

Simple - Studies in Mark

Session Two: Follow - Part 2 (including notes for leaders)

Welcome, opening prayer and worship

(5–15 minutes)

[Pray as you begin, asking God to be at work in your group, and enjoy a short time of worship together (e.g. singing, soaking, waiting on God in silence, praying through a Psalm, journaling, etc.).]

Introduction

(5 minutes)

[Read the paragraphs below aloud to introduce the session.]

When Jesus came to earth, He introduced an approach to God that stood in sharp contrast with the religious standards of the day. It seemed like an oversimplification. Even today, there's a tendency to complicate Jesus' simple invitation. According to Jesus, we're invited to follow. As we learn today, by simply following, we take advantage of His nature, His example, and His power to change our lives.

[As a group, name qualities that a person needs to have in order for you to want to follow them, e.g. 'trustworthy'.]

Bible study

(15 minutes)

[Read Mark 10:23-31.]

1. In the days of the Jesus there was a firm belief that rich people must be close to God because they enjoyed the 'blessings' of wealth. What does Jesus have to say on this subject? In what way is the grace of God mentioned in this passage?
2. Peter believed that he and the other disciples had already given up all that mattered - family and property (see vs. 28). But what is the *full* cost of following Jesus? (Hint: see Mark 10:35-45) And what is the reward?

Movie Clip

(15 minutes)

[Watch the clip from Andy Stanley's talk on the 'Simple' DVD. Go to 'Group Curriculum' -> 'Session 2'. -> 'Continue'.]

Youtube link: <http://youtu.be/yuDfhb5sDil>

[Work through the questions below.]

1. Was there anything from the DVD that was new to you, or had an effect on you? Did you hear anything that raised more questions in your mind?
2. Does it seem unusual to you that after Jesus asked Matthew to follow him, they went to Matthew's house? Would you have expected Jesus to command Matthew to completely change his life, rather than expecting him to take baby steps? What expectations do you put on yourself? What expectations do you put on others?
3. Read Mark 2:15. Jesus liked people who were unlike him. Do you like people who are unlike you? When have you chosen to spend time with people who are unlike you?
4. Read Mark 2:16. The Pharisees couldn't understand why Jesus would choose to associate with tax collectors and sinners. When have you found yourself being judgmental of others who are different than you? In what ways do you isolate yourself from those you don't approve of?
5. Read Mark 2:17. Do you consider yourself to be healthy or sick? Do you feel that you have it all together, or do you recognize that there is something wrong? How does this affect the way you see Jesus and other people?
6. Read Mark 2:17. In Matthew it says: '...go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice''. As you follow Jesus, do you emphasize mercy or sacrifice? Do you value relationships or rules? What is the difference?
7. Jesus' mission statement was to call the sinners to Him. What is your mission statement?

[Close by reading the following prayer aloud.]

Based on Philippians 2:1-5. May Christ encourage you, and His love comfort you. May God's Spirit bring unity and concern for others. May we live in harmony by showing love for each other. Let us not be jealous or proud, but let us be humble and consider others more important than ourselves, so that we may care as much about them as about our own wellbeing. In this way, let our minds be transformed into the mind of Christ Jesus.

Let us be reminded of this: "Christ has no body on earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which Christ's compassion for the world is to look out; yours are the feet with which He is to go about doing good; and yours are the hands with which He is to bless us now." - Saint Teresa of Avila.

[Ministry idea: Pray for God to give you opportunities to share the good news with those people you would not generally hang out with.]