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Kay Arthur & David Arthur

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40-Minute Bible Study Series
JESUS: EXPERIENCING HIS TOUCH

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HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

This small-group study is for people who are interested in learning for themselves more about what the Bible says on various subjects, but who have only limited time to meet together. It's ideal, for example, for a lunch group at work, an early morning men's group, a young mothers' group meeting in a home, a Sunday-school class, or even family devotions. (It's also ideal for small groups that typically have longer meeting times—such as evening groups or Saturday morning groups—but want to devote only a portion of their time together to actual study, while reserving the rest for prayer, fellowship, or other activities.)

This book is designed so that all the group's participants will complete each lesson's study activities *at the same time*. Discussing your insights drawn from what God says about the subject reveals exciting, life-impacting truths.

Although it's a group study, you'll need a facilitator to lead the study and keep the discussion moving. If *you* are your group's facilitator, the leader, here are some helpful points for making your job easier:

- Go through the lesson and mark the text before you lead the group. This will give you increased familiarity with the material and will enable you to facilitate the group with greater ease. It may be easier for you to lead the group through the instructions for marking if you, as a leader, choose a specific color for each symbol you mark.
- As you lead the group, start at the beginning of the text and simply read it aloud in the order it appears in the lesson, including the "insight boxes," which appear throughout. Work through the lesson together, observing and discussing what you learn. As you read the Scripture verses, have the group say aloud the word they are marking in the text.
- The discussion questions are there simply to help you cover the material. As the class moves into the discussion, many times you will find that they will cover the questions on their own. Remem-

ber, the discussion questions are there to guide the group through the topic, not to squelch discussion.

- Remember how important it is for people to verbalize their answers and discoveries. This greatly strengthens their personal understanding of each week's lesson. Try to ensure that everyone has plenty of opportunity to contribute to each week's discussions.
- Keep the discussion moving. This may mean spending more time on some parts of the study than on others. If necessary, you should feel free to spread out a lesson over more than one session. However, remember that you don't want to slow the pace too much. It's much better to leave everyone "wanting more" than to have people dropping out because of declining interest.
- If the validity or accuracy of some of the answers seems questionable, you can gently and cheerfully remind the group to stay focused on the truth of the Scriptures. Your object is to learn what the Bible says, not to engage in human philosophy. Simply stick with the Scriptures and give God the opportunity to speak. His Word *is* truth (John 17:17)!

JESUS: EXPERIENCING HIS TOUCH

People hold all sorts of opinions about Jesus Christ—what He believed, what He taught, how He lived. They also have thoughts on how He died and whether or not He really rose from the dead. But when you set opinions aside, what do you know for yourself about Jesus? What does Jesus mean to you?How have you encountered Him firsthand?

The Bible is unlike any other book ever written. It offers us sixty-six books written by God through the agency of man. The words found in the Scriptures bring spirit and life to us because they are God-breathed and inspired by the Spirit of God. Jesus Himself told us in Matthew 4:4 that man is to live by "every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."

This means we can encounter Christ each day by engaging with the Word of God—and that in doing so we will find our very lives transformed.

During the next six weeks we'll be reading and discussing the first six chapters in the gospel of Mark, looking at what happened to those who encountered Jesus firsthand. You're going to see how lives were transformed by the presence and touch of the Savior. And you'll experience for yourself the difference it makes when you engage with Jesus personally and experience His touch in your life.

WEEK ONE

Life is not easy for anyone, but when you know Jesus for yourself—when you understand His character, His proclamations, His teaching, His power, His authority, and what it means to be His follower—that knowledge becomes a steppingstone to living life with certainty and confidence. And that assurance is strengthened with every decision to live according to the truths of God's Word.

OBSERVE

***Leader**: Read Mark 1:1-3 aloud with the group. Then read it aloud a second time. Read slowly and have the group say aloud and mark each key word as directed:*

- *Mark every reference to **Jesus Christ** with a cross: ✝ In the same way, mark any synonyms, such as **Son of God** and **Lord**, as well as any pronouns, such as **you**, that refer to Jesus Christ. Since you'll be marking references to Jesus so often, you may prefer to use a particular color to mark the references to Him so they pop on the page.*
- *Draw a squiggly line under the word **messenger**, like this: ∿∿∿ Include pronouns such as **who** and synonyms such as **voice**.*

MARK 1:1-3

1 The beginning of the
gospel of Jesus Christ, the
Son of God.

2 As it is written in Isaiah
the prophet: "Behold, I
send My messenger ahead
of You, who will prepare
Your way;

3 The voice of one crying
in the wilderness, 'Make
ready the way of the Lord,
make His paths straight.'"

As you read the text, it's helpful to have the group say the key words aloud as they mark them. This way everyone will be sure they are marking every occurrence of the word, including any synonymous words or phrases. Do this throughout the study.

INSIGHT

The word *gospel* means good news.

Christ is the Greek word for Messiah. The Messiah was the anointed One whose coming was prophesied in the Old Testament.

DISCUSS

- Starting at verse 1 and moving through verse 3, look at every place where you marked a reference to Jesus Christ and state what you learned about Him from marking the text.

- Now discuss what you learn about the messenger from Isaiah's prophecy.

OBSERVE

Leader: *Read Mark 1:4-8 aloud, slowly. Have the group do the following:*

- *Draw a squiggly line like water*  *under all references to* ***John the Baptist****, including pronouns such as* ***him*** *and* ***he****.*
- *Mark all references to* ***baptism*** *with a squiggly line both above and underneath the word, like this:* 
- *Mark each occurrence of the word* ***sins*** *with a big* S*.*
- *Mark all references to the* ***Spirit of God*** *like this:* 

DISCUSS

- Look at the places where you marked references to John. What does the text tell you about him? What was he called, where was he, and what was he doing?

MARK 1:4-8

4 John the Baptist
appeared in the wilderness
preaching a baptism
of repentance for the
forgiveness of sins.

5 And all the country of
Judea was going out to
him, and all the people of
Jerusalem; and they were
being baptized by him in
the Jordan River, confessing
their sins.

6 John was clothed with
camel's hair and wore a
leather belt around his
waist, and his diet was
locusts and wild honey.

7 And he was preaching,
and saying, "After me One
is coming who is mightier
than I, and I am not fit to

stoop down and untie the thong of His sandals.

8 "I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

INSIGHT

The verb *baptize* is the simple transliteration of the Greek verb *baptizo*. In the Koine (common) Greek, it was used in reference to dyeing cloth and making pickles. The cloth takes on the color of the dye, and the cucumber absorbs the flavor of the brine. Thus baptism symbolizes unification, identification with Christ.

- What kind of a baptism was John preaching in verse 4? What purpose did it serve?

- Describe the response of the people to John's message.

INSIGHT

To *repent* is to change one's mind on something, which consequently leads to a change of belief and/or a change of behavior.

- Who do you think John was talking about in verses 7 and 8? Explain your answer.

- According to verse 8, what would that person do?

OBSERVE

***Leader**: Read Mark 1:9-13 aloud. Have the group do the following:*

- *Mark all references to **Jesus**, including pronouns and synonyms, with a cross or with the color they chose.*
- *Double underline anything that tells you **where** something takes place, for instance, **Nazareth in Galilee**, **the Jordan**, or **the wilderness**.*
- *Place a check mark like this ✓ over the word **immediately**.*
- *Mark references to **the Spirit** like this:* 
- *Mark **Satan** with a pitchfork, like this:* 

MARK 1:9-13

9 In those days Jesus came
from Nazareth in Galilee
and was baptized by John
in the Jordan.

10 Immediately coming
up out of the water, He
saw the heavens opening,
and the Spirit like a dove
descending upon Him

11 and a voice came out of
the heavens: "You are My
beloved Son, in You I am
well-pleased."

12 Immediately the Spirit impelled Him to go out into the wilderness.

13 And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him.

DISCUSS

- What do you learn from marking the references to Jesus in verses 9-11? Where was He? What happened?

- Who is speaking in verse 11, and what do you learn from Him about Jesus?

- What happened to Jesus in verses 12 and 13?

- What do you learn from marking the *Spirit*?

MARK 1:14-20

14 Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God,

15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom

OBSERVE

***Leader**: Read Mark 1:14-20 aloud. Have the group do the following:*

- *Draw a squiggly line under each reference to **John**.*
- *Mark each reference to **Jesus** as they did previously.*
- *Put a check mark over the word **immediately**.*
- *Mark **follow** and **followed** like this:* →

DISCUSS

- What does Mark tell you about John the Baptist in the beginning of this passage?

- According to verses 14-15, where did Jesus go, what did He do, and when did He do it?

- Look at verses 16-20. Where was Jesus, who did He come into contact with, and what did He call them to do?

of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

16 As He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen.

17 And Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men."

18 Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.

19 Going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who were also in the boat mending the nets.

20 Immediately He called them; and they left their

father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went away to follow Him.

- How did they respond?

- What do you think Jesus meant when He said, "I will make you become fishers of men"?

MARK 1:21-28

21 They went into Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and began to teach.

22 They were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

OBSERVE

***Leader**: Read Mark 1:21-28 aloud and slowly. Have the group do the following:*

- *Mark each reference to **Jesus** as they have previously.*
- *Double underline anything that indicates **where Jesus was**.*
- *Put a check mark over the word **immediately**.*
- *Mark all references to **unclean spirits**, including pronouns, with a pitchfork, since they are part of Satan's team.*

DISCUSS

- Where was Jesus in verses 21-22, and what was He doing?

- Look at the map below to identify the location of the city and synagogue mentioned in these verses.

Israel in the time of Christ



23 Just then there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,

24 saying, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!"

25 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!"

26 Throwing him into convulsions, the unclean spirit cried out with a loud voice and came out of him.

27 They were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the

unclean spirits, and they obey Him."

28 Immediately the news about Him spread everywhere into all the surrounding district of Galilee.

DISCUSS

- What was the response of those around Jesus?

- What happened next, and how did Jesus handle it, according to verses 23-25?

- Look at all those pitchforks! Move through the text and discuss what you learn about this unclean spirit.

INSIGHT

Synagogues were the official meeting place for the Jewish people in New Testament times. They became centers of learning and worship where the people gathered to read from the Law and the Prophets, pray, and hear messages from those invited to speak.

Synagogues came into being after the Jews were sent into exile under the Babylonians. Separated from Jerusalem and their temple, exiles established synagogues as a means of preserving their faith. They first sprang up outside the land of Israel and then were established throughout the land after the Jewish people returned from exile.

- What was the reaction of those who watched Jesus interact with the unclean spirit?

- If you have time, discuss what impressed you the most as you observed these first 28 verses of the first chapter of Mark.

WRAP IT UP

Three times in our text this week we saw the word gospel. Verse 1 speaks of the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Verses 14 and 15 speak of Jesus proclaiming the gospel of God.

The gospel is literally "the good news." But what good news?Often we think of the gospel as the collected facts about Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. This definition is accurate and spelled out clearly in places like 1 Corinthians 15. But what is the gospel, the good news in Mark 1? Jesus had not yet died on the cross; in fact, He had just begun His ministry.

Verse 15 tells us more of the good news Jesus preached: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand."

Something long awaited for—something amazing and powerful—is at hand: the kingdom of God! So what are we to do? How are we to respond?

Jesus says in verse 15, "Repent and believe in the gospel." What does it mean to repent and believe? Without taking away the joy of discovering all that is coming our way in this study, let's start with what happened next. Jesus said to the fishermen, "Follow Me."

As we study the gospel of Mark together, let's be intentional about following Jesus. Let's focus our minds and hearts on what it means to believe in the gospel, to repent and follow Jesus, to draw near and experience Hi touch on our lives.

About the Authors and Precept

KAY ARTHUR, cofounder of Precept, is known around the world as an inspiring Bible teacher, author, and conference speaker.

Kay and her husband, Jack, founded Precept Ministries International in 1970 in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Started as a fledgling ministry for teens, Precept today is a worldwide outreach that establishes children, teens, and adults in God's Word, so that they can discover the Bible's truths for themselves. Kay and the ministry staff of writers produce *Precept Upon Precept* studies, *In & Out* studies, *Lord series* studies, the *New Inductive Study Series* studies, *40-Minute* studies, and *Discover 4 Yourself Inductive Bible Studies for Kids*.

From years of diligent study and teaching experience, Kay and the staff have developed these unique, inductive courses that are now used in nearly 185 countries and 70 languages. Kay is the author of more than 120 books and inductive Bible study courses, with a total of over 5 million books in print. Kay also hosts the now streaming national radio and television program *Precepts for Life*.

DAVID ARTHUR serves as chief executive officer of Precept Ministries International. Having been mentored by his parents, Jack and Kay Arthur, in the value of inductive Bible study, he shares their passion for establishing people in God's Word. Prior to his role at Precept, David worked in the business world with IBM and small businesses. Starting in 1999 David served for several years as a pastor in both the Presbyterian Church of America and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. Just before coming to Precept, he was vice president with Generous Giving, working with givers and pastors. David is a gifted and passionate teacher of God's Word. He holds a bachelor's degree in organizational management from Covenant College and a master of arts in theological studies from Reformed Theological Seminary.

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