



CONNECT

with

GOD

BIBLE READING

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

If you're in a group, use these questions to have a conversation about how you can support and encourage one another to explore reading the Bible in new ways. If you're not in a group, reflect on these questions to help you consider what it would look like for you to connect with God through the Scriptures.

1. What are some things that keep people from regularly reading the Bible?
2. Read Mark 4:35–41 together, and then discuss the following questions:
 - What literary type is the passage?
 - Discuss journalistic questions such as: *Who is in the passage? What are they doing and saying? Why are they doing what they're doing and saying what they're saying?*
 - What is the atmosphere or mood of the passage?
3. Consider your observations about Mark 4:35–41. In light of those observations, interpret the passage by discussing the questions that follow. The “Background on the Gospel of Mark” section on page 4 of this guide is also a helpful resource. It contains the kind of information you can gather from a study Bible or a commentary.
 - What might someone have thought about Jesus after hearing this story for the first time?
 - What do you think Mark was trying to communicate about Jesus in this passage?
4. Given your interpretation of Mark 4:35–41, how could you apply the passage in your own life?
 - Is a universal principle evident in the passage?
 - What current situation in your life provides an opportunity for you to apply that principle?
5. Do you feel more confident about reading the Bible than you did before beginning this study? Why or why not?

START READING

Learning about reading the Bible is helpful, but now it's time to actually read it. Use the resources at groupleaders.org/bible to find a plan that appeals to you. The following options are great starting points.

- If you're reading in a group, try one of the Bible Project Studies on the Gospel of John. It's great for helping you form a daily reading habit. **You can find it at: groupleaders.org/bible-study-john**
- If you're reading on your own, try the “John 21-Day Reading Guide” at Bible.com or the YouVersion app you can download to your tablet or smartphone. It's a simple reading plan that will lead you through the entire Gospel of John in 21 days. Best of all, you can do it on your own or invite friends to read with you. **You can find it at: bible.com/reading-plans/817-john-reading-guide**

THIS WEEK, THINK ABOUT . . .

As you begin reading or begin a new approach to reading the Bible, be patient. It may take a little time for you to find your groove. Keep at it. On the other hand, if you persist for a couple of weeks and the approach you've chosen just doesn't work for you, switch things up. You will be able to find a way of reading Scripture that helps you connect with God.

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BACKGROUND ON THE GOSPEL OF MARK

The Gospel of Mark is the second book of the New Testament. Like the other three Gospels (Matthew, Luke, and John), the purpose of Mark is to give us a better understanding of who Jesus is.

The Bible sometimes refers to the book's author, Mark, as "John Mark." At different times, he was an associate of both the apostle Paul and the disciple Peter. Mark was not one of the twelve disciples, nor was he with Jesus during his ministry. His writing is largely based on the teachings and eyewitness accounts of Peter.

While Mark alludes to the divine attributes of Jesus a number of times, he focuses primarily on Jesus' human attributes. Mark included vivid details that give us the impression he was familiar with the events about which he wrote. This descriptive style may indicate the Gospel of Mark was originally intended to be read aloud in a group.

The book is divided into two main parts: Jesus' ministry in Galilee (chapters 1–9) and Jesus' ministry in Judea and Jerusalem (10–16). It was probably written for Gentile readers in general and for the Christians in Rome in particular.

Here are some additional characteristics of Mark's Gospel compared to the others:

- It's the shortest in length.
- It appears to have been written before the other three, probably between AD 60 and 75.
- Both Luke and Matthew used much of Mark's text to write their Gospels.
- Mark's account is a collection of stories about Jesus that are not necessarily in the order they happened.
- Mark begins his account with Jesus' public ministry, while Matthew and Luke begin with Jesus' birth.
- Mark's Gospel is more direct in language. At times, it's even blunt.