

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

TOOLS FOR CREATING A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW | ROMANS 12:2

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

The Jesus you need to know

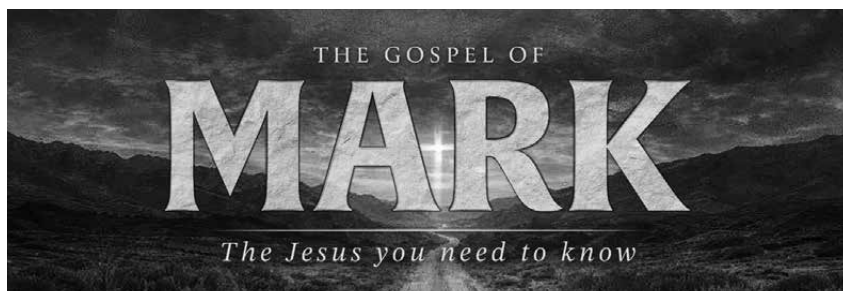
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Where did God show up?

As you see the goodness of God move in your life, use this page to write down how He's blessed you. Encourage one another and celebrate victories within and/or outside of your group meetings.

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WEEK 1: THE BEGINNING OF THE GOOD NEWS

ICE BREAKER

WORSHIP

PRAYER

SERMON REWIND

Mark introduces Jesus as a King who brings God's Kingdom near and calls for us to respond. Repentance and belief are not just about changing what we feel, but about changing who leads our lives. When the disciples follow Jesus, they show that the good news is not an improvement to our plans, but a surrender to His. From the start, we are confronted with a question that will echo throughout the series—will we rearrange our lives around this King, or attempt to fit Him into the margins of our own?

KEY VERSES

Look up theses additional verses:

Mark 1:1-15 (NLT)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

Making Jesus King

Jesus announces a Kingdom, which means He is not just an advisor, but the King..

- a. Where have you treated Jesus like He is just an addition to your life, rather than your King?
- b. What is one decision area right now where you are clearly asking, "What do I want?" more than "What does Jesus want?"

2

The Kingdom is at Hand

In **Mark 1:15**, Jesus pairs the Kingdom God being at hand with repenting and believing.

- a. Why do you think the nearness of God's Kingdom leads Jesus to call people to repent and believe?
- b. How has your understanding of repentance been shaped more by guilt than by direction?

3

Jesus Transforms Us

Surrendering to Jesus is submitting our lives, our views, our goals into His hands.

- a. What is the hardest thing to submit to Jesus (relationship, political views, work, personal struggle...)?
- b. When someone challenges a belief you strongly disagree with, how might following Jesus shape your response? Where have you seen this displayed well?

4

Trusting God in Each Step

Unsure of where they might end up, the disciples lives and mission changed when Jesus called them.

- a. What do you think the disciples felt as they let go of what was familiar and safe?
- b. Where might Jesus be calling you to take a step before you feel ready or certain?

Jesus, Our Lord

When Jesus enters our story, He is not entering as a guest but as our Lord.

- a. Where do you notice the tension between letting Jesus lead versus staying in control in of daily lifestyle?
- b. How could that awareness help you begin to surrender day-by-day?

DIVE DEEPER

Reflection Questions: Making Jesus our King is a work in progress, but it involves keeping our ears open to where He is calling us to submit.

- Dive Deeper" to this, "Where is it hardest to submit to Jesus as King (our heart posture, attitude, actions...)?
— *Important Note:* There is no shame from Jesus or this small group. Jesus just wants us to start living for Him. Breathe and release the weight.
- What would obedience look like this week if you stopped negotiating with Jesus?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Making Him King—Each day this week:

- Write down the areas you notice you prefer to be in control.
- Pray into how to release that control to Jesus.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you release areas of control and help you trust Him.

PRAYER/MINISTRY TIME

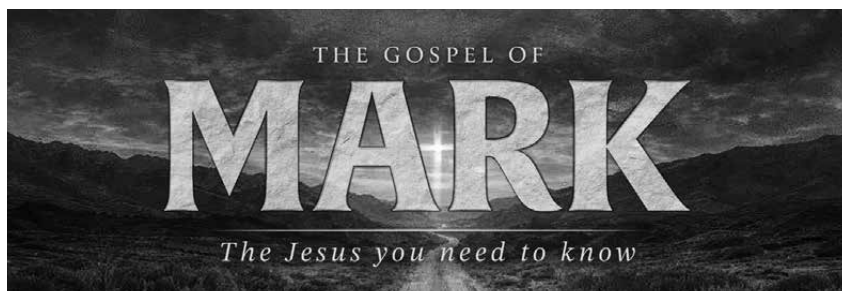
CLOSING SCRIPTURE

Psalms 33:4 (NLT), "For the word of the Lord holds true, and we can trust everything he does."

Let the group rest in that truth as you close together in prayer.

NOTES

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WEEK 2: AUTHORITY THAT RESTORES

ICE BREAKER

WORSHIP

PRAYER

SERMON REWIND

Jesus calls ordinary people into an extraordinary way of life and immediately reveals an authority that restores what is broken. His heart is clear in how He will heal, teach, have dinner with sinners, and allow Himself to be touched by the sick to bring life to others. The same authority that brings life, also challenged the comfort and routines of the religious leaders. Mark invites us to consider how we respond when Jesus' authority disrupts our comfort, routines and assumptions.

KEY VERSES

Look up theses additional verses:

Mark 1:16-3:12 (NLT)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

Compassionate Jesus

Very quickly, in Mark's first chapters, we see Jesus moved with compassion to care for the sick and demon possessed.

- a. How does the phrase "moved with compassion" affect your idea of Jesus?
- b. Jesus acts with immediacy. If Jesus saw someone in need today, how would you imagine He respond?

2

He Chooses Us

Jesus called ordinary people, fishermen and tax collector's, to experience and participate in His extraordinary work.

- a. Jesus didn't choose kings or princes; He chose fishermen and tax collector's. What does this tell you about His heart for people?
- b. Has it been difficult to believe that God could use you? Why?

3

Softening Our Heart

Jesus used His authority to heal people, even if that meant challenging traditions that would get Him in trouble.

- a. Why do you think that Jesus challenged systems and traditions?
- b. How might these stories challenge our own traditions and value systems?

4

Knowing Jesus Heart

Many people want Jesus to just fix their problems, but many struggle to let Him reorder their lives.

- a. What's the difference between being helped by Jesus and being transformed by Him?
- b. In what areas do you want Jesus to assist you rather than lead you? Why? What do you think God saying to you about this?

You Are Not a Failure

Jesus heals, forgives, and restores people that others may have already labeled as failures.

- a. Why is it easier to trust what others think of us, rather than what God thinks?
- b. Where do you still feel like you have to earn God's approval?

DIVE DEEPER

Reflection Questions: Our hearts have the tendency to get hard and distant, but Jesus calls us to keep our heart open.

- Where has your heart grown hard toward a situation—how might Jesus be trying to meet you there?
- What steps could you take to let your heart open up?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Being Challenged by Jesus—Each day this week:

- Write down the areas your heart has grown hard.
- Ask God: "Jesus, how do You want to move in this? Write and pray into this consistently.

Ask the Holy Spirit to soften your heart and to experience His love in this.

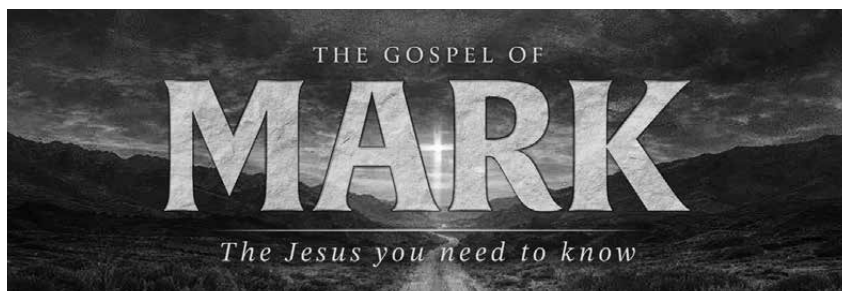
PRAYER/MINISTRY TIME

CLOSING SCRIPTURE

Jeremiah 39:17-18 (ESV), *"But I will deliver you on that day, declares the Lord, and you shall not be given into the hand of the men of whom you are afraid. For I will surely save you, and you shall not fall by the sword, but you shall have your life as a prize of war, because you have put your trust in me, declares the Lord."*

Let the group rest in that truth as you close together in prayer.

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WEEK 3: SOIL SCIENCE

ICE BREAKER

WORSHIP

PRAYER

SERMON REWIND

Through parables, Jesus invites His listeners to lean in and listen carefully. The Kingdom of God does not arrive with force or spectacle but grows quietly, often unseen, in receptive hearts. These stories reveal that transformation is less about intensity and more about attentiveness. Mark challenges us to examine the soil of our own lives—what we receive, what we resist, and whether we trust God to bring growth in His time and His way.

KEY VERSES

Look up theses additional verses:

Mark 4:1-34 (NLT)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 Let Them Hear

Jesus keeps repeating, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear," which suggests hearing is more than sound—it can affect the condition of our heart.

- a. Where have you noticed hearing Jesus' word, but you don't accept it and follow it?
- b. How can we attune our ears to hear and follow Jesus' voice?

2 Kingdom of God

The Kingdom of God grows quietly, in time, not arriving with force or extravagance.

- a. When have you experienced worry that God might not show up the way you expect Him to? How'd you respond when He didn't show up how we expected?
- b. What are some ways we can keep our heart on Jesus, even when He doesn't move how we expected?

3 Trusting God's Timing

When trusting God's move to grow us is difficult, it's easy to regain control. God is always moving, but not on our timing.

- a. Why is trusting God with His timing harder than trying to manage it?
- b. What would it look like to believe God is already working even when you can't see it?

4 Going Deeper

Jesus' miracles reveal His power, yet we often find it easier to trust what we can see Him do rather than to trust what we hear Him say.

- a. When was a time you relied on God's miracles more than His promises and whispers of love?
- b. How can we position ourselves to hear and treasure His voice in all circumstances?

5

Different Stories

We are all in different places of life and faith, yet in each area, circumstances can change the direction of our heart.

- a. *Currently*, where you are in life, which seed in the "parable of the sower" do you relate to? Why would you choose that one?
- b. What would it look like to be the seed that yields crops, even if our life is currently difficult?

DIVE DEEPER

Reflection Questions: God cares about our growth, but we could grow impatient and try to speed up the process. Growth is gradual and God is with each step of the way.

- Where in your life are you asking God for growth and transformation?
- What would it look like this week to stop managing the outcome and instead create space for God to work?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Growing with God—Each day this week:

- Write down where you want to grow (hearing His voice, reading Scripture, consistency...).
- Create a habit to support an area of growth (ex: read a chapter a day).

Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you to know His heart and hear His voice, so you can live it out.

PRAYER/MINISTRY TIME

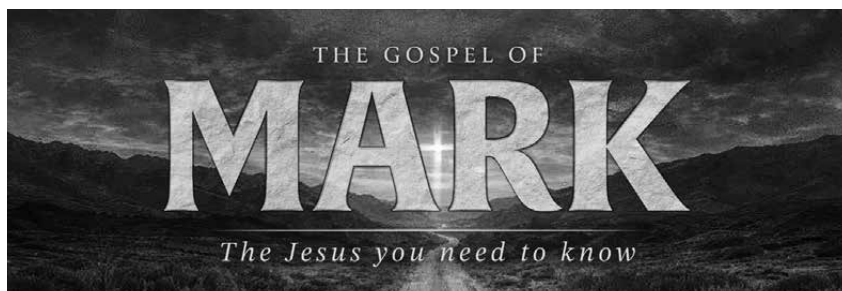
CLOSING SCRIPTURE

1 John 4:6 (ESV), *"So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him."*

Let the group rest in this truth as you close together in prayer.

NOTES

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WEEK 4: POWER OVER CHAOS

ICE BREAKER

WORSHIP

PRAYER

SERMON REWIND

As Jesus calms storms, confronts darkness, heals the sick, and feeds crowds, His authority over chaos becomes undeniable. Yet the disciples remain confused, fearful, and unsure of who He truly is. Mark shows us that proximity to Jesus does not guarantee clarity—faith is formed slowly through trust, surrender, and time with Him.

KEY VERSES

Look up these additional verses:

Mark 4:35-41 (NLT)

Mark 5:1-43 (NLT)

Mark 6:30-44 (NLT)

Mark 6:45-56 (NLT)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 Storms Still Happen

Even though Jesus is in the boat, the storm still comes and scares the disciples.

- a. Where in your life are you tempted to assume that if Jesus were really with you, the storm shouldn't be happening?
- b. How does Jesus' presence in the storm challenge the way you view God's care?

2 He Redeems What's Broken

Sometimes Jesus does not stop chaos—He redeems what was broken, or is breaking, from the chaos.

- a. What is harder for you: trusting Jesus to prevent pain, or trusting Him to restore you after it? Why?
- b. How have you seen God use something chaotic to reshape your faith?

3 Participating with Jesus

Jesus places the disciples in impossible situations and asks them to participate anyway.

- a. Where do you feel emotionally, spiritually, or practically "insufficient" right now?
- b. What might it look like to bring what you have instead of waiting until you feel ready?

4 Remembering Jesus

Even after miracles, like calming the sea, the disciples still struggle to understand who Jesus is.

- a. Why do you think it's so easy to forget what God has done when new challenges show up?
- b. What are some ways we can stay in remembrance of God, even if everything is pushing us to forget?

Staying In

Many people begin following Jesus, but circumstances test our faithfulness to continue with Him.

- a. What usually causes you to disengage—storms, delays, disappointment, or confusion?
- b. What helps you stay in when following becomes uncomfortable?

DIVE DEEPER

Reflection Questions: Jesus uses chaos to remind us that He can both prevent and restore.

- What painful and confusing place do you need Jesus to restore and speak into?
- What would it look like to trust His heart even if the answer doesn't come as quick as we'd like?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Practicing Trust—Each day this week:

- Write one area where you feel chaos, delay, or uncertainty.
- Ask God how He wants to shape your heart in this season.

Ask the Holy Spirit to give you strength to stay in every season, keeping our hearts on Him.

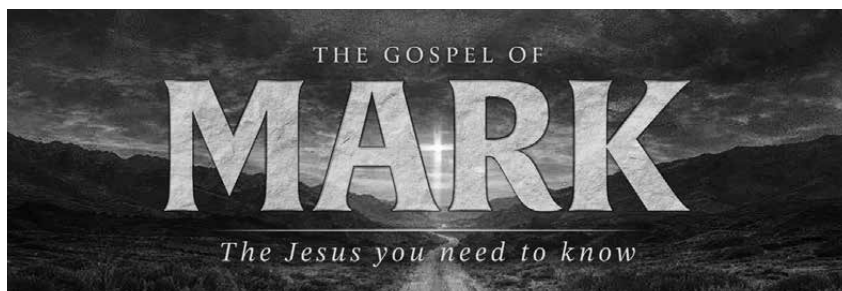
PRAYER/MINISTRY TIME

CLOSING SCRIPTURE

Psalms 23:6 (NIV), *"Surely Your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever"*

Let the group rest in this truth as you close together in prayer.

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WEEK 5: WHAT NO ONE SEES

ICE BREAKER

WORSHIP

PRAYER

SERMON REWIND

Conflict intensifies as Jesus exposes the danger of religious performance disconnected from transformed hearts. The healing of the blind man unfolds in stages, mirroring the disciples' own partial vision. They see—but not clearly. This moment invites us to ask where tradition, distraction, or misplaced priorities may be distorting our view of God. Jesus is not content with surface-level faith; He patiently leads His followers toward deeper clarity and trust.

KEY VERSES

Look up theses additional verses:

Mark 7:1-8:26 (NLT)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

Jesus' Heart

Jesus challenges religious leaders performance while their hearts remain far from Him.

- a. Why do you think it's so easy for faith to become about behavior instead of relationship?
- b. Why is it important that we make faith less about us?

2

Inward Transformation

Culture teaches us to fix the outside so the inside will follow. Jesus teaches the opposite.

- a. Where do you see yourself focus on the outside more than inside? How has this affected you?
- b. How can we begin to focus more about the condition of our heart than the condition of what others see?

3

Placing Our Hearts on God

The Pharisees hearts were in the wrong place, misplacing their priority on tradition rather than God.

- a. Where have you felt like you were an imperfect disciple?
- b. How do you think God actually wants you to view Him?

4

Imperfect Disciples

Jesus doesn't abandon imperfect disciples—He diligently leads them.

- a. Who is God to you that you'd consider Him your refuge and that you'd be comforted to be still and trust Him?
- b. How might patience and grace, with yourself, make space for God to move?

What Shapes Our World?

Jesus cares deeply about the unseen part of our life (our heart posture and our actions).

- a. What disciplines, thoughts, or patterns currently shape your world?
- b. Which of those are helping you see Jesus more clearly—and which might be clouding your vision?

DIVE DEEPER

Reflection Questions: Jesus never condemns our blindness—but He doesn't want us to stay there either. Lifelong patterns could blind us from God's heart, but Jesus calls us to face what has made us blind, so He could heal our vision.

- What is a pattern that has been difficult to break that has caused pain to you and others around you?
- It's easy to shame ourselves—what do you think God thinks about you?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Shaped Heart—Each day this week:

- Recognize and write down the patterns God is calling you to release.
- Ask God how He wants you to live.

PRAYER/MINISTRY TIME

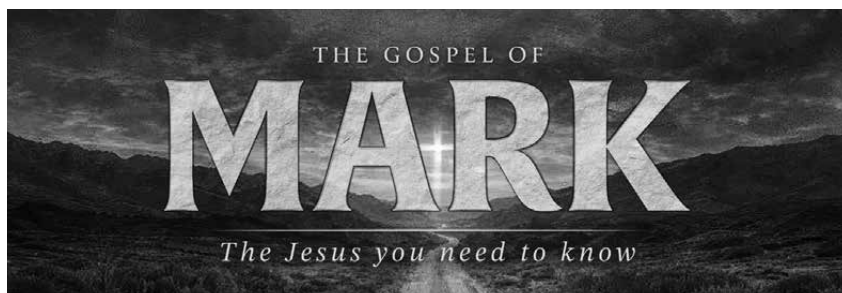
CLOSING SCRIPTURE

John 15:16-17 (NIV), *"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other."*

Let the group rest in this truth as you close together in prayer.

NOTES

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WEEK 6: WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

ICE BREAKER

WORSHIP

PRAYER

SERMON REWIND

At the center of Mark's Gospel, Jesus asks His disciples a question that still confronts us today: *"Who do you say I am?"* Peter answers correctly—Jesus is the Messiah—yet quickly resists the idea of a suffering Savior. Jesus responds by redefining both His mission and the call to follow Him. Discipleship is not about protecting our lives but surrendering them. This moment forces us to confront not only what we believe about Jesus, but whether we are willing to trust Him with our lives.

KEY VERSES

Look up these additional verses:

Mark 8:27-9 (NLT)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 Who Is He?

Jesus asks His disciples an important question, "Who do you say I am?"

- a. When you think about Jesus, how would you honestly describe Him in your own words?
- b. What do you think most shapes the way you see Jesus—your experiences, your disappointments, or your hopes?

2 Expectations Versus Reality

Peter calls Jesus "the Messiah," but struggles when Jesus explains what that really means.

- a. Have you ever believed in Jesus...but hoped He would work differently than He did?
- b. Where do you feel tension between what you want Jesus to do and what He might actually be doing?

3 Gaining Life

Jesus says that saving our life actually means losing it for His sake (**Mark 8:35**).

- a. Why do you think surrender feels more frightening than trust?
- b. What part of your life is hardest to place fully in Jesus' hands?

4 Everyday Wisdom

Jesus connects discipleship with daily choices, not just a one-time decision.

- a. What does following Jesus day-to-day look like to you?
- b. How can we begin to start stepping into this lifestyle?

5 Who Do We Follow?

Jesus doesn't just ask who He is—He wants us to recognize who is the ruler of our life, us or Him.

- a. Where in your life would you say you are the ruler more than He is? Why?

- b.** How can we start to give up that place more into His hands?
- c.** Kingdom, to bear fruit and exemplify Jesus to a world that needs Him.

DIVE DEEPER

Reflection Questions: We can believe all the right things about Jesus and still struggle to trust Him, but He still waits for us.

- Where do you believe in Jesus, but still hesitate to trust Him?
- What would surrender look like in that place—practically?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Trusting Him—This week:

- "Jesus, today I choose to trust You with _____."
- Write down where you trusted and where you struggled to this week.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you trust Him, finding peace that He is in control.

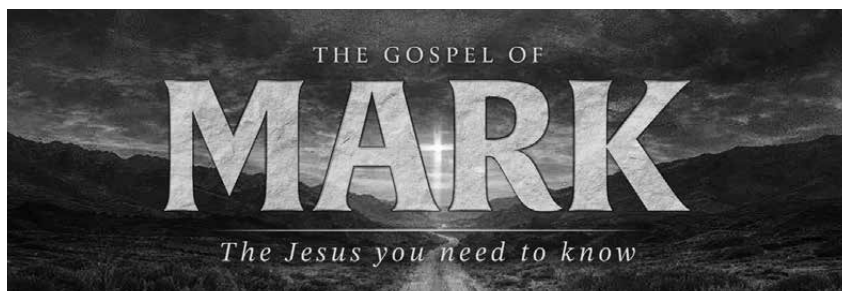
PRAYER/MINISTRY TIME

CLOSING SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 41:10 (ESV), *"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."*

Let the group rest in this promise as you close together in prayer.

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WEEK 7: SERVING ALL

ICE BREAKER

WORSHIP

PRAYER

SERMON REWIND

As Jesus teaches His disciples about His coming death and resurrection, they struggle to understand—and instead argue about who among them is the greatest. Jesus flips their idea of “greatest among them” upside down, showing that the first shall be last and servant of all. He then gives strong warnings about anything that leads our hearts away from God, calling His followers to live seriously, faithfully, and in peace with one another.

KEY VERSES

Look up theses additional verses:

Mark 9:30-50 (NLT)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 Who Is Greatest?

After Jesus predicts His suffering, the disciples begin arguing about who among them is the greatest.

- a. Why do you think it's so easy to think about "being better" or "being first," even when we're trying to follow Jesus?
- b. Where do you notice comparison or competition sneaking into your faith and relationships?

2 Love Is Greatest

Jesus says that whoever wants to be first must be last and servant of all.

- a. When you hear Jesus connect greatness with serving, what feels easy about that—and what feels uncomfortable?
- b. Who is one person, or group of people, God might be inviting you to intentionally serve right now?

3 Welcoming Jesus

Jesus brings a child into the center and says welcoming a "child like this" welcomes Him.

- a. Who are the people in your life that are easiest to overlook, rush past, or unintentionally ignore?
- b. What could it look like to welcome and love them more intentionally this week?

4 Being an Example

Jesus gives strong warnings about anything leading "little ones" into sin or causing them to drift.

- a. Why do you think Jesus speaks so firmly about removing things that pull us away from God?
- b. How much does our example matter to the next generation? Why?

Seasoned by God

Jesus ends by calling His followers to "have salt in yourselves" and live in peace with one another.

- a. What do you think it looks like as some who has "salt" and peace with another in everyday life?
- b. Where have you struggled to live in peace with one another? Why?

DIVE DEEPER

Reflection Questions: Peace with others is not always easy, especially when we have held bitterness for a long time.

- Have you ever held such deep bitterness, you began to hate someone? How did you get there?
- What does the Holy Spirit say about that person, if we asked Him? What does the Holy Spirit say about us?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Example of Peace—This week:

- Think of someone you have bitterness towards.
- Ask the Holy Spirit what He thinks of us and them: write it down and pray into it.

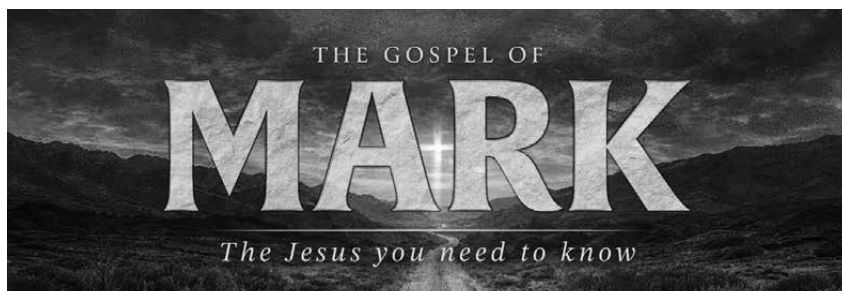
Ask the Holy Spirit to bring peace in our relationships and strength to live in forgiveness.

PRAYER/MINISTRY TIME**CLOSING SCRIPTURE**

1 Peter 4:10 (NASB), *"As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the multifaceted grace of God."*

Let the group rest in this promise as you close together in prayer.

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WEEK 8: THE WAY OF THE SERVANT

ICE BREAKER

WORSHIP

PRAYER

SERMON REWIND

As Jesus moves closer to Jerusalem, He repeatedly teaches His disciples that the Kingdom of God operates by an entirely different set of values. While the disciples wrestle with status, Jesus redirects them toward humility, service, and sacrifice. Mark shows us that the way of the Kingdom is not something we climb through effort or status—it's something we receive through surrender and live out through love.

KEY VERSES

Look up theses additional verses:

Mark 10:1-52 (NLT)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

No Loopholes

1

The Pharisees were focused on what was technically allowed, but Jesus pointed them back to God's original heart for commitment and love.

- a. Where do you think we're tempted to look for "workarounds" in our faith instead of trusting God's design?
- b. What might it look like to lean into God's heart, even when it feels harder than taking the easy route?

2

Receiving Like Children

Jesus says the Kingdom belongs to those who receive it like children—with trust, openness, and dependence.

- a. What do you think it means to come to God with childlike faith in everyday life?
- b. What makes trusting God feel harder as we get older?

3

Treasuring Others

In **Mark 10:17-31**, the rich, young ruler walks away grieving because he struggles to release what he owns.

- a. If you could give the rich, young ruler advice on surrender, what would it be? Do we follow that same advice ourselves?
- b. In what ways are generosity and surrender partnered together?

4

For Love, Not Recognition

James and John ask for seats of honor, and Jesus responds by redefining leadership.

- a. When was a time you really wanted to be recognized to look good in front of someone?
- b. What does it look like to grow, serve, and love without the motive of being seen?

5

To Serve, Not Be Served

Jesus summarizes His mission: not to be served, but to serve and give His life.

- a. When was the last time you consciously chose humility—putting someone else first or letting go of something that felt rightfully yours?
- b. How did that choice shape you, even if no one else noticed?

DIVE DEEPER

Reflection Questions: Jesus invites His followers to reconsider not just what they're doing—but who they're becoming.

- Where do you recognize Jesus inviting you to surrender pride, or recognition?
- What is a habit you can practice in surrendering these?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Way of the Servant—This week:

- Think of someone you can serve this week.
- When you do, write what the experience was like, what you learned about Jesus.

Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the heart to see and serve others who are in need.

PRAYER/MINISTRY TIME

CLOSING SCRIPTURE

John 13:34 (NIV), *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."*

Let the group rest in this truth as you close together in prayer.

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Prayer Requests

Note your prayer requests and fellow small group members' prayer requests here and pray for one another throughout the week.

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community church

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The Perspectives Curriculum is written by Small Groups
Volunteers at Water of Life Community Church.