



## FJBC

DISCIPLE: HOPE IN THE BOOK OF MARK • THE FIRST DISCIPLES • MARK 1:16-20 •  
9/6/2020 for 9/13/2020 Small Group

## MAIN POINT

A disciple follows Christ, is formed by Christ, focuses on others, and forsakes everything.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Share briefly how you first heard and responded to the call to follow Christ.**

**How has your understanding of that call grown since you first became a Christian?**

When we begin to follow Jesus, we begin a journey that transforms the very core of who we are. It's always been that way, back to the very first disciples. The Gospel of Mark opens the story of Jesus' ministry with Jesus calling Simon, Andrew, James, and John to leave their families and professions and to follow Him—to "fish for people"—and so they do. These men will find, along with us, that a disciple follows Christ, is formed by Christ, focuses on others, and forsakes everything.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

This small group study is more focused on the second part of the passage from Sunday's sermon. Take a few moments and review some of the points from the sermon.

**What is the good news that Mark shared with those early believers?**

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MARK 1:16-18.

Jesus' call to Simon and Andrew was specific and dramatic: "Come follow Me." In an instant, Jesus flipped their priorities upside-down. This calling, He was saying, is more important than your jobs, your families, and your lives. In obedience, Simon and Andrew "left their nets at once." They left everything they knew and followed Him.

**What do you think made Simon and Andrew leave behind everything they knew to follow Jesus? What kinds of excuses might they have made instead of following right away?**

**Why is it significant that these men left their nets to follow Jesus?**

**How did you react when Jesus called you out? Did you fight against it, ignore it, or drop your net and go?**

The call to follow Jesus has to take priority over everything else in our lives, just as it did for the first disciples. More than anything else, a disciple is one who follows Jesus wherever He might lead them. The fact that the Gospel of Mark includes this scene in its opening chapter shows the emphasis Jesus placed on reaching people with His life-changing message. Notice that He called Simon and Andrew specifically.

**Why is it important to see that Jesus specifically called these men to follow Him?**

**Why do you think Jesus chose to use the metaphor of fishing for men?**

When someone follows Jesus, that is only the beginning of the journey. Those that follow Jesus are also formed by Jesus. Discipleship is the process by which we become that which Jesus wants us to be. But we are not just becoming something ambiguous; Jesus has a very specific formative purpose in mind for us. His intent for all His followers is that they in turn bring more followers to Him. They are to become fishers of men.

**What are you "fishing" for right now in your life?**

**What about those around you? What do you see people fishing for in the world today?**

**How do you think the way Jesus views the people you come in contact with everyday?**

**How might that be different than the way you view them?**

The disciple follows Jesus and is formed by Jesus. When we are, we find that our focus shifts to others. To be a fisher of men means we are actually engaged in relationships for the purpose of bringing other people on the journey of discipleship with us.

**Who is one person you know that embodies that kind of focus on others for the sake of the gospel?**

**What kind of habits characterize their lives?**

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MARK 1:19-20.

**Why do you think Mark mentioned that Zebedee was also there? What does that mean about the call to follow Jesus?**

When Jesus spotted James and John, He called to them “at once.” In the background, however, we see a third character—Zebedee, James and John’s father. When James and John responded to Jesus, they left Zebedee behind with his hired men. This underscores the importance of the calling to fish for people: Not even your family, Jesus says, can stand between you and His calling.

**How do you think Zebedee felt when James and John left to follow Jesus?**

**How does this call fit with the command of Scripture to obey and honor parents?**

**What kind of sacrifices have you had to make as you have followed Jesus? Has following Him ever cost you anything?**

If you are a disciple of Jesus, it means that you are following Christ, being formed by Christ, focusing on others, and forsaking everything else. There no other way to follow Christ than with everything you have. This is the invitation Jesus extends to us, and when we accept it, it comes with great cost. But it also comes with great eternal implications.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**How does viewing Jesus’ calling in this way change the way you view your responsibility as a Christian?**

**Are there any “nets” you are still holding onto? Why?**

**What is one practical step you are going to take to make sure that you are fishing for men?**

## PRAYER

Close in prayer, thanking Jesus for His calling on your life. Pray that you would continue to embrace His formation and that you would be ready and willing to forsake anything else for His sake.

## COMMENTARY

### | MARK 1:16-20

v. 16. From the beginning of His public ministry, Jesus set about involving other people in His work. The Sea of Galilee geographically dominated the region where Jesus ministered. This large freshwater lake is 13 miles long and 8 miles wide. Its productive fishing provided a livelihood for many. Major trade routes passed near the sea. Flourishing towns dotted the seashore. In this setting Jesus spotted Simon and Andrew. He found these fishermen brothers busy at their work. Jesus always met people in the context of their day-to-day lives. Take note that Mark identified Simon (later called Peter) as the first of the disciples Jesus called. This lends support to the traditional view of Peter's influence on Mark and the Gospel.

v. 17. Jesus spoke to them in an authoritative tone, "Follow Me." These words came with a challenge to respond without hesitation. But the challenge included more than following Jesus for the day. It meant a change of direction for their lives. Jesus determined to change their vocation to fish for people. This explained the focus of Jesus' role. These men spent their days fishing for sea life. Now their objective became fishing for life on land. People concerned Jesus. They needed something only He could provide. He began early in His public ministry to teach (disciple) a select few about how to join Him in the task of reaching out to people.

v. 18. With no hesitation, Simon and Andrew responded immediately. The brothers left their nets at great personal sacrifice. Their vocation provided a good lifestyle. Although what Jesus made available promised no financial security, it provided something better. The men trusted Jesus and demonstrated instantaneous and complete obedience as they followed Him. Although they did not know Jesus' destination, they followed.

v. 19. Jesus went a little farther. He continued His search for disciples, apparently in a purposeful way. Another fisherman duo, James the son of Zebedee and his brother John, caught Jesus' attention. He discovered them also going about their work mending their nets. A good fisherman attended to this tedious detail at the end of the day. Even small tears in the nets resulted in loss of fish and thus income.

v. 20. Jesus called James and John to follow. They left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men. This highlights the immediacy of their response. James and John stopped what they were doing that very moment to follow. They sensed urgency in Jesus' call. The verse indicates an additional sacrifice Jesus asked of them. The two left family behind to become a part of Jesus' ministry family.