

# Spiritual Geometry

“Case For Christ”, Insights from Mark 9:38-41  
Pastor Bob Johnson, September 4th, 2022, GPC

## The Problem with John’s Circle:

### The Parameters of Jesus’ Circle:

*“For the one who is not against us is for us.” v40*

### Who is outside Jesus’ circle?

- Those who .... (John 14:6)

### Who is inside the circle that warrants a response?

- Those who ...  
*(Galatians 1:6-10)*
- Those who ...  
*(Titus 3:9-10)*
- Those who ...  
*(1 Corinthians 5:9-13)*

### Who is inside the circle that don’t warrant a response?

- Those with different ...  
*(Matthew 10:2-4)*
- Those who ...  
*(Galatians 6:1-2)*
- Those who seem to have ...  
*(Philippians 1:15-18)*

**Jesus’s encouragement: Let ...**  
*(Matthew 13:24-30)*

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## **This Week's Discussion Guide**

Welcome to our second week of our Fall Small Group Season at GPC! Our study and discussion this fall will be based on our current Sunday series at GPC called, "Case For Christ".

In this series, we are slowly unpacking the Gospel of Mark. Each week we will read and reflect on a passage from Mark's gospel and discuss ways we can apply what we reflect on to our daily lives.

It is our prayer at GPC for our Sundays and small groups to provide the encouragement we all need to support each other as we desire to grow closer to God and build friendships as part of our vision at GPC to raise up committed Christ followers in a healthy church community.

### **Getting Started:**

Each week, we typically start out with a few lighter questions to get us warmed up :).

Before we looked at Mark 9:38-41 last Sunday morning, Bob gave one last thought from the previous message which was encouraging us to serve not just those who can serve or bless us back.

Speaking of serving, when did you have a positive experience in serving others either by yourself or as part of a team? What was challenging about it? What was fulfilling about it?

If you could go anywhere in the world and be part of a service project, where might you want to go and how would you like to bless those you serve?

Last Sunday's message was about circles and the fact that in relational circles, some are outside and some are inside.

Speaking of circles, have you ever felt like you were outside of a relational circle? Why were you not included? Did you choose to address it or just let it go? Were you ever invited in?

Knowing how not being part of a 'friendship circle' made you feel, can you think of a time where you took some initiative to try and help someone else feel more included? How did it turn out?

### **Reviewing and Reflecting on last Sunday's Passage:**

Let's read the main passage from last Sunday. (Mark 9:38-41)

After reading this passage and looking back on our notes from Sunday, was there a particular thought, verse or comment that caught your attention, challenged you or raised a question for you?

## **Digging Deeper:**

1. This discussion question is actually the last question from the first discussion guide which was about “Fall Hurdles To Avoid”. If our group didn’t discuss it last week, let’s start with it this week :). If we covered it, let’s skip it and go to the next question.

The last “fall hurdle” to avoid (that Bob highlighted last Sunday) was focusing on how others can bless us rather than how we can bless others. This fall, opportunities to serve and impact others in small but significant ways occur around all of us every day. Let’s read the classic story of the Good Samaritan and his unplanned opportunity to serve in Luke 10:25-37.

As we read, let’s share some insights that can help us be effective ministers this fall.

2. Last Sunday, we looked at the ‘relational reality’ where we draw circles in areas of our lives where people are either in or out of our friendship circles. Jesus also drew circles but always included more people than those around him would.

Let’s read through the following stories and share how we see Jesus bringing someone into his circle that most people would leave out.

What insights do you see from each of these passages?

Luke 19:1-10, Mark 5:25-34, Luke 18:35-42

What might be some modern-day equivalents to the people we see Jesus reach out?

Are there any people you find it easier to bring into your relational circle?

Are there any you have a harder time reaching out to and would tend to leave out?

3. It can be hard to avoid “playing favorites” when it comes to who is in our relational circle. This is especially true when there are certain co-workers, family, kids, friends etc. who we get along with better than others. What can we learn from God’s view on favoritism that could help us when we are tempted to play favorites?

Acts 10:34-35, Romans 2:6-13, Romans 10:12-13, Ephesians 6:9

How do you feel you are doing in this area of not playing favorites and treating others equally?

What is a practical step you can take to help build better community in one of your relational circles?

## **Wrapping Up:**

What is an application from what we read or discussed together that you would like to practice in the coming days? Is there anything that came up from this week’s sermon or discussion that you would like prayer for? Is there anything else on your heart that you would like to express prayer for?