

ADULTS

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE®

PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE



JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING
MADE FOR SOMETHING MORE

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A Word from Our Team

The Bible Studies for Life Team



Following Jesus doesn't happen in a vacuum. The road of Christianity is lived out in real time and in real life, dealing with real situations and real people. As Christians, we know Jesus has changed us on the inside. We're made brand new because of the gospel, and if we're truly new, we will always find new ways to apply that new life in our homes, workplaces, and other relationships.

In this edition of *Bible Studies for Life*, you and your group will encounter Jesus in the Gospel of Mark as you hear straight from the Lord and see how, indeed, "Jesus Changes Everything."

You'll also have the opportunity in our second study to reaffirm the fact that, as Christians, we've been "Made for Something More." This study will guide you through six traits that clearly identify a person who is abiding in Jesus day by day.

As always, our team is praying for you as you walk through God's Word using *Bible Studies for Life*.

Michael Kelley—Director of Groups Ministry

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My group's prayer requests

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing prayer requests.

My group's prayer requests

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.

My group's prayer requests

Handwriting practice lines for the title "My group's prayer requests". The page contains 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing.

My group's prayer requests

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JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING



Who is Jesus, anyway?

A good man. A crazy person. A prophet. The Son of God.

You'll often get a strong response if you talk to other people about Jesus. Some will tell you they already know Him; some may say they want nothing to do with what you're trying to sell. Some might cry when hearing about Him; others may see it as an opportunity to debate.

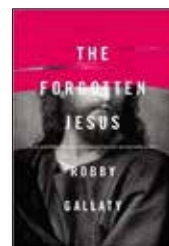
Jesus has been a polarizing figure in history for centuries. Mountains of opinions fill the landscape about who Jesus is and why He's worth talking about in the first place. Jesus' name may change the tone of a conversation, but His actions changed the world.

The Gospel of Mark was most likely dictated to Mark by one of Jesus' disciples—Peter, specifically. And since Peter was a man of action, his account of Jesus' life is a fast-paced examination of the things Jesus did. As we look in the opening chapters of that Gospel, we'll arrive at an incredible conclusion: *Jesus changes everything.*



Robby Gallaty

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Jesus Changes Everything

Session 1 ***Jesus Calls*** Mark 1:14-20

Session 2 ***Jesus Teaches*** Mark 4:1-9

Session 3 ***Jesus Rules*** Mark 4:35-41

Session 4 ***Jesus Saves*** Luke 2:4-20

Session 5 ***Jesus Heals*** Mark 5:22-24,35-43

Session 6 ***Jesus Provides*** Mark 6:34-44

Session 7 ***Jesus Corrects*** Mark 7:5-15

1

JESUS CALLS



*What great adventures are
on your bucket list?*

QUESTION #1

#BSFLJesus

*Following Jesus is a life-changing adventure,
and you're invited.*



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

I have a friend who loves trains. He's always loved trains, and when he was a kid, his parents knew it. One Saturday morning when he was around six or seven, he woke to the smell of blueberry pancakes and an unusual air of excitement from his parents. "Hurry up and eat. We've got great plans," his father said. "You'll find out what they are when we get there." The mystery and anticipation made him feel like he would burst.

His parents first took him to buy cowboy boots, chaps, a leather vest, and a cowboy hat, which was exciting enough for a small boy. But where they went next was even better: Tweetsie® Railroad, a theme park in Boone, North Carolina, designed entirely around a working coal train—the very thing he loved most. After that day, a trip to the Tweetsie® Railroad became a weekly adventure for my friend and his parents.

Adventures like that one create great memories for both kids and adults, but Jesus offered His disciples a far greater adventure than they could have thought to ask for—a life-changing adventure. And He offers the same adventure to us.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Mark 1:14-15

¹⁴ **Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God,**
¹⁵ **and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”**

There’s a common misconception about the kingdom of God that many people accept, including many Christians. It’s the idea that God’s kingdom is something that’s coming someday—that it’s a place we’ll go when we die, way out in the future.

The only trouble with that idea is that Jesus said something quite different. In His words, “the kingdom of God is at hand.” The kingdom, He was saying, is right here; it’s staring you in the face. When Jesus talked about the kingdom of God, He didn’t mean some far-off place we go when we die, although He did talk about heaven as God’s residence in other Scripture passages. (See John 6:38, for example.)

Let’s look at three key truths about the immediacy of God’s kingdom:

- 1. The kingdom of God is in Christ.** Jesus embodies the kingdom, with full authority as King.
- 2. The kingdom of God is powerful.** It’s greater than any other kingdom. (See 1 Cor. 4:20.)
- 3. We can participate in that powerful kingdom today.** Jesus’ model prayer includes these words: “Your kingdom come, your will be done” (Matt. 6:10). When God’s will is done in our lives, we’re a part of God’s kingdom. His power and authority guide us, rather than our own.

God’s kingdom is here and now. That’s a critical truth. In fact, Jesus declared that this truth demands a response from those who hear it: “repent and believe in the gospel.”

How should we understand the connection between repentance and belief in the Christian life?

QUESTION #2

"Repent" is a word that gets tossed around a lot in churches, but it has a crucial, personal, almost physical meaning. It carries the image of turning *from* something and *toward* something else. Nobody stands still; we're constantly moving in one direction or another—either toward God or toward something else. Repentance is what happens when we recognize we've been heading in the wrong direction and we correct our course toward the Lord.

What's perhaps most remarkable about Jesus' message is that we don't turn toward an elaborate ritual or list of demands, but simply believe in the good news about God. This was a revolutionary concept in a Jewish society run by the religious elite. They had constructed books full of rules—613 rules in all—that the "devout" were required to follow. In the Pharisees' eyes, people received right standing with God according to how perfectly they followed all of those rules. In Jesus' message, however, right standing with God comes when a person course-corrects toward belief in Him.

Too many times, repentance is painted as simply feeling sorry about what you did. That's only part of the process. Belonging to the kingdom of God also means recognizing the standard God commands us to live by, acknowledging that we've come up short of that standard, and taking the necessary steps to get back on course.

To become a citizen of a different country, a person has to follow several prescribed steps in order to demonstrate allegiance to that country's principles and laws. Living in God's kingdom isn't much different: we turn from our old ways and submit instead to the ways of God. Belonging to God's kingdom means our entire worldview has fundamentally shifted. We no longer seek the world and its fleeting pleasures, but we seek to glorify and proclaim our King.

Christ's invitation calls us to an adventure unmatched in either history or fiction, and it affects us right here and right now. Jesus' instructions for entering His kingdom are simple: repent of your sins and believe the good news that the kingdom of God is not far off or unattainable, but right in front of you, waiting for you to enter.

***How has the gospel
been "good news" in
your life?***

QUESTION #3

WHAT'S A KINGDOM?

Place a check mark next to the image below that best represents your understanding of what a "kingdom" is. Use the space below each image to record how it represents an element of God's kingdom.



What are some specific words you would use to describe God's kingdom?

Mark 1:16-20

¹⁶ Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." ¹⁸ And immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹ And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. ²⁰ And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

This wasn't the first time Simon and Andrew had encountered Jesus. Andrew initially was a disciple of John the Baptist. On one occasion when Andrew and another of his followers were present, John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and identified Him as the Lamb of God—the One he'd baptized the day before. Hearing this, Andrew and another of John's disciples immediately left to follow Jesus. (See John 1:32-37.)

After spending all day with Jesus, Andrew sprinted home to his brother Simon. Andrew told his brother that he'd just spent all day with the man John had been telling them about—the Messiah! (See John 1:40-41.) Andrew quickly took Simon to meet this new Rabbi. As soon as Jesus saw Andrew's brother, He told him: "You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas' (which means Peter)" (v. 42).

What are the life-long implications of accepting Jesus' call to follow Him?

QUESTION #4



Therefore, when we read Mark 1, we know Simon and Andrew were aware of Jesus. Even through brief encounters, Jesus had revealed Himself uniquely to these two brothers.

Similarly, Jesus continues to reveal Himself to us every day in at least two ways:

- ▶ **Creation.** Psalm 19:1 tells us, “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.” Paul wrote in Romans 1:19-20 that: “what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world.”
- ▶ **Scripture.** We have something even more remarkable at our disposal: the Word of God. The collection of Scripture that we can hold in our hand cries out the majesty and lordship of Jesus Christ on every page.

When Jesus called Simon and Andrew to follow Him, He didn’t give them a new assignment that was unfamiliar to them; He equated it with something they knew well: fishing. “Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” Of course, this was still an invitation into the unknown—following a Rabbi who, at this point, had given them no instructions beyond “Follow me.”

A short time later, Jesus came upon “James the son of Zebedee and John his brother,” and He also called them to follow Him. They did. For three years, these men followed Jesus and walked closely with Him. After Jesus ascended and sent His Holy Spirit, these four men—along with the other disciples—went in unique directions to do what God called them to do. But underneath it all was a common call: “Follow me.”

The call to follow Jesus has never been limited to Peter, Andrew, James, and John. It’s a universal call to us all. Jesus also calls us to repent, believe in Him as the Son of God, and follow Him. That call begins the greatest “fishing” adventure we could ever dream of undertaking.

What have you left behind in order to follow Jesus?

QUESTION #5

LIVE IT OUT

How will you respond to Jesus' call in your life this week? Keep in mind the following suggestions:

- ▶ **Consider.** Spend a few minutes in self-reflection. Are you walking toward God or away from Him? As honestly as possible, weigh your actions to see if they align with Christ's call to follow Him.
- ▶ **Correct.** Identify something about yourself that needs to change, and then take intentional, specific steps to change it. Seek help whenever necessary.
- ▶ **Cast.** Jesus has called you to fish for people. So fish as the disciples would have done: with a wide net. Cast it far and wide, leaving the results of your casting up to God.



In the adventure Jesus calls us to, we won't always know the direction we're headed, but we'll always know the One to follow. Following Jesus is an adventure that leads us straight to the arms of the Father.

My thoughts

Share with others how you will live out this study: **#BSFLJesus**