



THE GOSPEL OF  
**MARK**  
STUDY GUIDE

PART I



GOOD NEWS  
&  
CHOOSE WISELY

## Part 1: Weeks 1-8

If you have questions or thoughts that you want to write down, there is an area for notetaking at the back of the guide. Also, if at any time during these moments with God you feel like you need to talk, we encourage you to reach out to our pastoral staff. We are here for you as you engage in Scripture and grow in faith on your journey with Jesus.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

45

1. Pen or Pencil
2. Highlighter
3. Journal or Paper
4. Bible
5. Dictionary
6. Commentaries

*Father God,  
As we start this study on the Gospel of Mark,  
we ask that you open our hearts, our minds, our spirits.  
Do a work in us. Refine us with your Word.  
We take time to praise and thank you,  
knowing that you are a God worthy of adoration.  
Guide us Lord, as we humbly seek your wisdom.  
We give these fifteen weeks to you, saying  
“Have your way, Lord Jesus, have your way.”  
Amen.*



## DAY 1: Monday, January 3

**Read:** Mark Chapter 1

**Reflect:** What are you hoping to learn in the upcoming weeks as we study God's Word together?

**Pray:** Ask God to move in your heart as we dive into the book of Mark.

**Praise:** Thank God for a New Year and the opportunity to journey with Jesus!

**Watch:** *The Bible Project* Overview of Mark:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGHqu9-DtXk>

## DAY 2: Tuesday, January 4

1 The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah,[a] the Son of God,[b] 2 as it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

“I will send my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way”[c]—

3 “a voice of one calling in the wilderness,

‘Prepare the way for the Lord,  
make straight paths for him.’”[d]

4 And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

6 John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7 And this was his message: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. **8 I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.**"



**Reflect:** What does it mean to be baptized by the Holy Spirit?

**Pray:** Ask God to show you how baptism by water and the Holy Spirit is now, or could be, a part of the good news of your journey with Jesus.

### **DAY 3: Wednesday, January 5**

9 At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

12 At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, 13 and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted[g] by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. **15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"**



**Reflect:** The word *repent* means to turn back or turn around. Think back on the day when you first choose to repent and believe. How did that decision change your life? If you haven't taken the step to repent and believe in the good news, reach out to one of the pastors on staff and ask them any questions about what it means to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.



**Pray:** Whether you have prayed and accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior before or if you are praying it for the first time, look over these words and decide today to “repent” and turn back towards living your life on a journey with Jesus.

*Dear God,*  
*I come to you today asking for forgiveness of my sins.*  
*I confess with my mouth and believe with my heart that*  
*Jesus is your Son, and that He died on a cross that I might be forgiven and have*  
*eternal life in the kingdom of Heaven.*  
*I believe that Jesus rose from the dead and*  
*I ask you right now to come into my life and*  
*be my personal Lord and Savior.*  
*I repent of my sins and choose today to worship you.*  
*My life is yours, Lord; I give it to You.*  
*In Jesus’ mighty name I pray,*  
*Amen.*

\*If you prayed this prayer for the first time, we are so excited for you and your new journey with Jesus! Please reach out to a member of the pastoral staff so that we can encourage and support you on your new walk with Christ.

**DAY 4: Thursday, January 6**

16 As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen.  
**17 “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.”** 18 At once they left their nets and followed him.  
19 When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. 20 Without delay

## Notes

he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.



**Reflect:** Once you have made the choice to repent and believe, the next step is to follow. What might it look like to follow Jesus in your life?

**Pray:** Ask God to show you a tangible way to follow Jesus in your life this week.

## DAY 5: Friday, January 7

**Action and Application:** A great way to enhance your Bible study is by reading multiple translations of the Bible to add to the depth and breadth of your reading.

**Want to know more?** For those of you who want to dive deeper I encourage you to read a commentary or two on any of the daily passages (*The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary* is a great place to start).

## WEEK TWO

### DAY 1: Monday, January 10

**35** Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.



**Reflect:** Jesus shows us throughout his life that finding times of silence and solitude so that he might reflect and pray were vital to the rhythms of his life. Spend time today in solitude and silence. Even if you just give two minutes of your day to quiet reflection, you will be surprised at how it affects the rest of your day.

**Pray:** Praise God for the time he gifts us with each day. 24 hours! Ask Him to guide you in using it for his glory as you grow in your relationship with him.

### DAY 2: Tuesday, January 11

**Read:** Mark Chapter 2

**Reflect:** Jesus' authority over people, evil spirits, sickness, and sin is displayed throughout the gospel of Mark. Reflect on how you have seen Jesus' authority displayed in your own life.

**Pray:** Ask God to continue to reveal His Good News to you through His Word.

**Praise:** Thank God for the Good News of Jesus Christ revealed to us in Mark chapter 1.

your servant, 44 and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. 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."



**Reflect:** "Whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all.' I do not like this text. I prefer the secular way because, in my heart, I prefer to be served rather than to serve. But Jesus will have none of that. He said that if we want to be great, we must be small. If we want to be exalted, we must be abased. If we want to rule, we must serve. That is the ethic of Jesus. Leaders have to see themselves as slaves." (*Mark* – R.C. Sproul)

**Pray:** Ask God for the characteristic of humility and the desire to serve others above and beyond yourself.

### DAY 5: Friday, February 25

**Action and Application:** Mark your calendar and plan to attend the upcoming Ash Wednesday service on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. This day marks the beginning of the Lenten season and the journey to the cross and Easter Sunday.



“If we put our confidence in material wealth, we are trusting in something that cannot possibly redeem us. Jesus warned people against trying to serve God and mammon (Matthew 6:24), and against storing up riches in this world, where thieves break in and steal, and moths and rust destroy. Instead, we should seek to stockpile treasure in heaven.” (*Mark – R.C. Sproul*)

**Pray:** Spent time in prayer asking God to reveal to you any area of your life that you are serving in addition to or above God. Ask God for forgiveness and thank Him for his mercy.

### DAY 4: Thursday, February 24

35 Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do for us whatever we ask.”

36 “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked.

37 They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.”

38 “You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?”

39 “We can,” they answered.

Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, 40 but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.”

41 When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. 42 Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 43 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be

### DAY 3: Wednesday, January 12

1 A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. 2 They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. 3 Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. 4 Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, **“Son, your sins are forgiven.”**

6 Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, 7 “Why does this fellow talk like that? He’s blaspheming! **Who can forgive sins but God alone?**”

8 Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, “Why are you thinking these things? 9 Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk’? 10 But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the man, 11 “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” 12 He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”



**Reflect:** As sons and daughters of the Lord Most High, we have been forgiven of our sins. Praise the Lord! Our chains have been broken, and we too can “get up!” Why do you think we so often turn back to our old habits instead of making the choice to stand and follow Christ?

**Pray:** Ask God to show you areas of your life that you need to give over to him. Pray about what it looks like in your life to “get up” and follow Jesus, knowing that your sins have been forgiven.

## DAY 4: Thursday, January 13

13 Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. 14 As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.

15 While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. 16 When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

17 On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

18 Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, "How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?"

19 Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them. 20 But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast.

21 "No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. Otherwise, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse. 22 And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins."

23 One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. 24 The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?"

25 He answered, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? 26 In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated

21 Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

22 At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

23 Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!"

24 The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is[e] to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

26 The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?"

27 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."

28 Then Peter spoke up, "We have left everything to follow you!"

29 "Truly I tell you," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel 30 will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last first."



**Reflect:** "The most fundamental truth about wealth, according to the Bible, is that 'every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights' (James 1:17). There is no such thing as a bootstrap ethic apart from the grace of God. Everything that we have comes to us from His bounty and from His goodness. For this reason, God cares deeply about what we trust and what we do with that which He entrusts to us."

kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” 16 And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.



**Reflect:** “Somehow Jesus detected that the disciples were limiting access to Him, and He was “greatly displeased.” The Greek word Mark uses here means “indignant,” which is a state of anger that is aroused by injustice.” (*Mark – R.C. Sproul*)

We don’t have to think too hard to see injustice happening in our world today. Reflect on what it might mean to “fight injustice” with the Word of God and show people how to come to Jesus.

**Pray:** Ask God to show you someone in your life who you can share the love of Jesus with. This might look like sharing your testimony with them about how God has moved in your life. It also might look like inviting them to church or a journey group. Find a way to live life with someone who is still trying to come to Jesus.

### **DAY 3: Wednesday, February 23**

17 As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

18 “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. 19 You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.’[d]”

20 “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.”

bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions.”

27 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.”



**Reflect:** Repeatedly we see people questioning the ministry decisions of Jesus. Go through and highlight all of the questioning statements and reflect on times when you have questioned what exactly Jesus was doing in your own life.

**Pray:** Ask God to show you how to trust His Good News even when there are times that you don’t completely understand what He is doing in your life or the lives of others around you.

### **DAY 5: Friday, January 14**

**Take Time to Pray:** Use the prayer labyrinth picture on the last page of this guide to quiet yourself and focus as you pray. Every two weeks, we will take time to pray and center ourselves as we continue to choose to move closer to God. Start at the “entrance” at the bottom and slowly pray for God to reveal Himself to you as you move through the labyrinth. This movement symbolizes a movement towards Jesus. Once you reach the center, take time to just sit in the presence of our Lord. When you are ready to start your day, leave the labyrinth knowing that you are not alone. God goes with you into the world. This week focus on the grace and mercy that God provides us with each day. Walk towards it, knowing that it is a free gift given to you abundantly.

## WEEK THREE

### DAY 1: Monday, January 17

**Read:** Mark Chapter 3

**Reflect:** The good news can seem like great news to some, and bad news to others. Sometimes we can feel both in the same day. Oftentimes this is an issue of giving over authority to God. Reflect on areas of your life that you might need to hand over to God. What might this process look like?

**Pray:** Ask God to show you the next step to take as you work to give every area of your life over to Him.

**Praise:** Thank God for his constant grace and mercy as you walk with him on this journey.

### DAY 2: Tuesday, January 18

1 Another time Jesus went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. 2 Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath. 3 Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, “Stand up in front of everyone.”

4 Then Jesus asked them, “Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” But they remained silent.

**5 He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts,** said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. 6 Then the

## WEEK EIGHT

### DAY 1: Monday, February 21

**Read:** Mark Chapter 10

**Reflect:** Throughout the book of Mark, we see Jesus explain to the disciples his ethical stance on many aspects of life. This “ethic of Jesus” is counter-cultural and practically upside down from both the standpoint of the Roman empire and our culture today. As you read through the passages in chapter 10, read with fresh eyes and wonderment as to what it must have felt like to hear the words of Jesus as He shared his vision with the disciples.

**Pray:** Ask God to show you his vision for your life and how you might live a counter-cultural upside-down life and follow Him.

**Praise:** Thank God for the Bible and the ability to learn and grow more each time we approach His Word.

### DAY 2: Tuesday, February 22

13 People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. 14 When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15 Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the

## DAY 5: Friday, February 18

**Reflection:** There are times when you will read Scripture, and it will evoke emotion. As we enter the second half of the book of Mark, check in with yourself today. What emotions have you felt from the Scripture readings? What emotions are you feeling when you pray? Recognize that God is doing a work in your life and that taking time to “check in” on yourself, just as you might check in with a friend or neighbor, is a good way to reflect on where you have been, where you are now, and where you want to move towards. It’s also a good time to wonder about whether there is anything that might be standing in your way or slowing you down on your journey with Jesus.

Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.



**Reflect:** We see throughout Scripture that Jesus was indeed fully human. One way we see this is by the range of emotions that he displays. How often we feel like God can’t understand us in a time of crisis or high emotions. Scripture reveals to us that Jesus felt all the emotions that we feel as well: frustration, distress, heartache, anger, joy, peace. There isn’t a place of feeling that our Lord hasn’t felt first.

**Pray:** Spend time remembering that our God is a loving father who is willing to embrace us—emotions and all.

## DAY 3: Wednesday, January 19

13 Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. **14 He appointed twelve[a] that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach 15 and to have authority to drive out demons.** 16 These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter), 17 James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means “sons of thunder”), 18 Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot 19 and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.



**Reflect:** Reflect on the people that God has placed in your life in the past to simply do life with. What does it feel like to know that you have people supporting you throughout your highs and lows? Reflect on if you still have those important relationships today.

**Pray:** Ask God to lead you to a journey group or band so that you can both have the support of others and show support yourself. If you are already in a journey group or band, take this time to thank God for the special people that He has given you to do life with.



## DAY 4: Thursday, January 20

20 Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. 21 When his family[b] heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, “He is out of his mind.”

22 And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons.”

23 So Jesus called them over to him and began to speak to them in parables: “How can Satan drive out Satan? 24 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26 And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. 27 In fact, no one can enter a strong man’s house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man’s house. 28 Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, 29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin.”

30 He said this because they were saying, “He has an impure spirit.”

31 Then Jesus’ mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. 32 A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, “Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you.”

33 “Who are my mother and my brothers?” he asked.

34 Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.”



**Reflect:** We see in this moment that Jesus is accused by both the people of the law and his family for not doing what is expected of Him. Often we are called by God to take the road less traveled.

19 “You unbelieving generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.”

20 So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

21 Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has he been like this?”

“From childhood,” he answered. 22 “It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.”

23 “If you can?” said Jesus. “Everything is possible for one who believes.”

24 Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!”



**Reflect:** “Every Christian has some level of authentic saving faith in his or her heart. However, the intensity of that faith is not constant. It waxes and wanes. It increases and diminishes. No matter how strong your faith is, there are moments in this life when it is assaulted by the enemy. Sometimes it can seem as if your faith is barely hanging on, and you make a prayer much like this man made to Jesus: “I believe, but my belief is not perfect, it is not pure, it is not strong. I need help. Help me with my unbelief.” (*Mark – R.C. Sproul*)

**Pray:** Take time today to write out a prayer confessing to God that you have struggled to believe in Him with your whole heart, soul, and mind. Ask God for forgiveness and cry out to him for help to overcome your unbelief. Ask God to continue to perfect, purify and strengthen your belief in Him.



“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7)

The book of Mark spends a lot of time discussing the concept of spiritual warfare, a subject that we don’t really talk about much in our current culture. But the Bible is full of Scripture passages warning us against the movement of the adversary in our midst. How might your life change if you looked at the struggles of life as a battle in the heavenly realm taking place in our midst?

**Pray:** Ask God to reveal to you what it means to live life spiritually minded. Read and re-read the Scripture verses listed above and let them be a prayer for your life from this day forward.

**Praise:** Thank God for his saving grace and his protection over your life!

**Additional Reading:** If you’d like to read more about the subject of spiritual warfare, a good book is *The Bait of Satan* by John Bevere.

## DAY 4: Thursday, February 17

14 When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. 15 As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him.

16 “What are you arguing with them about?” he asked.

17 A man in the crowd answered, “Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. 18 Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.”

Reflect on the tension that Jesus must have felt in these moments. Can you recall a time in your life when you felt the tension between what you thought God was calling you to do and another path?

**Pray:** Boldly ask God to show you His path for your life and to destroy any path that is placed in front of you by others or society.

## DAY 5: Friday, January 21

**Action and Application:** Read through this month’s Reach newsletter and find a journey group to join. We are better together, and we are called by God to live life in community!

## WEEK FOUR

### DAY 1: Monday, January 24

**33** With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. **34** He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.



**Reflect:** Jesus used the parable story throughout his ministry so that these new counter-cultural ideas that he was sharing with the people would come to life and make sense. However, Scripture tells us that “when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.” Jesus is eager to tell us, his disciples, everything! The reality is that the more that we study his Word, spend time in prayer, and commit our lives to Him, the more we see Him.

**Pray:** Take time today to repent of the times in your life that you have not followed Jesus completely and have not allowed yourself the opportunity to sit at His feet and listen to Him. Ask God to guide you into being a disciple who is ready to follow Him in every area of your life.

### DAY 2: Tuesday, January 25

**Read:** Mark Chapter 4

**Reflect:** The book of Mark showcases numerous miraculous moments in the ministry of Jesus and his apostles. We see Jesus having authority over nature, evil spirits, illness, and even death. There is a lot to reflect on when it comes to the idea of miracles.

Peter answered, “You are the Messiah.”

**30** Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.



**Reflect:** “The question Jesus posed to His disciples is the ultimate question for us: “Who do you say that I am?” Do you believe that Jesus is the Messiah? When we stand up publicly and join a church, we declare to our friends, our neighbors, and all that watching world: “I believe that Jesus is the Messiah. I believe that He is the Christ. I believe that He is the Son of the living God.” If you believe that, the same benediction that Jesus pronounced on Peter is your benediction. He says, “Blessed are you.” (*Mark – R.C. Sproul*)

**Pray:** Spend time in prayer today reflecting on Jesus Christ the Messiah. Praise Him! He is worthy of our praise!

### DAY 3: Wednesday, February 16

**Read:** Mark Chapter 9

**Reflect:** “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” (Ephesians 6:12)

“For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.” (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” (1 Peter 5:8)



## WEEK SEVEN

### DAY 1: Monday, February 14

**Read:** Mark Chapter 8

**Reflect:** Reflect on the concept of trust. What does it look like to put your trust fully in Jesus? As we read through the book of Mark, we see that Jesus shares knowledge with the disciples about what He believes and who He is, but underlying all that information is a simple question: *Do you trust me?* The disciples were trusting enough to follow Jesus, but each day as they learned from Him and watched Him live out his ministry, they had to decide whether or not He was worthy of their trust.

**Pray:** Ask God to show you why he is worthy of your trust as you read his Word today.

**Praise:** Thank God for the example of Jesus and the disciples and how much we can learn for their relationships with one another.

### DAY 2: Tuesday, February 15

27 Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, “Who do people say I am?”

28 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.”

29 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

Some people think miracles don’t happen anymore. Some believe that they do but vary rarely. Some people believe that miracles happen, but we just aren’t paying attention. Reflect on your understanding of both the miraculous moments in the life of Jesus and what the Holy Spirit can do in your life today.

**Pray:** Ask God to open your mind to his understanding of miracles and how they showcase the love of Christ to us all.

**Praise:** Thank God for the miracles (big or small) that he has done in your life!

### DAY 3: Wednesday, January 26

1 Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water’s edge. 2 He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: 3 “Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. 4 As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. 6 But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. 8 Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times.”

9 Then Jesus said, “Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.”

10 When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. 11 He told them, “The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables 12 so that,

“they may be ever seeing but never perceiving,

and ever hearing but never understanding;

otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!”[a]”

13 Then Jesus said to them, “Don’t you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? 14 The farmer sows the word. 15 Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. 16 Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. 17 But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. 18 Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; 19 but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. **20 Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.**”



**Reflect:** Good soil produces good crops, and good crops multiply. The work then is twofold. First, we need to till the soil of our hearts and make sure that it is good, clearing out the thorns, getting rid of the rocky places, making it fertile ground so that what God sows can grow and take root deeply. Second, we need to show others how to till the soil of their hearts so that they, too, can grow.

**Pray:** Ask God who He is calling you to be in a discipleship relationship with so that you can follow God’s calling on your life to “Go and make disciples.”

## **DAY 4: Thursday, January 27**

35 That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side.” 36 Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. 37 A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. 38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”

*Amen.*

**Additional Reading:** Read Matthew 7:1-5

## **DAY 5: Friday, February 11**

24 Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre.[g] He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret. 25 In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an impure spirit came and fell at his feet. 26 The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.

27 “First let the children eat all they want,” he told her, “for it is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.”

28 “Lord,” she replied, “even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.”

29 Then he told her, “For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter.”

30 She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.



**Reflect:** “Desperation often means that we have come to the end of ourselves. We are out of resources and places to turn. The power of desperation moves us to action and can even give us the boldness to do what needs to be done, to go that last mile, or to sacrifice that last bit of energy to get the thing we need most. Sometimes it means running completely out of inner resources and turning to the help only God can supply.” (*Inside the Miracles of Jesus – Jessica LaGrone*)

**Pray:** Ask God to give you the faith of the Syrophenician Woman. Faith that is desperate. Faith that is bold.

curses their father or mother is to be put to death.’[e] 11 But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is Corban (that is, devoted to God)— 12 then you no longer let them do anything for their father or mother. 13 Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.”

14 Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. 15 Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them.” [16] [f]

17 After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. 18 “Are you so dull?” he asked. “Don’t you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? 19 For it doesn’t go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body.” (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.)

**20 He went on: “What comes out of a person is what defiles them. 21 For it is from within, out of a person’s heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, 22 adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. 23 All these evils come from inside and defile a person.”**



**Reflection:** Take time praying over each word that is listed in the highlighted Scripture above. Ask God to reveal any area of sin in your life that might defile you. Pursue the Holy Spirit in this time.

#### **Prayer:**

*Father God,*

*We start this new day humbling ourselves in your presence. We pursue you and we ask that the Holy Spirit awaken in us a knowledge of any area of our lives that we have either knowingly or unknowing held close to our hearts and away from you. Lord, we do not want to take this time to see the speck in our neighbors’ eye; we trust that you, and you alone, will work in their lives. Help us, Lord, to see the plank in our own eye. Our sin is great. Help us to recognize our need for you.*

**39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.**

40 He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”

41 They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”



**Reflect:** “Quiet! Be still!” Three simple words, and the wind died down and everything was calm. The God we love and follow can calm the storms of nature and the storms of our souls. Reflect on the storms of your life (past or present). Do you remember God showing up in a mighty way to calm your storm?

**Pray:** “Quiet! Be still!” Let that be the prayer of your day. Let that be the prayer of your life. Cry out to God and ask him to still the chaos of the world around you so that you might hear His still small voice.

## **DAY 5: Friday, January 28**

**Read:** Mark Chapter 5

**Reflect:** As you read through the fifth chapter of Mark, spend time reflecting on the three M’s of this chapter: miracles, mystery, and mercy.

**Pray:** Ask God to continue to display his mercies and miracles in your life, even when they happen in mysterious ways.

**Praise:** Thank God for his mercies that are new every morning.



## WEEK FIVE

### DAY 1: Monday, January 31

1 They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes.[a] 2 When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. 3 This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. 4 For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. 5 Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

6 When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. 7 He shouted at the top of his voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God’s name don’t torture me!” 8 For Jesus had said to him, “Come out of this man, you impure spirit!”

9 Then Jesus asked him, “What is your name?”

“My name is Legion,” he replied, “for we are many.” 10 And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.

11 A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. 12 The demons begged Jesus, “Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them.” 13 He gave them permission, and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

14 Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. 15 When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. 16 Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man—and told about the pigs

**Reflect:** Today, spend time reflecting on God’s love for you. Review the first seven chapters of Mark and think about how Jesus displayed love to each person that he encountered.

**Pray:** Ask God to show you how to love all those you encounter today.

**Praise:** Thank God that He loved you so much that He sent His son Jesus to save you from your sins!

### DAY 4: Thursday, February 10

1 The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus 2 and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. 3 (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. 4 When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.[a])

5 So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, “Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?”

6 He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:

“‘These people honor me with their lips,  
but their hearts are far from me.

7 They worship me in vain;  
their teachings are merely human rules.’[b]

8 You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.”

9 And he continued, “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe[c] your own traditions! 10 For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and mother,’[d] and, ‘Anyone who



died down. They were completely amazed, 52 for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.

53 When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. 54 As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. 55 They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. 56 And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. **They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.**



**Reflect:** We've all been there. You're in Walmart and you see a toddler throw themselves down in the middle of the aisle and scream bloody murder because they must have the candy or toy. They are adamant. They are desperate. They have zero shame in making a fool of themselves and zero shame in what you think. All they know is what they want is worth the risk.

"They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed."

**Pray:**

*Dear Lord,*

*We confess that we often rely on our own strength, our own finances, our own comforts to support us and protect us. We confess that we rarely beg to be healed by you. Please Lord, ignite in us a desire to throw down what we are holding onto—the things of this world—and instead reach out, touch the hem of your cloak, and be healed by you. You know our need, Lord. Help us to see our desperation for you. Help us to know that we adamantly need to be healed. Lord, come heal us today.*

*Amen.*

## **DAY 3: Wednesday, February 9**

**Read:** Mark Chapter 7

as well. 17 Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

18 As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. 19 Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." 20 So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis[b] how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.



**Reflect:** Let's be honest, this story is a head scratcher on a lot of levels. There's a man with multiple demons, Jesus speaks, and then some poor pigs get the demons and rush down a steep cliff and drown in a lake. What are we supposed to learn from this? I think our starting point is to get back to basics. This passage is expressing to us that when an individual with a need cries out to God, God will respond. This passage also shows us that demons know who Jesus is! This is also, interestingly, a moment when Jesus tells the man to "go tell it on the mountains"—or Decapolis, to be exact. This man was willing to follow Jesus, but he was asked to be obedient by going home and sharing his faith story with the people who knew him before. Can you relate?

**Pray:** Ask God to take control. Ask God to move. Be prepared to release your life to Him and follow!

## **DAY 2: Tuesday, February 1**

**Read:** Mark Chapter 6

**Reflect:** The stories in the gospel of Mark are familiar to many of us...sometimes too familiar. We read them like we read the back of a shampoo bottle in the bathroom when we forgot to bring our phone along with it. We already know what it says, and we aren't expecting to be surprised or hear a new word from God. But the truth is, God's Word is alive! Every time we read it and come with a heart that is prepared to learn and grow in our relationship with God, He will

meet us there (the same probably won't happen with your shampoo bottle)!

**Pray:** Ask God to give you a desire to read these popular Bible passages with a heart that is ready to hear Him and be renewed by His word.

**Praise:** Every day is a new opportunity to grow in your relationship with God.

### **DAY 3: Wednesday, February 2**

1 Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. 2 When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.

“Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What’s this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing? 3 Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph,[a] Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.

4 Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home.” 5 He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. 6 He was amazed at their lack of faith.



**Reflect:** “Rejection by one’s own is a human experience which evokes sharp emotions: anger, outrage, self-pity, hate. The consistent witness of the New Testament is that Jesus was rejected by his own people. New Testament texts register this fact differently. John 1:11, “He came to his own home, and his own people received him not,” carries a note of pathos but serves as a dark background against which to affirm the bright good news that all who believe in him may become children of God. In Chapters 9 through 11 of Romans, Paul wrestles with the rejection of Jesus Christ by his own people, the Jews, as a serious theological problem. In Mark 6:1-6 the theme is the same but the treatment is distinct. Jesus’ own people in this passage

the two fish among them all. 42 They all ate and were satisfied, 43 and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. 44 The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.



**Reflect:** Why? That’s the biggest glaring question that stands out after reading this passage. Why did Jesus do it? He could have sent them away like his disciples suggested and had them find food elsewhere. He could have told them He was calling it a night and they could start back up again tomorrow morning. But Jesus isn’t one to send hungry people away. So, he feeds them.

Are you hungry for more of Jesus? He is willing and ready to feed you with the truth of his Word, clothe you with righteousness, and refresh your soul with living water. He’s in the habit of meeting our basic physical needs and our basic spiritual needs. You just have to admit that you are hungry.

**Pray:** Cry out to God and tell Him that you are hungry for more of Him. If you feel dry inside, ask Him to refresh your soul with living water so that you might hunger again.

### **DAY 2: Tuesday, February 8**

45 Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. 46 After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

47 Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. 48 He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, 49 but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, 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.” 51 Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind



## WEEK SIX

### DAY 1: Monday, February 7

30 The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. 31 Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”

32 So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. 33 But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. 34 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

35 By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. “This is a remote place,” they said, “and it’s already very late. 36 Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.”

37 But he answered, “You give them something to eat.”

They said to him, “That would take more than half a year’s wages[e]! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?”

38 “How many loaves do you have?” he asked. “Go and see.”

When they found out, they said, “Five—and two fish.”

39 Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. 40 So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. 41 Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided

are not the Jews as a whole but friends and relatives in his home town, and the dominant emotion on his part and theirs is astonishment. This particular treatment of the theme is of direct relevance to the church which, in her own eyes and in the eyes of the world, constitutes the family of Jesus Christ.” (*Interpretation – MARK*)

#### **Prayer:**

*Father God,*

*We come to you today and we ask for your forgiveness for times that we did not receive your good news but instead rejected it. We ask for your forgiveness for times when we picked our own comforts over your convictions. We ask for your forgiveness for when we closed our hearts to you. We pray individually that we, the church universal, would follow you: with open hearts that are refined through Scriptural holiness, with open minds that reject sin and injustice, and with open doors that welcome all who want to be transformed by you. Guide us Lord, we pray.*

*Amen.*

### DAY 4: Thursday, February 3

Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. 7 Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits.

8 These were his instructions: “Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. 9 Wear sandals but not an extra shirt. 10 Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. 11 And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.”

12 They went out and preached that people should repent. 13 They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.



**Reflect:** This could be the best superhero movie! Jesus gives the disciples instructions that include what not to bring with them, what to wear and what not to wear, and how long to stay somewhere. He also tells us something that we all need to hear when he says, “Hey guys, now you know, not everyone is going to be your number one fan! When that happens, don’t let it get to you, don’t let it slow you down. Dust off that dirt from your feet and keep on keeping on.” The disciples listened to Jesus’ instructions and then went out and did superhero-level things! “They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.”

**Pray:** Ask God to empower you with the Holy Spirit so that you might be used in a mighty way!

**Additional Reading:** 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 (The Gifts of the Holy Spirit)

## **DAY 5: Friday, February 4**

14 King Herod heard about this, for Jesus’ name had become well known. Some were saying,[b] “John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him.”

15 Others said, “He is Elijah.”

And still others claimed, “He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of long ago.”

16 But when Herod heard this, he said, “John, whom I beheaded, has been raised from the dead!”

17 For Herod himself had given orders to have John arrested, and he had him bound and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, whom he had married. 18 For John had been saying to Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife.” 19 So Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But she was not able to, 20 because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled[c]; yet he liked to listen to him.

21 Finally the opportune time came. On his birthday Herod gave a banquet for his high officials and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. 22 When the daughter of[d] Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests.

The king said to the girl, “Ask me for anything you want, and I’ll give it to you.” 23 And he promised her with an oath, “Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom.”

24 She went out and said to her mother, “What shall I ask for?”

“The head of John the Baptist,” she answered.

25 At once the girl hurried in to the king with the request: “I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a platter.”

**26 The king was greatly distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her.** 27 So he immediately sent an executioner with orders to bring John’s head. The man went, beheaded John in the prison, 28 and brought back his head on a platter. He presented it to the girl, and she gave it to her mother. 29 On hearing of this, John’s disciples came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.



**Reflect:** Have you ever felt greatly distressed by a decision you made or a statement you uttered that you wished in hindsight you could take back? We’ve all been there. A part of life on earth is dealing with the fact that we are striving towards perfection but are not perfect yet. Fortunately, we have a Savior who forgives us and washes us white as snow.

**Pray:** Spend time thanking God for all the moments in your life that he has forgiven you when your choices affected others negatively. Ask God to continue to heal your heart as you commit to be more like Him.