come to Jesus to see a show. Only those in whom the Spirit is at work will come to have Him change their sinful hearts.

But this man didn’t obey. According to verse 45, “But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places [NIV ‘lonely places’], and people were coming to him from every quarter.”

So Jesus healed the man, and the man disobeyed Jesus. Jesus told him to keep quiet, but he proclaimed it to the world. There’s certainly an irony here, do you see it? What has Jesus told us to do? Tell the world, right? But far too often we keep quiet.

Why the command to be silent? The reason was so Jesus could continue to preach in the towns. But because the man talked, the crowd of healing-seekers became so thick there was no way Jesus could preach in the populated areas.

Disobedience, even if the motive is good, produces harmful consequences. Mark says Jesus had to stay in “lonely places.” In Luke’s account this note is added (Luke 5:16), “But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places *and prayed.*”

So, the private life, which produces the public life, which shows us in the inter-personal life, is fueled once again by the private life. This is true in the balanced life of the One worth following, as it must be in the lives of His followers.

When we left the *Persona* earlier, it was heading out to sea in splendor, its builder gloating at the applause of the crowd. The pride soon turned to shame as Gordon MacDonald explains:

“A few miles out to sea a storm arose. Not a hurricane. But not a squall either. There were sudden gusts in excess of forty knots, waves above fifteen feet. The *Persona* began to shudder, and water swept over the sides. Bad things began to happen, and the poise of the ‘captain’ began to waver. Perhaps the ocean wasn’t his after all.

How about connections with other club members? The ones who sailed from the harbor on either side, cheering and waving? He looked about for them. But none were to be seen. The boats that had been there in the early part of the voyage had turned back long ago. He’d been too self-absorbed to notice...

Within minutes the *Persona*’s colorful sails were in shreds, the splendid mast was splintered in pieces, and the rigging was unceremoniously draped all over the bow. The teakwood decks and the lavishly appointed cabin were awash with water. And then before the foolish man could prepare himself, a wave bigger than anything he’d ever seen hurled down upon the *Persona*, and the boat capsized...

When most boats would have righted themselves after such a battering, the *Persona* did not. Why? Because its builder—this very foolish man—had ignored the importance of what was below the waterline. There was no weight there. In a moment when a well-designed keel and adequate ballast might have saved the ship, they were nowhere to be found. The foolish man had concerned himself with the appearance of things and not enough with resilience and stability in the secret, unseen places where storms are withstood...

The foolish man was never found. Today, when people speak of him—which is rare—they comment not upon the initial success of the man or upon the beauty of his boat but only upon the silliness of putting out on an ocean where storms are sudden and violent. And doing it with a boat that was really never built for anything else but the vanity of its builder and the praise of spectators. It was in such conversations that the owner of the *Persona*, whose name has long been forgotten, because known simply as the foolish man.”<sup>9</sup>

#### Make It Personal: Three responsibilities...

1. *We need to know why we are here.* Can you state your purpose for living? Is it based upon the Word of God? Is it truly God’s purpose, and would the people who know you well agree with that?

2. *We need to exhibit intentionality.* Perhaps you’ve been ignoring your private life. If so, what needs to change, starting today? On the other hand, maybe you need to get out and invest time with people. As Jesus so beautifully demonstrated, balance is key. And the bottom line is clear.

3. *We need to know Jesus.* As our Savior. And then as our example, too.

**Closing Song: #390** “*May the Mind of Christ, My Savior*” (verses 1, 4, 5, 6)

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<sup>9</sup> Gordon MacDonald, taken from *The Life God Blesses*, ix-xiii.