

ABOUT THIS READING PLAN

Each week's questions will take you on a journey to study one passage of the book of Mark over the course of five days. These questions are designed to equip you in good Inductive Bible study methods, learning to **observe** the passage through the lens of the original audience, **interpret** the passage through the lens of Christ's full plan of redemption, and to **apply** the passage through the lens of a 21st Century follower of Jesus. Here are some key skills you will develop:

1. **Observation Skills** – You will learn how to isolate individual scenes or “pericopes” and look for repetition of themes and words, using a Bible dictionary to gain understanding. You will practice finding the plot or the “narrative arc” of the passage. Finally, you will become familiar with a literary skill Mark often employed, commonly called “the Markan Sandwich” (see **Appendix 2**).
2. **Interpretation Skills** – You will learn how to use the features you observed to discover the author's intent. You will also learn how to use the whole context of the book and cross-references in the Bible to check and deepen meaning and understanding.
3. **Application Skills** – Learn how to create faithful and specific applications that are in line with the author's original intent for writing.

We urge you to make the most of this study, devoting yourself to daily reading and prayerful study. Each time you sit down with God's word, you can follow this pattern:

- **Pray** – Ask God to give you understanding and to transform you through his word.
- **Read** – Read slowly and carefully. Use the daily study questions to continually add to your understanding.
- **Pray** – Ask God to impress what you have read upon your heart. Pray for the opportunity to share it with someone else, and pray for others in our church as they seek to walk in this truth with you.

Finally, we hope you will take advantage of all the resources available at www.oakhillfellowship.com/mark. There you will find a link to biblestudytools.com where there are free online tools like Bible dictionaries, encyclopedias and Greek lexicons.

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INTRODUCTION

DURING THE 2020 PANDEMIC, THE BAD NEWS IN THE TYPICAL MEDIA OUTLETS WAS SO PERVASIVE THAT SOME WELL-MEANING CELEBRITIES STARTED “THE GOOD NEWS MOVEMENT,” HIGHLIGHTING STORIES OF CUTE PUPPIES AND PEOPLE DOING NICE THINGS. WHILE THIS TYPE OF GOOD NEWS IS REFRESHING TO READ SOMETIMES, IT DOES NOT SATISFY THE DEEP SOUL ACHE CAUSED BY THE BAD NEWS IN ANY LASTING WAY. IT IS NOT POWERFUL ENOUGH TO RESOLVE THE TENSION AND DESPAIR OF THE FALLEN WORLD.

The world needs good news: ***THE good news.*** 2000 years ago, the Son of God came to earth to live among us, die for us, and rise again to be forever with us. He is the good news and the only one who can reverse the curse of sin in our lives.

After Jesus ascended, the good news of his life, death, and resurrection spread on the lips of messengers throughout the Roman Empire, saving souls and establishing churches far and wide. After thirty-or-so years, the Apostles realized the need to have a written record of the events of Christ’s life that bore witness to his person and work. Church tradition teaches that a young disciple named John Mark was under the leadership and teaching of the Apostle Peter at the time and recorded Peter’s eyewitness account. Many modern scholars believe this was the first of our four Gospels to be written, somewhere in the early-to-mid-60s of the first century.

Mark wrote the most concise account of the four Gospel writers, and he was concerned not so much about the chronology of events, but about the theological purpose of Christ’s life. He takes us on a true-story journey from Jesus’

early ministry days in Galilee, to the trying season as he prepared to enter Jerusalem, to his final days in that fateful city where he was rejected, crucified, and ultimately rose again.

All throughout, Mark invites the reader to consider how they must respond to “the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (Mark 1:1). As you embark on this study, we pray you will respond in three ways:

1. **Proclaim Jesus** - That you would grow to know and love Jesus more closely.
2. **Equip Servants** - That you would be able to clearly communicate the person and work of Christ to others.
3. **Send Witnesses** - That you would help at least one unbeliever to encounter Jesus this year, potentially inviting them to read the Gospel of Mark and discuss it with you.

The Reading Plan is designed to help you grow in good Bible study skills, studying each section using an inductive method over the course of a week. Following that study, you will listen to a sermon on the same passage in our weekly Celebration Service. Finally, we hope you will discuss your application with others in your Gospel Community.

We pray that you encounter the only good news that can rescue you from your sin and restore this fallen world. We want you to be convinced that “NOW is the time to tell others the good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”

READ: MARK 1:1-15**DAY 1 READING**

Prayerfully read through the passage twice (preferably in two translations), asking God to grow your knowledge and love for Jesus through your study this week. Note differences between the translations and how they enhance your understanding.

DAY 2 OBSERVATION

Summarize/label the following “scenes” in this passage: v. 1-3, v. 4-8, v. 9-11, v. 12-13, and v. 14-15. Do you see any repeated words or patterns in these scenes? How do these scenes seem to relate to one another?

DAY 3 INTERPRETATION

All of the Gospel writers include the ministry of John (see also Matt. 3:1-12, Luke 3:15-18 and John 1:19-14). What place does he have in our understanding of the gospel?

DAY 4 INTERPRETATION

The baptism of Jesus in v. 9-11 stands at the climax of this prologue section. Why is Jesus' baptism significant? How is Jesus identified in his baptism, and who states this?

DAY 5 APPLICATION

Notice that the Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness where he was tempted by Satan (v. 12-13). How does this help your understanding of the Christian life and what it means to "repent and believe the gospel" (v. 14-15)? Identify any temptations that are keeping you from wholeheartedly believing the good news about Jesus.

READ MARK 1:14-20

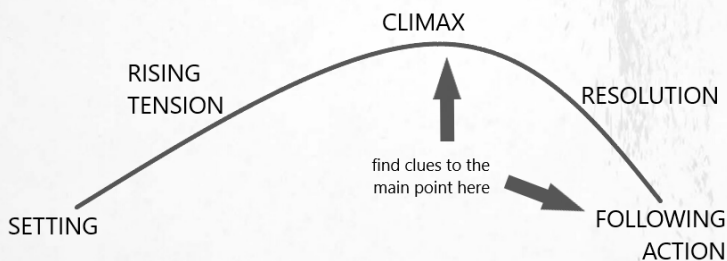
DAY 1 READING

Prayerfully read through the passage twice (preferably in two translations), asking God to grow your knowledge and love for Jesus through your study this week. Note differences between the translations and how they enhance your understanding. (Note: The overlap of v. 14-15 from last week is intentional).

DAY 2 OBSERVATION

Note the people and places mentioned in these verses. What do we learn about the people in this passage? Locate the places on the map in **Appendix 1**.

DAY 3 INTERPRETATION



Using the diagram above identify the following parts of the plot (v. 16-20):

- Setting
- Rising tension
- Climax
- Resolution
- Following action

DAY 4 OBSERVATION

The climax of the plot comes when Jesus says, "Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men." What does he mean by this? What is their response?

DAY 5 APPLICATION

What is your response to Jesus' call to "repent and believe" and to "follow me"? In light of what it meant for Simon, Andrew, James and John, what does this call mean for your life? For whom does Jesus want you to "fish"?

READ MARK 1:21-45

DAY 1 READING

Prayerfully read through the passage twice (preferably in two translations), asking God to grow your knowledge and love for Jesus through your study this week. Note differences between the translations and how they enhance your understanding.

DAY 2 OBSERVATION

Note the people and places mentioned in these verses. What do we learn about the people in this passage? Locate the places on the map in **Appendix 1**. Look up “synagogue” in a bible dictionary and summarize in your own words.

DAY 3 OBSERVATION

Summarize/label the following “scenes” in this passage: v. 21-28, v. 29-34, v. 35-39, and v. 40-45. Do you see any repeated words or patterns in these scenes? How do these scenes seem to relate to one another?

DAY 4 INTERPRETATION

The secrecy of Christ about his mission is often questioned/discussed in studies of Mark. What do you notice about the fame and knowledge of Jesus in this passage? Why do you think Jesus tried to control the knowledge (see v. 34, 44)?

DAY 5 APPLICATION

Jesus' word casts out demons, heals diseases, and draws crowds. How do you relate to the word of Christ on a daily basis? Identify any areas you are prone to disbelieve Christ's word and make a commitment to get to know his word more deeply.

READ MARK 2:1-17

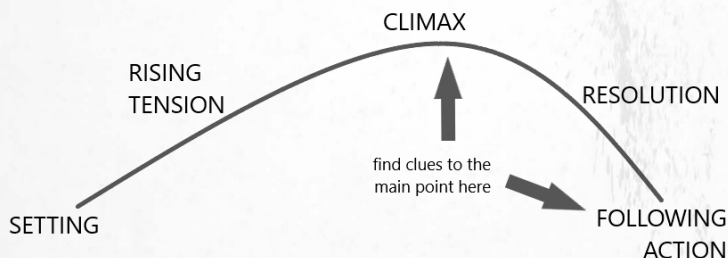
DAY 1 READING

Prayerfully read through the passage twice (preferably in two translations), asking God to grow your knowledge and love for Jesus through your study this week. Note differences between the translations and how they enhance your understanding.

DAY 2 OBSERVATION

Note the people and places mentioned in these verses. What do we learn about the people in this passage? Locate the places on the map in **Appendix 1**. Look up “pharisee”, “scribes”, and “blasphemy” in a bible dictionary and summarize in your own words.

DAY 3 OBSERVATION



There are two scenes in this week's study: v. 1-12 and v. 13-17. Identify the following parts of each scene:

- Setting
- Rising tension
- Climax
- Resolution
- Following action

DAY 4 INTERPRETATION

The two places most likely to contain the “point” of a narrative is in the climax or in the lesson as the narrative concludes. What seems to be the main point of these two scenes?

DAY 5 APPLICATION

Do you typically view yourself more like the paralytic and the tax collector who needed their sins forgiven, or more like the Pharisees who get to question and judge Jesus? What evidence caused you to answer this way? Identify specific ways you need Jesus, and praise him for how he meets those needs.

READ MARK 2:18-3:6**DAY 1 READING**

Prayerfully read through the passage twice (preferably in two translations), asking God to grow your knowledge and love for Jesus through your study this week. Note differences between the translations and how they enhance your understanding.

DAY 2 OBSERVATION

Summarize/label the following “scenes” in this passage: 2:18-22, 2:23-28, and 3:1-6. Do you see any repeated words or patterns in these scenes? How do these scenes seem to relate to one another?

DAY 3 INTERPRETATION

In the parables of v. 19-22, identify what each of the following elements represent:

- Wedding guests
- Bridegroom
- Unshrunk cloth
- Old/new garment

- New wine
- Old/fresh wineskins

What is the common theme of these parables and how does it answer or not answer the Pharisees' questions?

DAY 4 INTERPRETATION

Read 1 Sam. 21:1-6 as the background for Mark 2:25-28. What is Jesus advocating here? What is he not advocating here?

DAY 5 APPLICATION

What does it mean for your weekly mindset and habits that the Sabbath was created for man and that Jesus is "Lord even of the Sabbath"? Identify a time each week that you could set apart for the purpose of soul rest and communing with the Lord of the Sabbath.

READ MARK 3:7-19

DAY 1 READING

Prayerfully read through the passage twice (preferably in two translations), asking God to grow your knowledge and love for Jesus through your study this week. Note differences between the translations and how they enhance your understanding.

DAY 2 OBSERVATION

Note the Jordan River, as well as the cities of Tyre and Sidon, on the map in **Appendix 1**. What is different about this location from previous locations you have observed? Look up “Tyre” and “Sidon” in a bible dictionary and summarize in your own words.

DAY 3 INTERPRETATION

Notice the differentiation between his disciples and “a great crowd” (v. 7, 9). Also notice the way Jesus relates to his disciples in v. 9, 11, and 13. What do these interactions reveal about the nature of discipleship?

DAY 4 INTERPRETATION

Why do you think Mark chooses to describe some of the twelve as he lists them and not others? How do the descriptions enhance our understanding of these men?

DAY 5 APPLICATION

Would you identify as a disciple or as part of the crowd? Why? Write down some specific steps you can take to move closer to Jesus.

See www.oakhillfellowship.com/pathway to take a self-assessment and get some ideas for next steps in your personal growth.

READ MARK 3:20-35

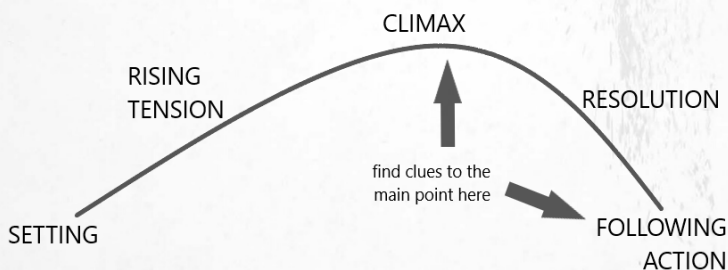
DAY 1 READING

Prayerfully read through the passage twice (preferably in two translations), asking God to grow your knowledge and love for Jesus through your study this week. Note differences between the translations and how they enhance your understanding.

DAY 2 OBSERVATION

Identify the characters in this story and describe what we learn about them.

DAY 3 INTERPRETATION



Identify the following parts of the plot:

- Setting
- Rising tension
- Climax
- Resolution
- Following action

DAY 4 INTERPRETATION

This passage forms a “Markan Sandwich” (see **Appendix 2**), a storytelling tool Mark uses in which a middle story (the meat) interrupts the two outer stories (the bread). The “meat” story adds theological significance to the “bread” stories.

Here, the first slice of bread is 3:20-21, the meat is found in 3:22-30 and the last slice of bread is 3:31-35. Describe the relationship between these parts of the sandwich in your own words. What is the theological significance of this section?

DAY 5 APPLICATION

The household/family of Jesus is plundering the household of Satan. Those who “do the will of God” are the ones who are part of Jesus’ family. What does it practically mean for you to be part of Jesus’ family? Practically, what is his “word” that he is calling you to hear and do today?

READ MARK 4:1-20

DAY 1 READING

Prayerfully read through the passage twice (preferably in two translations), asking God to grow your knowledge and love for Jesus through your study this week. Note differences between the translations and how they enhance your understanding.

DAY 2 OBSERVATION

Identify the different parts of the parable according to how Jesus defines them:

THE SEED

THE PATH

THE ROCKY GROUND

THE THORNS

THE GOOD SOIL

DAY 3 INTERPRETATION

Jesus cites Isaiah 6:9-10 when explaining the purpose of parables. Go back and read Isaiah's whole commission in Isa. 6:9-13. How does this passage seem to relate to Jesus and his ministry? In what ways are the disciples different from the rest of the crowds in how they get to hear and respond to the teaching of Jesus?

DAY 4 INTERPRETATION

Again, this passage forms something similar to a "Markan sandwich" (see **Appendix 2**) in which the "meat" of v. 10-13 explains the theological significance of the parable in v. 1-9 and the parable's explanation v. 14-20. In your own words, explain how the parts of this section work together.

DAY 5 APPLICATION

With which soil do you personally identify? Ask the Lord to soften your heart like the good soil and reveal Christ and his kingdom to you. Revisit the people you identified in **week 2** and consider which type of soil they might be. Pray for them accordingly and continuing sowing the seed of the gospel.

READ MARK 4:21-34**DAY 1 READING**

Prayerfully read through the passage twice (preferably in two translations), asking God to grow your knowledge and love for Jesus through your study this week. Note differences between the translations and how they enhance your understanding.

DAY 2 OBSERVATION

Summarize the content of each parable, identifying the parts: 4:21-23, 4:24-25, 4:26-29, and 4:30-32. What is similar and what is different about each parable? How might they relate to one another?

DAY 3 OBSERVATION

Look up "Kingdom of God" in a Bible dictionary. Summarize the definition in your own words. What do these parables say about the kingdom of God?

DAY 4 INTERPRETATION

Jesus gives the purpose of parables in 4:11-12 (see ***last week's study***). Note the similar language used in v. 22-23 and v. 33-34. How do these parables further the theme of what Jesus hides and reveals?

DAY 5 APPLICATION

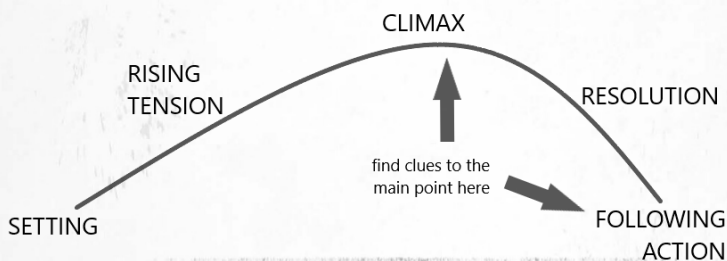
Jesus privately explained everything to his own disciples. Write down anything you don't understand about his kingdom or his plan. Ask him to reveal these things to you, and seek out others in the body of Christ to help you understand.

READ MARK 4:35-41

DAY 1 READING

Prayerfully read through the passage twice (preferably in two translations), asking God to grow your knowledge and love for Jesus through your study this week. Note differences between the translations and how they enhance your understanding.

DAY 2 OBSERVATION



Identify the following parts of each scene:

- Setting
- Rising tension
- Climax
- Resolution
- Following action

DAY 3 INTERPRETATION

Compare and contrast the disciples' response in the rising tension of v. 37 and their response in the resolution of v. 41a. What is the source of their fear in each? What makes the difference?

DAY 4 INTERPRETATION

Look up the word "peace" in the Bible dictionary. What kind of peace is Jesus bringing to this situation?

DAY 5 APPLICATION

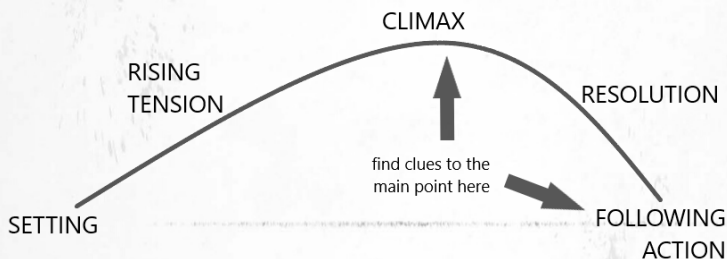
Where in your life do you need to hear the words of Jesus, "Peace, be still?" Write down specific things that you are fearing (or are prone to fear) instead of fearing Christ. Entrust these things to him in prayer.

READ MARK 5:1-20

DAY 1 READING

Prayerfully read through the passage twice (preferably in two translations), asking God to grow your knowledge and love for Jesus through your study this week. Note differences between the translations and how they enhance your understanding.

DAY 2 OBSERVATION



Identify the following parts of each scene:

- Setting
- Rising tension
- Climax
- Resolution
- Following action

DAY 3 OBSERVATION

The setting of this narrative communicates a lot. First, look up “Gerasenes” in a bible dictionary and summarize your findings. Second, Mark repeats the word “tombs” three times (v. 2, 3, 5). Why do you think he does this? How does this help us understand the man’s condition and society’s response?

DAY 4 INTERPRETATION

Based on your narrative analysis, what do you think Mark wants to emphasize through this story (climax and following action)?

DAY 5 APPLICATION

With which group do you most closely identify in their response to Jesus: those who had seen the miracle, the people who later came to see what happened, or the freed demoniac. Why? Confess your need for Jesus and your willingness to tell others about him.

READ MARK 5:21-43**DAY 1 READING**

Prayerfully read through the passage twice (preferably in two translations), asking God to grow your knowledge and love for Jesus through your study this week. Note differences between the translations and how they enhance your understanding.

DAY 2 OBSERVATION

Identify the characters in this story and describe what we learn about them. Compare them with one another. How do they treat one another and interact with Jesus?

DAY 3 INTERPRETATION

This passage forms a “Markan Sandwich” (see **Appendix 2**), a storytelling tool Mark uses in which a middle story (the meat) interrupts the two outer stories (the bread). The “meat” story adds theological significance to the “bread” stories. Here, the first slice of bread is 5:21-24, the meat is found in 5:25-34 and the last slice of bread is 5:35-43. Describe the relationship between these parts of the sandwich in your own words.

DAY 4 INTERPRETATION

What theological significance does the “meat” story about the woman in the crowd add to the “bread” story of Jairus and his daughter? What might be missing if Mark did not include the details of the woman’s healing, but simply stated “there was a delay”?

DAY 5 APPLICATION

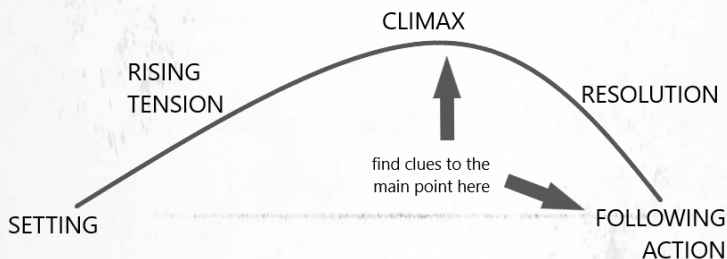
How does this true story impact your faith in Christ? Pray that God would increase the boldness of your faith to match that of the woman who touched Jesus’ garment.

READ MARK 6:1-6

DAY 1 READING

Prayerfully read through the passage twice (preferably in two translations), asking God to grow your knowledge and love for Jesus through your study this week. Note differences between the translations and how they enhance your understanding.

DAY 2 OBSERVATION



Identify the following parts of each scene:

- Setting
- Rising tension
- Climax
- Resolution
- Following action

DAY 3 INTERPRETATION

What seems to be the cause of the unbelief in Jesus' hearers?

DAY 4 INTERPRETATION

What does Mark mean by the phrase, "but he could do no mighty work there..."? What do we learn about the relationship between miracles and belief/unbelief from this passage? How does this compare to the rest of the examples of miracles in the book of Mark?

DAY 5 APPLICATION

Do you ever doubt Jesus' identity or authority? Does prior "knowledge" about Jesus ever keep you from accepting what his word clearly says when it confronts what you previously thought? Identify and confess any doubts or unbelief that are keeping you from fully embracing the identity and authority of Christ.

READ MARK 6:7-30**DAY 1 READING**

Prayerfully read through the passage twice (preferably in two translations), asking God to grow your knowledge and love for Jesus through your study this week. Note differences between the translations and how they enhance your understanding.

DAY 2 OBSERVATION

Identify the characters in this story and describe what we learn about them. Compare them with one another. How do they treat one another and interact with Jesus?

DAY 3 INTERPRETATION

This passage forms a “Markan Sandwich” (see **Appendix 2**), a storytelling tool Mark uses in which a middle story (the meat) interrupts the two outer stories (the bread). The “meat” story adds theological significance to the “bread” stories. Here, the first slice of bread is 6:7-13, the meat is found in 6:14-29 and the last slice of bread is 6:30. Describe the relationship between these parts of the sandwich in your own words.

DAY 4 INTERPRETATION

How does the “meat” story about John the Baptist and Herod temper our response to the “bread” story about the disciples’ ministry? Putting these stories together, what does it teach us about what disciples of Jesus can expect?

DAY 5 APPLICATION

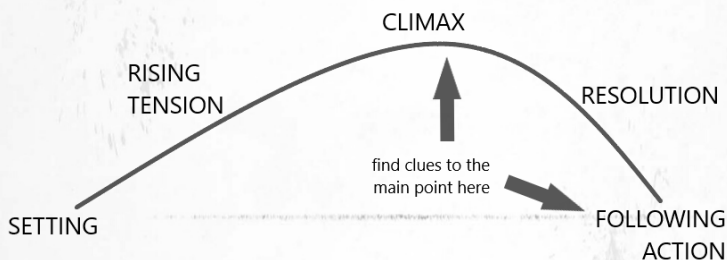
Create two columns: in the first, write the benefits of participating with Jesus in his mission; in the second, write the potential costs of participating with Jesus in his mission. Look at the lists and write down your level of commitment to participate with Jesus on mission now that you have considered the costs.

READ MARK 6:31-44

DAY 1 READING

Prayerfully read through the passage twice (preferably in two translations), asking God to grow your knowledge and love for Jesus through your study this week. Note differences between the translations and how they enhance your understanding.

DAY 2 OBSERVATION



Identify the following parts of each scene:

- Setting
- Rising tension
- Climax
- Resolution
- Following action

DAY 3 OBSERVATION

What does Mark convey about the setting and the rising tension? How does this tension make you feel?

DAY 4 INTERPRETATION

How does the climax and sudden resolution affect you as a reader? Why do you think Mark wrote the story this way?

DAY 5 APPLICATION

Consider your application from **week 14**.

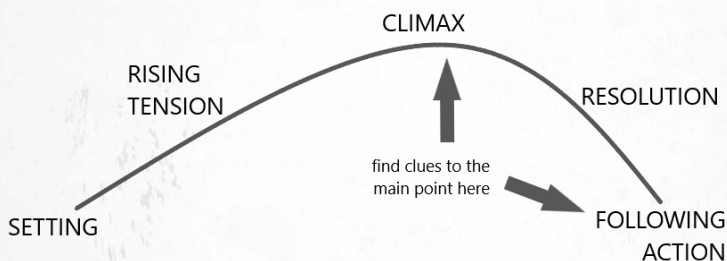
Participating in ministry is costly and rewarding at the same time. Often it feels impossible, but Jesus always provides what we need. What is Jesus calling you to do that feels beyond what you can accomplish? Ask him for what you need.

READ MARK 6:45-56

DAY 1 READING

Prayerfully read through the passage twice (preferably in two translations), asking God to grow your knowledge and love for Jesus through your study this week. Note differences between the translations and how they enhance your understanding.

DAY 2 OBSERVATION



Identify the following parts of the plot for the first scene (6:45-52):

- Setting
- Rising tension
- Climax
- Resolution
- Following action

Look up Bethsaida and Gennasaret on a map (**Appendix 1**) and in a Bible dictionary.

DAY 3 INTERPRETATION

Mark gives us a lot of details about Jesus' purpose behind his actions in the first scene (6:45-52). How does this information help us understand the point of the story?

DAY 4 INTERPRETATION

Compare the response of the disciples at the end of the first scene (v. 51-52) to the response of the people at Gennesaret in scene 2 (v. 53-56). Why are the disciples struggling at this point in Mark's Gospel?

DAY 5 APPLICATION

Do you identify more with the disciples in the boat who do not understand because of the hardness of their heart, or the crowds at Gennesaret in their eagerness to see his power? Confess any hardness of heart, and bring any concerns to him in prayer.

READ MARK 7:1-23**DAY 1 READING**

Prayerfully read through the passage twice (preferably in two translations), asking God to grow your faith and love for Jesus through your study this week. Note differences between the translations and how they enhance your understanding.

DAY 2 OBSERVATION

Look up the words “Pharisee” and “heart” in a Bible Dictionary. Summarize what you learn about each subject. How does this knowledge help your understanding of this text?

DAY 3 INTERPRETATION

Summarize the following parts of this scene in your own words: the Pharisees' question/accusation (7:1-5), Jesus' response to the Pharisees (7:6-13) and Jesus' teaching to the crowd (7:14-23). What is the Pharisees' primary charge against Jesus, and what is his primary charge against them?

DAY 4 INTERPRETATION

Jesus quotes Isaiah 29:13 in verses 6-7. Go back and read this verse in context (Isaiah 29:11-21). According to this passage in Isaiah, how does the Lord respond to those whose hearts are far from him? Who does he reveal himself to instead? How does this shed light on what is happening in Mark 7:1-23?

DAY 5 APPLICATION

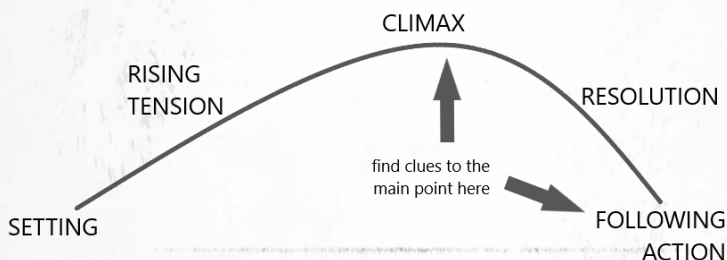
Create two columns: on one side, write down words that you've said in the past week that seem to honor the Lord. On the other side, carefully think through and write down your heart motivation behind those words. Does your heart match your words, or is there a discrepancy? Confess any discrepancy to the Lord and ask him to purify your heart.

READ MARK 7:24-37

DAY 1 READING

Prayerfully read through the passage twice (preferably in two translations), asking God to grow your faith and love for Jesus through your study this week. Note differences between the translations and how they enhance your understanding.

DAY 2 OBSERVATION



Identify the following parts of the plot for the both scenes (7:24-30 and 7:31-37):

- Setting
- Rising tension
- Climax
- Resolution
- Following action

DAY 3 OBSERVATION

Revisit what you learned about Tyre and Sidon in week 6. What is the significance that the woman he encounters there is a “Gentile”? Look up Decapolis on the map (**Appendix 1**) and in a Bible Dictionary. What happened the last time Jesus was in this general area (see 5:1-20)?

DAY 4 INTERPRETATION

Compare and contrast the two healings. Suggest reasons for the differences based on clues in the text.

DAY 5 APPLICATION

Jesus is for those who are humble enough to receive him by faith, no matter what their background or ethnicity. Is there anyone you have overlooked who needs to hear the good news of Jesus? Add them to the list of people who Jesus is calling you to reach that you made in week 2 of this study.

READ MARK 8:1-21**DAY 1 READING**

Prayerfully read through the passage twice (preferably in two translations), asking God to grow your faith and love for Jesus through your study this week. Note differences between the translations and how they enhance your understanding.

DAY 2 OBSERVATION

Compare the feeding of the four thousand in this passage with the feeding of the five thousand in Mark 6:30-44. What is similar? What is different? How can we know that this is two separate occurrences, and not just a retelling of the same story with different facts (see also the discussion in 8:14-21)?

DAY 3 INTERPRETATION

This passage forms a “Markan Sandwich” (see **Appendix 2**), a storytelling tool Mark uses in which a middle story (the meat) interrupts the two outer stories (the bread). The “meat” story adds theological significance to the “bread” stories. Here, the first slice of bread is 8:1-10, the meat is found in 8:11-13 and the last slice of bread is 8:14-21. Describe the relationship between these parts of the sandwich in your own words.

DAY 4 INTERPRETATION

Compare Jesus’ statement in 8:17-18 to these in previous sections: 4:10-12, 6:1-6, 6:51-52, 7:6-23, and 8:12. What does Mark seem to be communicating throughout each of them about how we hear and understand Jesus?

DAY 5 APPLICATION

As we come to the end of the first section of the book of Mark, is there anything you are still struggling to understand? Is there any teaching of Jesus you are resisting, or any call of Jesus you are not following? Confess anything you have identified, and ask the Lord to continually deepen your understanding of his power and authority.

APPENDIX 1

MAP: THE SETTING OF MARK



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APPENDIX 2

THE “MARKAN SANDWICH”

Because the Bible uses literary technique to communicate theological truth, it is sometimes helpful to understand different literary styles. One of Mark’s favorite techniques in his gospel is called “interpolation” or more commonly, the “Markan Sandwich.” Mark uses this technique to draw out key theological themes from two stories that don’t always appear to relate at first glance. Here’s how the technique works:



PART 3 - THE BREAD REPETITION

Mark tops off the sandwich by the story or theme set out in part 1.

PART 2 - THE MEAT

Mark interrupts the first story with a seemingly unrelated story or teaching.

PART 1 - THE BREAD FOUNDATION

Mark introduces a story or a theme but does not resolve it.

The point of this literary technique is to reveal a theological emphasis using the middle story as the key. Just as in a sandwich the “meat” helps give flavor and substance to “the bread,” the “interruption” adds emphasis that would not otherwise be there if the first story or theme existed on its own. Additionally, to observe and interpret a “Markan Sandwich,” it can sometimes be helpful to identify the “toothpick”: a repeated word, phrase, or theme that serves to hold the whole sandwich together.

Understanding this literary technique can enrich our understanding and enjoyment of God’s intended teaching in a given passage much in the same way that a complete sandwich is far more flavorful than two pieces of bread.

