

ADULTS

# BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE.®

LEADER GUIDE



JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING  
MADE FOR SOMETHING MORE

Don't Miss This

A Word from Our Team

Using Bible Studies for Life

The Attributes of Discipleship

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Session 2      ***Jesus Teaches***

Session 3      ***Jesus Rules***

Session 4      ***Jesus Saves***

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## ***Made for Something More***

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Article: 4 Ways to Facilitate Discussion

Article: Because I Know the One

Join the Conversation

Coming Next Quarter

# Don't miss this!

## Social Media



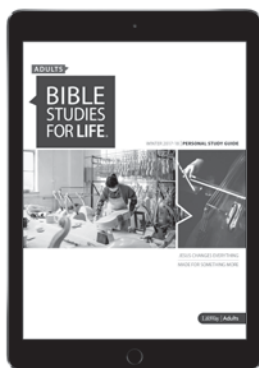
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## The App

Simple and straightforward, this elegantly designed app gives you all the content of the Personal Study Guide—plus a whole lot more—right at your fingertips. Available in the iTunes App Store and for Android devices; search “**Bible Studies for Life.**”



## Blog

Every week, you'll find helpful add-ons and additional suggestions in our “Leader Extra” posts. You'll also find teaching tips, links to magazine articles, insights from our editorial team, and sermon outlines to complement every session. [BibleStudiesForLife.com/AdultExtra](http://BibleStudiesForLife.com/AdultExtra)

**E. Coye Still**, writer of the “Made for Something More” commentary, pastors the University Hills Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina. He is a graduate of Furman University (B.A.) and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (M.Div., Ph.D.). Coye and his wife, Sherra, are former International Mission Board representatives in Southeast Asia.

**Bob Bunn** wrote the commentary for “Jesus Changes Everything.” Bob currently serves as an editorial director for books and training at Ramsey Solutions in Brentwood, Tennessee. Bob holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in journalism, along with a Master of Divinity and a doctorate in Christian education and leadership from Southern Seminary.

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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 are made brand new because of the gospel, and if we are 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 the second study to reaffirm the fact that, as Christians, we have been "Made for Something More." This study will help you see six traits that clearly identify a person who is abiding in Jesus day by day.

As always, we are praying for you as you walk through God's Word using Bible Studies for Life.

**Michael Kelley**—Director of Groups Ministry

 @MichaelKelley | [michaelkelley.co](http://michaelkelley.co)



# USING BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

## ***Invite the Holy Spirit's Guidance***

Because God is the guide for your study, invite Him to show you how to be the best facilitator for your group. Read the Bible passage several times with the Holy Spirit showing you its meaning and application.

## ***Personal Study Guide***

Then read the Personal Study Guide. Its content provides the foundation and direction for the Bible discussion and study by your group.

## ***Leader Guide***

Follow the simple directives in the group plan, which will guide you in engaging your group in discussion around the Bible passage. Read the commentary to help you understand the passage. Share insights from the commentary as needed during the group discussion.

## ***Leader Pack***

The optional Leader Pack is designed to enhance the group experience, especially for visual learners. Pull in the Leader Pack items as referenced in the group plan.

The Leader Pack also includes a CD-ROM with:

- ▶ JPEG files of the two main study images that you can use with any presentation software (i.e., PowerPoint). Promote the study by placing these images into an announcement slideshow or display the images during the sessions to reinforce the study topic.
- ▶ PDF file of each pack item, so you can create multiple posters. During your session, display the image on a screen using any presentation software, or post the image on social media to promote the study.
- ▶ Sample Twitter® and email messages to post prior to your Bible study time in order to raise awareness and promote the session topic.
- ▶ Promotional videos to introduce both of the studies in this quarter.
- ▶ An electronic version of the group plans that you can customize and print.
- ▶ Leader articles to assist you as you lead your group.
- ▶ *Biblical Illustrator* articles that allow you to go deeper in your study.

## ***Additional Ideas***

Additional discussion questions and teaching suggestions for leaders are available online at [BibleStudiesforLife.com/AdultExtra](http://BibleStudiesforLife.com/AdultExtra). You'll also find all the magazine articles we mention in this study guide.

## ***Prepare Your Group Members***

Encourage your group members to read the Personal Study Guide prior to the group meeting. (Some group members will prefer to read it after the meeting as a way to follow up and reflect.)

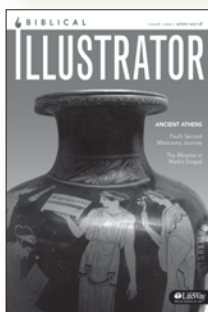
Encourage them to join the conversation with others on our Facebook page ([Facebook.com/BibleStudiesforLife](http://Facebook.com/BibleStudiesforLife)), our blog ([BibleStudiesforLife.com](http://BibleStudiesforLife.com)), or on Twitter ([@BibleMeetsLife](https://twitter.com/BibleMeetsLife)).

## ***For Those Who Want to Go Deeper***

The ***Advanced Bible Study*** is written for group members who desire more extensive commentary. It includes exposition of each session's Scripture passage, an examination of key words, an introduction to the setting of the passage and biblical life and times, questions to guide the study, and interactive responses to help readers apply God's truths to their lives today.

The ***Herschel Hobbs Commentary*** is designed specifically for leaders and provides a comprehensive exposition of each session's Scripture passage. Specific attention is called to items in the biblical text that readers would miss without a commentary. This commentary is based on the King James Version but interacts with all major English translations.

Each quarter, ***Biblical Illustrator*** offers in-depth background information on Bible customs, history, culture, archaeology, and word studies through vivid photography, engaging maps and graphics, and lesson-targeted articles. You can subscribe to *Biblical Illustrator* by going to [lifeway.com/biblicalillustrator](http://lifeway.com/biblicalillustrator) or by calling 1-800-458-2772. Forty additional articles (in PDF form) that support this quarter's Bible studies are available for \$3.00 per bundle at [lifeway.com/biblicalillustrator](http://lifeway.com/biblicalillustrator).



## My group's prayer requests

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## My group's prayer requests

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing prayer requests.



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# THE ATTRIBUTES OF DISCIPLESHIP

How do you measure discipleship? Research conducted by LifeWay revealed eight factors that are consistently present in the lives of believers who are progressing in their spiritual maturity. These “attributes of discipleship” form the foundation for the scope and sequence of studies used in *Bible Studies for Life*. By regularly engaging these studies, your group will experience an intentional plan for discipleship in the following eight ways:

## ► Bible Engagement

Transformation can be recognized when our mind is sharpened by the Bible, our perspective is shaped by the Bible, and our actions are directed by the Bible.

*All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17, CSB).*

## ► Obeying God and Denying Self

Discipleship is the process of obedience to One who is in authority over you. Transformation can be seen when we progressively set aside earthly delights for kingdom priorities.

*“If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23, CSB).*

## ► Serving God and Others

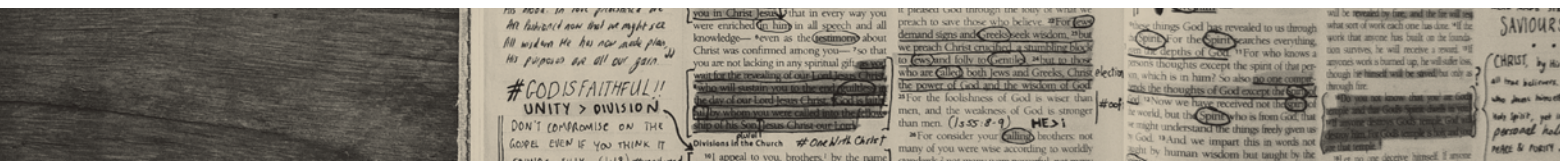
Transformation is evident when personal needs and even dreams are set aside for the needs we see in others.

*“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me” (Matthew 25:40, CSB).*

## ► Sharing Christ

Even with the need to live out the effects of the gospel, maturing believers know that speaking about the message is a necessity. Transformation is evident when we talk about the source of it.

*Ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you (1 Peter 3:15, CSB).*



For more details about each of the eight attributes, go to [BibleStudiesforLife.com/8attributes](https://BibleStudiesforLife.com/8attributes).

### ► Exercising Faith

Transformation is seen in believers when risk-aversion is set aside and our lives are characterized by faithful obedience to God's will.

***I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me (Galatians 2:19b-20, CSB).***

### ► Seeking God

Transformation is seen when our desire is to know God more deeply and experience His work more fully. *See page 14 for more details.*

***But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you (Matthew 6:33, CSB).***

### ► Building Relationships

Our faith is personal but it is not intended to be private. Our horizontal relationships should develop just as our vertical relationship with God does. Transformation is occurring when relational maturity is evident in our lives.

***They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer (Acts 2:42, CSB).***

### ► Unashamed

Transformation is evident when a believer is unashamed in presenting their own life as being aligned with Christ.

***For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek (Romans 1:16, CSB).***

# SEEKING GOD

BY PHILIP NATION

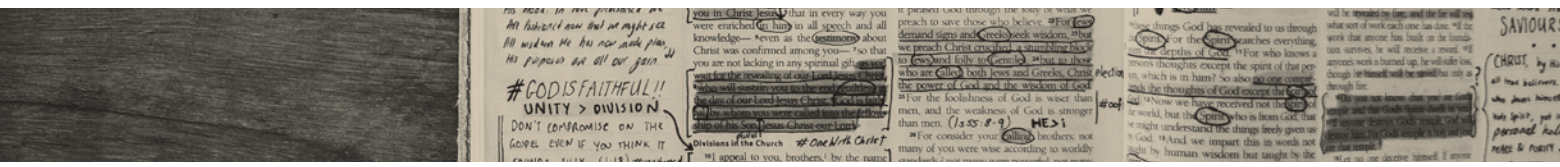
Do you ever find yourself just going through the motions? We can do so much in auto-pilot mode—the daily commute, working at a desk, chores around the house, and more. But how we live for Christ and worship Him should never be something that we find in this category.

In the *Transformational Discipleship* research, growing disciples firmly disagreed with the idea that worship is something we can do by “just going through the motions.” Rather, growing disciples intentionally engage in activities like congregational worship, setting aside time for prayer, and even memorizing Scripture.

Jesus taught us, “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you” (Matt. 6:33, CSB). We become disciples of Christ because we intend to follow Jesus and become like Him. The desire does not end when we cross over the threshold of faith and gain salvation. Growing disciples will continually seek after God because of their love for Him and their commitment to become more like Jesus.

As Christians, we should have a continuous hunger for knowing Christ.

The passion we have for Jesus is referred to in Scripture as our “first love.” God commands believers to return to it. Maturing disciples prioritize their faith as the guiding principle for living. Their personal commitment to Jesus Christ for salvation remains vitally important throughout their lives. Whenever we find ourselves straying from this commitment, then the call to return to “the love you had at first” is a beautiful reminder.



In the research, growing believers gave a strong agreement to the statement, “One of the main reasons I live my life the way I do is to please and honor God.” They don’t just think about what God might want from them. These believers actively praise God for His previous work in their lives and chase after what He wants next for them.

We see transformation when we desire to know God more deeply and experience His work more fully. The idea of seeking God is not only about knowing a proverbial playbook for life. It’s that we seek Him first. Then, we will do His work naturally in and through our lives.

If we don’t care properly for our spiritual lives, we may allow them to deteriorate into simply consuming religious goods and services from a congregation. Transformational discipleship presses us to something greater. Rather than just consuming spiritual stuff, we desire to know God intimately. As you press into your study of the Word and begin to truly live out your faith, keep your focus on Jesus and His great love for you.

—Dr. Philip Nation is the pastor of First Baptist Church of Bradenton, Florida, and is the author of *Habits for Our Holiness*.

# Seek

# 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.

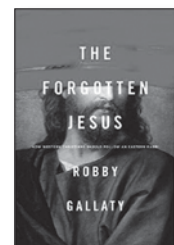
Jesus has been a polarizing figure in history for centuries. Mountains of opinions fill the landscape about who Jesus is and why He's worth talking about in the first place. Jesus' name may change the tone of a conversation, but His actions changed the world.

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**

Robby Gallaty is the pastor of Long Hollow Baptist Church in Hendersonville, Tennessee, and is passionate about disciple-making. He and his wife, Kandi, and their two sons live in Hendersonville. Robby is the author of several books, including *The Forgotten Jesus: How Western Christians Should Follow an Eastern Rabbi*.





## **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

***Find additional tools and resources to support this study, all available online at [BibleStudiesForLife.com/AdultExtra](http://BibleStudiesForLife.com/AdultExtra).***



## SESSION 1

# JESUS CALLS

### ► ***The Point***

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

### ► ***The Passage***

Mark 1:14-20

### ► ***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.

### ► ***The Setting***

From the very first chapter, Mark's Gospel is a fast-moving summary of Jesus' earthly ministry. A brief introduction to the ministry of John the Baptist (see Mark 1:1-8) leads directly into his baptism of Jesus. Mark then provided a summary of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. (See vv. 12-13.) Using an economy of words, the stage is set. The focus fully moves from John to Jesus, including Jesus' ministry of calling people—including His first disciples—to follow Him.

# *What does the Bible say?*

## **Kingdom of God** (v. 15)—

The kingdom is not an earthly domain, but a spiritual realm operating under the authority of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

## **Mark 1:14-20**

**<sup>14</sup> Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God,**

**<sup>15</sup> and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”**

**<sup>16</sup> 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.**

**<sup>17</sup> And Jesus said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.”**

**<sup>18</sup> And immediately they left their nets and followed him.**

**<sup>19</sup> 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.**

**<sup>20</sup> And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.**

# GET INTO THE STUDY



5 minutes

Notes



**LEADER PACK:** Display **Pack Item 1**, “Jesus Changes Everything,” to introduce the major theme of this study, along with the specific focus of each session.

**DISCUSS:** Question #1 on page 13 of the PSG (Personal Study Guide): **“What great adventures are on your bucket list?”**

**ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL):** Supplement your group’s engagement with

Question #1, above, by bringing an actual bucket to your gathering. Also bring a sheet of paper or a note card for each group member. Encourage group members to write down the adventure they want to pursue, but not to sign their names. Gather all of the papers or note cards into the bucket, then draw one out at random. Read what’s been written, and see if the group can guess which person wrote about that adventure. Repeat as you have time.

**Note:** If time allows, encourage group members to share about the adventures they would like to pursue. What’s appealing about their adventure? What’s held them back from pursuing that adventure so far?

**GUIDE:** Direct group members to “The Bible Meets Life” on page 14 of the PSG. Introduce the life-changing adventure of following Jesus by reading or summarizing the text—or by encouraging group members to read on their own.

**GUIDE:** Call attention to “The Point” on page 14 of the PSG: **“Following Jesus is a life-changing adventure, and you’re invited.”**

**PRAY:** Transition into the study by thanking God for gathering each person in your group and bringing them to your meeting place. Pray that the Holy Spirit would be near to each of you as you study the words and actions of Jesus.

## BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR

Want to know about biblical culture, people, archaeology, and history? *Biblical Illustrator* has articles that tie to each session in this study at [lifeway.com/BI](http://lifeway.com/BI).

## JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING

▶ JESUS CALLS	Mark 16:7-13
▶ JESUS TEACHES	Mark 16:14
▶ JESUS RULES	Mark 16:15-17
▶ JESUS SAVES	Luke 24:37-49
▶ JESUS HEALS	Mark 16:18, 19-20
▶ JESUS PROVIDES	Mark 16:21-26
▶ JESUS CORRECTS	Mark 16:27-28

**TIP:** Use this “Notes” column to record additional discussion questions, concepts, and activities that connect the study content with your specific group.



15 minutes

# STUDY THE BIBLE

## Notes

### Mark 1:14-15

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



**READ:** Mark 1:14-15 on page 15 of the Personal Study Guide (PSG). Read the text out loud or ask a volunteer to do so.

**LEADER PACK:** Display **Pack Item 2**, “Map of Jesus’ Life,” to show group members where Galilee was located. Also point out other important areas from Jesus’ life such as Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Jerusalem.

**GUIDE:** Encourage group members to read through the numbered list on page 15 of the PSG in order to see three key truths about the kingdom of God.

**DISCUSS:** Question #2 on page 15 of the PSG: **“How should we understand the connection between repentance and belief in the Christian life?”**

**RECAP:** Read aloud the second paragraph on page 16 of the PSG:

What’s perhaps most remarkable about Jesus’ message is that we don’t turn toward an elaborate ritual or list of demands, but simply belief 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.

**DISCUSS:** Question #3 on page 16 of the PSG: **“How has the gospel been ‘good news’ in your life?”**

**TRANSITION:** We’ve seen Jesus’ general call to repent and believe the gospel. As we move to verses 16-20, we’ll see Jesus specifically call individuals to join His ministry and build His kingdom.

### ALTERNATE QUESTION:

*How would you describe “the kingdom of God” to someone who’s never heard about it?*

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## Mark 1:14-15 Commentary

**[Verse 14]** Mark noted that Jesus began His ministry in Galilee **after John was arrested**. The region of **Galilee** was located in the northern part of Israel, bounded on the west by Phoenicia (Tyre) and on the east generally by the Sea of Galilee. Samaria separated Galilee from Judea in the southern reaches of Israel. Galilee also was Jesus' home. He had been raised in the Galilean town of Nazareth.

Jesus went to Galilee **proclaiming the gospel of God**. In first-century Jewish culture, the gospel Jesus proclaimed would have had definite messianic implications. The prophet Isaiah identified the Messiah as the One who would proclaim good news to the poor, along with bringing healing and freedom. (See Isa. 61:1.) Jesus applied this passage to Himself in the synagogue at Nazareth—an incident which led to His rejection by the people of His hometown. (See Luke 4:16-30.)

**[Verse 15]** Jesus' proclamation included three parts. First, He announced that **"The time is fulfilled."** The Greek word for "time" (*kairos*) was used to indicate the proper or favorable time for something to happen. It also reflected a sense of significance, rather than simply marking the passing of time. But the political and national situation of Israel in the first century caused most Jews to misinterpret the role of the Messiah. Rather than the Suffering Servant described in passages like Isaiah 53, they looked for a Messiah as a powerful political leader who would defeat all of Israel's enemies, particularly the Roman occupiers of Israel. The concept of "the time" also indicated that the coming of the Messiah was all about God's plan. The coming of the Messiah was happening in accordance with God's timing, and it occurred according to His will. (See Gal. 4:4.)

The second part of Jesus' message explained the result of God's perfect timing: **"the kingdom of God is at hand."** Again, while many first-century Jews were looking for a Messiah who would establish a physical, political kingdom, God's plan for the Messiah went in a different direction—the kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom. The kingdom of God is the reign of God over those who have in their hearts submitted to His rule.

The kingdom is at hand because Jesus, the Messiah and King, had come. In the prologue of his Gospel, John wrote "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). In His sovereignty, God broke into human history to redeem His people through the incarnation of Jesus the Messiah and His sacrifice at the cross!

The final element of Jesus' core message demanded a response to the arrival of the kingdom of God. Jesus challenged His audience to **"repent and believe in the gospel."** The only way to enter God's kingdom is to "repent" of one's sins and "believe" in the good news of the kingdom. Repentance requires a complete change of direction—an about-face that moves one toward God rather than away from Him. This change is rooted in belief in God's Messiah—Jesus Christ—and marks the starting line for the great adventure Jesus calls us to begin.





# STUDY THE BIBLE

## Notes

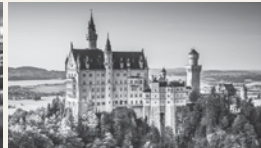
### Mark 1:16-20

<sup>16</sup> *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.* <sup>17</sup> *And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men."* <sup>18</sup> *And immediately they left their nets and followed him.*

**DO:** Direct group members to complete the activity "What's a Kingdom?" on page 17 of the PSG. If time allows, encourage volunteers to share their responses.



*Place a checkmark 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?*

**READ:** Mark 1:16-20 on page 18 of the PSG.

**RECAP:** Read aloud the bullet list on page 19 of the PSG to reveal two specific ways Jesus reveals Himself to us today:

- ▶ **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.

**DISCUSS:** Question #4 on page 18 of the PSG: **"What are the life-long implications of accepting Jesus' call to follow Him?"**

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## Mark 1:16-20 Commentary

**[Verses 16-17]** Jesus brought His message to the shores of the **Sea of Galilee**. The Sea of Galilee is actually a lake measuring about thirteen miles (north to south) by eight miles (east to west). The land surrounding the lake had a thriving economy, providing a solid livelihood for fishermen who lived in the many villages on its shores.

Among the commercial fishermen in the region were **Simon**—also known as Peter—and his brother **Andrew**. Mark didn't record any previous questions or conversations between the Messiah and these two fishermen. Instead, he dove straight into Jesus' call: **"Follow me."** The call to follow Jesus meant more than simply walking alongside Him or the creation of a teacher-pupil relationship. Instead, Jesus was calling His disciples to surrender and submission. By following Jesus, Andrew and Peter would be putting aside their own desires in order to serve their new Master. His mission would become their mission. Moving forward, they would be immersed in His plan.

But this invitation also came with a promise—**"I will make you become fishers of men."** While they might hang up their nets, following Jesus would transform their fishing experience. They would get the chance to be His witnesses and introduce people to the kingdom of God.

**[Verse 18]** The response of the fishermen was quick and decisive. **Immediately they left their nets and followed him.** Mark used the word "immediately" throughout his Gospel to underscore pace. But here it also reveals the compelling nature of Jesus' call and the devotion of His disciples. [Note: Depth of commitment is not the same thing as depth of understanding. While the disciples demonstrated a deep commitment to Jesus by immediately leaving the lives they'd known in order to follow His call, their understanding of who Jesus is as Messiah and what that meant gradually developed and grew as they spent more and more time with Him.]

To demonstrate their own commitment to this new adventure, Andrew and Peter **left their nets**. Abandoning their nets symbolized the cost of discipleship in at least two ways. First, it indicated they were leaving their past behind. The nets represented their profession, what they had grown up doing. It was what they knew and what they enjoyed. But the lure of the fishing business was not enough to overcome their devotion to the Messiah.

The nets also represented the secure livelihood that Andrew and Peter had built along the shores of Galilee. Their nets had provided whatever wealth they had accumulated, had put food on their tables, and provided a roof over their heads. Now, they were putting their very existence in Jesus' hands. He would be their Source and Provider. Following Him meant relying on Him to meet their needs.

The words **followed him** point to the fact that Andrew and Peter were completely committed to Jesus' mission. They had seen and heard enough to believe that Jesus was the Messiah (see John 1:40-42), and they were willing to lay everything else aside to become His disciples.





10 minutes

# STUDY THE BIBLE

## Notes

### Mark 1:16-20 (continued)

*<sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.*

**GUIDE:** Use the third and fourth paragraph from the Commentary to provide your group members with background information on James and John.

**DISCUSS:** Question #5 on page 19 of the PSG: **“What have you left behind in order to follow Jesus?”**

**ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL):** James and John were “mending the nets” when Jesus called them. As fisherman, their nets were visible symbols not only of their jobs, but of their identity as well. Give each group member a piece of paper and a pen. Ask them to draw a picture of their “nets”—something that symbolizes their work and identity—to show the rest of the group.

**RECAP:** Read aloud the final two paragraphs on page 19 of the PSG:

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.

**GUIDE:** Refer back to “The Point” for this session: **“Following Jesus is a life-changing adventure, and you’re invited.”** As time permits, encourage volunteers to share any final thoughts and questions.

#### ALTERNATE QUESTION:

*What have you learned about Christ from your experiences while following Him?*

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## Mark 1:16-20 Commentary (continued)

**[Verses 19-20]** After securing commitments from Andrew and Peter, Jesus went on a little farther to speak with another pair of brothers, **James** and **John**. Like Peter and Andrew, James and John were engaged in a normal practice of their trade—mending their fishing nets. This type of net was thrown from the boat into the sea to catch fish and then drawn back out of the water into the boat. Hauling in large catches of fish could put a strain on the nets and cause them to break in spots. Before the nets could be used again, those weak spots needed to be repaired.

Mark used the term **called** to describe Jesus' encounter with James and John. The word emphasizes the importance of discipleship. It is also used specifically in the context of discipleship in Mark 2:17, where Jesus talked about calling out sinners rather than those who don't recognize their need for Him.

This was a different location with different fishermen, but the results were the same. When Jesus called, James and John wasted no time in responding. He called them, and they followed. The brothers left behind more than just their nets to follow Jesus. They left their father, **Zebedee**, and the hired servants who were helping them in their family business. So, in addition to walking away from their livelihood, James and John also had to move away from the security of family relationships—as well as the possibility of a larger stake in the family business in the future.

The presence of hired men working with the family indicated that Zebedee's family might already have enjoyed a certain amount of wealth. While family members working together was almost a given in that culture, only those who were doing well financially could consider bringing in extra help. Scripture notes that John was "known to the high priest" (John 18:15), which also points to the possibility of a degree of wealth and influence.

Despite their success, James and John **followed** Jesus.

Jesus is still challenging individuals today to sacrifice the temporal things of this world that people find so important in favor of the eternal things which really matter. Much has changed since Jesus first started preaching and called four fishermen beside the Sea of Galilee. But the Messiah is still in the business of calling disciples to Himself. He's still offering all who will heed His call a spot on what will be the ride of a lifetime—an adventure like no other!



Read the article "First-Century Occupations" in the Winter 2017-2018 issue of *Biblical Illustrator*. A previous *Biblical Illustrator* article "The 'Kingdom of Heaven' in Matthew" (Fall 2007) relates to this lesson and can be found on the DVD in the Leader Pack; it can also be purchased, along with other articles for this quarter, at [lifeway.com/biblicalillustrator](http://lifeway.com/biblicalillustrator). Look for *Bundles: Bible Studies for Life*.



5 minutes

# LIVE IT OUT

**GUIDE:** Direct group members to page 20 of the PSG. Encourage them to consider these options for responding to Jesus' call this week:



## Notes

Dotted lines for taking notes.

- ▶ **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.

## Wrap It Up

**TRANSITION:** Read or restate the final paragraph from page 20 of the PSG:

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.

**PRAY:** Conclude by stating your desire to continue your adventure with Jesus by daily answering His call to follow Him. Pray that you will have the strength and courage necessary to follow well, and pray the same for each person in your group.



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