

STRONG

STUDENTS

MIDDLE &
HIGH SCHOOL

STUDENT BOOK



Here to Serve

Gospel of Mark



Here to Serve

Over the next thirteen weeks, you will study Jesus' ministry on earth from the Gospel of Mark. The course focuses on Jesus' mission to serve others and give His life as a ransom for the lost. This course will challenge you to make serving God the priority and mission for your life. You, like Christ, are on earth to serve.



Time with God

Keep a journal as you work through your Time with God each week. A great way to think through passages and gain insights is to ask yourself simple questions. See the list below and sample questions for each one.

Who?	<i>Who wrote this passage? To whom was it written?</i>
What?	<i>What is this passage about? What happened to the characters in the passage?</i>
When?	<i>When was this passage written? When did the events in the passage take place?</i>
Where?	<i>Where was this passage written? Where did the events in the passage take place?</i>
Why?	<i>Why was this passage written? Why is it organized as it is?</i>
How?	<i>How should this passage affect its readers? How might I live out this passage?</i>

As you answer these questions in a journal, you will begin to see what each passage means and how God wants you to use it.



How to Go to Heaven

God has promised you eternal life. You can know for sure you will spend eternity with Him in Heaven (1 John 5:13).

1. You must understand that you are a sinner and God won't let sin into Heaven. God is perfect and could never allow evil to dwell in His presence. You must face the reality that you are a guilty sinner (Rom. 3:23).
2. You can't earn eternal life. You are already guilty, and nothing you do can pay for your sin. Unless God miraculously saves you, you are destined for eternity in Hell. That is a terrifying fact. Thankfully, God has miraculously provided salvation for everyone (Eph. 2:8, 9).
3. God sent His Son to earth to become a man and die to pay for your sins. Jesus Christ remained perfect because He remained the Son of God. When Jesus died on the cross, God the Father accepted His sacrifice to fully pay for your sins. Jesus' resurrection from the dead proved that God had accepted Jesus' death. Jesus can now offer you eternal life (Rom. 5:8; 1 Cor. 15:20).
4. Jesus did all the work to secure salvation, but that doesn't make anyone automatically saved. You must accept His payment for your sins by placing your trust in His finished work on the cross. God will not accept anything else. When you place your trust in Jesus, God guarantees you have eternal life (John 5:24).

If you aren't sure you are saved, place your trust in Jesus Christ right now, and you can know for certain you will spend eternity with Him!



MARKED FOR SERVICE

Theme: God presented Christ in Mark's Gospel as the suffering servant Who encourages believers to serve sacrificially.

I. _____ Mark

A. Mark, the _____ (Acts 15:36–41; 2 Tim. 4:11)

Mark had a _____ spiritual _____.

Mark joined Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey but then _____ them.

Mark could teach believers they could come back from _____ to serve God.

B. Mark, the _____ (Mark 14:66–72; 1 Pet. 5:13)

_____ provided firsthand accounts Mark used in _____ his Gospel.

Mark and Peter give us _____ that _____ doesn't give up on believers.

II. Mark's _____

Mark wrote to Gentile believers in _____. They were suffering persecution in the aftermath of the great _____ during emperor _____ reign (AD 64).

Romans took _____ on the Christians. For example, they dressed believers in animal _____ and released wild _____ to attack and kill them.

III. Mark's _____

A. Present Christ's suffering (Mark 1:12, 13; 3:20–22; 8:31–33; 10:32–34; 45)

Mark's Gospel focuses primarily on the suffering and _____ of _____.

In the wilderness, Christ was victorious over the _____ and Satan.

Some in Jesus' _____ accused Him of being a _____.

Mark recorded _____ of Jesus' announcements of His coming _____.

B. Encourage persecuted Christians (Mark 8:34–38; 10:21, 42–44; 1 Pet. 2:21)

To take up one's _____ means to follow Christ obediently and sacrificially.

The Christians in Rome understood that to live for Christ sometimes means to _____. But _____ already blazed that _____ ahead of them.

The Roman believers could find _____ in _____. Mark helped them know that.



Time with God

Read each passage and answer the questions to spend personal time with God.

MONDAY

Read Acts 15:36–41; 2 Timothy 4:11.

Mark failed in his first major attempt at ministry. When have you felt like a failure in your attempts to serve God?

Mark became useful to God because God didn't give up on him. Thank God for not giving up on you.

THURSDAY

Read Mark 3:20–22.

What did Jesus' family (His people) think about Him?

Is being criticized by family and friends an excuse for not serving God? Explain.

TUESDAY

Read Mark 14:66–72.

Mark depended on Peter for firsthand accounts of Christ's life. What did Peter do that could have shamed him into never serving God again?

God offers forgiveness and restoration to those who fail Him. Talk to God about any past failures you've had. He will grant you forgiveness and restore you to His service.

FRIDAY

Read Mark 10:42–44.

What does the world say makes a person great?

What did Jesus teach about greatness?

WEDNESDAY

Read Mark 1:12, 13.

Mark wrote to believers in Rome who faced persecution after Emperor Nero blamed them for starting a devastating fire. They needed encouraged to stay strong in their faith. What did Jesus face when God led Him to the wilderness to be tempted?

How has Jesus' suffering helped your willingness to suffer for His name?

SATURDAY

Read Mark 10:45.

Why did Jesus come to earth?

Talk to God about giving your life to serve Him by serving others.

Tough Questions Answered



Is suffering for serving Christ worth it?



Throughout the history of Christianity, many believers have suffered for the cause of Christ. Some have suffered physical persecution and even death for the sake of the gospel. John Mark suffered and died for his faith by being dragged through the streets of Alexandria, Egypt. Others have had their property destroyed or been shunned by their families and friends. This raises a question: Is it really worth it to suffer shame, torment, or death for the cause of Christ? If all Christians will go to Heaven anyway, why not just take the easier path of keeping quiet and lying low in this life? Why didn't Mark just live a peaceable life? Why did he feel the need to take the gospel to pagan lands?

The Bible addresses the issue of suffering. It teaches that suffering for the cause of Christ is valuable. Consider that Jesus loved us so much that He was willing to suffer brutal torment and to die for us. If we are called to suffer for His sake, it is the least we can do to begin showing our gratitude to Him for His sacrifice.

Moreover, Scripture tells us that those who suffer for Christ in this life will receive wonderful rewards in Heaven. Both James and John speak of a "crown of life" that will be given to those who suffer for Christ's sake (James 1:12; Rev. 2:10). And Jesus said that whoever suffers loss for His sake would in Heaven receive one hundred times more in rewards than he lost or suffered on earth (Matt. 19:29; Mark 10:30)!

So far we have lived in a time when we don't face suffering for the cause of Christ. That may change. If we do face suffering for serving Christ, we can be assured that it is worth it, because God sees and rewards faithfulness!

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A Not so Great Basilica



Tradition says that in AD 68, pagans in Alexandria, Egypt, tied a rope around Mark's neck and dragged him through the city streets until he died. They had grown tired of his witness.

In AD 828, merchants from Venice stole John Mark's remains from Alexandria, Egypt. The Venetians built a church, called Saint Mark's Basilica, to house Mark's remains. Over the centuries, the church has been rebuilt a number of times. Each building served as a way to show off Venice's wealth. In the current church sits the Pala d'Oro, an altar screen made of gold and studded with 1,300 pearls, 300 emeralds, 300 sapphires, 400 garnets, and 100 amethysts. The Venetians are proud of their church and priceless altar screen. But God doesn't care about the gold and jewels. Mark, not the Venetians, is great in His eyes. He served others with his life, giving his all so others might hear of the gospel.



Memory Verse Review



Memory Verse—Mark 10:44, 45

Jesus' disciples argued about who would be the greatest in Christ's Kingdom. Christ responded by correcting their thinking. The greatest person in God's eyes is the one who serves others. Christ's life demonstrates that truth. He lived and died for others. He gave up His life so He might pay the ransom for your sins and offer you salvation.

1. How have you responded to Christ's suffering service on your behalf?
2. How has Christ's suffering encouraged you in any suffering you have faced?
3. Spend time praising Christ for the greatness He showed in serving you well.

Measuring Growth



John Mark wrote the Gospel of Mark. He leaned on Peter for firsthand accounts about Christ's ministry. Both Mark and Peter knew what it meant to bounce back from failure to become effective ministers. Mark wrote his Gospel to Gentile believers living in Rome during a time of persecution. Nero had blamed them for the fire that devastated Rome. Mark encouraged the Christians by writing about Jesus' suffering. Mark's message about Christ comforted the believers in Rome. For those who had failed in their faith in the face of persecution, God would help them grow in Christ and become effective servants.

Look for the following indicators that serving Christ is your focus in life.

1. I believe greatness comes by serving others in service to God.
2. I am willing to make sacrifices in order to serve God.
3. I know God won't give up on me if I fail to serve God well.

Additional Memory Verses—1 Peter 2:21–24.