

THE GOSPEL OF
MARK



The mystery of the Kingdom Revealed

Leader's Guide

BY CHARLES DUNAHOO

Leader's Guide

The following is the electronic leader's guide for the study of The Gospel of Mark, The Mysteries of the Kingdom Revealed. It is to be used in conjunction with the study of the Gospel of Mark, written by Dr. Charles H. Dunahoo and published by Christian Education and Publications as part of their discipleship Bible study resources. The study is available from the PCA CEP's Bookstore and can be ordered 1800-283-1357...

Editor's Note: The following is a guide to help you navigate through the study of the Gospel of Mark. It is a guide not an answer book. Each chapter will contain a brief summary of each particular chapter along with some suggestions on teaching and facilitating the study. It will contain suggestions for using the questions in each chapter. Only on rare occasions will this guide give specific answers to those questions. While it is no doubt true that some believers are still young in their faith and knowledge and have to be spoon fed, as with milk, our desire is to encourage a growth and maturity process in the study that will build a strong foundation on the meat of God's word. This is not really intended as someone once said, for "the man who almost thought for himself" even though he could benefit from this study. There is much to encourage him as he grows in his knowledge, understand, and application of God's Word. However, our aim is using the study of the Word to develop a Christian mind, a Christian world and life view, and a kingdom of God perspective regarding life and reality.

Timothy Dwight, a 19th century hymn writer best reflects our objective and desire as you study this book:

"I love thy kingdom Lord
The house of thine abode,
The Church our blest redeemer saved,
With his own precious blood.

I love thy Church, O God:
Her walls before thee stand,
Dear as the apple of thine eye,
And graven on thy hand."

Study 1 Mark, the Kingdom Gospel

Read: Read the entire first chapter to set the stage.

Summary Objective: Ideally, it would be invaluable to read through the Gospel of Mark in its entirety before beginning this study. We suggest the ESV translation as the translation of preference. But for a first reading you could also choose the NIV (New International Version) or the NLT (New Living Translation) versions. If you are leading a group study, it is extremely important for you to follow that procedure.

This first study is intended to lay the foundation and set the stage for the study to follow. It is important to note that even though the studies work through various passages in Mark's Gospel, a more thematic approach built around the Kingdom and making Kingdom disciples, will be the trajectory for this study. Number seven in this chapter gives some possibilities for procedure.

Suggested approach:

Our suggestion would be to work through each point in this chapter in order to see “the big picture” and understand something of the uniqueness of this Gospel. This study not only highlights Mark's place within the New Testament Canon, but it would give you an opportunity to underscore point number three, regarding God's inspired Word. Note the several references you could use in this connection including the *Westminster Confession's* chapter one—the statement of Scripture which forms our foundation and is our authority for truth. Question number 3 on page 11 is a most important and current topic in many Christian circles.

Point number eight in the outline gives four questions that can be discussed in relation to the content of this study. Point nine contains 15 questions that will help throughout the study of each chapter.

As you work through this and the remaining studies, I would challenge you as the leader and likewise to your group, to spend some time discussing the “so what?” of each study. Our focus is not to turn this into a Bible trivia study, though knowing certain facts and details are important, nor is it to spoon feed. Our main objective is to know how to think and apply our hearts unto wisdom.

Also, to lift a section from an article in *Equip to Disciple* magazine published by CEP, I wrote, “The Bible is the instrument that God has provided for us to use in this warfare. He has told us that it is sufficient in all areas. You can expect that our adversary would do everything he can to spiritually disarm us. He does that openly without a doubt. He also uses subtlety and trickery with that Word. Openly he challenges the Word. With trickery he uses various interpretations of Scripture to divide us. The truth is that we are

to be people of the Word. Attempts to discredit, undermine, create doubt, to question the sufficiency and authority of God's Word requires that we be on our guard, to know the Word and how to stand up and speak out when we see this happening. (See *Equip to Disciple* Issue Two 2010, pages two and three).

I would suggest using the 15 questions as a means of helping the group anticipate some of the things to come. There will be more but these suggest some of the key things to look for in the study. You will see that the answer to most of those questions are not yet apparent but will become more so as the study progresses. Actually you want to impress upon the group that while our objective is to learn about the mysteries of the kingdom, the flip side is that we also learn about the king, Jesus himself. You can't learn about one without learning about the other.

As you prepare to teach and actually lead the group forward, pray that God will enable you to be effective in facilitating the learning, understanding, and application of these truths to their daily lives in the transformation process of being more and more like the king and having the characteristics of kingdom people in their lives.

Study 2 A Kingdom Perspective

Read: For the next two studies (2 and 3) you could read through the entire first chapter of Mark with the group and for study three read 1:1-14.

Summary Objective: As you have already pointed out, Mark 1:1 serves as the title of the book. In that title it points to the “Gospel” and we observed how Jesus defined that word in 1:14. In that reminder it leads into the summary of this study. Mark is about the good news of the Kingdom of God and its King Jesus Christ. It is a story about him, not us nor even our salvation, though such are present. It is about Christ the King and His Kingdom, made up of those within his “covenant” family. For a review of the covenant see chapter 6 of *Making Kingdom Disciples*.

When we say that we will follow a “kingdom hermeneutic” in this entire study, we simply mean that the means of interpreting this Gospel will be through the paradigm of the Kingdom of God. Hermeneutic simply deals with how we will study and interpret this Word.

Our intention with study 2, similar to the overview in study 1, is to set in motion a pattern for the remaining studies by showing the Gospel in its fullest as it relates to the Kingdom. Remember and remind the group that when we talk about making kingdom disciples, as a concept, we are referring to the rule and reign of Christ over all his creation and especially in the hearts and lives of his people. We can also point out that what is present with this idea of the Kingdom is also the foreshadowing of the Kingdom after the second coming of Christ which will encompass all reference to life and reality. The first coming of Christ brings the Kingdom in its initial phase and the second coming of Christ will bring the Kingdom in its second and final phase.

Suggested approach:

1. Review study one by reminding that its purpose was to see the Gospel of Mark in its full context of Scripture along with some specific demographics connected with Mark. Along with this review, remind the group that when we are reading and studying the Bible we are reading God’s story therefore we can do so with the conviction that this is God telling us what he wants us to know about himself and his story and how we fit into that narrative. Because of this awareness it is essential to ask the Holy Spirit to guide the study of his Word (story).
2. In reading through the first chapter of Mark, you can assign certain passages, read as a group, or read it as the leader. Having the same translation is preferred though not necessary.
3. Give some of the following as highlights of study two that will serve as background and content for the discussion and interaction with the group.

4. You could point out that the real objective of study 2 is to connect the dots among Christ the King, the Kingdom of God, the Gospel, along with the present and future of God's Kingdom and where we are in relation to those things. Continue to emphasize to the class as we point out in chapter one of Making Kingdom Disciples, truth learned has a transforming effect on our lives.
5. While we have suggested that Mark's Gospel is the good news of the Kingdom, in points 6 and 7 we highlight how that good news is comprised of a number of themes. Our intention was to point out the main themes in point 6 and other important points in number 7; however, in reality they are all part of the whole and should be viewed in that manner. For example: you can point out that Mark is a Gospel about the Kingdom, but it is also about discipleship, and its also about who is and is not part of that Kingdom, especially where the Gentiles fit into God's story.
6. The eight discussion questions are a combination of some review of study 1 and 2 but there are also several questions such as questions 1, 2, 3, and 7 that are intended for interaction within the group.
7. It is always good and important to end a study with some thoughts, ideas, or discussion on the "so what?" What difference does this study make in our life and the life of God's people?

Study 3 Clarifying Mark's Purpose

Read: Mark 1:1-14

In the introduction we suggest that under the theme of the Kingdom of God, Mark's two main working themes throughout are Christology and Discipleship (Christ and his disciples). You will see as the studies progress why these two sub-themes are actually primary ones.

Summary Objective: The last two paragraphs in the conclusion can serve as a reminder or a way of setting forth your objective in study 3. As we have emphasized in studies 1 and 2, because the good news is about the Kingdom of God, we need to have some clear understanding of the Kingdom. Before we jump into the details of God's gospel story, we have elaborated on the Kingdom of God point 1 in, pages 22-24 to help you enable the group to have a clear understanding of what the Kingdom of God is and is not. Once you are comfortable with the group's understanding, you are ready to begin to deal with the details of the story in verse 2ff.

Suggestions:

1. Mark deals with John the Baptist and his role in the story. (See point 2).
2. The meeting of Jesus and John gives a good opening to the story, especially as it relates to the baptism event. We have suggested three questions, page 26, to think about and have the group discuss.
 - a. Have the group give some response. Using Mark 1:9 as the springboard, incorporate things such as: What is baptism? Who is it for? What does it accomplish? (It would be helpful to refer to the Westminster Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms for good summary to those questions). Relate the question of why? to Jesus' baptism.
 - b. Questions 2 and 3, page 26, refers to John's knowledge of Jesus and obviously Jesus' knowledge of John. Questions: How does anyone know who Jesus is? Are there different ways to knowing him?
3. After the baptism discuss what happened at that time. As a result, should there remain any doubt as to who Jesus was? (vs. 11).
4. As you deal with point 4 regarding Jesus' temptation, you might want to compare this passage with those in the other Gospels, such as the 4th chapters of Matthew and Luke.

5. Why did Jesus have to face temptations, especially in the manner in which he did? But as you discuss this remember, his temptations did not end here.

6. Highlight the main thoughts in point 5, *The Gospel in a Nutshell*. This will help deal with several discussion questions at the end of the study.

7. Leave enough time to work through the seven questions.

8. Thoughts for questions:

- a. The Kingdom is not about us and our person and works.
- b. Can people confess Jesus, be baptized, and join the church and still not be true believers and how can you tell?
- c. Where do the demons fit into the story and what do we learn about them here?
- d. Can we learn from Jesus' temptations in a way that can help us in ours? Underscore the place and importance of the Word.

Study 4 Revelation and Conflict

Read: Mark 2:1-3:6

Summary Objective: Having sought to lay the foundation in the first three studies, this study (4) begins to unpack and repack the ideas of the Kingdom of God. We begin to see how the true Kingdom of God is in conflict with even the religious people of the day who believe they are meticulously following God to the letter. This begins to set up the conflict with Jesus that will remain throughout the Gospel thus ending with his crucifixion. What Jesus does from the outset is to demonstrate what we mentioned in study 2 regarding the insiders and the outsiders. We begin to see in this chapter that those who might be considered insiders because of their outward religious persona are actually the outsiders. What we will begin to see and will do so more in following studies is that religion centered upon man and his works conflicts with the religion of the Kingdom that focuses on Christ and his work. The animosity and the hatred are beginning to surface in this chapter as more is seen and known about Jesus.

I would suggest that one of the main objectives of this chapter is to get a proper understanding of religion, especially the Christian faith, in order not to fall into the traps that the enemy sets for us. The law and grace trap is one of the most deadly and this is seen in Jesus dealing with the Sabbath.

Suggestions:

Note: Realize as you begin this chapter that this will be one of those in the study that could easily be divided into two studies, especially if you are able to engage the group in some of the discussion suggestions along with what might grow out of that. Do not hesitate to make that adjustment if you deem it profitable. Having taught this to two different groups, with one I did divide the lesson and with one I did not.

1. In a slightly different approach in beginning the lesson, we believe it will be helpful in setting that stage to work through with your group point 1. The three bullets under number 1 can set the stage for you to get some interaction with the group going, which in turn will prepare them for the remainder of the study. You can re-iterate or re-emphasize what we said earlier about the Kingdom of God and the enemy of that Kingdom, Satan and his demons.

You can also begin to see in the calling of the disciples, what being a disciple involves. Not only does Jesus' calling the disciples to himself and to follow him, he also shows that he calls them to a life of service. This would be a good place to set forth the premise that being a disciple not only involves following Jesus, but in consciously serving him in all of life. In keeping with the idea that a kingdom disciple involves a 24/7 commitment, there is technically no difference within the

Christian family of those who are missionaries and those who are not. A disciple is a co-laborer in Christ's Kingdom no matter how that is played out on a day to day basis.

You could also briefly discuss the similarities and differences between calling the disciples then and calling disciples today. In the opening of the session, this would be a good place to talk about not only the calling part of disciples but how disciples are made.

2. Our text for this study presents four stories of conflict that arise in the light of God's showing who he is. We will focus on three of the four and especially the fourth. Forgiveness, association with sinful people, fasting, and the law and Sabbath are the four.
 - a. In conflict one, the religious are troubled by Jesus' open forgiveness of the paralytic man. From their perspective only God can forgive sin, which is a clue that they are not on the same wave length with who Jesus is. Of course they were perplexed to see Jesus doing what they thought only God could do. What are some things we learn about Jesus from the paralytic man's healing? (Have the group respond).
 - b. In conflict two underscore the significance of the Talmud and Mishnah, defined on page 36 in the life of the Jewish leaders of that day and what that begins to tell us about their religion.
 - c. Conflict three deals with fasting and we simply note the conflict but do not spend time on it in this study.
 - d. The fourth conflict relating to the Sabbath and the law will be a major point of discussion at this time. In this episode the conflict really raises its ugly head. Help your group to understand the place and importance of both the Sabbath and the law in the life of the Jewish people, especially among the leaders. Have them respond to the suggestion on page 37 top regarding the Jews, for the first time, hearing a correct interpretation of the law and the Sabbath.

We have also suggested that this would be a good place to deal with the relation of the law to grace in God's story. Many have grown up in a fundamentalist type culture where there was a legalistic definition of the law which has easily led to an antinomian attitude about the law, i.e. we are no longer under the law. At this point see the four points of the purpose of the law listed on page 37.

Point out that for those who have a wrong understanding of law and grace, it is easy to attempt to use the law and consequently misunderstand grace as well.

This is also a good place to underscore that the purpose of the law and grace is to free us in order to worship and serve God. How does a wrong understanding keep us from those things? Use the idea from Ecclesiastes 12 that man's purpose in life is "To fear God and keep his commands." How does that square with being under grace? You could also discuss some of the lessons Jesus teaches us about the law of God in this chapter.

3. Using the discussion questions, you could ask Question 1 to the group and get their response. It is important to have the right perspective on the law, grace, and the Gospel.

Question 2 is an important question but be careful with this, especially if you are not comfortable with it.

Question 3 is intended to create discussion about the wrong use of both law and grace. In our circles we may hear both of those used out of their context and bring a false message to the people. Elaborate on that with your group, especially asking for examples that they may or may not be aware of.

Question 4 is designed to have the group interact about how the conflict with the Sabbath and law may or may not impact their lives today. How do you know there is a conflict and then how do you judge whether there is not a conflict.

Question 6 is important to save some time for, because the Gospel is about the Kingdom. You have highlighted that topic in the earlier studies, and now as Mark is developing that theme you want to keep the group focused on the good news of the Kingdom.

Study 5

The Significance of Kingdom Parables

Read: Mark 4:1-34

Summary Objective: Jesus begins to focus on the kingdom, and to do so he uses parables as his teaching tool. Hopefully in this chapter you will conclude with a better understanding of several things:

1. What is a parable?
2. Why did Jesus use parables? (Remember the outsiders and insiders).
3. You will also see some ways in which using parables opens up our understanding of the mysteries of the kingdom.

When we said earlier that Mark was not only writing about King Jesus and his kingdom, he was also writing about kingdom disciples. In this chapter you should be able to begin to get a clearer picture as to what a kingdom disciple is and how parables are the perfect teaching method for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom. Therefore realizing that Jesus used parables to make known to his disciples what he wanted them to know and do, you can begin to see their value in our discipleship process today.

Suggestions:

1. In this chapter we begin to talk about the mystery or mysteries of the faith. This would be a good place to remind the group that for a working understanding of mystery we simply mean something that we do not automatically understand and something that we cannot understand without God's revealing it to us. But also, once he reveals certain mysteries to us, there is still mystery because God is incomprehensible and we can only know those things that he chooses to show us.
2. Point out that we see Jesus in his threefold work in the parable of the seed and the sower. Actually Jesus is all three: the seed, the sower, and the gardener. He is the farmer who puts in the crop, tills it, and harvests it. He makes the seeds to grow.
3. Question 1 on page 47 is a good point to open the discussion. Make a list of things that the group identifies about the King and the kingdom.
4. Question 3 relates to the antinomy between the sovereignty of God and human responsibility. Discuss how we keep both truths in tandem.

5. Question 5 asks what we learn from this study regarding ourselves and our responsibilities. Collect thoughts from the group on this question.

6. Question 7, as we suggest in our *Making Kingdom Disciples* book is the framework within which we develop a Christian world and life view. Identify some of the elements in this study that would go into developing a Christian world and life view. (Remember that the world and life view basically refers to glasses through which we see and interpret life and reality).

Study 6

Jesus' Ministry in Jewish Galilee

Read: Mark 6 and 7 (selected passages)

Summary Objectives: In these two chapters from Mark's Gospel, you begin to see more and more of Mark's purpose of presenting Jesus the King, the kingdom, and discipleship. They surface more and more and as they do you will want to note how the kingdom of God is presented not as Jewish localized phenomena but as the universal, global, all inclusive rule and reign of Jesus.

You will not only see how the kingdom moves from the Jewish context to the gentiles, but you will also note the emphasis placed on the ministry and service attributes required of kingdom disciples. You will also be challenged to understand the feeding of the 5,000 and what we learn about the king and the kingdom from the miracle. You will also begin to see what builds to a climax later in Mark 8 the consequences for not understanding the kingdom of heaven. As you work through the various passages in Mark 6 and 7 you will see what happens when we focus our attention on the wrong things and what that does to the kingdom concept.

There are definite lessons for each of us in the various passages. For example what can we learn about our being disciples today from the early disciples mentioned in the text? You can also see some of the challenges we face, as did those early disciples, in following Jesus.

Suggestions:

You will want to read each passage as you begin to see its relation to the whole.

Questions for Discussion:

As you move to the conclusion of the study and look at some of the discussion questions, identify some of the characteristics of being a kingdom disciple found here. What are similar temptations for us that were demonstrated by these early disciples.

You might find it interesting to have the group interact around the subject of the hardening of the heart and its implications for us. You also might have the group react or interact to building a description of the kingdom based on these passages.

Question 4 on page 55 gives you a good opportunity to have the group do some creative thinking. For example: based on the text what would you say if you were responsible for training or discipling 12 people? What would be your main points and how would you interact with them?

Question 3 gives you an opportunity and the group an open door to share any new thoughts or ideas they have gleaned from this study.

List lessons to be learned from Mark 6 and 7.

Study 7

The Two Part Focus Begins

Read: Mark 8:1-26

Summary Objective: Mark 8 is a most important chapter in the Gospel. It brings to a close what we call part one of Mark, especially with verses 26 and sets the stage for part two, which is a more focused approach. We say that Peter's confession 8:27-30 is the turning point because from this point forward until the end of the story Mark takes more of a rifle rather than a shotgun approach. We will look further in the next study at Peter's confession.

Jesus begins to minister more openly to the gentiles, starting with the feeding of 4,000 (see page 58). You will observe both similarities and dissimilarities between the two feedings. In changing the focus a bit, we have reference to Jesus' concentrating his discipleship efforts on the 12 in contrast to the many. It is in this context, what the circumstances reveal, and what Jesus says about them, especially in vs. 21, that underscore the necessity of understanding what it means to be a kingdom disciple. Jesus points out to the disciples that there are consequences for not understanding Jesus, the kingdom, and discipleship. Notice as you move through this study how Jesus' warning is connected with the healing of the blind man, vss. 22-26, emphasizing Jesus as the source of true light and when you look at Peter's confession, vs. 31, refer to Matthew's account of that confession and connect revelation from God with the receiving sight emphasis.

The objective in this study is to have some understanding about the king and the kingdom and the necessity of incorporating this understanding in to the discipleship process.

Suggestions:

1. The four points in the conclusion, page 62, are worth discussing with the group. One way to do that is to ask, what is it that Jesus wants us take away from this study? As we hope you see from the study, we believe Jesus' question to the 12 disciples in the boat is a critical question and one that we should deal with in our own discipleship process.

2. You could generate some discussion about developing a Christian mind that knows how to think and apply God's thoughts to everyday life and why understanding cannot be separated from belief. This could be an opportunity to point out that Christianity is not an easy religion. It is a mind, heart, body and soul religion. The third point reminds us of the things God has provided in helping us in our faith and understanding of being a Christian. What were some

- of the mistakes the disciples made because they did not understand? (Notice Mark does not suggest a lack of faith in all of this).
3. You could use this point before number 2 or at this point. But have the group discuss the “which is better” question, number 1, page 63.
 4. Hopefully you will have time to touch on each of the questions but be certain to leave enough time to discuss question 4, page 63.

Study 8

Setting the Final Stage

Read: Mark 8:22-38

Summary Objective: We are going to see from this point on that Jesus' is intent on spending time with his 12 disciples in order to help them believe and understand what they were still not certain of or what Jesus was talking about when he talked of his kingdom. As Mark underscores this, it is clear that the key to understanding the kingdom is to know the king. That is really what this study is all about. Most of it revolves around Peter's confession, as a response to Jesus' question, "Who do people say that I am?" (vs. 27). As you work through this remember the reference in the previous study to the Matthew account of that confession and especially the revelation of God.

You will see what we suggested earlier what was unique in Mark's gospel, namely Jesus' emphasis on secrecy. Another thing that you will find being developed in this study that we mentioned earlier refers to Jesus' ministry taking on a different focus from this point on. And you will see, as you work through this chapter, what is required in order to be a kingdom disciple—self denial, following him, taking up our cross.

Suggestions:

1. Use questions from the previous study and passage, "do you not understand," to lead into this study. There are suggestions in the introduction and point 1 to help you do that.
2. Use point 2, the transition, and discuss with the group what Jesus appears to be doing at this time.
3. As you think about the secrecy aspect of Jesus' ministry, combine that with the title that he uses most often to refer to himself. See the comments at the bottom of page 66 and top of page 67. Be sure to understand why Jesus was hesitant to refer to himself, at this point, as the Messiah or Christ. Highlight some of the things that are reflected in the title Son of Man.
4. You also see Jesus' consistency with his emphasis on secrecy in the episode of Peter's confession. Notice the time, place, and the people involved.

5. As you look at the confession and read what Peter said, and as you connect that with Matthew's account, you will observe several things. First, Peter confesses who Jesus is. Jesus blesses Peter for that confession, even as he makes it clear that it came from God. But as Peter calls Jesus the Christ and Jesus blesses him for that, why then in vs. 33 did Jesus call Peter Satan. What happened between those events?
6. On page 70 there are two important points under the heading "bottom line." Underscore or call the groups attention to these things.
7. What are some of the things in this study that underscore that often Jesus' way and ours conflict?
8. In vss. 34-38 Jesus says some clear things about discipleship. Take time to highlight and discuss each aspect.
9. Help the class to develop some specific applications for them as it relates to the themes addressed in this study. Knowing and applying are essential in the discipleship process.

Study 9

How to Be A Kingdom Disciple

Read: Mark 8:34-9:13

Summary Objectives: In this passage you will find Mark following through with the transition from the first part of his story and beginning to move into the second part of the story which will take us through the 16 chapters of Mark. Though we have been emphasizing that part two of Mark shows Jesus dealing more personally with the 12, in the first part of this lesson he says some things to the crowd before really focusing in on the twelve. And basically what he wants them to hear, and what he will concentrate on with the 12, is how he describes a kingdom disciple.

In vss. 34-36 Jesus makes it clear that being a Christian by God's saving grace has some demanding things from believers. As you read these verses think about the tendency and temptation today to make it as easy as possible in becoming a Christian and then contrast that to Jesus' message. To follow me, said Jesus, you must deny yourself, die to yourself, and follow me. That's the path to kingdom discipleship. There is no easy believism or bed of roses approach to being a Christian and following of Jesus. That's the big picture Jesus' paints for the crowd and the 12 disciples.

Read carefully the comments on page 76 regarding Jesus' declaration (9:1) and use that, as Mark did, to lead into the big moment on the Mount of Transfiguration (9:2-13). One thing that would be really good to emphasize as you look at the transfiguration is how God's plan always includes the solidarity of the Christian family. (See how he does that in 9:2-13).

Suggestions:

1. After reading the above texts spend some time on the introduction, especially highlighting the three points or thoughts that are crucial to our understanding Mark's message. Be sure to emphasize the quote of James Edwards on page 74 of the introduction.
2. In point 1, broadening the circle, realizing his immediate audience be sure the group really comes to grips with the significance of being a kingdom disciple, requirements and all.
3. As you look at 9:1, point 2, page 76, notice the pattern of Jesus' strong demands for being a disciple but also reminding them that paying a price will bring tremendous rewards.
4. Regarding the transfiguration, which is one of those key events and passages in Mark, be sure to use question 2 and the suggested answer provided to discuss the solidarity and continuity aspects of God's story.

5. We have mentioned on several occasions that Jesus revealed or taught or performed a certain miracle and instructed the people not to tell anyone. He does that in this passage as they are coming down from the mountain. Have the group discuss or reconcile these two things—1) how Jesus wanted the people to know him and his kingdom, and 2) how on several occasions he instructed the people not to talk about or tell someone.
6. Question 3 raises the issue of the comparison and contrast between the baptism of Jesus and the transfiguration. What are some of those and what do they teach us?
7. Don't overlook question 9, especially having the group interact about the significance of God's instruction to listen to his Son and how that touches our lives as well.

Study 10

Getting to the Heart of The Matter

Read: Mark 9:30-10:38

Summary Objective: As you study 9:30-10:38, you will begin to learn more specifics about the kingdom and kingdom discipleship. You will see Jesus continuing what he began following Peter's confession, namely telling about his death and resurrection. When you reach the end of this passage, 10:38, Jesus will have foretold his death and resurrection three times. In this chapter he uses a number of things to teach about the kingdom and discipleship. For example both in chapters nine and ten he speaks of servant leadership. He refers to divorce as another example. And using the little children as an illustration, he talks about the kingdom. The rich young ruler and the teachings regarding wealth is another lesson for understanding the kingdom.

Suggestions:

Note: Depending on the time frame for your study, you could divide this chapter into two sessions. Study ten covers many verses and topics. It is always easier to cover the content in one session but do not hesitate to break it into two sessions, especially if your groups likes to interact. One way you could break this into two lessons is by combining the part regarding James and John and couple that with the first part of lesson 11 which continues to develop the theme of leadership.

1. Remember as you work through this study, we have mentioned that Mark does not always write chronologically. Following his example, we have moved the sequence of topics around a bit in this study. Realizing that, you could do several things:
 - a. You could take 9:33-35 and 10:36-45 together and talk about servant leadership
 - b. You could take 8:31-33, 9:30-32, and 10:32-34, all which speak of his death and resurrection, and look at them collectively.
 - c. You could also group 9:36-37 and 10:13-16 and consider what Jesus says about children and the kingdom of God. This is an especially important topic in understanding the kingdom.
 - d. You could also take chapter ten, as suggested by the ESV Study Bible, and consider in its entirety discipleship, divorce, humility and wealth.
2. This passage could be another one of those passages where "understanding" is underscored. For example: it is not simply enough to believe, we must add to that belief by understanding. Refer back to 8:21 where Jesus rebuked the disciples for not understanding who he was and what kingdom disciples are all about. Then contrast that or connect that with 9:32 where the disciples admitted that they did not understand all that Jesus was saying but this time, they were afraid to ask. Questioning is one of the oldest and best methods of learning something. And

while it is true that we may not always know the right questions to ask, a good teaching/learning situation enables good questions to surface. There are a number of good questions that you could connect in this study.

3. Remember as you move through this study the unfolding of the statement in the introduction page 82 where Jesus is inching his disciples bit by bit toward Jerusalem. Each event from now on will be critical in Jesus' attempt to disciple his 12 in order to prepare them for his death, resurrection, and ascension. After that point, they will have a greater role in the kingdom which requires knowing, understanding, and believing all that is revealed to them from the Lord Jesus and God the Father and the Holy Spirit.
4. Spend some time examining and discussing the passages that refer to little children and the kingdom of God. Using the comments on page 83 and 84 will help you see what Jesus is really referring to.
5. It would be interesting with your group to make an assessment of the request of James and John regarding where to sit with Jesus. What did Jesus say about the first and the last and how a kingdom disciple has to be a servant leader? Then what can be learned from that about God, his covenant plan, and our role in the kingdom?
6. If we learn the lessons that Jesus was giving to James and John, and consequently to us as well, how does that impact our relationships, who we are, and what can we learn about our spiritual gifts?
7. This is a good place also to compare and contrast the biblical concept of leadership to that of the world's. How are they alike or not?
8. On page 87, question 2 asks "how would you describe James' and John's view of the kingdom" based on what we see in these passages, how would you describe that?
9. Talk about the motivation that led James and John to make such a request and what made the other 10 react as they did?
10. In the conclusion of the study, page 87, we pick up a phrase from R. T. France and his commentary on Mark and underscore the connection between the spirit of service and self sacrifice with that of being a kingdom disciple. What are some practical everyday ways we can learn to apply Jesus' words about serving in the kingdom?

Study 11

Leadership-Christ's Example

Read: Mark 10:36-45; 11

Summary Objective: In study 11 there are two main themes. The first deals with a topic introduced in the previous study, leadership. As you see what Jesus says about leadership, especially servant leadership, you see the difference a kingdom perspective makes not only in this area but all areas of life. It is clear that the Christian concept of leadership offers a different paradigm from that of the world. This involves things such as power and control, humiliations and service. Using the question put to Jesus by James and John, you will be able to see a kingdom framework for leadership.

The second part of this study begins to unfold that last week of events in the life of Jesus. Mark makes it clear that Jesus made two entries into Jerusalem and as you read about what we have called the triumphal entry, be willing to rethink some things that have been traditionally connected with the event that might not actually be accurate. Then you will see Jesus' three visits to the temple during this last week of his life and observe what was significantly different about each. In this study you find another mention of Jesus attitude toward the Jewish religion of his day, especially noting the significance of the cursing of the fig tree.

Suggestions:

1. As stated in the previous leader's guide of study 10, you can either choose to use the entire 11th study with both parts on the agenda or you can connect the first part of leadership with the previous study. If you break the 10th study into two parts that would work rather nicely for continuity. You can determine how much of the content of both studies you and your group might want to interact with as you proceed.
2. First on leadership, the two points in the introduction on page 90 are important to emphasize.
3. In developing the topic of kingdom leadership, what are some of the contrasts between the kingdom approach to leadership and the world's approach? Where would you place the request of James and John in that scenario? This could incorporate the context of questions 1 and 2 on page 94.
4. Question 4 is intended to be a thorough question for you and the group. The key to working through it would center around the idea of understanding. Remember understanding is one of those keys that is present in Mark's gospel account.
5. As you begin to deal with Jesus going to Jerusalem, his two entries and three visits to the Temple, be certain that the group understands those different parts of

the “passion week.” You will find in the text on pages 92, 93 references to the different dating of the passion story. If there are those who want more details they can go to any of the commentaries listed at the beginning of the studies. However, keep the discussion not on the timing but the significance and sequence of the events. Note especially how each visit to the temple led to a more and more obvious difference between Jesus and the Jewish religion of that day.

6. As you work through both entries to Jerusalem and the three entries into the temple, it would be good to get some reaction from the group of anything that impresses them or that they see for the first time in this connection. They are all important parts of the overall kingdom story.
7. It would interesting to have the group discuss Jesus’ attitude about Judaism of his day and then connect that with the conclusion on page 94 regarding Islam. Too many people today seem to think that there are three equally valid religions: Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Using the content of this study, how would you respond to someone who holds the position that all three worship the same God, just in different ways?
8. Question 8 can offer another way to bring the group into the discussion of connecting their understanding of things and the application of that understanding to their daily lives.
9. What should our attitude towards those of another religion be, and can we learn anything from Jesus’ example to help us determine what God might have us do?

Study 12

Jesus' Confrontation with the Jewish Leaders

Read: Mark 11:27-12:44

Summary Objective: In this study you will find the opposition to Jesus mounting more and more from the Jewish leaders. He will face one challenge after another. We refer to them as the three confrontations on page 98 in the form of three questions. The sum of the three confrontations end in setting forth the main kingdom living characteristic, which is love.

Suggestions:

1. If we are right in the timing mentioned in the earlier studies 10 and 11, Jesus is in Jerusalem in the last week of his earthly life. He is controlling things in a way to bring the message that his ways and that of the Jewish leaders are in conflict. They are following two different paths. Of course this raises the level of agitation and intense anger with those leaders. Point out in general some of the ways we have already seen these antagonisms and then mention some that you will consider in this study.
2. On page 96 we point the three groups of Jewish leaders who oppose Jesus. You could mention which is distinctive about each and what they have in common.

If you have access to a good Bible dictionary, you could read further but briefly, the **Pharisees** stressed the individual and literal fulfillment of all sides of the law with Judaism.

The **Sadducees** were the conservatives among the three mainly because of their insistence on strictly following the laws of the Pentateuch. They denied life-after-death and the resurrection, of course.

The **Scribes** were the lawyers and teachers of the law. They were experts in the Law of Moses (the Torah). Their role was to preserve the law and instruct students in the law.

Obviously they would have issues with Jesus because of his challenge to their use, interpretation, and application of the law, as well as some of the major doctrines of the faith.

3. On page 97 we list "another challenge." Read that and talk about the parable of the tenants and how that applies to the situation at hand in this study. Notice also and point out Jesus' style of dealing with controversy; that is, answering a question with a question, a good teaching technique.

4. On page 98 we mention the three confrontations of Jesus. They are described by the questions raised. Take each one individually and with the group discover what you learn about Jesus the King and his kingdom and our responsibilities and privileges as kingdom disciples.

5. We point out regarding question three on the commandments that the question could actually be a friendly one but some say it was the trickery of the Scribes trying to entrap Jesus. Remember the Scribes were the teachers of the law and they were always fond of trying to deal with the situation where one law seemed to conflict with other laws.

6. Given everything we know up to this point, why would “love” be the greatest commandment and really summarize all the rest?

7. In the first confrontation the Pharisees pressed the point of paying taxes to Caesar. How did Jesus deal with this controversial matter and what can we learn from it to help us work through issues such as taxes, church and state separation vs. God and religion separation. How can we have a wholistic unified kingdom view with Christ as Lord over all things and not fall into a “two kingdom trap.” This would be a good place to remind the group of the danger of a dualistic perspective where they divide life into the two realms of the sacred and the secular, the nature areas and the grace area, the natural and the supernatural. Christianity and its kingdom message is a wholistic unified approach where there is no area of life that does not belong to the Lord.

In working through this question you could make and ask the group for other examples of the unified world and life view, and the kingdom perspective.

Study 13 **The Grand Finale**

Read: Mark 14:32-16:8

Summary Objective: This lengthy study, with six different episodes, brings the things that Jesus had come to fulfill, that he had taught and prepared his disciples for is not about to happen. Here we find his suffering in the spiritual and physical state set forth, the struggle in the garden of Gethsemane, the agony of the trial, bearing the cross, and finally dying that awful death which brought about separation from his heavenly father, his Abba Father. With that we look at his betrayal, his arrest, his trial, the denial of Peter, the crucifixion, and the resurrection in this study. We want to see how the parts fit together in a way that accomplishes God's purpose and Christ's redemption for us.

Suggestions:

1. While we have attempted to keep these studies with a 12- 15 week time frame, we have suggested how several of the studies could be divided into more studies. Study 13 is certainly no exception. While our intention was to give an overview as we stated in the beginning, you might want to divide chapter 13 into two or even three studies. Your group's interest and time frame will help you determine that. Keep in mind that our intention has not been to slight or gloss over any part of Mark's Gospel but given our purpose and time frame, we too have made choices to help us hopefully accomplish our end of understand more about King Jesus and his kingdom.
2. As you read the introduction and think about some of the questions asked, particularly the one about where Christ's real suffering took place, our intention was not to demean any area of his suffering. Nothing could be more critical in his suffering than being separated from his Abba Father, but to realize all the anguish that he experienced in preparation for the cross. This could be a good topic for discussion regarding Jesus suffering. Actually each of the six episodes in this lengthy study, except the resurrection, involved suffering. Be sure to emphasize that point.
3. The questions on page 105 will be helpful in putting this study in perspective, especially if you put before the group who really killed Jesus?
4. Notice throughout this study, from the garden episode 105 and 106, and then the betrayal the idea of Christ's aloneness in all of these events. Especially note the disciples asleep in the garden, all fleeing into the night, even John Mark, and Peter's denial. Emphasize throughout that these things happened that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. Also at this point note the statement on page 106 "when Jesus felt the most excluded from God's presence, he was actually closest to God's will." Can that be true of us?

5. In the trial episode, as you note in reading our comments, certainly not to distract the gravity of the moment, we could not resist seeing a bit of humor in how Jesus' enemies bumbled things. If Jesus had not intervened and helped them, he might never have made it to trial. Everything the enemies had tried seemed to backfire but Jesus made it happen that "scripture might be fulfilled."
6. In the fourth episode, Peter's denial, you might remember the irony of this situation. Mark received much of his information to write this Gospel from Peter and Peter was the confessor and spokesman of the Apostle, but here he was a denier. Note the contrast taking place. While Jesus was denying himself in order to die for Peter on the cross, Peter was denying Jesus for fear of his own death. Then comment on the last sentence on page 109, "Knowing Jesus, yet denying him, confessing him, but denying him, He couldn't even speak his name."
7. Using the Scripture passage 15:1-20 and our comments on pages 110 and 111, have the group talk about Pilate's role in all of these events. Where do you think Pilate really stood in this matter of Jesus? We point out on page 111, bottom, "Isn't it interesting that in the Apostles' Creed the reference is to suffering under Pontius Pilate and not the Jewish leaders. Why?"
8. As stated above, our intention was in no way to slight the cross episode but to assume familiarity on the part of the group and focus on fitting the parts together leading the resurrection and the abruptness of Mark's ending, especially at vs. 8 in anticipation for the second coming and the final phase of the coming of the kingdom.
9. An interesting point to think about and discuss centers around the many references Christ made to his death and resurrection. Why do you suppose those events surprised so many? It was preplanned and pre-announced.
10. Because the focus of the study was to learn of the mysteries of the kingdom, the King himself, and what it means to be a kingdom disciple, allow time to discuss whether those objectives have been realized through this study. You could also ask from the group if anyone experienced or learned something that has really made a difference in their Christian lives.