



Grow Group Guide | summer 1

Bible Discussion

Read Mark 10:15-19

- Does Jesus flipping tables fit your image of him? Why is it crucial to know Jesus as the Bible depicts him, and not just as we want him to be?
- Would you say that Jesus “loses his cool” here? Why or why not? Is it ever acceptable for us to “lose our cool”? What are the risks of losing our cool at the right time, and at the wrong time?
- Why does Jesus flip over the tables? What is he fighting against, and what is he fighting for? Have there been moments in our life when we felt angry after witnessing such a thing? What might a modern day “den of thieves” in the church look like?
- Can our anger have pure motives? When can our anger be fruitful? As Christians, what kinds of things should make us angry, and what should we do with that anger?

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Go Deeper

- When Jesus saw the temple in a state that needed changing, he aggressively called for that change. How does God “flip tables” in our lives in order to bring change?

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Grow Group Guide | summer 2

Bible Discussion

Read Mark 11:12-14

- What was the significance of the fig tree event being included in the Gospel of Mark? What was the fig tree guilty of? Can a fruit tree that doesn't produce fruit be called a fruit tree?
- On Sunday, Pastor Ted discussed how, on the fig tree, the leaves represent outward goodness and activity, while the fruit reflects an outward expression of an inner nature. If we are fig trees, as Christians what would our leaves represent? What would fruit represent--what would fruit of a Christian life look like?
- Put yourself in the place of the fig tree. If Jesus were to evaluate your life, would He be able to see that you produce fruit that reflects your faith and reflects that you are a Christian--reflects Christ-like behavior?
- Read John 15:5. How can we describe the relationship between the vine and the branches? If God is the vine, and we are the branches, what should our relationship with Him be like? Is Jesus something we attach to our lives--a badge we add to our vest--or He something we attach ourselves to? Why does this distinction matter?

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Go Deeper

Read Mark 11:20-25

- Does Jesus say we should talk *about* the mountain, or *to* the mountain? In our lives, is it easier to talk about our mountains, or talk to (i.e., confront) our mountains? Why is it counterproductive to just talk about our mountains?

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Grow Group Guide | summer 3

Bible Discussion

Read Mark 11:24-33

- Prayer is a very important component of the Christian life. Why do we pray? Why is prayer important? Why in times of crisis or turmoil must we turn to prayer, even if the world ridicules us for it?
- In v. 24, is Jesus saying we will be given whatever we ask for in prayer? Is asking sufficient for “belief,” or must “belief” encompass much more?
- Should we still pray when we are experiencing doubt or unbelief? Why or why not?
- To the secular world, forgiveness might often be a perplexing concept. How would you explain the concept of forgiveness to a non-believer? Why in v. 25 does Jesus bring up forgiveness in the context of prayer? Why, as Christians, should we seek to forgive, even if the weight of the offense compels us not to?
- Does forgiving a person mean they’re no longer responsible for crimes they may have committed? Does forgiving a person mean we should forget what they did?
- How can we see God’s power at work when we forgive others?
- In prayers, we often open or close (or both) with a statement along the lines of “in the name of Jesus.” Why do we invoke Jesus’s name in our prayers?

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Go Deeper

Read James 1:5-6

- How is this verse similar to the passage from Mark? What role does faith have in prayer?
- Does God always answer prayer? Most of us can probably recall instances where God clearly answered our prayer with a yes (immediately, or over time), where God clearly said no, or where He said wait. How can we discern this if we’re not sure? If we include “if it’s Your will” in our prayers, does this reflect doubt?

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Grow Group Guide | summer 4

Bible Discussion

Read Mark 12:1-12

- To understand the message Jesus was trying to convey through this parable, it is important to identify the characters. Who do the characters in this parable represent? The vineyard owner, the vineyard, the tenants, the servants, and the son.
- The vineyard owner entrusted his vineyard to his tenants to work it for him. In a similar way, God has entrusted different things to each of us to take care of. Does anything we have or take care of not belong to God? What are the dangers of not realizing this? What are the benefits of remembering this?
- What sorts of things does God give us to care for? How can we know if we're doing a good job? If we're not doing a good job, should we expect God to trust us with more?
- The vineyard owner could have gone to the vineyard after his first servant was killed to kill the tenants, but instead he sent more servants, and sent his son, before finally going to the vineyard himself. What does this say about the vineyard owner? How has God been patient with you? How has God given you second (or third or fourth or) chances? What is God seeking after by waiting for us and being patient with us?

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Go Deeper

The Pharisees and priests were too proud to be corrected. So instead of making a mid-course correction and repenting, they ended up under God's condemnation. If they were wise, they would have asked the same question Paul asks the Galatians: "Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people?" (Galatians 1:10).

- Are we trying to please God, or please people? How can we tell when we are doing one or the other?
- **Read Proverbs 15:31-33.** Do you allow God to challenge you through others, or do you tend to respond angrily to correction?



Grow Group Guide | summer 5

Bible Discussion

Read Mark 12:13-17

- Read the words that the Herodians and Pharisees spoke to Jesus. What is true in their words? What did they believe or not believe in what they said to and about Jesus? How were they being hypocritical? What were they trying to get Jesus to do?
- Do you ever come to God with hidden motives? Do you ever try to hide your motives from others? Why? How does it make you feel to know that Jesus knows the motive of your heart? How should this fact impact the way that you come to God with your words?
- **Read Romans 13:1-7.** Discuss how these verses connect to the words of Jesus in Mark 12. What are the implications of these words for your lives and/or for the church? How should these truths from God's Word impact the way that Christians engage in politics and political change?

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Go Deeper

- What has the image of God inscribed on it? Discuss the implications of this reality in your lives.
- If people don't give God what He deserves in their lives, then what are they doing to God, or what are you indicating you think about God?
- Make a list of the things that belong to God in your lives. From the list, are there any things that you are struggling to give to God?



Grow Group Guide | summer 6

Bible Discussion

Read Mark 12:18-27

- Who are the Sadducees and why were they asking Jesus a question about marriage? Why ask a question based upon a resurrection they do not believe in? What did they hope to gain from Jesus' answer?
- What scriptures are Jesus referring to here? Explore this with your group and see what there is to be learned.
- What does this passage teach us about our reality in heaven? What does it teach us our reality *won't* be? What misconceptions do we or others have about heaven that this passage sets straight? Is this encouraging or discouraging?
- Why does Jesus in verse 26 bring the discussion back to the real issue which is the reality of the resurrection? Why is it more important to deal with the resurrection than it is with the question of marriage? In what ways is this still true today?

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Go Deeper

- **Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-22.** What truths does this passage teach that the Sadducees were missing?
- How can these truths help us live our faith differently or in a more committed way?

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Grow Group Guide | summer 7

Bible Discussion

Read Mark 12:28-34

- Do you think this scribe was trying to test/challenge Jesus in the same way the other religious leaders had? Why or why not?
- How would you define “loving God?” How can you show love to God whom you cannot see?
- What does with “all your heart, all your soul, all your strength” mean? Is there any difference between these three things?
- What does Jesus mean when he tells the scribe that he is “not far from the Kingdom of God”? Should these words be encouraging or alarming to the scribe?

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Go Deeper

- In the three possibilities of love relationships (with God, neighbors and self), where are you the strongest? The weakest?

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Grow Group Guide | summer 8

Bible Discussion

Read Mark 12:28-34

- Today, how does society react when someone is passionate about God? How does our expectation for how society will act damper or inhibit us from being passionate about God?
- We are called to love and obey God emotionally—with all of our heart. What are some ways we would be able to tell if obeying God is the primary passion of someone's life?
- We are called to love God willfully—with all of our soul. Does this form of obedience come naturally? Once we become a Christian, is willful obedience automatic? What holds us back from being willfully obedient?
- We are called to love God intellectually—with all of our mind. How can we use our mind to recognize all that God has done, and all that He has created? How does God make Himself evident in creation or in everyday life? Why can't we love God with just part of our mind—why is it all or nothing? Why do we need to give it all to Him?
- We are called to love God energetically—with all of our strength. What fruitful work could we expect to see from someone who is energetic in their faith and service to God? Answers here might seem similar to answers to the earlier question on passion and loving God emotionally. But, what is the distinction between loving God energetically, and loving God emotionally? ... Can you come up with any athletic or sports metaphors here—'use it or lose it'?
- Why is it important that instead of just simply saying 'love God completely' Jesus said to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength? What, in total, do these four tell us and add that would have otherwise been lost in a simplified statement?
- Why is it important that Jesus said "your"? Love the Lord your God with all *your* heart *your* soul and with all *your* mind and with all *your* strength" (emphasis added)? Why does He make this specific? Is there a one-size-fits-all way to follow this command?

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Go Deeper

- Take some time to reflect and take account for your life—are you loving God with all your heart? All your soul? All your mind? All your strength? Where are you the strongest? The weakest? Share with your grow group, or in smaller one-on-one or break-out groups, and pray for one another.

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Grow Group Guide | summer 9

Bible Discussion

Read James 1:19-27

- Read James 1:19-20. Why is it important to be quick to listen and slow to speak and slow to anger? What happens when we speak before we listen and we get angry quickly?
- How do we “deceive” ourselves as James mentions in v22?
- What does it mean to persevere in the law of liberty (or law of freedom)?
- Are you a doer of the Word? Imagine if a non-believer looked at your life over the past week. What would they think is of primary importance to you? Is your belief in Jesus evident in the way you live?
- According to James’ standards, when is your religion “worthless”?

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Go Deeper

Read Hebrews 4:12; John 15:7; Colossians 3:16

- How is God’s Word alive and active in us? What can we learn from these scriptures?

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Grow Group Guide | summer 10

Bible Discussion

Read Mark 12:38-44

- As you read the section about the scribes (v38-40), what did it make you think of? Does it trigger any memories, personal experiences, or even current convictions? What is the “greater condemnation” the scribes will receive? Why does Jesus reserve it for these particular people?
- Within the four gospels, Jesus rarely complements or celebrates the actions of any individual quite the way he does with this widow. Does Jesus’ passionate approval of the widow’s gift say anything about the weight of what she has done? What, if anything, can we learn from Jesus’ reaction?
- Ultimately, why did the widow give everything that she had? Do her actions make sense? What is she risking? Why did she give *both* coins? What’s the difference between contributing “out of (one’s) abundance” and “out of (one’s) poverty.”
- Are we called to give all that we have, as the widow did here? Is Jesus’ teaching moment a lesson on financial stewardship, or is it about something greater?

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Go Deeper

While it is obvious that Jesus is holding up the poor widow, her heart, and her actions over and above the scribes and other religious leaders, the reality is that many if not all of us do not live as a “poor widow.” We have more resources and what we would consider “better life circumstances.” Consider the following questions:

- How are you sacrificially giving of yourself for the sake of God and His kingdom?
- How are you sacrificially giving of your resources for the sake of God and His kingdom?
- In what ways are you risking for God and His kingdom?

These questions are more for personal perspective than for discussion (although discussion is encouraged). Consider how your group will best respond to these questions (i.e., will your group respond to direct questions, or would a few minutes to journal on a notecard be more appropriate?).



Grow Group Guide | summer 11

Bible Discussion

Read Mark 13:1-13

- What did Jesus mean when he responded to the disciple's question (Mark 13:1-2)? When would the temple be destroyed? What is the significance of the Mount of Olives (Mark 13:3; Zechariah 14:3-4) and the private questions of these four disciples (cf. Mark 1:16-20)?
- Why were these disciples so interested in things like the future destruction of the temple (Mark 13:4)? Would you also have been interested if you were one of them? What were these disciples anticipating would happen (cf. Acts 1:6; Matthew 24:3)?
- What does Jesus warn about in Mark 13:5 and why does He give this warning (2 Thessalonians 2:1-2)? Have we seen examples from history of people coming "in Jesus' name" who have led others astray (Mark 13:6; cf. Jeremiah 29:8-9)?
- Have we witnessed "wars and rumors of wars" in our age (Mark 13:7)? Why does Jesus command us not to fear when we hear of these things? Do you obey Him, or do you become fearful and anxious (cf. Philippians 4:6-7) when you think about the "end times?"
- International strife, earthquakes, and famines have been happening for centuries now (Mark 13:8). How do we know when the end is coming (Matthew 24:36, 44; Acts 1:7)? Will we experience the same persecution that Jesus' disciples did (Mark 13:9; 1 Thessalonians 3:4)? How do His words here in verse 9 apply to us?
- Has the gospel been preached to all the nations (Mark 13:10)? When will this happen? How does the worldwide proclamation of the gospel relate to the disciples' testimony before world leaders? Does Mark 13:11 give you any comfort as you seek to share the gospel with others?
- If Jesus taught so extensively on "love" (cf. John 13:35), why would people hate His disciples (Mark 13:13; John 15:21)? What would stir up this hatred? Are you "hated" because of the name of Jesus (1 Peter 4:12-14)? What does it mean to "endure to the end?"
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Note:

These scriptures and discussion will likely stir strong emotion and opinions, especially considering the unavoidable political climate in our country today. Be intentional about centering the conversation on truth and biblical wisdom, and not on things that fall short of that standard.