



MARK: September Overview

Pastor Derek Sanford

September 2023

As we enter a longer series in the gospel of Mark, we want to help you learn the OIA inductive Bible study method. OIA represents three steps in examining a passage.

1. **Observation:** Simply observe the passage. Imagine the scene and put yourself there- ask those basic questions from elementary English class: Who? What? Where? When? How? Observe what questions you have about the passage. You want to figure out what is happening and who is involved in the section you are reading.

Specifically for the Mark series, the sermons, the READ plan, and these guides will help you observe key themes and questions:

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|-------------------------|--|
| -Son of God/ Son of Man | -Who is Jesus? |
| -Cosmic Conflict | -Is there more to life than I can see? |
| -Discipleship & Failure | -How do followers of Jesus mess up? |
| -Ordinary Heroes | -What does faith look like? |

2. **Interpretation:** This is where you want to understand what the passage means. You are seeking to find out what God/the biblical author is trying to communicate to their original readers. Here, context is key. Having a Bible dictionary, commentary, or notes from your study Bible can be helpful to grasp the biblical culture and context. You want to answer the questions: What is the context (culture, geography, audience, etc.)? Why is the author saying this in this way? What is God communicating to Mark's original readers?
3. **Application:** The Bible was written *to* an original audience, but it was also written *for* us. Application helps us discover what it means for Christ-followers today. Too often, this step is skipped or given minimal attention. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 teaches that God's word is for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness so that you may be equipped for every good work He has for you. You want to try to answer these types of questions: What does this mean for my life right now? How do these truths change how I live my life? What does it look like to put this into practice?

The LifeGroup leader guides will have some of each of these questions labeled throughout the lessons to help you get a feel for each of these types of questions. We will also reference the NIV Application Commentary you have received. (If you haven't gotten your copy yet, please email janaburruss@whoisgrace.com to set up a time to get that in your hands!) For additional series resources, including the READ plan, please visit <http://www.whoisgrace.com/MARK>.



A BRAND NEW START: Introduction to Mark

Pastor Derek Sanford

September 3, 2023

Life Group Discussion

Before leading your group, it will be helpful to familiarize yourself with the NIV Application Commentary you received. Read the introductory material (pp. 17-31) and compare it to any information supplied by your study Bible.

Encouragement: Share how the Gospels have impacted you- do you have a favorite of the four? Is there a story of Jesus that speaks to you in a big way? Is there a person (besides Jesus) that you love (or not!)?

Scripture: Read [Mark 1:1](#) in more than one translation (suggested: NIV, ESV, and KJV/NASB)

Observations (*see p. 18 of NIV Application Commentary*):

- Some scholars call this the “title” of Mark’s gospel. From that perspective, what does it tell you about the book you’re about to read?
- What are the titles/names Mark uses for Jesus in verse 1:1?

Interpretations (*see pp. 26-31 of NIV Application Commentary*):

- What is the context of the gospel of Mark? (setting, date, audience, purpose, themes)
- How will understanding the context help us understand Mark’s gospel?

Application (*see pp. 24-26 of NIV Application Commentary*):

- We have the benefit of hindsight. We know the story of Jesus. We have the New Testament in our hands (and our pockets). We’re part of the living church. What is the “good news of Jesus Christ,” as you understand it? What do you hope to learn as we study Mark’s story of Jesus? How does it transform your life?

Prayer: Invite the Spirit to stir up every mind and heart as you read, study, and discuss Mark’s gospel over the next few months. Ask Him to *restore the joy of salvation* (Psalm 51:12) in every heart. Ask Him to *stir us up to love and good works* (Hebrews 10:24). Ask Him to open our ears to hear and our eyes to see Jesus more clearly. AMEN!

Next Steps: These group guides will follow the sermons, but the READ plan will take you through the entire book of Mark in 30 days, specifically focusing on Observation, putting yourself in the story as a disciple or part of the crowd. Feel free to go at your own pace- reading 5 days a week is a good goal! Follow the plan on YouVersion or find the pdf and many more series resources, including the *Pray for 8* initiative, at <http://www.whoisgrace.com/MARK>.



A BRAND NEW START: Welcoming Jesus In

Pastor Derek Sanford
September 10, 2023

Life Group Discussion

Encouragement: Share about one of the people who prepared the way for you to come to Jesus. What did they do? How did they help you get to know Jesus?

Scripture: Read [Mark 1:2-8](#).

Observations:

- Who is John? What details are given about his physical appearance?
- What was he teaching and doing?
- Who was going out to see him?

Interpretations:

- Read [Exodus 23:20](#), [Malachi 3:1](#), [Isaiah 40:3](#). How do these verses give us context for Mark 1:2-3? (*Mark certifies that the Torah, Major Prophets, and Minor Prophets confirm what he is about to tell them; see p. 43-44 of NIV Application Commentary*)
- How do they apply to the descriptions of John?
- Read [2 Kings 1:8](#). Who would the Jews have thought John was supposed to represent?
- What does it mean that John's baptism was "of repentance for the forgiveness of sins"? How does this prepare the way for Jesus?

Application:

- What do confession and repentance look like for us today? Take a moment and look up these terms in the dictionary.
- Read [Luke 3:8-14](#). What does it mean to have true repentance? How does this look in Christian lives today? (*humility, love for others, etc.*)
- John prepared the way for Jesus. How can we help prepare the way for others to experience Jesus today? (Read [1 Corinthians 2:1-5](#) and [3:6-7](#))

Prayer: Take a moment to privately confess the ways we have not put Jesus first. Pray for each member of the group to be able to be like John and prepare the way for others to know Jesus.

Next Steps: Prayerfully review the application points and ask the Holy Spirit to work in your life. (Find resources and information about Pray for 8 at <http://www.whoisgrace.com/MARK>.)



A BRAND NEW START: The Leader We've Been Waiting For

Pastor Derek Sanford

September 17, 2023

Life Group Discussion

Encouragement: Grace Church is leaning into this Pray for 8 initiative all month. How is that going for you? Share a personal story if you can.

Scripture: Read [Mark 1:9-13](#)

Observations:

- Jesus came from the little-known town of Nazareth and came to His baptism with no fanfare. As an observer in that scene, what would you think of Jesus? Would you expect Him to be the Messiah? Why or why not?
- At His baptism, what did Jesus see and feel? What did those around him see and feel?
- What details does Mark give about Jesus' time in the wilderness?

Interpretations: (see pp. 47-54 of *NIV Application Commentary*)

- Read [Isaiah 64:1](#), [Isaiah 42:1](#), and [Psalm 2:7](#) – How do these Old Testament verses relate to this scene in Mark?
- How do these events show Jesus as both the Son of God and the Son of Man?
- How does Jesus' temptation exhibit the Cosmic Conflict (spiritual warfare) theme?

Application: (see pp. 55-57 of *NIV Application Commentary*)

- In this cosmic power struggle, we know Jesus is always greater. How does this help you in your struggle with sin?
- What would it look like for you to start each day intentionally choosing to follow Jesus as the leader of your life?

Prayer: Thank Jesus for giving us victory over sin and ask Him to help you live out that victory when you are tempted.

Next Steps:

-Continue to [Pray for 8](#) (find more info and resources at <http://www.whoisgrace.com/MARK>)



A BRAND NEW START: Partnering with Ordinary People

Pastor Sarah Burt

September 24, 2023

Life Group Discussion

Encouragement: Share with the group some examples where ordinary people (or circumstances) have pointed you toward Jesus or showed you His love.

Scripture: Read [Mark 1:14-20, 21-22, 32-34](#)

Observations:

- What does Jesus say about the current time they're living? (*See p. 58-66 of NIV Application Commentary*)
- Who are the disciples, and what were they doing when Jesus called them to join him?
- What does Jesus's ministry look like once he gets to Capernaum?

Interpretations:

- Read [Galatians 4:4-5](#), [Romans 5:6](#), and [Luke 4:17-19](#). How do these passages provide further insight into what Jesus means by what he says in Mark 1:14-15? What does this teach us about the world in which we live? (*Refer back to p. 58-66 of NIV Application Commentary*)
- What does Jesus teach us about discipleship in Mark 1:16-20? Read [Luke 9:23-25](#). What kind of people is Jesus looking for to be his disciples? (*Look at p. 69 of NIV Application Commentary.*)
- Pastor Sarah pointed out that Jesus launches the Kingdom of God in ordinary places, with ordinary people, and in extraordinary ways. How do we see this in Mark? What other stories from Scripture highlight God's extraordinary work in ordinary people?

Application:

- Read [Matthew 28:19-20](#). What does it look like for us in 2023 (and beyond) to be "fishers of men?"
- Where has Jesus done extraordinary work in you or someone you love? What does it look like to live each ordinary day in the presence and power of our extraordinary Savior?

Prayer: Use the Lord's Prayer as your prayer, paying particular attention to what the prayer is asking of our Father in Heaven. Take time this week to repent, believe, and open your heart and mind to HIS work IN you. Ordinary life with Jesus is extraordinary!

Next Steps:

-Continue to Pray for 8 (More info and resources can be found at <https://whoisgrace.com/mark>).