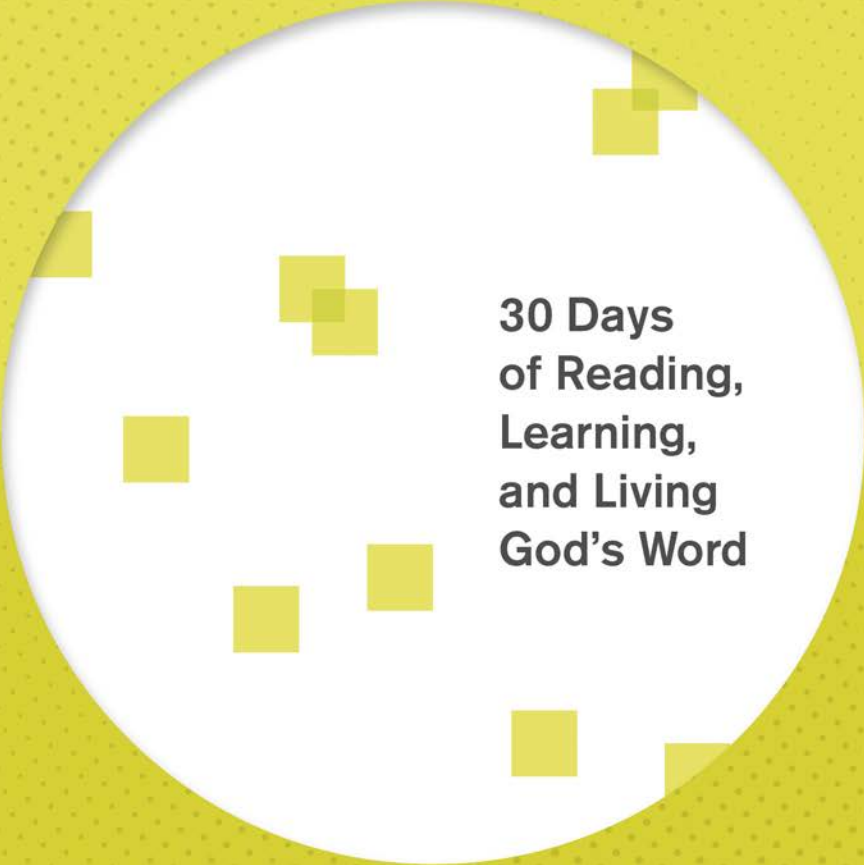


# EXPERIENCE

## THE GOSPEL OF



30 Days  
of Reading,  
Learning,  
and Living  
God's Word

# mark

So many devotional books for teenagers fall prey to one or more of these missteps: they talk about the Bible but don't get young people to read it; they talk down to teenagers; or they try too hard to be cool (which just comes off as lame). *Experience the Gospel of Mark*, thankfully, avoids all these problematic approaches. It's straightforward, engaging, conversational, and invitational. And I love that *The Message* passages for each day are embedded in the text, which increases the likelihood that students will actually read them.

**Mark Oestreicher**, The Youth Cartel

As a family and student pastor, I am always looking for resources that challenge students and are Bible based. Here it is! *Experience the Gospel of Mark: 30 Days of Reading, Learning, and Living God's Word* is what I plan to give out to students who are hungry to dive into the Bible on their own. The structure and layout are easy for students to follow, and the experience and takeaway sections challenge the reader to not just have head knowledge but also apply what they are reading to their lives. Yes. Yes! Yes!! We need resources like this to help cultivate a rhythm of learning and a living out of our faith.

**Christy Penley**, students and family pastor at Pulpit Rock Church

*Experience the Gospel of Mark* gives students of the Bible a thirty-day immersion into the shortest of the four Gospels. Each reading offers readers the space to experience God through the text. The accessibility of *The Message* makes the experiential nature of this Bible study an inviting opportunity. *The Message* captures the sacred words of Mark's Gospel and communicates them in common, everyday language. The daily readings immerse readers in sizable passages from Mark and lead readers to reflect on how each passage can penetrate the heart and lead to spiritual formation.

**Derek Vreeland**, pastor and author of *Centering Jesus*



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EXPERIENCE

THE GOSPEL OF

mark

Several light gray squares of varying sizes are scattered across the middle section of the page, some overlapping.

30 Days of Reading, Learning, and Living God's Word

Two light gray squares of varying sizes are positioned to the left of the author's name.

Andy Klenke



A NavPress resource published in alliance  
with Tyndale House Publishers

*Experience the Gospel of Mark: 30 Days of Reading, Learning, and Living God's Word*

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# introduction

Who is Jesus? This question, as popular as it is today, was even more common two thousand years ago when Jesus walked the earth. Confusion and controversy followed this teacher from Bethlehem as He performed amazing miracles and spoke with confident authority. And while much of Jesus' teaching referenced familiar Old Testament passages and themes, He often drew new, and even uncomfortable, conclusions. The Gospel of Mark records the events of Jesus' life, prompting future readers to ask the same question the crowds asked during ancient times: *Who is Jesus?*

Here are some key overarching details to help you understand Mark's Gospel.

**Author.** Mark. Mark was known to be Peter's (Jesus' disciple's) trusted assistant.

**Purpose.** Mark provides a brief account of Jesus' time on earth. He writes about Jesus' ministry, healings, teaching, death, and resurrection. He writes to show that Jesus is the Son of God and Savior of the world!

**Style.** Fast-paced and action-packed. Mark rarely provides details or descriptive language—he gets right to the point!

**Key verse.** “That is what the Son of Man has done: He came to serve, not to be served—and then to give away his life in exchange for many who are held hostage.”  
Mark 10:45



### **Themes.**


- *The cost of discipleship:* Mark shows that while following Jesus may be costly, it is worth it.
- *Upside down:* Mark records Jesus' new, countercultural value system to mankind.
- *Son of God:* Mark's portrayal of Jesus leaves no doubt that He is indeed the Son of God.
- *Heart over rules:* Mark emphasizes that Jesus' ultimate concern is the condition of our hearts.
- *Love and compassion:* Mark highlights Jesus' love and compassion for the world through His miracles, teachings, and sacrifice.

### **Major characters.**

- *Jesus:* The controversial Jewish leader who claimed to be the Son of God.
- *Pharisees:* Religious leaders who were experts in the Old Testament law. Pharisees had a reputation for prioritizing rules over a genuine relationship with God.
- *The disciples:* A group of twelve men whom Jesus chose to be His first followers. While they often misunderstood Jesus' words and actions, Jesus used this faithful group to advance His mission in incredible ways!

### **Terms to know.**

- *Miracles:* Signs that show Jesus' power.
- *Parables:* Stories from everyday life that explain complicated truths.
- *The gospel:* The Good News of salvation, offered through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.



# how to get the most out of this book

This book, divided into thirty days of reading, learning, and living, is designed to help you experience Scripture. Use these step-by-step instructions to help understand how you can best use this tool.

## **Know before You Go**

This section explains the background information you need in order to understand the day's Scripture. In other words, it gives some ideas for you to know before you go and read.

## **Read the Passage**

The Scripture for the day's experience will be printed using *The Message* version of the Bible. Do not skip this reading! This is the most important step in your experience.

## **After the Passage**

This section explores the messages, themes, or confusing parts in the day's Scripture. It is not meant to be the answer key, since we will not address every question or issue that you may have after reading the passage. The point is to introduce you to Scripture and help you understand the main idea, or bottom line, for each day.

## **The Bottom Line**

This short statement distills the passage into a core concept for you to continue to reflect on.

## **Experience**

This section creates space for you to process or experience each day's Scripture. The questions are meant to engage different parts of your mind, so each day's experience will vary in style. We want you to go beyond simply reading Mark. We want you to experience its truth for yourself. Take time to respond to the questions provided and be honest with yourself as you experience Scripture. Do not feel boxed in by the questions! Use this space to explore what God is teaching you.

## **Takeaway and Pray**

This section prompts you to choose one personal application. Consider the ideas you have processed and commit to one as your main takeaway. Then focus your daily prayer on one specific request, confession, and/or praise. Naming this one specific prayer allows you to reflect on God's power and possible answer to prayer as time passes.

**WE ARE EXCITED FOR  
YOU TO EXPERIENCE THE  
GOSPEL OF MARK OVER  
THE NEXT THIRTY DAYS!**

READING 1

# prepare & point

*Mark 1:1-15*

## Know before You Go

Mark explains how John the Baptist prepares people for Jesus' ministry on earth.

## Read the Passage

<sup>1:1-3</sup>The good news of Jesus Christ—the Message!—begins here, following to the letter the scroll of the prophet Isaiah.

Watch closely: I'm sending my preacher ahead of you;  
He'll make the road smooth for you.  
Thunder in the desert!  
Prepare for God's arrival!  
Make the road smooth and straight!

<sup>4-6</sup>John the Baptizer appeared in the wild, preaching a baptism of life-change that leads to forgiveness of sins. People thronged to him from Judea and Jerusalem and, as they confessed their sins, were baptized by him in the Jordan River into a

changed life. John wore a camel-hair habit, tied at the waist with a leather belt. He ate locusts and wild field honey.

<sup>7-8</sup>As he preached he said, “The real action comes next: The star in this drama, to whom I’m a mere stagehand, will change your life. I’m baptizing you here in the river, turning your old life in for a kingdom life. His baptism—a holy baptism by the Holy Spirit—will change you from the inside out.”

<sup>9-11</sup>At this time, Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. The moment he came out of the water, he saw the sky split open and God’s Spirit, looking like a dove, come down on him. Along with the Spirit, a voice: “You are my Son, chosen and marked by my love, pride of my life.”

<sup>12-13</sup>At once, this same Spirit pushed Jesus out into the wild. For forty wilderness days and nights he was tested by Satan. Wild animals were his companions, and angels took care of him.

<sup>14-15</sup>After John was arrested, Jesus went to Galilee preaching the Message of God: “Time’s up! God’s kingdom is here. Change your life and believe the Message.”

## After the Passage

The Gospel of Mark introduces us to Jesus’ ministry; however, it begins with a reference to the Old Testament (Mark 1:2-3 is quoting Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3). Even though we often talk about the Bible as two different parts—the Old Testament and the New Testament—they are actually two parts of the same story. When we see Old Testament verses quoted in the New Testament (like Mark 1:2-3), they are a reminder that Jesus’ life continues the story of God in the Old Testament.

Mark 1:1-3 also shows us that John the Baptist’s calling is significant because the Old Testament mentions it is going to happen hundreds of years before John the Baptist is even born. So try not to be fooled by his unique clothes and peculiar diet (Mark 1:6): He is actually an incredibly important person in the story of Jesus. John the Baptist is chosen by God to pave the way for Jesus and prepare people for the Good News they are about to hear (Mark 1:4-5). He is not some crazy guy walking around preaching a random sermon—he is specifically called by God to tell people about Jesus!

John's entire life purpose is to make sure that when Jesus arrives, people's hearts are ready to receive His message. Although John gains popularity and fame, he continues to use his platform to point others to Jesus. Think of how different this approach is from that of most celebrities! Typically, the more famous people get, the more they talk about themselves. John the Baptist does the exact opposite: He points others to Jesus (Mark 1:8). In fact, he is so determined to make sure people understand that Jesus is truly the One to worship, he tells the crowds that he is merely a stagehand while Jesus is the star of the drama (Mark 1:7). What incredible humility and a powerful example for us!

## The Bottom Line

Our entire lives are meant to point others to Jesus.

## EXPERIENCE

Complete this sentence: My life points other people to \_\_\_\_\_.

As we see in John the Baptist's example, God wants our lives to point other people to Jesus. However, our gifts, our desires, and our relationships can get in the way of this calling. You may realize that your life actually points other people to things, hobbies, success, or even yourself instead of Jesus. Now ask someone you trust to complete the sentence for you. Sometimes others can view the results of our actions more clearly than we see them ourselves.

**HOW CAN YOUR LIFE  
POINT OTHERS TO JESUS?  
CONSIDER YOUR GIFTS,  
YOUR FRIENDS, YOUR  
FAMILY, AND YOUR TIME.**

## Takeaway and Pray

My takeaway from this experience is

My prayer today is a

REQUEST  CONFESSION  PRAISE