

Community Groups

DISCOVER | CONNECT | SERVE



“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. ²⁵Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” – Hebrews 10:23-25 (NIV)

Why Community Groups?

Because God created us to live life in the context of relationships! This is an opportunity for you to connect with others as you experience real life-change in your Christian walk.

What is a Community Group?

A group of 6-10 people who “do life” together as they grow in their love for God, His word, and others. Community Groups encourage folks to take their next step spiritually as they: (1) **Discover** God and His grace, (2) **Connect** with others in life-transforming relationships, and (3) **Serve** the church and the world.

Thus, a Community Group is an environment where we are transformed more and more into the image of Jesus Christ (*Romans 8:29-30*). Our conviction is that “real life-change only happens in the context of biblical community.”

In addition to this, a Community Group is also a place for folks to have fun as they celebrate and share life together! Come join us!

Our journey begins with a study of the **Gospel of Mark**. The following Study Guide is intended to immerse you into God’s word so that you will grow closer to Him in the context of life-transforming relationships.

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STUDY ONE | **MARK 1:1-13**

BACKGROUND

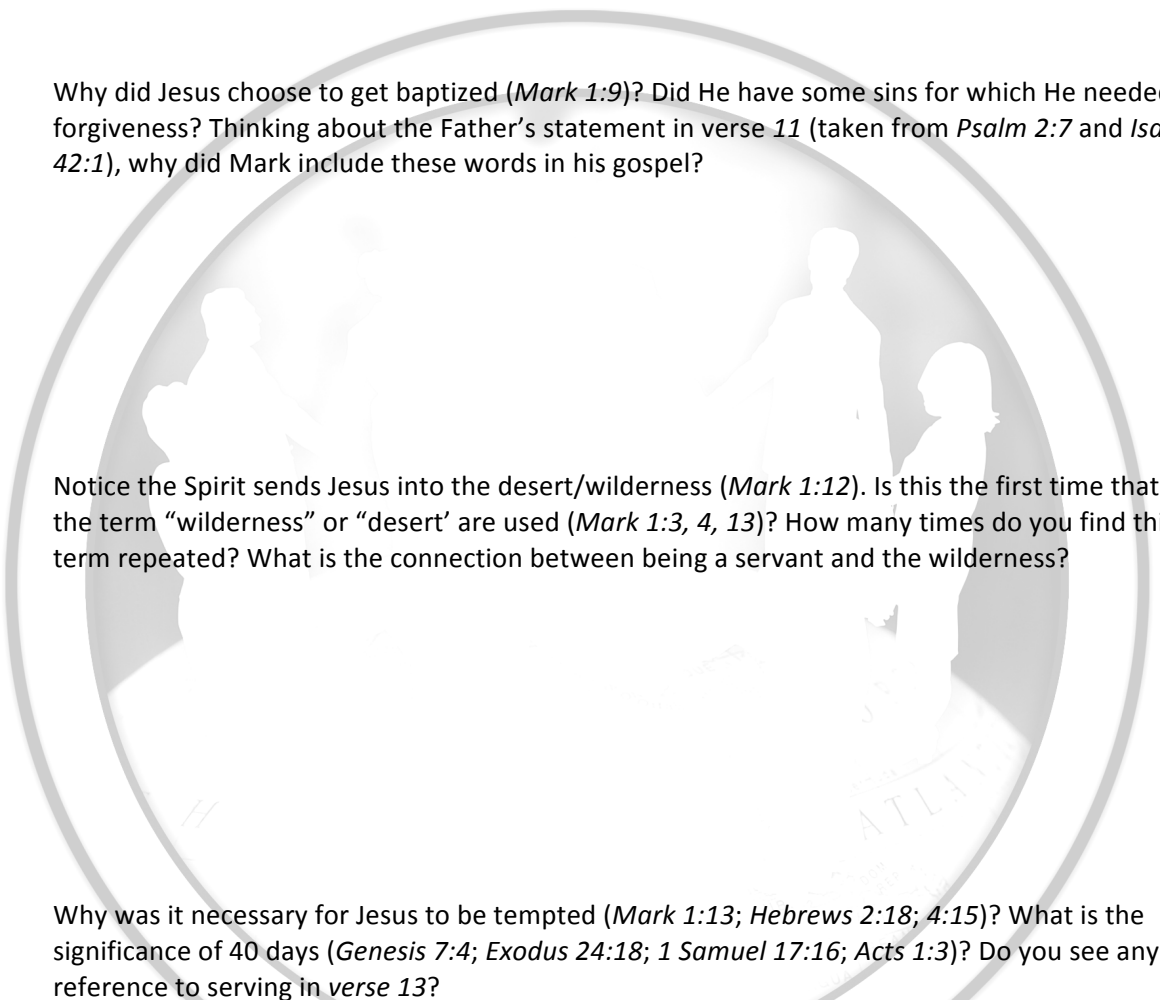
Author: John Mark (*Acts 12:25*), the cousin of Barnabas (*Colossians 4:10*)

Date written: c. A.D. 63-70

Written: Possibly from Rome and possibly based off the preaching and teachings of Peter (cf. *1 Peter 5:13*) in order to present Jesus as the ultimate servant (*Mark 10:45*) and to proclaim the kingdom of God so that his readers would repent and be saved (*Mark 1:14-15*).

Mark's account of the life of Christ reads like an action movie. Notice the word "immediately" throughout this gospel. Also notice the theme of servant hood.

1. The word "gospel" (*Mark 1:1*) means "good news." How would Mark's account of the life of Jesus have been "good news?" What is Mark claiming about Jesus right from the start of his gospel (cf. *John 5:18*)?
2. Read *Mark 1:1-8*. What does Mark tell us about Jesus' birth? Do you think Mark knew anything about Jesus' birth? Why did he intentionally leave out the first 30 years of Jesus' life and jump *immediately* to the beginning of His earthly ministry?
3. Given John the Baptist's strange description in *Mark 1:6*, why did anyone accept his message and get baptized (*Mark 1:5*)? Why would God use John in the first place (*1 Corinthians 1:27-29*)? How does John's character relate to the theme of Jesus as a servant?

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4. How did John view Jesus in *Mark 1:7-8*? What does untying sandals have to do with this? How does John's humility serve as an example for us (see *John 3:28-30*)? How did John's baptism differ from that of Jesus (*Acts 2:4; 19:3-6*)?

 5. Why did Jesus choose to get baptized (*Mark 1:9*)? Did He have some sins for which He needed forgiveness? Thinking about the Father's statement in verse 11 (taken from *Psalms 2:7* and *Isaiah 42:1*), why did Mark include these words in his gospel?

 6. Notice the Spirit sends Jesus into the desert/wilderness (*Mark 1:12*). Is this the first time that the term "wilderness" or "desert" are used (*Mark 1:3, 4, 13*)? How many times do you find this term repeated? What is the connection between being a servant and the wilderness?

 7. Why was it necessary for Jesus to be tempted (*Mark 1:13; Hebrews 2:18; 4:15*)? What is the significance of 40 days (*Genesis 7:4; Exodus 24:18; 1 Samuel 17:16; Acts 1:3*)? Do you see any reference to serving in verse 13?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 1:7 – *And he was preaching, and saying, "After me One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to stoop down and untie the thong of His sandals."*

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STUDY TWO | **MARK 1:14-34**

Jesus taught with authority, but He demonstrated that authority through His miracles. Amazingly, He wasn't interested in being "popular" but in proclaiming the truth.

1. What exactly did Jesus mean when He said that the kingdom of God is "near" (*Mark 1:15; Ephesians 1:9-10*)? What did He mean by the "gospel" or "good news" (*John 10:10*)? If you were in Galilee at the time, how would you have responded to Christ's message?
2. When Jesus called His first disciples, how did they respond (*Mark 1:18 and 20*)? What kind of person did Jesus call to follow Him (*Mark 1:16*)? How might their occupation relate to Mark's theme of servant hood and humility?
3. Why did Jesus only call James and John and not the others in the boat (*Mark 1:20*)? If you had been called, what would you have done? Are there any areas of your life where you should be responding immediately to Jesus Christ, but aren't doing so (*2 Peter 1:10*)?
4. Why did Jesus head "immediately" into the synagogue to teach on the Sabbath (*Mark 1:21*)? What was it about Jesus' teaching that gave Him "authority" (*Mark 1:22; John 5:19; 8:28; 14:24*)? Why did the scribes/teachers of the law not have this authority?

5. How did the man with the evil/unclean spirit recognize Jesus so specifically as the *Holy One of God* (*Mark 1:24; Luke 1:35; John 6:69; Psalm 16:10*)? What does this say about evil's recognition of Jesus as the Christ (*James 2:19*)? What is the significance of Jesus being from Nazareth (*John 1:45-46*)?

6. If Jesus clearly demonstrated His authority by casting out the evil spirit from this man, why did people debate about who He was (*Mark 1:27; John 1:10-11*)? Do you struggle to believe that Jesus has ultimate authority in your life (*Ephesians 1:20-23*)?

7. What kind of stir do you think Jesus created through His healings (*Mark 1:32-33*)? Why would Jesus not permit the demons to speak (*Mark 1:34*)? Why did He want to keep His identity a secret (see verses 43 and 44 as well)?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 1:22 – *They were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*

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STUDY THREE | MARK 1:35-45

We get a glimpse into Jesus' ministry priorities in this passage: Prayer, preaching, and compassion. We do well to consider these priorities in our lives as well!

1. After a long day of ministry, what did Jesus do the following morning (*Mark 1:35*)? If Jesus relied on the Father in prayer, how important is for us to do the same? Why don't we spend time in prayerful preparation more often (*1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*)?
2. The term for "solitary" or "secluded place" is the same term for "wilderness" or "desert" used earlier in this chapter (*Mark 1:3, 4, 12, 13*). What is the connection between the "wilderness" and our preparation to do God's work (*Exodus 3:1; Deuteronomy 8:2*)?
3. Why was "everyone" looking for Jesus in *Mark 1:37*? If they were seeking Him, why did Jesus decide to go somewhere new (*Mark 1:38*)? What does Jesus indicate is the main reason why He came (cf. *Romans 15:20; 1 Corinthians 1:17; Isaiah 61:1*)?
4. What was the order of activity in Jesus' ministry in Galilee (*Mark 1:39*)? Is this order consistent with Jesus' stated ministry purpose in *verse 38*? Do you think people experience more growth through preaching or through miracles (*1 Corinthians 14:1-3, 22*)? Explain your answer.

5. Notice that Jesus was filled with “compassion” for the leper (*Mark 1:41*)? How is that a model to us towards those in need (*Colossians 3:12-14*)? Would others describe you as a compassionate person? Why do we often struggle to extend compassion to others in need (*1 John 3:17*)?

6. Why did Jesus tell the cleansed leper to follow the Old Testament law from *Leviticus 14*? Didn't Jesus fulfill that old covenant (*Matthew 5:17*)? Why did this man not heed Jesus' warning to remain silent (*Mark 1:45*)? Was he sinning by telling others about what Jesus had done?

7. How can you more successfully emulate Jesus' ministry priorities in your own life? How might your life change if you were to make these your priorities as well? Who can encourage you to make these your priorities (*John 13:15*; *1 John 2:6*; *1 Peter 2:21*)?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 1:38 – *He said to them, “Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, so that I may preach there also; for that is what I came for.”*

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STUDY FOUR | MARK 2:1-12

Jesus continues His miracle-working and gives us the first indication that He is indeed God: He forgives sins! Needless to say, Jesus' enemies have problems with this issue!

1. Why do you think these four men went to such lengths to bring their paralyzed friend to Jesus (Mark 2:3-4)? Considering their example, to what lengths have you gone in order to “bring” your friends to Jesus Christ (i.e. share the gospel, serve them, etc.; Romans 10:1)?
2. Why would Jesus forgive the sins of the paralytic because of the faith of his friends (Mark 2:5)? Why is nothing said about the paralytic's faith? What was Jesus teaching them and us today (James 5:15-16)?
3. Were the friends hoping that Jesus would forgive the paralytic's sins or were they hoping for something else? Why would Jesus' words cause such a stir amongst the scribes (Mark 2:6-7; cf. Isaiah 43:26)?
4. How did Jesus know exactly what the scribes were thinking in their hearts (Mark 2:8; Colossians 1:15-17)? How would you respond if Jesus had asked you such a penetrating question like He did in verse 8?

5. What is the answer to Jesus' question in *Mark 2:9*? What did His command to the paralytic demonstrate to those watching (*Mark 2:10-11; Matthew 11:27; John 3:35*)? Why was it crucial for Jesus to demonstrate this (*John 1:4-5, 10-12*)??

6. What was the result of Jesus' miracle (*Mark 2:12*)? What does this result reveal about the purpose for which Jesus came (*John 8:28-29*)? Has Christ's miraculous work in your life caused you to glorify God recently?

7. How does our passage today challenge you to intercede on behalf of others to God (Again, see *James 5:15-16*)? What difference does it make in your life that Jesus Christ has the authority to forgive sins (*Acts 5:31; 10:43; Ephesians 1:7*)?

MEMORY VERSES:

Mark 2:10-11 – “*But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins*” He said to the paralytic, **(11)** “*I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.*”

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STUDY FIVE | MARK 2:13-22

Jesus calls a new disciple and the religious elite are not impressed. Jesus demonstrates that His teachings are very different than those of His legalistic Jewish counterparts.

1. Notice Jesus' continued commitment to teaching the crowds that approached Him (*Mark 2:13*; cf. *1:38*). Why was Levi so quick to follow Jesus (*Mark 2:14*)? How would you have responded to Jesus' invitation?
2. Why was it significant that Jesus would call Levi, a tax collector, to follow Him? What was significant about the meal that Jesus share at Levi's house (*Mark 2:15*)? How does Jesus model genuine ministry for us here?
3. Would your reaction have been like that of the scribes (or "teachers of the law," NIV) of the Pharisees in *Mark 2:16*? Who are the "tax collectors and sinners" that we see in our world today? How does your answer reveal your own spiritual perspective (*John 9:40-41*; *1 John 1:8*)?
4. What is profound about Jesus' response in *Mark 2:17*? How does He warn against self-righteousness here (*Romans 12:3*)? Do you see yourself as a "sinner" (*Romans 7:24*) or one who is "righteous" (*2 Corinthians 5:21*) Both? Explain your answer.

5. How does Paul's life compare with that of Levi (*1 Timothy 1:12-16*)? Given that Levi is also Matthew (*Matthew 9:9*) who wrote the Gospel of Matthew, what do we learn about God and His ways (*1 Corinthians 1:26-29*)? Do these truths cause you to be proud or humble?

6. Who were John's disciples (*Mark 2:18; Luke 7:19; John 3:23*)? Why was Jesus constantly criticized by others (especially the Pharisees; see *Luke 18:11-12*)? What does Jesus mean to communicate in His response (*Mark 2:19-20; Luke 9:22, 44*)?

7. What is this *cloth* and *wineskin* business (*Mark 2:21-22*)? If Jesus' teaching is the "wine," how is He attempting to expand the perspective of the Pharisees? Where do you need to be teachable and have your perspective expanded by Christ? What "new wine" is God trying to teach you?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 2:17 – *And hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."*

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STUDY SIX | **MARK 2:23-3:6**

Jesus seeks to undermine the Pharisees' rigid understanding of the Sabbath. What preconceived notions do we have that God may want to change?

1. Why would the Pharisees say that it was unlawful to pick heads of grain on the Sabbath (*Mark 2:24; Exodus 34:21*)? What was the Sabbath anyway and what was its purpose (*Exodus 20:9-11; 31:13*)?
2. What is this event that Jesus references from the life of David (*1 Samuel 21:4-6* and *Leviticus 24:9*)? Why would Jesus reference King David to these Jewish Pharisees? How would these men have viewed David?
3. What point is Jesus trying to make in *Mark 2:25-26*? Was it unlawful to do good on the Sabbath (*Luke 6:9*)? What does God prefer? How did this challenge the Pharisees and their rigid (or legalistic) standards?
4. How was the Sabbath made for man (*Mark 2:27; Deuteronomy 5:13-15*)? How was man (i.e. the Pharisees) trying to "make" the Sabbath? Who is Jesus (*Mark 2:28; John 3:13*) and how does His teaching overrule what the Pharisees might say?

5. Why were the Pharisees so intent on watching Jesus' every move (*Mark 3:2; Luke 6:7*)? Why did they not learn their previous lesson about the Sabbath? Why do you think they kept silent when Jesus asked His question in *Mark 3:4*?

6. Was it right for Jesus to be angry at the Pharisees' stubbornness/hardness of heart (*Mark 3:5; Luke 13:34*)? Why or why not? Why would this stubbornness grieve Jesus? Why did the Pharisees immediately leave to plot His death (*Mark 3:6*)?

7. Where are you being too critical or "rigid" in your adherence to a particular set of behaviors (*Galatians 5:1*)? How are you not allowing yourself or others to carry forth the work that God desires you to do (*Colossians 2:16-17*)?

MEMORY VERSES:

Mark 2:27-28 – Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. **(28)** So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

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STUDY SEVEN | MARK 3:7-35

As Jesus' popularity grows, so does His opposition. Some claim that He is out of His mind, yet they are really the nonsensical ones. True wisdom means obeying God.

1. Look at the variety of places from where these people came (*Mark 3:7-8*). What does this say about the reputation of Jesus and the authority of His message (*Matthew 28:18; John 12:44-45; 49-50*)?
2. How was Christ's authority underscored by the evil/unclean spirits' assertion (*Mark 3:11; 1:23-24*)? This theme of the "Secret Messiah" is very present in Mark's gospel (*Mark 3:12; 1:34*). Why did Jesus order them to remain silent about His identity?
3. What were the specific purposes for which Jesus appointed the twelve apostles (*Mark 3:14-15*)? Notice that Jesus' authority qualified them as apostles (*Matthew 10:1; Luke 10:19*)? Why was Jesus' authority essential for them to carry out their work?
4. Jesus' own family claimed that He was "out of His mind" (*Mark 3:21; Luke 4:24*). How could they not fully understand who Jesus was? Who else misunderstood who Jesus was (*Mark 3:22*)? Are these "misunderstandings" connected (*John 10:20*)?

5. Who is Beelzebul (or Beelzebub, *Mark 3:22; Luke 11:18*)? Why was this claim nonsensical (*Mark 3:23-26*)? What nonsensical claims have you heard others make about Jesus? What was Jesus accomplishing through His healings and miracles (*Mark 9:27; 1 John 3:8*)?

6. What is “blasphemy against the Holy Spirit” (*Mark 3:29*)? Why is it unforgivable? How does *Mark 3:30* explain what this sin is? Don’t worry, this sin is really about “hardness of heart” (*Mark 3:5; Exodus 8:32; Psalm 14:1*) rather than any action we might make!

7. Why did Jesus’ mother and brothers return to find Him (*Mark 3:31; cf. Mark 3:21*)? Was Jesus wrong to reject His family (*Matthew 10:37*)? How do you “do” the will of God (*Mark 3:35; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Deuteronomy 27:10*)?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 3:35 – “For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother.”

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STUDY EIGHT | MARK 4:1-20

In this well known Parable of the Sower, Jesus begins to unfold some of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. While the crowds remain confused, His disciples get the real story.

1. Imagine this scene in *Mark 4:1*. Why did so many people come to hear Jesus? Why was Jesus constantly teaching by the lake/sea (*Mark 2:13; 3:7*)? What is a “parable” and why did Jesus use parables to teach (*Mark 4:2*)?
2. Would the imagery of this parable in *Mark 4:3-8* have made sense to His listeners? Why or why not? Does this imagery make sense to you? What does the phrase in *Mark 4:9* mean and why did Jesus say it (*Matthew 13:9; Revelation 3:6*)?
3. Why were only the disciples given the secret/mystery of the “kingdom of God” (*Mark 4:11; cf. Ephesians 1:9-12*)? Was there something special about them? Why didn’t Jesus make His teaching clear to outsiders too?
4. Don’t the words of *Mark 4:12* (quoting *Isaiah 6:9-10*) seem a little unfair (cf. *Jeremiah 5:21*)? Why would God keep His truth a mystery from these people? How does the context of the unbelieving crowd shed light on this issue?

5. Jesus gives an explanation of this parable to His disciples (*Mark 4:14-20*). How does His explanation help you understand the parable? If you've read this parable before, do you have any new insights?

6. If the seed in this parable is the "word" (*Mark 4:14*), then what does the "soil" represent? What deters the word from "taking root" in your life? Worry (*Philippians 4:6-7*)? Riches (*1 Timothy 6:9-10*)? Worldly desires (*Titus 3:3*)?

7. Given your particular struggles from Question 6, what can you do in order that the word "takes root" more successfully in your life (*Mark 4:20*)? In other words, how can you pursue a more "fruitful" Christian life (*John 15:5; Romans 7:4*)?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 4:20 – "And those are the ones on whom seed was sown on the good soil; and they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold."

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STUDY NINE | **MARK 4:21-41**

Jesus continues His teaching in parables to the disciples in an effort to explain the coming Kingdom of God. He also proves His authority by calming the stormy sea.

1. What is Jesus getting at in *Mark 4:21-22*? Who is the “lamp” and why must the light of this “lamp” be revealed (*John 1:4-5; 9:5*)? What exactly will the light of this “lamp” reveal? What difference should these verses make in your life?
2. *Mark 4:24-25* is even more mysterious. What more will be given to those listening? What is the significance of “having” and “not having?” How might Christ’s teachings in this parable apply to us (see *John 14:15; Matthew 25:23*)?
3. What’s peculiar about Jesus’ description of the kingdom of God in *Mark 4:26-29*? Does the sower have control over the seed’s growth? How does the harvesting relate to the future of God’s kingdom (*Joel 3:12-13; Revelation 14:15*)?
4. What is the character of a mustard seed and how does this describe God’s kingdom (*Mark 4:30-32*)? How will God’s kingdom begin (*John 1:10-11*)? How will it end (*Ephesians 1:9-10; Philippians 2:9-11*)?

5. How much did the crowds understand the teachings of Jesus (*Mark 4:33-34*)? Even if you believe in Jesus Christ, how are you like these crowds (*1 Corinthians 3:1-2*)? How does our obedience relate to our maturity (*Hebrews 5:12-14*)?

6. How does Jesus' response to the storm (i.e. sleeping) differ from that of the disciples (*Mark 4:38*)? What did Jesus' control over the storm demonstrate about Him and His message (*Mark 4:39; Psalm 24:1-2; 135:7; 107:28-29*)?

7. Do you lack faith when "storms" enter your life (*Mark 4:40*)? How does God desire for you to respond (*John 14:27; Colossians 3:15*)? How did the disciples' (and our) confusion over who Jesus was lead to their lack of faith (*Mark 4:41*)?

MEMORY VERSES:

Mark 4:40-41 – *And He said to them, "Why are you afraid? How is it that you have no faith?" (41) They became very much afraid and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"*

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STUDY TEN | **MARK 5:1-20**

Jesus casts out a series of demons called “Legion.” Notice the repetition of the verb “implore” (“plea” or “beg”). How does this repetition highlight the authority of Jesus?

1. How much good had human effort (shackles and chains) done to control this man with an unclean spirit (*Mark 5:3-4*)? Is it shocking that the man bowed before Jesus (*Mark 5:6; James 2:19*)?
2. How might have Jesus “tormented/tortured” this evil spirit (*Mark 5:7*), also known as “Legion” (*Mark 5:9*)? How does Legion’s pleading with Jesus demonstrate Jesus authority (*Mark 5:10; cf. Colossians 1:16*)?
3. How do we know that Gerasenes was a Gentile territory (*Leviticus 11:7*)? Why is it odd that Jesus would go to a Gentile territory (*Matthew 15:24*)? Yet why is it also consistent with God’s ultimate plan of salvation (*Romans 15:8-9*)?
4. Was it cruel for Jesus to cast Legion into the swine (*Mark 5:13*)? What is more important to God, the lives of people or of animals (*Genesis 1:26-27*)? Why would Mark include this strange event from Jesus’ life?

5. Imagine you were one of the townspeople in Gerasenes. How would you have responded to seeing this formerly possessed man sitting down in his “right mind” (*Mark 5:15*) after hearing this story (*Mark 5:16*)?

6. Why did the people “plea/implore” (again, notice the repetition of this word) Jesus to leave the area instead of thanking Him (*Mark 5:17*)? How does their reaction reveal their fear and misunderstanding of who Jesus was? Do you see similar misunderstanding about Jesus by people today?

7. The formerly possessed man “begged/implored” Jesus to join Him, but what task did Jesus have for this man (*Mark 5:19*)? How did he respond (*Mark 5:20*)? How can you similarly respond to the great things God has done in your life (*Psalms 71:15; 145:6-7*)?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 5:19 – *And He did not let him, but He said to him, “Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you.”*

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STUDY ELEVEN | **MARK 5:21-43**

Jesus continues His miracles by raising a girl from the dead and healing a woman of long-term hemorrhaging. Note the importance of faith throughout this section.

1. When Jairus approached Jesus (*Mark 5:22-23*), what was he risking at a Jewish synagogue leader (*John 9:22*)? Did you take similar risks when choosing to trust and follow Jesus Christ? What can we learn from Jairus' example of faith?
2. What had the bleeding woman tried to do in order to get well (*Mark 5:25-26*)? How did her trust in human wisdom and worldly means help her? Do you trust in human effort rather than in the miraculous power of God (*1 Corinthians 1:25*)?
3. Notice that the bleeding woman had not even seen Jesus, but simply *heard* about Him (*Mark 5:27*). Do you typically believe what others tell you, or do you accept what they say? How do you determine what you "accept?" What can we learn from her example of faith (*Hebrews 11:1*)?
4. Do you think Jesus actually knew who touched Him (*Mark 5:30*)? Why did He ask who touched Him if He already knew? Read *Leviticus 15:25-30*. What is ironic about Jesus' immediate healing of this bleeding woman?

5. Why did Jesus invite only Peter, James, and John to watch Him perform this miracle with the girls' parents (*Mark 5:37, 40*)? What other instances does Jesus invite only Peter, James, and John (*Mark 9:2*)?

6. Try to observe some similarities between the raising of Jairus' daughter and the healing of the bleeding woman. Why might Jesus call the woman "daughter" (*Mark 5:34*)? What else do you notice about these two miracle accounts (*Mark 5:25, 42*)?

7. The theme of *Mark 5* seems to be faith in God's ability to do the impossible. What does Jesus indicate is the opposite of faith (*Mark 5:36; Luke 8:50*)? Why do you hold on with fear rather than trusting your circumstances to God by faith (cf. *Proverbs 3:5-6*)? How can you more fully walk by faith and trust God this week?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 5:36 – *But Jesus, overhearing what was being spoken, said to the synagogue official, "Do not be afraid any longer, only believe."*

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STUDY TWELVE | **MARK 6:1-13**

Jesus gets a chilly reception in His own hometown of Nazareth. He also empowers His apostles with more authority to minister and gives them specific “marching orders.”

1. When Jesus returned to His hometown (Nazareth, *Luke 2:39-40*), how was He received (*Mark 6:3; John 1:10-11*)? How did their familiarity with Jesus taint their ability to believe that He was the Son of God and worthy of honor (*Mark 6:4*)?
2. What was the consequence of the lack of faith of the people of Nazareth (*Mark 6:5*)? How does this contrast this to the attitude of Jairus and the bleeding woman (*Mark 5:23, 27*)? Why does our unbelief limit the unlimited power of God?
3. Why would Jesus need to send out the twelve disciples to do His work (*Mark 6:7*)? Couldn't Jesus do it all Himself? He was, after all, God in human flesh, right (*John 1:14; Philippians 2:6-7*)? Does Jesus still “need” our help today?
4. Do Jesus' instructions in *Mark 6:8-9* seem odd to you? If you were told these same words, what (or, more appropriately, Who) would need to be your source of trust and provision? How does this principle of trust speak to us today (*Matthew 6:25-30*)?

5. Why would Jesus have the disciples/apostles shake the dust from their sandals (*Mark 6:11*)? What was this supposed to symbolize (*Nehemiah 5:13; Acts 18:6*)? Do we have a modern-day equivalent of this act of “dust shaking?”

6. Notice the order of Jesus’ activities: 1) Message of repentance followed by 2) Miracles (*Mark 6:12-13*; see the same order in *Mark 1:38-39*). What does this order show you about God’s priorities? What is God really most concerned about (*Luke 5:32; 2 Peter 3:9*)?

7. Do not let your “familiarity” with Jesus stifle your faith in Him (*Mark 6:3*). Thank God for how He has drawn you to repentance (*Romans 2:4*). Ask Him to increase your faith so that you will trust even more fully in the Son of God, who is worthy of all honor (*1 Timothy 1:17; Revelation 4:11*)!

MEMORY VERSES:

Mark 6:4-5 – *Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his own relatives and in his own household.” (5) And He could do no miracle there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.*

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STUDY THIRTEEN | **MARK 6:14-29**

We read of the beheading of John the Baptist as ordered by the cowardly King Herod. John and Herod stand in stark contrast to one another. Which one do you resemble?

1. People had many ideas about who Jesus was (*Mark 6:14-15; Matthew 16:13-16*). Why were so many people confused about who He was? Who do people today believe Jesus to be? Why are they confused as to who He is (*John 1:5*)?
2. Why did Herod believe that Jesus was John the Baptist risen from the dead (*Mark 6:16*)? Read the following account (*Mark 6:17ff*, especially *Mark 6:26*) and imagine the emotions Herod was dealing with.
3. Look up all of the historical characters that are named in this section (Herod, Herodias, Philip, etc.) in a Bible dictionary. How can a fuller understanding of history and background help in reading this account?
4. Imagine the courage it must have taken for John the Baptist to rebuke Herod and Herodias for marrying each other (*Mark 6:18; Luke 3:19-20*). When have you taken a similar courageous stance for the truth in your life (*1 Corinthians 16:13*)?

5. Herod enjoyed listening to John the Baptist even though John rebuked him for his marriage to Herodias (*Mark 6:20*)? How do we explain this? Do you know people who enjoy listening to God's truth, even though it convicts (and possibly) offends them (*Hebrews 4:12*)?

6. Herod was entertained by John the Baptist, but he could not spare John's life (*Mark 6:25-28*). Contrast Herod's life of *cowardice* to John's life of *conviction*. How does God desire for us to live (*1 Corinthians 15:58*)? How are you living?

7. John the Baptist was martyred for his faith and willingness to stand for the truth. As followers of Christ, why are we promised to experience persecution (*Philippians 1:29; James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6-7*)? Are you prepared for this persecution?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 6:20 – *for Herod was afraid of John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he kept him safe. And when he heard him, he was very perplexed; but he used to enjoy listening to him.*

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STUDY FOURTEEN | **MARK 6:30-44**

In one of His most famous miracles, (the Feeding of the 5,000), Jesus demonstrates care and compassion both for His small group of disciples as well as the larger crowds.

1. How did Jesus first respond to His apostles' report (*Mark 6:30-31*)? Why would He tell them to go away to a secluded place – didn't they have more ministry to accomplish? How does He model servant leadership here?
2. Does busyness without rest define your life? Do you see rest as a necessary part of your life as you serve the Lord at home, work, or church? How does God model for humanity the importance of rest (*Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:11; cf. Mark 1:35*)?
3. How does Jesus protect His disciples from burnout in *Mark 6:34* (*Matthew 11:28-29; Jeremiah 31:25*)? What strikes you about Jesus' response to this large crowd (see also *Mark 1:41*)? How does Jesus act as a model for us as we serve others (*Colossians 3:12*)?
4. Contrast Jesus' response to the crowd (*Mark 6:37*) to that of His disciples (*Mark 6:35-36*). What are they more concerned about? What was He concerned about? Do you let practical concerns limit your opportunities for ministry (*Philippians 2:3-4*)?

5. Why would Jesus have the crowd sit down into groups of hundreds and fifties (*Mark 6:39-40*; cf. *Exodus 18:21*)? How does this account demonstrate that Jesus was a strategic leader, even during unexpected circumstances?

6. This miracle is amazing by itself, but what do you notice about the result (*Mark 6:42-43*)? Are you able to see how God abundantly supplies your physical and spiritual needs every day (*Matthew 6:30*; *John 4:13-14*; *Ephesians 3:20*; *1 Timothy 1:14*)?

7. How can you cultivate a compassionate, servant heart like that of Jesus (*Mark 10:45*)? What opportunities is God putting before you this week? How should you respond? Share about these opportunities with someone so that they can pray for and encourage you (*Hebrews 10:24*).

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 6:34 – *When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things.*

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STUDY FIFTEEN | **MARK 6:45-56**

Jesus walks on the water, causing much fear in the disciples. Their development as disciples is slow, much like ours. Thankfully, God is compassionate and gracious with us!

1. Why would Jesus send His disciples ahead of Him (*Mark 6:45*)? How might this have allowed both Jesus and His disciples to be refreshed after an intense day of ministry (*Mark 6:46; John 6:14-15*)?
2. Do you think that Jesus meant to test the disciples (*Mark 6:48*)? Was He planning to walk past them or help them? Which motive would have been more consistent with Jesus' role as a servant leader to His men?
3. Imagine you were one of the disciples – how would you have responded to seeing Jesus walking on water (*Mark 6:49*)? Should they have known it was Him? How does Jesus' response to their fear demonstrate His compassion for them (*Mark 6:50; Isaiah 41:13*)?
4. Why were the disciples astonished (*Mark 6:51-52*)? Why had they not gained any insight from the feeding of the 5,000 previous to this (*Mark 6:33-44*)? How should they have responded differently (*1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Hebrews 5:11-12*)?

5. How has God shown Himself to be mighty and miraculous in your life? Have you learned any insights from what He's done or is your heart hardened like those of the disciples (see also *Psalm 95:7-8*)?

6. No rest for the weary in *Mark 6:53-56*! Are you more like the people of Gennesaret (seeking to get something) or Jesus (seeking to serve the peoples' needs)? How can you become more like Jesus (*Matthew 20:26-28; Philippians 2:5-7*)?

7. Take some time and ask God to grow your heart for compassion and service (*Colossians 3:12; 1 John 2:6*). Who are the people in your life that you can serve this week? Write down one way that you can practically serve and do it!

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 6:50 – *because they all saw him and were terrified. Immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."*

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STUDY SIXTEEN | **MARK 7:1-23**

Another round of confrontation with the Pharisees gives Jesus a chance to reveal the source of all things unclean: The sinful human heart.

1. The Pharisees' idea of what was "unclean" or "impure" came from the "traditions of the elders" (*Mark 7:2-4; Galatians 1:14*). What "traditions" do you cling too tightly to? How can these "traditions" be offensive to God (*Colossians 2:8*)?
2. Jesus' response to the Pharisees was very stern (*Mark 7:6-8*). Are you ever hypocritical like the Pharisees? Does the quotation from *Isaiah 29:13* convict you (*Psalms 50:16-17; Ezekiel 33:31*)? What is God most concerned about – our heart or our actions?
3. What does it mean to "honor your father and your mother" (*Mark 7:10; Exodus 20:12; Leviticus 20:9*)? Given the context (*Mark 7:11-12*), how might honoring one's parents related to financial provision (*1 Timothy 5:8*)?
4. What does this term "corban" mean (*Mark 7:11*)? Check a Bible Dictionary or commentary for background. How can you guard against nullifying/invalidating God's word by your own preconceived traditions (*Mark 7:13*)?

5. According to Jesus, what “defiles” a man (*Mark 7:15*)? Do you agree? Why did Jesus make this declaration? What part of the body is ultimately the source of “defilement” in a person’s life (*Mark 7:19; Luke 6:45*)? How do you see this played out in your own life (cf. *Romans 7:19-24*)?

6. If all foods were declared “clean” by Jesus (*Mark 7:19*; cf. *Acts 4:13-15*), then why did God declare some animals “unclean” in the Old Testament (*Leviticus 11:3-7*)? How does this demonstrate Christ’s fulfillment of the Old Testament law (*Matthew 5:17*)?

7. After reading the list in *Mark 7:20-23*, why do you think it is so important to protect our hearts? How are you failing to protect your heart (even in the “smallest” way)? What steps can you take to protect it this week (*Proverbs 4:20-23; Luke 6:45*)?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 7:15 – “*there is nothing outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man.*”

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STUDY SEVENTEEN | **MARK 7:24-37**

***Jesus' ministry takes an unexpected turn as He exorcises a demon from a Gentile girl.
People continue to be astonished by His miraculous power***

1. Where is Tyre (locate it with a Bible map or atlas)? What is significant about this region, its history, and its people (*Joel 3:4-8*)? Why might Tyre have been a good place for Jesus to “hide out” (*Mark 7:24*)?
2. What is significant about this woman’s desire to approach Jesus, a Jewish rabbi (*Mark 7:25-26*)? What does Jesus mean by His response in *Mark 7:27*? Who are the “children” (cf. *Exodus 19:5*) and who are the “dogs” (lit. “doggies”)?
3. Whom was the primary target of Jesus’ ministry (cf. *Matthew 15:24; Romans 1:16*)? In light of this, how was the woman’s response appropriate (*Mark 7:28*)? Are you ever grateful that you also benefit from Jesus’ ministry (*Colossians 1:21-22*)?
4. Jesus’ exorcising of the woman’s daughter is unique among others in Mark since He casts a demon out of a person whom He never saw (*Mark 7:29-30*). How does this demonstrate the power and sovereignty of Jesus Christ (*Colossians 1:15-16*)?

5. Contrast the exorcism of the Syrophenician woman's daughter and the healing of this deaf man (*Mark 7:33*). Why did Jesus take the man away in private? Why did He touch the man's tongue? What was the significance of His saliva (consult a commentary for more background)?

6. As usual, Jesus orders the people to remain silent and yet they fail to do follow His instructions (*Mark 7:36*). What was the result of their proclamation of His deeds (*Mark 7:37*)? How would their proclamations have offered great hope to the people of Israel (*Isaiah 35:5-6*)?

7. Do these miracles offer you hope? Are you astounded by the miraculous work of Jesus Christ in your life? How do these miracles demonstrate Jesus as the ultimate servant (*Mark 10:45*)? Out of response to what Christ has done for you, whom can you serve this week?

MEMORY VERSES:

Mark 7:27-28 – *And He was saying to her, "Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." (28) But she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table feed on the children's crumbs."*

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STUDY EIGHTEEN | **MARK 8:1-21**

Jesus conducts His second mass “feeding” miracle for 4,000 people. This miracle leads into a discussion about bad leaven and reveals that the disciples are still slow learners.

1. Notice once again, Christ’s compassion for these people (*Mark 8:2-3*; cf. *1:41* and *6:34*). How does His compassion demonstrate His role as the ultimate servant of humanity (*Mark 10:45*)?
2. What is remarkable about the peoples’ persistence (*Mark 8:2-3*)? What they were willing to do just to spend time with Jesus? How much more accessible are the teachings of Christ available to you today (cf. *John 8:26-30*)? Are you grateful for this?
3. Compare and contrast the “Feeding of the 4,000” here (*Mark 8:3-9*) with the “Feeding of the 5,000” (*Mark 6:35-44*). What is similar? What is not? Why do you think Mark included two of these “Feeding” accounts?
4. Why did the Pharisees seek a “sign” from Jesus (*Mark 8:11*)? Did they really want a sign, or did they have different motives? How should we respond to people today who similarly “test” the claims of Jesus Christ (*1 Corinthians 1:22-24*)?

5. What was the “leaven/yeast” of the Pharisees and Herod and why was Jesus warning them to watch out for it (*Mark 8:15*)? What does Luke indicate this leaven is (*Luke 12:1*)? What insights might we get from Paul (*1 Corinthians 5:6-8*)?

6. Now, looking at the context of *Mark* chapter 8, how might leaven in this case specifically relate to hostile unbelief in Jesus through a hardened heart (*Mark 8:17*)? Why did Jesus warn His disciples (and us) against this? How can we watch out for this “leaven” in our lives today (*Romans 12:1-2*)?

7. How could the disciples possibly worry about their own bread supply (*Mark 8:16*) after what had preceded (*Mark 8:18-20*)? How do we exhibit the same lack of understanding as the disciples (*Mark 8:21; 6:52*)? What should we do differently (*2 Peter 1:9-11*)?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 8:15 – *And He was giving orders to them, saying, “ Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.”*

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STUDY NINETEEN | **MARK 8:22-38**

We see the unique account of Jesus healing of a blind man. Following this miracle, we have Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi and Jesus' later rebuke of Peter.

1. Why might Jesus have taken the blind man away from the village (*Mark 8:23*)? How would this seclusion have allowed Jesus to establish personal contact with the man? How is this similar to Jesus' healing of the deaf mute in *Mark 7:33*?
2. Couldn't Jesus have simply spoken and healed this man (cf. *Mark 5:39-42; Luke 7:12-15*)? Why did He choose to spit on him and touch him? How did this relate to the friends' request in *Mark 8:22*?
3. Why did Jesus perform this miracle in stages (*Mark 8:24-25*)? Was Jesus' ability to heal this man limited (cf. *Matthew 13:58*) or was He choosing to heal him in this way? Do you struggle to trust in God's timing and methods in your own life (*Psalms 6:2-4*)?
4. Who do people say that Jesus is today (*Mark 8:27-28*)? Why do they have so many ideas about who Jesus claimed to be? What is Peter's answer (*Mark 8:29; John 11:25-27*)? What does it mean that Jesus is the "Christ" (i.e. Messiah; *John 4:25-26*)?

5. If you were one of the disciples, what would you have thought if your leader started clearly predicting His suffering, death, and resurrection (*Mark 8:31*)? Why did Peter rebuke Jesus (*Mark 8:32*)? What was Peter afraid of?

6. Why did Jesus call Peter “Satan” (*Mark 8:33*)? What was Peter’s problem here? How do you set your mind on man’s interests rather than God’s? Why is it essential that we keep God’s interests at the core of all we do (*Colossians 3:2; Philippians 3:18-21*)?

7. How do Jesus’ words in *Mark 8:34-38* emphasize the importance of aligning our lives with God’s priorities? What does it mean to take up one’s cross (*1 Corinthians 11:1*)? How can you live this principle out this week? What are the consequences for being “ashamed” of Jesus (*Mark 8:38*)?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 8:34 – *Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”*

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STUDY TWENTY | **MARK 9:1-13**

Now we witness the incredible event of Jesus' glorious transfiguration.

One point of interest: Verse 7 is mathematically the central verse of the entire gospel!

1. What is Jesus talking about here in *Mark 9:1*? How does this verse on the kingdom relate to His statement in *8:38* about His coming in glory? How does this verse relate to the section that follows here in *Mark 9:2ff*?
2. Why did Jesus' transfiguration look like (*Mark 9:2-3*)? How did this transfiguration display the power of God's kingdom, while giving a foretaste of Jesus' future coming in glory (*Daniel 7:13-14; Revelation 1:12-16; 19:11-13*)?
3. Why were Elijah and Moses present on this mountaintop with Jesus (*Mark 9:4*)? What was significant about these two great figures from the Jewish faith? How might Jesus fulfillment of the Old Testament law and prophets relate to their appearance?
4. Why did Peter suggest making three tabernacles (*Mark 9:5*)? Did Peter intend to establish a permanent dwelling on the mountaintop (cf. *Exodus 25:8-9*)? Why were these three disciples terrified (*Mark 9:6*)? Would you have responded like Peter did?

5. Verse 7 is literally the middle of Mark's gospel. Why is this verse so important? Why did God the Father order them to listen to His Son (cf. *Matthew 3:17*)? At the same time, why did Jesus tell them not to say anything about this until after His resurrection (*Mark 9:9*)? Notice Peter's own account of this event in *2 Peter 1:16-18*.

6. Jesus had clearly shared about His resurrection before (*Mark 8:31-32*). Why then were these men still confused (*Mark 9:10*)? Again, why is Elijah mentioned (*Mark 9:11-12; Malachi 4:5-6*)? Who is the "Elijah" that Jesus mentions in verse 13 (*John 1:6-7, 21*)?

7. What difference does the Transfiguration make in your life? Do you think of Jesus Christ's glorious return (*Philippians 3:20; Revelation 1:7*)? How can you specifically live for God's future kingdom in the here and now? With whom can you share this glorious truth with this week?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 9:7 – *Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!"*

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STUDY TWENTY ONE | **MARK 9:14-29**

Through the disciples' failure to perform miracles, we see that while belief is powerful, in many situations, unbelief is more powerful!

1. Why did Jesus ask what this crowd was “arguing” (NIV) or “discussing” (NASB; *Mark 9:16*)? Did He really need to ask them (*Mark 2:8*)? How might His asking give the people an opportunity to experience growth?
2. If they had been able to cast out demons previously (*Mark 3:14-15; 6:13*), why were the disciples unable to cast out the demon from this man's son (*Mark 9:18*)? Why was Jesus so distraught with the unbelief of His generation (*Mark 9:19*)?
3. Did the people struggle to believe? Did His disciples (cf. *Mark 6:52*)? Did both? Considering that this account begins the second half of Mark's gospel, what is significant about Jesus' focus upon believing in God's ability to accomplish the miraculous (cf. *Ephesians 3:20*)?
4. As the father of this child who had been demon possessed since childhood (*Mark 9:21*), how eager would you have been to see Jesus heal this boy? Have you fully entrusted your children to the care and protection of Jesus Christ (*Matthew 19:14-14*)?

5. Do you trust that “all things are possible to him who believes” (*Mark 9:23; Luke 1:37*)? If this statement by Jesus is true, how might this fact change the way you pray? How might this fact change the things for which you pray (*Matthew 6:9-10*)?

6. Is your faith ever like that of the father in *Mark 9:24*? Why do Christians still struggle with doubts about who Jesus is and what He can do if we trust Him (*Matthew 17:19-20*)? What are you struggling to believe about Jesus Christ right now?

7. How important is prayer when we seek to accomplish God’s work (*Mark 9:29*)? How do you need to *pray expectantly* (*Matthew 21:21-22; Luke 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17*) this week for God’s work and will to be done (*John 13:13-14*)? Share this with others so that they too can pray.

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 9:23 – *And Jesus said to him, “If You can? All things are possible to him who believes.”*

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STUDY TWENTY TWO | **MARK 9:30-50**

In light of Jesus' role as the ultimate servant, here He teaches on the importance of living the life of a servant, which includes taking obedience very seriously!

1. Jesus seems to explain very clearly what was going to happen to Him (*Mark 9:32; Matthew 16:21*). Why then did the disciples fail to understand what He meant (*Mark 9:33; Luke 9:45*)? What would you have done if you were in their position?
2. Why were the disciples discussing which one of them would be the greatest (*Mark 9:34*)? Why is the tendency of our human nature to compare? How (if at all) do you struggle with this problem of comparison? How do you deal with this struggle?
3. Why must the "last/servant" considered "first" in God's kingdom (*Mark 9:35*)? What does this mean (*Philippians 2:3-4*)? How would Jesus embody this principle (*Matthew 20:26-28*)? How would welcoming a little child illustrate this principle (*Mark 9:37*)?
4. What does it mean to perform a miracle in "Jesus' name" (*Mark 9:39-40*)? How might John have been struggling with comparison or elitism in *Mark 9:39*? How does Jesus show that redemptive miracles are all accomplished by God's power (*Mark 9:40*)?

5. Why would Jesus use such strong language in *Mark 9:42*? Who are the “little ones?” Are they literally children or does this term refer to “the least” of those who believe in Jesus (*Matthew 10:42; 25:40, 45*)? Are you currently causing anyone to stumble?

6. Is Jesus speaking literally in *Mark 9:43-48* or is He using hyperbole (or exaggeration)? What is His point in these verses? What are the distractions in your life that prevent you from embracing a lifestyle of godliness and deeper obedience (*Colossians 3:1-5*)?

7. What is with this “salty” language in *Mark 9:49-50*? What did salt symbolize (*Leviticus 2:13*)? Do avoid opportunities to increase your “saltiness?” Why is this avoidance dangerous and how does God desire for us to respond instead (*Romans 12:1; 1 Peter 1:6-7*)?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 9:35 – *Sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, “If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.”*

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STUDY TWENTY THREE | **MARK 10:1-12**

Jesus' teaching on divorce reveals that the hardness of the human heart is often the real problem while the decision to divorce is the symptom.

1. Why do you think the Pharisees questioned Jesus about divorce (*Mark 10:2*)? Did they really want to get an answer or were their motives tainted (*Matthew 19:3*)? Why might divorce have been a hot topic for debate in Jesus' day?
2. Why did Jesus appeal to "Moses" when talking to the Pharisees (*Mark 10:3*)? From their response, in *Mark 10:4*, do you think the Pharisees had a full understanding of Moses' teaching on divorce (*Deuteronomy 24:1-4*; cf. *Malachi 2:14-16*)?
3. Why did Moses write the words of *Deuteronomy 24:1* (*Mark 10:5*)? How does a people's hardness of heart and tendency towards sinfulness force God to take action as a contingency for what He really wants for His people (cf. *Genesis 3:22-23*; *6:5-7*; *1 Corinthians 11:27-30*)?
4. How does Jesus' citation of the creation of man and woman strengthen His argument against the Pharisees' concerning divorce (*Mark 10:6-9*; *Genesis 1:27*; *2:24*)? Is the idea of "one flesh" merely physical (*1 Corinthians 6:16*), or more than that?

5. How do Jesus' words in *Mark 10:9* emphasize the importance of the marriage relationship to God (*Malachi 2:16*)? Do you really believe your marital union is something that God has brought together? How might this view change your approach to your spouse (*Ephesians 5:22-25, 28, 33*)?

6. How does Jesus clearly spell out His perspective on divorce (*Mark 10:11-12; Exodus 20:14*)? Do you agree with Him? What do other similar passages say on this subject (*Luke 16:18; Romans 7:2-3; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11*)?

7. Given Jesus' words concerning divorce in this passage, how would you counsel a friend who is considering divorce or who is already divorced? What about a friend who has been through a divorce and has already remarried?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 10:9 – *“Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”*

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STUDY TWENTY FOUR | **MARK 10:13-31**

Jesus He teaches very clearly about the futility and distractions of wealth. In order to be a fully devoted follower of Christ, we must limit these distractions that exist in our lives!

1. Why would people bring their children for Jesus to touch (*Mark 10:13*)? Why do you think the disciples rebuked these people? What is Jesus communicating through the example of children in *Mark 10:14-15* (*Psalms 25:9; 1 Peter 2:2-3, 5:6*)?
2. How might the example of “child-like” faith connect to the question that this man asks Jesus in *Mark 10:17*? How can we tell that this man is sincere? Why would Jesus say that God alone is good (*Mark 10:18*)? Wasn't Jesus God (*John 1:1-3*)? What point is He trying to make to this man?
3. Was Jesus indicating that eternal life could be earned through these commandments (*Mark 10:19; cf. Exodus 20:12-16*)? What did Jesus perceive in this man's life that was preventing him from fully embracing a life of discipleship (*Mark 10:21-22*)?
4. Would you have responded like this man (*Mark 10:22*)? Why are wealth and possessions such a distraction for us (*Matthew 6:19-21; 1 Timothy 6:17-19*)? What can wealth potentially keep us from experiencing (*Mark 10:23*)? Why did Jesus use such dramatic language in *Mark 10:25*?

5. On account of their astonishment, the disciples ask a good question in *Mark 10:26* don't they? How did Jesus respond (*Mark 10:27*; cf. *Luke 1:37*)? How does His response highlight the role of God's grace in our salvation (*Ephesians 2:4-5, 8-9*)?

6. What is Jesus' main point in *Mark 10:29*? Have you forsaken everyone and everything for His sake and that of the gospel? Do your wealth and possessions distract you from embracing the life of discipleship that Jesus calls you to?

7. What might the "reward" that Jesus is talking about in *Mark 10:30* look like? What might it look like in eternity? Why might we not be experiencing these rewards now? How does this passage move you to respond as a follower of Jesus Christ?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 10:25 – *"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."*

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STUDY TWENTY FIVE | **MARK 10:31-52**

Mark 10:45 is the “theme verse” of Mark’s gospel. Also notice that Mark 10:31 is a “hinge verse” that sets up the transition into this section for us.

1. Jesus clearly tells His disciples what is going to happen to Him (*Mark 10:32-34*). This is not the first time that Jesus has explained these things to them (*Mark 8:31*). How might these predictions relate to Christ’s words in *Mark 10:31*(cf. *Philippians 2:3-8*)?
2. Does James’ and John’s question seem out of place here (*Mark 10:35-37*)? How were they missing the point of what Jesus was saying? At the same time, how did they at least partially understand what was going to happen (*Acts 2:24; Matthew 19:28; Revelation 3:21*)?
3. What “cup” and “baptism” was Jesus talking about in *Mark 10:38* (*Matthew 26:27-29; Luke 12:50*)? How would James and John experience this “cup” and “baptism” (*Acts 12:1-2; Revelation 1:9*)?
4. How did the other disciples respond to this situation (*Mark 10:40*)? How would you have responded? How does Jesus correct their (and our) thinking about those who are “great” (*Mark 10:41-44*)? How does our world view “greatness” and why did Jesus’ definition run counter to that of the world’s (*1 Corinthians 1:18; 2:14*)?

5. Verse 45 is the theme verse for the entire Gospel of Mark. What was Jesus' ultimate act of service for the world (*John 10:14-15; Matthew 26:39*) and how is He our model for living the Christian life? Who else do you know that models this way of living?

6. Are you successfully living a life of service to others for the glory of God (*1 Peter 4:11; Colossians 3:17*)? Why or why not? Who are some people in your family, neighborhood, church, workplace, etc. that you can more actively serve this week?

7. Read the account of Bartimaeus (*Mark 10:46-52*). How does this account demonstrate that Jesus is the ultimate servant with ultimate authority? What is significant about Bartimaeus calling Jesus the "Son of David" (*2 Samuel 7:12-16; Matthew 1:1; Luke 1:32*)?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 10:45 – *"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

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STUDY TWENTY SIX | **MARK 11:1-11**

The Triumphal Entry sets the stage for Mark's final chapters. The great Servant sits on a colt as He prepares to carry out the greatest act of service in the history of the world.

1. Was Jesus wrong in ordering His disciples to take someone else's colt from them (*Mark 11:1-2*)? What is the significance of a colt that has never been ridden (cf. *Numbers 19:2*)? Why does God use "unblemished" things for His purposes (*Leviticus 22:21; Colossians 1:21-22; 1 Peter 1:19*)?
2. If Jesus only rode a colt, why do we call this the "Triumphal Entry?" How would you expect the "King" to enter the city of His ancestor David (*Matthew 1:1*)? How does the use of a lowly colt relate to the theme of Mark's gospel (*Mark 10:31, 45; cf. Philippians 2:5-8*)?
3. How did Jesus know that His disciples would find the colt (*Mark 11:3-6*)? Are you surprised that Jesus knew specifically what would happen? What attribute does this demonstrate about Jesus and His deity (cf. *Mark 2:8; John 4:16-19*)?
4. What was the significance of spreading coats and palms (or "branches") in front of Jesus as He rode on the colt (*Mark 11:7-8*)? What were they expressing? What does the word "Hosanna" mean? (*Mark 11:9*)?

5. *Psalm 118:26* was read during the Passover celebration. How do this fact relate to Jesus' entry into the city of Jerusalem (*2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 2:2*)? How was Jesus coming "in the name of the Lord" (*Mark 11:9; John 8:28-29; 14:24*)?

6. Was Jesus ushering in the kingdom of David (*Mark 11:10; Matthew 9:27; 2 Samuel 7:12-16*)? What did the people hope Jesus would accomplish (cf. *Luke 19:11; Acts 1:6*)? What would you have thought if you were there witnessing this event?

7. Compare this account to the parallel account in *Matthew 21:1-11*. What is similar? What is different? What do we learn from Mark's account about Jesus? How can we apply this passage to our lives this week?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 11:9 – "Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.'"

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STUDY TWENTY SEVEN | **MARK 11:12-33**

After Jesus clears the temple, He teaches about the importance of faith and forgiveness in relation to prayer. What do these verses have to say to you today?

1. Why did Jesus curse the fig tree in *Mark 11:14*? If we view this fig tree curse as an illustration of judgment, how might this cursing relate to what happens next with the cleansing of the temple (*Mark 11:15ff*)?
2. Why did Jesus become so enraged at the buying and selling inside the temple (*Mark 11:15-16*)? Was Jesus sinning through His anger (*Ephesians 4:26*)? What was at stake in this situation and how does this differ from most of the situations that anger us (*Psalms 69:9*)?
3. Did God intend His “house” (i.e. the temple) to be a place of prayer for all nations (*Mark 11:17; Isaiah 56:6-7*)? Wasn’t the temple only for the Jews’ worship? What does this global inclusion demonstrate about the scope of God’s salvation, even in the Old Testament (*1 Kings 8:41-43*)?
4. Why is it significant that the fig tree is withered after the temple cleansing (*Mark 11:20-21*)? How important is belief when we pray (*Mark 11:23-24*)? Will God really give us “all” things or is there more to this idea of answered prayer (*John 14:12-14; 16:23-24*)?

5. How important is forgiveness when we pray (*Mark 11:25*)? What happens when we fail to forgive others (*Mark 11:26; Matthew 6:14-15*)? Does this mean that we will not be saved? Do you need to forgive someone in order for your prayers to be answered (*Ephesians 4:32*)?

6. Why were the chief priests and scribes questioning Jesus' authority (*Mark 11:27-28; cf. 11:18*)? How was Jesus' response extremely clever (*Mark 11:29-30; cf. Matthew 11:9-11*)? How did their answer to Jesus demonstrate their misunderstanding of Christ's authority (*Mark 11:33*)?

7. What about you? Who do you believe gave Jesus His authority (*Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20-21; 1 Peter 3:22*)? Do you recognize Jesus as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (*Colossians 1:15-17; Revelation 17:14; 19:16*)? Why is an inaccurate understanding of Jesus' authority dangerous (*Mark 3:22, 28-30*)?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 11:24 – *“Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you.”*

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STUDY TWENTY EIGHT | **MARK 12:1-17**

Jesus' interaction with the chief priests and scribes takes a new turn. He tells them a striking parable that exposes their sinful hypocrisy even more. How will they respond?

1. Jesus used parables previously in this gospel (*Mark 12:1*; cf. *Mark 4*)? Would His listeners, i.e. the Jewish religious leaders, have understood the vineyard imagery used here (*Isaiah 5:1-7*; *27:2-3*)?
2. Who is the owner of the vineyard in this parable (*Psalms 80:8-11*)? Who are the vine-growers (or tenant farmers)? Who are the servants of the owner (*Mark 12:2, 4*; *Hebrews 1:1*)? Why did the tenants beat the servants (*Mark 12:3-4*)?
3. What do you observe about the treatments of the servants as time goes on? Does the tenants' abuse lessen or worsen each time (*Mark 12:5*)? What is special about the owner's final servant (*Mark 12:6*; *Luke 3:22-23*; *Hebrews 1:2-3*)?
4. Why did the tenants want to kill the owner's son (*Mark 12:7-8*)? Can you clearly see now who the tenants are and who the son is in this parable? Why might Jesus have told this parable after He entered Jerusalem (*Mark 11:11*; *Matthew 16:21*)?

5. How did the owner respond to the murder of his son (*Mark 12:9*)? How would God enact this judgment on His people? Who received the “vineyard” after them (*Romans 11:11-12, 25*)? What is Jesus communicating in *Mark 12:10* (*Psalms 118:22-23; Ephesians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:4*)?

6. Knowing that Jesus told this parable against them (*Mark 12:12*), these religious leaders now send some of their best henchmen to trick Jesus (*Mark 12:13; Luke 11:53-54*). Were they sincere in their flattery of Jesus (*Mark 12:14*)?

7. How were they hoping to catch Jesus with their question in *Mark 12:14-15*? How did Jesus know they were trying to test Him? What did Jesus mean by His answer (*Mark 12:16-17*)? Are we required as Christians today to render unto “Caesar” what is his and render unto God what is His (*Romans 13:1-2*)?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 12:17 – “And Jesus said to them, ‘Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’ And they were amazed at Him.”

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STUDY TWENTY NINE | **MARK 12:18-34**

The questioning of Jesus continues from a different group now – the Sadducees. Jesus points them to the true God and later explains what is most important to God.

1. Why did the Sadducees not believe in a resurrection from the dead (*Mark 12:18; Acts 23:8*)? Why is a belief in the resurrection essential to our Christian faith (*1 Corinthians 15:12-13*)? Could you imagine what life would be like if we did not have the hope of the resurrection?
2. Why did the Sadducees question Jesus about the seven brothers marrying the same woman (*Mark 12:19-23; Deuteronomy 25:5*)? What were they hoping to accomplish? How does Jesus' response expose their ignorance in several areas (*Mark 12:24*)?
3. Does Jesus' response about us being like "angels" in the resurrection surprise you (*Mark 12:25*)? What did He mean? What do you think we our bodies will be like in the resurrection (*1 Corinthians 15:41-43, 49*)?
4. How did Jesus' quotation of *Exodus 3:6* support His argument for the resurrection (*Mark 12:26*)? How did this quotation prove that God was the God of the "living" and not the "dead" (*Mark 12:27*)?

5. Do you think the scribe genuinely wanted to learn from Jesus (*Mark 12:28*)? Did Jesus' answer surprise you (*Mark 12:29; Deuteronomy 6:4-5*)? What does loving God with all your "heart, soul, mind, and strength" look like (*Colossians 3:17*)?

6. How is the second commandment connected to the first (*Mark 12:31; Leviticus 19:18*)? How do you love your neighbor as "yourself?" Why is obeying these two commandments more important than burnt offerings and sacrifices in God's eyes (*1 Samuel 15:22; Hosea 6:6*)?

7. Was this scribe saved or just *close to* being saved (*Mark 12:34*)? What did Jesus mean by not being far from the kingdom of God? What about you? Are you far from, close to, or a part of God's kingdom? What would have moved this scribe from being *close to* to being a *part of* God's kingdom (*Romans 10:9*)?

MEMORY VERSES:

Mark 12:29-31 – *"The most important one," answered Jesus, 'is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. (30) Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' (31) The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."*

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STUDY THIRTY | **MARK 12:35-44**

In the final teaching segment of this chapter, Jesus warns us to guard ourselves from hypocrisy and a “showy” life. God desires genuine sacrifice and obedience from us!

1. Where would the scribes/teachers get this idea that the Christ (Messiah) is David’s son (*Mark 12:35*; *2 Samuel 7:12-16*)? What is significant about Jesus’ quotation of *Psalms 110:1* here in *Mark 12:36*? Read all of *Psalms 110* and see what it’s saying.
2. What is the significance of Jesus’ statement that David said (really wrote) something “in/by the Holy Spirit” (cf. *2 Samuel 23:2*; *2 Timothy 3:16*)? What point was Jesus making in *Mark 12:37* about the Messiah being a son of David *and* the Son of God?
3. Why did people enjoy listening to Jesus’ teaching (*Mark 12:37*)? Was it simply pleasing to their ears (cf. *2 Timothy 4:3-4*), or were they getting something more out of it (*Luke 4:31-32*; cf. *2 Timothy 4:2*)?
4. What was Jesus condemning in *Mark 12:38-40*? Have you ever been concerned with how you appear to others or expected special treatment from others (*Luke 11:43*)? Rather than living with an attitude of “entitlement,” how does Jesus call us to live (*Mark 9:34*; *10:45*)?

5. How did these scribes “devour” widows’ houses (*Mark 12:40*)? What does God think about this “devouring” (*James 1:27*)? While we all struggle with the desire to appear impressive in the eyes of others, how can we avoid the hypocrisy that Jesus denounces here (*Matthew 6:6-7*)?

6. Notice that even giving can be done for the sake of appearance (*Mark 12:41*)? What should our motivation be (*Matthew 6:3-4*)? How was the widow’s offering different than that of the rich people (*Mark 12:42-44*)?

7. Do you see giving to God as a sacrificial part of worship or simply as a deed that must be done? What should our attitude be (*2 Corinthians 8:12; 9:7*)? How do you need to alter your approach to giving to God and His work? Where might He be stretching you in this area?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 12:36 – “*David himself said in the Holy Spirit, ‘The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand until I put Your enemies beneath Your feet.’”*

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STUDY THIRTY ONE | **MARK 13:1-13**

Jesus begins discussing His second coming to earth, which will happen in the future. What can we learn from Him regarding the treatment of Christians?

1. What did Jesus mean when he responded to the disciple's question (*Mark 13:1-2*)? When would the temple be destroyed? What is the significance of the Mount of Olives (*Mark 13:3; Zechariah 14:3-4*) and the private questions of these four disciples (cf. *Mark 1:16-20*)?
2. Why were these disciples so interested in things like the future destruction of the temple (*Mark 13:4*)? Would you also have been interested if you were one of them? What were these disciples anticipating would happen (cf. *Acts 1:6; Matthew 24:3*)?
3. What does Jesus warn about in *Mark 13:5* and why does He give this warning (*2 Thessalonians 2:1-2*)? Have we seen examples from history of people coming "in Jesus' name" who have led others astray (*Mark 13:6; cf. Jeremiah 29:8-9*)?
4. Have we witnessed "wars and rumors of wars" in our age (*Mark 13:7*)? Why does Jesus command us not to fear when we hear of these things? Do you obey Him, or do you become fearful and anxious (cf. *Philippians 4:6-7*) when you think about the "end times"?

5. International strife, earthquakes, and famines have been happening for centuries now (*Mark 13:8*). How do we know when the end is coming (*Matthew 24:36, 44; Acts 1:7*)? Will we experience the same persecution that Jesus' disciples did (*Mark 13:9; 1 Thessalonians 3:4*)? How do His words here in *verse 9* apply to us?

6. Has the gospel been preached to all the nations (*Mark 13:10*)? When will this happen? How does the worldwide proclamation of the gospel relate to the disciples' testimony before world leaders? Does *Mark 13:11* give you any comfort as you seek to share the gospel with others?

7. If Jesus taught so extensively on "love" (cf. *John 13:35*), why would people hate His disciples (*Mark 13:13; John 15:21*)? What would stir up this hatred? Are you "hated" because of the name of Jesus (*1 Peter 4:12-14*)? What does it mean to "endure to the end?"

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 13:7 – *"When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be frightened; those things must take place; but that is not yet the end."*

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STUDY THIRTY TWO | **MARK 13:14-37**

Jesus continues teaching on His second coming by giving more clues, but ultimately warning His disciples to be prepared – for no one knows when He will return!

1. What is the “abomination of desolation” (*Mark 13:14*; cf. *Daniel 9:27*; *11:31*; *12:11*)? Many people believe this “abomination” happened before Jesus’ time. If the abomination had already occurred, why did Jesus warn people to flee when they see it happening (*Mark 13:15-18*)?
2. What is this “time of tribulation/distress” (*Mark 13:19*; *Daniel 12:1*; *Jeremiah 30:7*; *Isaiah 2:12*)? How bad will this “day” or “time” be? Has this “day” already happened (i.e. the Holocaust)? Who are the “elect” (*Mark 13:20*; cf. *2 Peter 1:10*)?
3. Why does Jesus warn against “false Christs and prophets” (*Mark 13:21-22*; *Matthew 7:15-16*)? Have we seen “false Christs” appear in our lifetime (notice this is Jesus’ second warning of this sort; See *Mark 13:6* and Question 3 from the previous study)?
4. Jesus indicates that the return of the true Christ will be obvious (*Mark 13:23-25*). Based on these words, how will we know when the true Christ returns again (*Mark 13:26*; cf. *Daniel 7:13*; *Revelation 1:7-8*; *14:14*)? Why does He call Himself the “Son of Man?”

5. Notice what will happen after (not before) this final tribulation (*Mark 13:24-26; Isaiah 13:10; Joel 2:10; Revelation 6:12*). How many references do you see to celestial objects in these verses? Why do we see this focus on the heavens and the sky?

6. Why will the Son of Man send out His angels out across the world (*Mark 13:27*)? Why does Jesus indicate that that we will know when these future events are close (*Mark 13:29*), but then indicate that only the Father knows of their exact timing (*Mark 13:32; Matthew 24:36; Acts 1:6-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2*)?

7. How are we to respond to the coming of the Son of Man (*Mark 13:33; Ephesians 6:18*)? How many times is the term “alert” or “watch” used in *Mark 13:33-37*? What “tasks” has the Son of Man given you to carry out (*Mark 13:34*)? Why do we not want to be found “asleep” (*Mark 13:36; 1 Thessalonians 5:6*)?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 13:33 – “Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.”

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STUDY THIRTY THREE | **MARK 14:1-11**

The woman with pure nard illustrates a life of full devotion to Jesus Christ. What other responses to Christ do we see in this passage? Which response should you have?

1. What did Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread commemorate (*Mark 14:1; Exodus 12:11-23; 23:15*)? Why are these festivals important in light of what Jesus would eventually accomplish (i.e. die on the cross and be raised; cf. *John 1:29*)?
2. Why did the chief priests and scribes want to seize Jesus secretly (*Mark 14:1-2*)? What is significant about Jesus' choice to recline and eat at the home of Simon the leper (*Mark 14:3; Leviticus 13:3; cf. Matthew 9:11*)?
3. Who is this woman (cf. *John 12:2-3*) and why is her action questioned by those present (*Mark 14:3-4*)? How does this woman display unhindered devotion to Him who is worthy – Jesus Christ (*Revelation 5:11-12*)? Does this example mirror your devotion to the Savior?
4. Would you have responded like the individuals in *Mark 14:4-5*? The reasons for their rebuke seem valid, don't they (*Deuteronomy 15:11*)? Why then, does Jesus rebuke them for their response to her action (*Mark 14:6*)? Did Jesus not care about the poor (*Matthew 19:21; Luke 6:20*)?

5. What is Jesus foretelling in *Mark 14:8* (cf. *John 19:40; Luke 24:7*)? How could He foretell such an event with such confidence and, at the same time, peace (*John 13:1*)? How are Christ's words in *Mark 14:7* applicable to us (cf. *Isaiah 55:6-7*)?

6. What does Jesus promise will happen as a result of this woman's act of devotion to Him (*Mark 14:9*)? Is the emphasis on the woman or what she did? Now contrast the actions of Judas to that of the woman with the nard (*Mark 14:10-11*). What is the connection between the first two verses of this section (*Mark 14:1-2*) and the last two (*Mark 14:10-11*)?

7. Whose example should we follow? The woman's? The people's who rebuked her? Judas'? What prohibits you from living a life of full devotion to Jesus Christ (*Luke 14:26-27, 33*)? Fear? Concern? Control? Take some time to confess your hindrances and ask God to show you areas where you need to trust and obey Him more fully.

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 14:9 – *“Truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be spoken of in memory of her.”*

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STUDY THIRTY FOUR | **MARK 14:12-31**

Jesus and His disciples partake in the Last Supper. While Jesus warns of betrayal, Peter and the other disciples promise they will never disown.

1. What is significant about the Last Supper taking place the same day that the Passover lamb was sacrificed (*Mark 14:12*; cf. *1 Corinthians 5:7*)? How did Passover and the feast of Unleavened bread function as visible reminders to Israel of God's providential care (*Deuteronomy 16:1-4*)?
2. Jesus gives His disciples very clear instructions on how they are to find the place where they would celebrate the Passover meal (*Mark 14:13-16*). Where have we seen Jesus give similar instructions before (*Mark 11:1-4*)?
3. Imagine you were one of the disciples. What would you have thought when you heard Jesus' prediction about betrayal in *Mark 14:18-20* (cf. *John 13:10-11*)? How does their response in *verse 19* reveal their genuine shock? What would you have done?
4. Would the disciples have understood Jesus' words as He instituted the first communion meal (*Mark 14:22-24*)? What did the broken bread symbolize (*John 6:51-54*)? What is the blood of the covenant (*Mark 14:24*; *Hebrews 9:15*; *Jeremiah 31:31-34*)?

5. Do you really think about the significance of the bread and cup when you celebrate communion (*1 Corinthians 11: 27-29*)? What is Jesus talking about when He refers to drinking wine “anew in the kingdom of God” (*Mark 14:25*)? When will this event take place (cf. *Luke 14:15; Revelation 19:6-9*)?

6. What does Jesus mean by “falling away” (*Mark 14:27*)? Who is the “shepherd” and who are the “sheep” (cf. *Zechariah 13:7; John 10:11, 14*)? Even in the midst of predicting their failure to remain faithful, how does Jesus give the disciples hope (*Mark 14:28*)?

7. Peter saw himself as being faithful to Christ (*Mark 14:29*). How does Jesus expose Peter’s failure as a disciple (*Mark 14:30*)? Are you convinced that your faithfulness to Christ will never falter (*Mark 14:31; 1 Corinthians 10:11-13*)? How do your times of denial or failure remind you of God’s abundant grace (*1 John 1:9; Psalm 32:5*)?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 14:25 – “Truly I say to you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

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STUDY THIRTY FIVE | **MARK 14:32-42**

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus wrestles with His destiny: that He must die for the sins of the world. The Son of God desires to do the Father's will above everything else.

1. It appears that Jesus often went to Gethsemane (*Mark 14:32; Luke 22:39; John 18:2*). How does Jesus' honest display of emotion before Peter, James, and John serve as a model of authenticity for us (*Mark 14:33-34*)? Was Jesus sinning in His distress (*Philippians 4:6-7; Matthew 6:34*)?
2. Why did Jesus pray that the "hour" might pass Him by (*Mark 14:35*) if He knew that this "hour" was the reason why He came (*John 12:27*)? How does Jesus model for us transparency before God the Father here?
3. While Jesus wanted the hour to pass by Him, what was His ultimate concern (*Mark 14:36*)? Do you believe that everything is possible with God (*Genesis 18:13-14; Job 42:2; Luke 1:37; 18:27*)? Why does He choose not to do certain things that we ask?
4. What does Jesus mean when He refers to the Father's will (cf. *Matthew 6:10; John 4:34; 6:38*)? Has your will ever been "at odds" with God's? What did you learn through that experience (*Romans 8:28-30*)? What else can we learn about prayer from Jesus' example in this verse?

5. If all three men were sleeping, (*Mark 14:37*) why did Jesus speak first to Peter (cf. *Mark 14:29, 13:35-37*)? Why did Jesus need these men to stay awake and pray (*Mark 13:34*)? What does Jesus mean when He says that the spirit is willing, but the body/flesh is weak (*Mark 13:38; Romans 7:22-23*)?

6. Have you ever experienced this phenomenon where you desire to obey the Lord, but struggle to do it? What boundaries or relationships have you established in your life to help you make obedient choices (*Proverbs 12:15; 19:20; Hebrews 10:24-25*)? How important is prayer to our ability to obey the Lord (*1 Thessalonians 5:16*)?

7. Jesus finds His closest disciples sleeping three times in Gethsemane (*Mark 14:40-41*). Do you struggle with habitual sin and moments of weakness? How have you dealt with the conviction over these habitual sins? Do you believe that God still loves you deeply even when you repeatedly fail Him (*Romans 8:35-39; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 4:10*)?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 14:36 – *And He was saying, “Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will.”*

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STUDY THIRTY SIX | **MARK 14:43-52**

We read about the betrayal of Jesus by Judas in these verses. Just as Jesus predicted, all of His disciples left Him – including a man wearing only a linen sheet!

1. Mark reminds us for the second time in this chapter that Judas was “one of the twelve (disciples)” (*Mark 14:43* and *10*). Why does Mark repeat this fact? How does this fact contribute to the story that Mark is telling?
2. What is ironic about what Judas does next and how he greets Jesus (*Mark 14:44-45*)? What does this term “Rabbi” mean (cf. *John 1:38b*)? What were the other disciples thinking in this moment? Did they immediately suspect that Judas was betraying Jesus?
3. Notice how quickly the scene changes in *Mark 14:46*. Who was this disciple that drew his sword (*Mark 14:47; John 18:11*)? Why did Mark not mention this disciple’s name? Would you have responded like this disciple did? Why or why not?
4. How does Jesus respond to this situation (*Mark 14:48*)? Was this crowd a motley crew or a more trained group of people (*John 18:3*)? Did they really need to bring these weapons to apprehend one man?

5. Considering the fact that Jesus was constantly around His enemies in Jerusalem (Luke 21:37), why didn't His enemies capture Him earlier (*Mark 14:49; Luke 19:47-48*)? How did His arrest fulfill the "Scriptures" (cf. *Isaiah 53:7-8*)?

6. Do you think the fact that the disciples left Jesus and fled (*Mark 14:50*) was a fulfillment of the "Scriptures" mentioned in *verse 49* (*Zechariah 13:7; Mark 14:27*)? Keep these themes of betrayal and denial in mind as they will resurface at the end of *Chapter 14*.

7. Who was this young man wearing a linen sheet (*Mark 14:51*)? Why did Mark include this detail about the man running away naked (*Mark 14:52*)? How does Mark's inclusion of this detail heighten the theme of denial? How do we apply today's reading to our lives?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 14:49 – "Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled."

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STUDY THIRTY SEVEN | **MARK 14:53-72**

***Jesus is taken before the Sanhedrin where He is falsely accused and abused.
Peter's denial highlights the tragedy of this chapter.***

1. How many people are mentioned in *Mark 14:53*? Given the context of this chapter (*Mark 14:1, 12; Deuteronomy 16:1-4*), are you surprised that this many leaders had gathered to try Jesus? Didn't they have more important matters to attend to?

2. Why did Peter follow Jesus (*Mark 14:54; cf. Mark 14:31*)? What did the false testimonies concerning Jesus reveal about these men (*Mark 14:55-56, 59; Proverbs 12:22*)? What did they reveal about Jesus (*Isaiah 53:9; 1 Peter 2:22-23*)?

3. What were these men accusing Jesus of in *Mark 14:58* (cf. *Acts 6:12-14*)? Jesus did say these words, but what did He mean (*John 2:18-21*)? Why would these men be so upset with this statement by Jesus?

4. Why did Jesus remain silent when the high priest first questioned Him (*Mark 14:60-61; Isaiah 53:7*)? How did the high priest's second question differ from his first? What does Jesus' response to the second question mean (*Mark 14:63; Daniel 7:13; Revelation 14:14*)?

5. Why did Jesus' response cause the high priest to react like this (*Mark 14:63; Leviticus 21:10*)? Why were these men claiming that Jesus was blaspheming (*Mark 14:64*)? Were they right or significantly confused (*Leviticus 24:15-16; John 10:31-33; 5:10; 19:7*)? Did emotion and fear factor into their judgment at all (*Mark 14:65*)?

6. Given the accusations against Jesus, is it understandable that Peter would deny knowing Him (*Mark 14:67-78*)? Have you ever denied knowing Jesus either out loud or silently in the presence of others? Why do we sometimes deny knowing Him? What are we afraid of (*Luke 9:24*)?

7. Notice that Peter's denials increased in intensity (*Mark 14:68, 71*). While Jesus had warned Peter ahead of time what would happen (*Mark 14:30, 72*), he still denied knowing Christ. When we deny knowing Christ (or fail Him through our disobedience), can we be encouraged that God is still faithful (*2 Timothy 2:13; 1 Corinthians 1:19*)?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 14:62 – “I am,” said Jesus. “And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

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STUDY THIRTY EIGHT | **MARK 15:1-15**

Jesus is brought before Pontius Pilate and identified repeatedly as the “King of the Jews.” The King of Kings is, however, rejected in favor of a criminal and sent off to be crucified.

1. Do you recognize any similarities between this segment (*Mark 15:1-15*) and the previous segment (*Mark 14:52ff*)? Why did these Jewish leaders take Jesus to (Pontius) Pilate (*Matthew 27:1-2*)? Did they waste anytime approaching Pilate (*John 18:28*)?
2. Is Jesus boasting when He answers Pilate’s question in *Mark 15:2*? How often is the phrase “King of the Jews” repeated in this chapter? What did it mean for Jesus to be the “King of the Jews” (*John 18:33-36*; *2 Samuel 7:12-16*)?
3. Jesus again remains silent during the harsh accusations (*Mark 15:3-4*). Why was Pilate amazed by His response (*Mark 15:5*)? Does God desire for us to respond with humility like Jesus did (*Matthew 5:39*; *Romans 12:17-19*; cf. *1 Corinthians 6:7*)?
4. How is Barabbas described (*Mark 15:7*)? Did this description fit Jesus? How heinous was their choice to release Barabbas over Jesus (*Mark 15:11*)? What destructive sin was driving this choice (*Mark 15:10*; *Proverbs 14:30*; *Job 5:2*; *1 Corinthians 13:4*; *Titus 3:3*)?

5. Why did the crowd want Jesus to be crucified (*Mark 15:12-13; Acts 3:13-14*)? Was this their idea, or were they incited in any way (*Mark 15:11; cf. Acts 13:50; 14:2*)? Why didn't they simply tell Pilate to put Jesus in prison (*John 5:18; 8:37*)?

6. Did Pilate try to have Jesus released instead (*Mark 15:14*)? Why did he give in to what the crowd desired (*Mark 15:15*)? Do you ever cater to the desires of others even when their desires violate your convictions of right versus wrong? Why do we sometimes do this? How can these decisions be dangerous (*Romans 14:14, 22-23; Galatians 1:10*)?

7. Do you see the ultimate irony and tragedy of this scene? Barabbas, the evil murderer, is released. Jesus, the innocent Son of God, is handed over to be murdered (*2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 3:5*). How does this picture of ultimate injustice stir you to respond to Christ's sacrifice for your sins?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 15:14 – *But Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify Him!"*

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STUDY THIRTY NINE | **MARK 15:16-32**

The tragic crucifixion of Jesus begins. Notice the irony as the divine Son of God and “King of the Jews” chooses to endure agony and insults ... for us.

1. Was this company of Roman soldiers a small group of men or a large one (*Mark 15:16; John 18:3*)? Why did Pilate call in this group (cf. *Mark 14:2* perhaps)? Why did they dress Jesus in purple (*Mark 15:17; Esther 8:15; Daniel 5:7; Luke 16:19*)?
2. Again, notice the repetition of the phrase “King of the Jews” in this chapter (*Mark 15:18, 2, 12, 26, 32*). This statement was similar to “Hail, Emperor Caesar!” What other examples of mockery do you see here (*Mark 15:19-20*)? What does God think of mockery (*Proverbs 1:22; 3:24; 17:5*)?
3. Why was this man Simon told to carry Jesus’ cross (*Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26*)? Do we know anything about this man? Where was he from (*Acts 2:10*)? Why might he have been in Jerusalem? Who might his son Rufus be (*Romans 16:13*)?
4. Why did these Roman soldiers try to give Jesus wine mixed with myrrh (*Mark 15:23*)? Some say the drink was given to help deaden Jesus’ pain while others say this was done to torment Jesus. Why did Jesus not take this drink (cf. *Matthew 27:34*)?

5. Why would these soldiers divide up Jesus' clothing and cast lots for it (*Mark 15:24; John 19:23-24; Psalm 22:18*)? Didn't they have more important things to do? How legitimate was the "charge" against Jesus, which they hung over His head (*Mark 15:26*)?

6. What do you think when you read about the continuation of mocking and insults (*Mark 15:29-32; Psalm 22:7*)? How many people mock and insult Jesus in the chapter? Did the chief priests really believe that Jesus "saved" others (*Mark 15:31*)? Why did they use this language?

7. Why didn't Jesus "save" Himself (*Mark 15:30-31; Luke 22:42; John 6:38*)? What would have happened if He had chosen to step down from the cross? How grateful are you for Jesus' willful sacrifice for the sins of the world (*Hebrew 12:2; John 10:17-18*)? How should you respond to His sacrifice?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 15:32 – "Let this Christ, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross, so that we may see and believe!" Those who were crucified with Him were also insulting Him."

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STUDY FORTY | **MARK 15:33-47**

Jesus dies the most significant death in the history of the world. Following His crucifixion, Jesus' body is laid in a tomb and the story appears to be over.

1. What are the sixth and ninth hours (*Mark 15:33*)? What is significant about darkness during this entire stretch of time? What did this darkness represent and how was this connected to Jesus' dying on the cross (*Amos 8:9; Isaiah 59:9-10; Jeremiah 13:16*)?
2. Why did Jesus say what He said in *Mark 15:34* (quoting from *Psalms 22:1*)? In what way had the Father forsaken the Son? Was this even possible? How do these words explain what was happening to Jesus at this very moment in time (*2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 4:10*)?
3. Why did those watching think that Jesus was calling for Elijah (*Mark 15:35*)? Did the Jews have an expectation that Elijah would return to earth (*Malachi 4:5-6; Mark 9:11*)? Why did one man give sour wine/vinegar to Jesus (*Mark 15:36; Psalm 69:21*)?
4. Why did the veil of the temple tear (*Mark 15:38; Hebrews 6:19-20; 10:19-20*)? What is significant about the manner in which it tore? If we realize just how holy the Most Holy Place was (*Leviticus 16:2-17*), what did Christ's death mean (*Hebrews 9:11-14*)?

5. What about Jesus' final breath convinced the centurion that Jesus was the "Son of God" (*Mark 15:37, 39*)? If women were not highly regarded in first-century Palestine, then what can we gather about Jesus' ministry (*Mark 15:40-41*)? Whom did He seek to reach (see *Luke 5:31* perhaps)?

6. What was the preparation day (*Mark 15:42*) and why did Joseph of Arimathea want to take Jesus' body down from the cross (*Mark 15:43; Deuteronomy 21:22-23*)? How was this act by Joseph one of incredible boldness (*Luke 23:50-51; John 19:38*)? Do you ever take similar risks?

7. What if the story of Jesus Christ's life ended in *Mark 15:46*? How would history have been different? What might have Mary and Mary been thinking (*Mark 15:47*)? Are you able to see past the momentary trials and grief of your life, realizing that there is more to the story?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 15:39 – *When the centurion, who was standing right in front of Him, saw the way He breathed His last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God."*

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STUDY FORTY ONE | **MARK 16:1-20**

The story is indeed NOT over as Mark recounts the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ! We are reminded of the need to share the victorious hope we have with others!

1. Why did these women wait until the Sabbath ended before they approached Jesus' burial place (*Mark 16:1*)? What purpose would anointing Jesus' body serve in their ancient culture (cf. *Mark 14:3, 8; John 19:39-40*)?
2. Why did Joseph of Arimathea roll the stone in front of the tomb (*Mark 15:46*) if these women still needed to anoint Christ's body (*Mark 16:3*)? What did they think when they saw the stone removed from the tomb's entrance (*Mark 16:4*)?
3. Who was this individual whom the women saw when they entered the tomb (*Mark 16:5; Matthew 28:3*)? Did he move the stone (cf. *Matthew 28:2*)? Why were the women alarmed or amazed (this term is used almost a dozen times in Mark's gospel; cf. *Mark 9:15*).
4. Are the angel's words in *Mark 16:6* good news? Note that the resurrection is the heart of the gospel (*1 Corinthians 15:1-4*). What did Jesus' resurrection signify and what did it accomplish for us (*Romans 4:25*)? Do you grasp its implications (*1 Corinthians 15:16-17, 20-22*)?

5. Why did the angel specifically order the women to tell Peter (as distinguished from the other disciples; *Mark 16:7; 14:27-30*)? Why was Peter significant (*Matthew 16:18-19*)? Why were they so afraid (*Mark 16:8*)? Is their response understandable? How would you have responded to this situation?

6. Why were people hesitant to believe that Jesus had been raised from the dead (*Mark 16:10-13*)? Do you know people who require “proof” to believe in Jesus (*John 20:25*)? What does Jesus say to those who do not believe (*Mark 16:14; John 20:27*)?

7. What is Jesus’ final command to His disciples in Mark’s gospel (*Mark 16:15; cf. Matthew 28:18-20*)? Do you obey this command? What was the purpose of the signs mentioned in *verses 17-18* (*Mark 16:20; cf. Acts 28:3-5*)? How is God calling you to follow the model of His Son, the great servant, now that you have read this book?

MEMORY VERSE:

Mark 16:6 – “Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.”

Resources for Mark | TBC

For further study of the book of Mark, see the following Bible Study Resources:

<http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/mark.pdf>

<http://net.bible.org/bible.php?book=Mar&chapter=1>

