

## Follow Me • Life Group Curriculum

### Introduction:

We follow celebrities on Instagram. We follow famous personalities on Twitter. What does it mean to follow Jesus?

The Gospel of Mark provides a vivid account of Jesus' life, ministry, and teachings, highlighting the call to follow Him. This sermon series will explore various passages in Mark's gospel that focuses on what it means to be a follower of Christ. We will delve into the characteristics, challenges, and blessings of discipleship and draw practical applications for our lives as modern-day followers of Jesus.

Following Jesus is not just an invitation to believe in Him, but a call to a life of radical obedience, humility, compassion, and faith. Let us respond to this call, take up our cross, and faithfully follow Him wherever He leads us.

## WEEK 1: The Call to Follow

### Mark 1:16-20; 2:13-17

1. Read Mark 1:14-15. What might your perspective of Jesus have been if you lived in first century Galilee? When Jesus spoke of the Kingdom of God, what sort of images, expectations, or assumptions might you have had?
2. Read Mark 1:16-20, 2:13-17. What did the first disciples give up by following Jesus (financial, material, social, familial, etc.)? What was it about Jesus' invitation that persuaded the disciples to make such a dramatic sacrifice?
3. Simon, Andrew, James, John, and Levi experienced dramatic lifestyle changes to follow Jesus. Is this a pattern that should be expected? If you identify as a Jesus follower, did you experience any life changes because of following Jesus? If you are not a follower of Jesus, what changes do you expect to make if you choose to follow him?
4. How did the term "fishers of men" evolve in the minds of the fishermen disciples over the course of their time with Jesus? How does this term apply to modern day followers of Jesus?
5. Imagine being one of the fishermen disciples at the dinner party with all of Levi's friends. What did this experience teach them about the heart of Jesus?
6. We can assume that many at the dinner party were Levi's personal friends, professional contacts, and/or family members. What expectations did Levi have when he invited his contacts to meet and experience Jesus?
7. In the weeks leading up to Easter, we will explore what it means to follow Jesus from the perspective of his first disciples. What do their dramatic origin stories teach us about the life adventure of following Jesus?

## **WEEK 2: Faith in Action**

### **Mark 2:1-12**

- 1.** Share with your Life Group a testimony of your faith in action.
- 2.** Read Mark 2:1-5. What strikes you about the healing described? What made it different? What aspects of faith were modeled in this interaction.
- 3.** Mark 2:6,7. How and why did the Pharisees and the teachers of the law react to this miracle?
- 4.** Read Mark 2:8-12. How did Jesus know what the Pharisees were thinking? How and why did he explain Himself?
- 5.** Think through how this miracle impacted the various groups of people who witnessed it: Pharisees/teachers of law, healed man, his friends, crowd in general.
- 6.** Read 2 Corinthians 5:7, James 1:2-4. Process with your life group how you intend to model faith in action this coming week.

## **WEEK 3: Faith Through the Storms**

**Mark 4:35-41, 6:45-52**

- 1.** Share with your Life Group instances from your life when faith carried you through difficult situations.
- 2.** Read Mark 4:35-41. During the storm, how did the disciples react? What did Jesus do to quell their fear?
- 3.** Why do you think they were 'terrified' after seeing Jesus calm the wind and waves?
- 4.** Read Mark 6:45-52. Speak through the events in these seven verses. What situation did the disciples find themselves involved in? What did Jesus do?
- 5.** Why were the disciples amazed?
- 6.** Are you going through a storm or a difficult situation in your life? Read Isaiah 43:2, Psalm 23:4, Psalm 46:1-3 Take time with your life group to journal it (share if you would like to). As a life group, pray together for greater faith and absence of fear as you navigate life together!

## WEEK 4: Wholehearted Commitment

### Mark 8:34-38

1. "Honeymoon Phase" is an expression used to describe a period when a relationship, hobby, job, or experience is new and carries an overwhelming sense of optimism. Share with your group a time in your life when you experienced a "honeymoon phase." How did the phase end?
2. For the early disciples there was a lot of positive momentum and optimism surrounding their relationship with Jesus, but this must have sobered when Jesus predicted his own death (Mark 8:31-33). How do you think the disciples felt when they heard Jesus make this statement?
3. What is the connection between sacrifice and following Jesus?
4. In verse 36, Jesus is quoted saying "what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul." In your own personal context what might it look like to "gain the whole world"? What might it look like to "lose your own soul"?
5. Verse 38 describes the journey of following Jesus as a countercultural journey. How does the sacrificial call of following Jesus contrast with the values of our current Silicon Valley culture?
6. At the end of this section, Jesus references a time when the Son of Man will return in the glory of his father. What is Jesus referring to? How might this perspective motivate us to live sacrificial lives?
7. In your own life, how might Jesus invite you to take up your own cross and follow Him?

## WEEK 5: The Transfiguration

### Mark 9:2-13

1. As you read this week's passage, imagine yourself in the place of Peter and John. Discuss together how you might react if you witnessed what they saw. Jesus often went to pray alone; why do you think Jesus brought Peter and John along with him up the mountain?
2. Review Mark 9:2-4. Throughout scripture, light is often linked with the Glory or presence of God. And with the apparent absence of God's presence, the destruction of the First Temple at the time of the Babylonian Exile, and the coming of Jesus, how does this help us understand the radiance of Christ during the transfiguration?
3. What is the significance of Moses (the law giver) and Elijah (the prophet) appearing alongside Jesus? Recall that both Moses and Elijah encountered God on Mt. Sinai/Horeb, what might today's passage tell us about the identity, mission, and message of Jesus?
4. In verse 7, the disciples hear the voice of God declare, "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" Read Mark 8:27-38. What did the disciples find so objectionable about Jesus' words and how does God intervene? What does this teach us about, not only the cost of discipleship, but also the specific way in which God's glory is revealed in the actions of Jesus?  
(Optional: Read 2 Peter 1:16-21).
5. The phrase "son of God" has a special meaning within scripture, used to refer to those who had been called to take up the mission of God in the world. It was applied to the Israelite kings, particularly Solomon, and also in reference to the Israelites as a whole. All of this, however, is being taken up and applied to Jesus. Why is God pleased with Jesus?
6. We are also invited to become the sons and daughters of God, taking up his mission and message to the world with the power of the Holy Spirit. Brainstorm ways you might be able to take on and continue the mission and work of Jesus in your context.

## WEEK 6: Growing in Faith

### Mark 9:14-29

#### A. THE DISCIPLES:

Read the story in Mark 9:14-29. Put yourself in the disciples' shoes.

- How do you think they felt when they couldn't cast out the evil spirit (cf. Mark 3:15)? Why were they unable to heal?
- What is the relationship between faith and prayer?

#### B. THE FATHER:

Read the story again. Imagine being in the father's position.

- How does his plea to Jesus reflect the struggles and anxieties of a parent or caregiver?
- What does his interaction with Jesus reveal about the dynamics of faith and desperation?
- In what areas of life do you struggle to trust God?
- When have you experienced Jesus' compassion and power?
- What practical steps can we take to grow in our faith and reliance on God, especially when facing difficulties?

## **WEEK 7: Obstacles to Following Jesus**

### **Mark 10:17-31**

- 1.** At what age did you begin to ponder the ultimate questions of life? What questions have you thought about the most?
- 2.** What is the rich young ruler's question to Jesus, and why do you think it was important? How does his question reflect common concerns or priorities today?
- 3.** How does Jesus respond to the rich young ruler's question?
- 4.** Why is it hard to let go of possessions? Why is this a prerequisite to following Jesus?
- 5.** What do you need to give up or let go to follow Jesus?
- 6.** How can the promises Jesus made motivate us to overcome obstacles?
- 7.** How can we find joy and purpose in following Jesus even when it involves giving up certain comforts or possessions?



## **WEEK 8: Heart of a Servant**

### **Mark 10:35-45**

- 1.** Sometimes our ambitions can be misguided. Tell the group about a time when you were particularly ambitious. Were your motives good or bad?
- 2.** Why did James and John approach Jesus with this request?
- 3.** What did their request reveal about their perspective of the Kingdom of God? What are some misconceptions that Christians have about the Kingdom or plan of God?
- 4.** How does Jesus respond to the brothers' request?
- 5.** In Jesus' response he contrasts servanthood with worldly authority. How does this challenge traditional views of leadership and authority? How would our world look differently if people truly embraced servanthood as a leadership quality?
- 6.** In what ways does Jesus exemplify a servant's heart? In what environments of your life (home, work, with your kids, at church, etc.) do you find it most difficult to follow the example of Jesus?
- 7.** This week, in what ways can you apply Jesus' teachings on servant leadership?

## **WEEK 9: Resurrection Call**

### **Mark 16:1-8**

- 1.** Describe a time when you made a surprising discovery. How did that affect you?
- 2.** Why were the women surprised to find the tomb empty? How did they feel when they discovered that?
- 3.** Why were the women afraid when they fled the tomb?
- 4.** How does fear impact our own understanding and response to the resurrection? In what ways does fear play a role in our faith journey?
- 5.** The women initially keep silent about the angel's message. Why do you think they chose silence, and how might this relate to our own hesitations or reservations in sharing the good news of Jesus' resurrection?
- 6.** In what ways does the resurrection of Jesus transform our lives, perspectives, and understanding of God's plan? How can we live out this transformation in our daily choices?