



FOLLOW^{NO 11}

Discover the Life
of Jesus through the
Gospel of Mark

LEADER GUIDE



In the gospel of Mark, Jesus invites all kinds of people to follow Him. In fact, His invitation is actually a command. He commands people to follow Him. When Jesus says, “Follow Me!” nothing will ever be the same again for those who chase after Him. So that’s what we’ll be doing too—following this man Jesus during His ministry. Mark is the perfect gospel to start with if you’ve never studied Jesus before. It’s fast-paced and to the point. In the first half of his book, Mark essentially asks, “Who is this Jesus?” So that’s what we’ll be asking too. Who is Jesus? Who did He claim to be? Why was His teaching so profound? How did His actions reveal who He was? And why was the watching world so threatened by Him?

This leader guide is meant to support you as you lead and provide additional questions for your group to discuss as you walk through this study together. If your group has a lively discussion going, there’s no need to rush to get through all the questions. We simply want to make your role a bit easier and provide a starting point to get the conversation going.

LEADER EXPECTATIONS

GATHER AND FACILITATE CONVERSATION

We recommend that each person read the study daily. Then, once a week, gather as a discipleship pair or small group to dialogue about the daily questions and/or discuss the questions provided in this guide.

BUILD A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUR PEOPLE TO GO DEEP

There are many ways to study together in a discipleship relationship. However you go about it, we ask that you create a simple and pure environment to come, pray, and learn about studying the Bible.

Pray: In preparation for your time together, spend time in prayer. Beg for the Holy Spirit to fall afresh and use your time together for God’s glory. Pray that each person would gain a deeper love for God as you spend intentional time studying Mark together.

Lean on God: God will have a unique agenda for your group each time you meet. Rely on Him instead of trying to control the conversation. Lean into your own weakness and into His strength and direction.

Be transparent: You have the opportunity to set the tone for those around you. If you choose not to be vulnerable, other women may not feel the freedom to be honest. We encourage you to be honest and transparent, creating an environment for others to open up.

Listen, but also lead: When women are vulnerable, it is a tremendous risk that needs to be honored. Protect them by not interrupting and instead listening and empathizing. In love, point women back to what the truth of God’s Word says in their situation.

Model trust: Be open with your group about how you are processing this study. Throughout the study, we must continue to seek God and ask for His help in understanding His Word. These women look to you for an example. We encourage you to be intentional in your relationship with God as we walk through the next six weeks.

KEEP UNITY A CENTRAL VALUE

Your group likely has different experiences and backgrounds. As a leader, you have the responsibility to keep a spirit of unity within your group. We ask for sensitivity, openness, and a safe environment for everyone to learn together.

We encourage you to pray for the Holy Spirit to guide you in demonstrating love to everyone as you learn and process this study together.

SUPPLIES

- IF:Equip study book for each participant, or access to the study on IFEquip.com or the IF:Gathering app
- Leader Guide
- Bible

Optional: Daily videos. If the daily videos on IFEquip.com or in the IF:Gathering app are important to your discussion, use your computer or phone to play the video for the group.

A dark green topographic map with white contour lines and elevation numbers (e.g., 300, 320, 340, 360, 380, 400, 420, 440, 460, 480, 500, 520, 540, 560, 580) serves as the background for the left side of the page. A white rectangular box is positioned in the upper left, containing the text 'WEEK ONE'.

WEEK ONE

1. Discuss your thoughts about Jesus before beginning this study. Have you studied the life and teachings of Jesus before? Who do you believe He is? What do you believe about His teachings?
2. What have you heard others say about Jesus?
3. Why is it important to know who wrote the gospel? Why is it important to keep his original audience in mind?
4. What do you find interesting about the author, Mark?
5. What does it mean that Jesus aligned Himself with humanity? Why is this so important? How does this give us hope?
6. How did Jesus' teachings differ from that of the religious leaders of the time?
7. What does it mean to repent? Why do we find this so difficult? If you are comfortable, share a time you repented from something. What was that experience like?
8. What surprises you about the people Jesus called to follow Him?
9. Jesus' call to the fishermen is written as a command, not simply an invitation. Why is this significant?
10. In Mark 1:35-45, Jesus heals the leper by touching him. Why does Mark include this detail? Why is this so significant? Can you think of a comparable situation today? Who are the untouchables in our circles? How can we reach out to them with the same compassion Jesus showed?



WEEK TWO

1. Why were the religious and political leaders threatened by Jesus?
2. In Mark 2:1-17, what did the man's friends believe about Jesus?
3. Imagine yourself as a member of the crowd gathered in the house. What would you have expected Jesus to say to the man on the mat? Why were His words so shocking?
4. What message was Jesus sending by eating with tax collectors and sinners? What does this reveal about His kingdom?
5. Why does Mark include these two stories? How does this build his case for who Jesus is?
6. In Mark 2:18-22, the Pharisees challenge Jesus on the issue of fasting. What had the Pharisees gotten so wrong with fasting? What does Jesus' response tell us? How might we hold onto the "old way" of doing things?
7. In Jesus' fourth and fifth conflicts with the religious leaders (Mark 2:23-3:6), He challenges their understanding of the Sabbath. Why was this such a contentious issue for them?
8. In both of these stories, how had the Pharisees missed God's intention for the Sabbath? In our context, in what ways are we at risk of elevating our own rules above God's purposes? How can we keep God's heart in mind as we seek to obey Him?
9. The crowds continued to seek healing and Jesus doesn't send them away, even though He remained focused on preaching His message. Why? Jesus continually healed the sick and cast out demons. What does this reveal to us about who He is?
10. Jesus called the unexpected as His disciples. What surprised you about this group? Do you believe Jesus calls the "unqualified"?

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WEEK THREE

1. Why did Jesus' family doubt Him? How do you think that made Him feel?
2. Over and over, Mark has demonstrated that Jesus is powerful. Why does he make such an effort to show the reader this? Do you believe Jesus is powerful?
3. In Mark 4, Jesus tells the parable of the soils. How can we cultivate good soil in our hearts?
4. Who is responsible for the growth of the seeds? What is the sower's responsibility? What does that mean for us?
5. In the parable of the lamp, who does Jesus portray as the responsible party? What are followers of Christ called to do?
6. What more do we learn about Jesus when He calms the storm in 4:35-41? What does this episode teach the disciples? How do they respond? Put yourself in their shoes. How do you think you would have responded?
7. What is Mark trying to show us about Jesus' power? What implications does this have for our lives?
8. In Mark 5:1-20, Jesus goes to a man who had no hope. What does this show us about Jesus? Have you ever found yourself in a situation that felt hopeless? How does this story encourage us?
9. What did the man regain after Jesus cast out the demons? What was his response to Jesus?
10. Several times in Mark, we've seen Jesus encounter the forces of evil. What is the outcome in each situation? What does this say about Jesus, and how can we find encouragement in these stories?



WEEK FOUR

1. In Mark 5:21-34, we read the first part of a two-part story concerning daughters. Mark notes that Jairus was a synagogue leader. Why do you think he included that detail? What would it have meant for him to seek out Jesus for help?
2. The bleeding woman broke all the rules by approaching Jesus. Put yourself in her place. What do you think she felt and thought as she drew near to Him? What drove her? What do you think she felt when Jesus spoke to her and called her “daughter”?
3. In Mark 5:35, Jesus turns His attention back to Jairus. What do you imagine Jairus was feeling through all of this? Did he still have faith in Jesus? How do we know?
4. Mark reveals yet another aspect of Jesus’ power in the scene with Jairus’ daughter. What does Jesus have power over? How does this continue to build Mark’s case for Jesus’ identity?
5. In Mark 6:1-6, Jesus is rejected by His hometown and He is amazed at their unbelief. Why do you think they didn’t believe Him? How does this story prepare the disciples (and us)?
6. When Jesus sends out His twelve disciples, He instructs them to take very little with them. Why? What can we learn from their experience?
7. Why does Mark place the story of the death of John the Baptist right after the disciples have been sent out? What was the result of John obeying God’s will?
8. Based on these two stories, what can disciples of Jesus expect as a result of following Him?
9. In what ways are we tempted to place something or someone before King Jesus?
10. What have you learned this week about who Jesus is?

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It features contour lines and numerical elevation markers such as 080, 090, 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160, 170, 180, 190, 200, 210, 220, 230, 240, 250, 260, 270, 280, 290, 300, 310, 320, 330, 340, 350, 360, 370, 380, 390, 400, 410, 420, 430, 440, 450, 460, 470, 480, 490, 500, 510, 520, 530, 540, 550, 560, 570, 580, 590, 600, 610, 620, 630, 640, 650, 660, 670, 680, 690, 700, 710, 720, 730, 740, 750, 760, 770, 780, 790, 800, 810, 820, 830, 840, 850, 860, 870, 880, 890, 900, 910, 920, 930, 940, 950, 960, 970, 980, 990, 1000, 1010, 1020, 1030, 1040, 1050, 1060, 1070, 1080, 1090, 1100, 1110, 1120, 1130, 1140, 1150, 1160, 1170, 1180, 1190, 1200, 1210, 1220, 1230, 1240, 1250, 1260, 1270, 1280, 1290, 1300, 1310, 1320, 1330, 1340, 1350, 1360, 1370, 1380, 1390, 1400, 1410, 1420, 1430, 1440, 1450, 1460, 1470, 1480, 1490, 1500, 1510, 1520, 1530, 1540, 1550, 1560, 1570, 1580, 1590, 1600, 1610, 1620, 1630, 1640, 1650, 1660, 1670, 1680, 1690, 1700, 1710, 1720, 1730, 1740, 1750, 1760, 1770, 1780, 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The map also includes some dashed lines and small cross markers.

WEEK FIVE

1. Before studying Mark 6:30-34, what was your idea of rest? Why does Jesus couple rest with burdens? What does that mean for us?

2. In feeding the multitude, what does Jesus want the disciples to understand? What does this reveal about Him?

3. When do you feel reached your capacity but the needs keep coming? How can we seek rest in Jesus in the midst of these situations or seasons?

4. In Mark 6:45-56, Jesus calms the sea during a terrible storm. He meets the disciples in this chaos and answers their cries with the statement, “It is I; do not be afraid.” Why was this such a loaded phrase? Who else says this in the Bible?

5. What is your first response in a storm? How can we remember to call on Jesus when our lives are in chaos?

6. In Mark 7:1-23, we see Jesus in conflict with the Pharisees again, this time over their washing rituals and clean and unclean foods. What point was Jesus making? What does this reveal about who He wants in His kingdom?

7. How are we prone to focus on outwards appearances in our context? How can we remember that God cares about the heart?

8. Why was it surprising that Jesus went to Tyre? What was so shocking about the interaction between Jesus and the Syrophenician woman?

9. What does she understand that the disciples don’t?

10. What should the disciples have understood when Jesus healed the deaf man? What did this further reveal about Jesus’ identity?



WEEK SIX

1. In Mark 8:1-13, Jesus feeds a multitude for a second time. Why do you think the disciples still didn't understand? How does Jesus respond to them? Do you believe He responds to us with the same compassion and patience?
2. How did the disciples act similarly to the Pharisees? In what ways do we risk treating Jesus the same way? How can we have faith, remembering Jesus' power and provision?
3. In Mark 8:14-26, we see that the disciples still do not understand. Why do you think they were so blind to who Jesus was and what He was doing? How does Jesus respond to them? How does this encourage you?
4. Why did Jesus heal the blind man in front of the disciples? What did He want them to see?
5. Many people interacted with Jesus, were even healed by Him, but still did not see Him for who He is. How do we risk falling into the same trap?
6. In Mark 8:27-30, we reach the climax of Mark's argument, when Jesus asks the disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" How does Peter respond?
7. Why did Jesus reveal His identity so slowly? Who did He reveal His identity to first? Why?
8. Jesus begins to explain to the disciples that He will suffer, die, and rise from the dead. Put yourself in the disciples' place. What would your reaction have been to these words?
9. Moments after declaring Jesus is the Christ, Peter reveals how little he truly understands. Remember – Mark based this gospel on Peter's teaching. How do you think Peter looked back on this moment later in life?
10. After studying the first half of the gospel of Mark, who do you believe Jesus to be? How has your view of Jesus changed over the course of this study?