
READING THROUGH THE GOSPELS:

Mark

CALVARY WOMEN

A NOTE FROM CHRISTY SPADER, WOMEN'S MINISTRY DIRECTOR

Welcome to our Calvary Women Gospel Reading Plan!

As fall approaches, we're excited to invite all Calvary women to join us in something special: a 4-month journey through the Gospels designed just for you. Written by different Calvary women, in each monthly booklet, you'll find a roadmap through one of the Gospels, touching on key themes, memory verses, and thought-provoking challenges. Plus, we've got an awesome playlist of weekly audio devotionals by that month's author.

If you are anything like me, with the start of the fall, I have a new wave of spiritual ambition. I buy a book. I make a plan. I start strong, but as life happens, my grand faith goals link arms with guilt and shame when what I hoped to be true of my spiritual rhythms has suffered a steep decline.

While I want God's love to be the ultimate driving force behind my spiritual practices, I've learned that God, in his grace, provides other motivators to help me. I've seen that some extra support can make a world of difference. And that's where our faith community steps in. So, this fall, we're inviting every woman at Calvary to join us in exploring the Gospels together.

Our mission is simple: through this booklet we want women to **Know** the love of God, **Grow** in our love of God, and **Show** the love of God. When it comes to **Knowing the Love of God**, each week we'll dive into a theme to keep your eyes out for as you read the text, a spot where we see the character of God on display. To **Grow in the Love of God**, there's a reading plan waiting for you. Each month our approach will vary. We might read the Gospel chronologically, thematically, or simply chapter-by-chapter and every week you'll get to hear from some women at Calvary dive a bit deeper through short audio devotionals on our Calvary Women Spotify/Apple Music playlist. There's more too! It's not just about personal growth; it's about **Showing the Love of God** too. The booklet will wrap up with a simple action and prayer prompt to put those insights into practice.

No matter who you are, or your capacity to be involved in other Women's Ministry offerings, this booklet is for YOU. There is power in God's Word and there is power in reading it alongside a community of faith. We want to be women of the Word together. Let's make this reading plan not just a thing we do, but a way we live – connected, empowered, and radiating God's love.

So, open this booklet and let's dive into the Gospel of Mark this month, together!

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

"But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many."

Mark 10:43b-45

INTRODUCTION TO MARK

By Erin Mann

Welcome to the book of Mark! Written in the mid to late 50's AD, Mark is the *earliest* written account of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. It is vivid, fast-paced, short and to the point. It is widely accepted to be Peter's account of Jesus, penned by John Mark, which we can delight in remembering when we encounter the speedy, sometimes blunt expression in this gospel. The main theme of Mark is Jesus' call to discipleship, specifically a call to enter into life changing relationship with him. Before you embark on this journey through Mark, take a quiet moment to pause and pray this prayer (or your own!):

Author of life and Author of My Life: as I begin the reading of this gospel, give me a sensitivity to listen, not just to the story told, but to the responses of my own heart to what I encounter in these pages. Let the honest responses of my heart to reading this gospel grant new insight into the story Your grace is already telling in my own life.

(adapted from *A Liturgy Before Beginning a Book, Every Moment Holy*)

WEEK 1

Jesus' Identity and A Call to Discipleship

*Our mission is to **Know** the love of God,
Grow in our love of God, and **Show** the love of God.*

KNOW

The gospel of Mark starts off with a bang, spelling out for us in no uncertain terms Jesus' identity as the Son of God. Our first week reads like a quick moving "docudrama," providing overt evidence for the identity and authority of Jesus in quick scenes. Mark hammers home the point: Jesus is clearly the divine son of God, the awaited Messiah! He heals, performs miracles, casts out demons, fulfills prophecy, teaches with authority, and even in these early chapters we will find his clear call to discipleship. Let's pray this week that God would give us hearts to heed that call, that he would draw us in to encounter afresh our Savior Jesus through this text.

WEEK 1 READING PLAN

October 1: Mark 1:1-28

October 2: Mark 1:29-45

October 3: Mark 2

October 4: Mark 3:1-21

October 5: Mark 3:22-35

October 6: Mark 4:1-34

October 7: Mark 4:35-41

GROW

To listen to an audio devotional for Mark Week 1 check out: calvarymemorial.com/women or search for the “Calvary Women” playlist by Calvary Memorial Church on Spotify or Apple Music.

SHOW

Challenge: Take some time this week to consider and reflect on how the Lord has shown His infinite love and unwavering faithfulness to you in your life. Consider journaling or making a list that calls to mind evidence of how he has been with you, and has continued to call you to himself.

Prayer: Take some time this week to consider and reflect with the Lord on how your relationship with Christ has changed you (inwardly or outwardly, personally or relationally). Give thanks to him for the ways he has begun to bear spiritual fruit in you, and ask that he would reveal to you the places where he longs for your heart to soften into further dependence on him.

WEEK 2

A Deeper Look into the Heart of Jesus

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KNOW

We continue our journey this week around the regions of the Sea of Galilee with Jesus and his disciples. Our fast-paced narrative will slow down just a bit, inviting us to take in slightly more elaborated scenes with Jesus and those he encounters. Settle in; this is a week for soaking in the character of Jesus. Mark will continue to remind us of Jesus' identity and continue developing the theme of discipleship to Christ, but this week we also get a deeper look into the heart of Jesus through many of these stories. Let's pray that God would reveal that heart to us, drawing us into his presence as we read.

WEEK 2 READING PLAN

October 8: Mark 5:1-20

October 9: Mark 5:21-43

October 10: Mark 6:1-29

October 11: Mark 6:30-56

October 12: Mark 7:1-23

October 13: Mark 7:24-37

October 14: Mark 8:1-13

GROW

To listen to an audio devotional for Mark Week 2 check out: calvarymemorial.com/women or search for the “Calvary Women” playlist by Calvary Memorial Church on Spotify or Apple Music.

SHOW

Challenge: Do you know anyone walking through their worst nightmare right now? Are there ways you can be a picture of Christ’s love for them in this season?

Prayer: Are there fears or sorrows you may be withholding from the Lord, or places where it has become difficult to believe he looks on you with a heart of love and compassion? Take time to sit with him in those darker places, and ask that he would reveal his heart to you.

WEEK 3

The Unexpected Mission of Jesus

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KNOW

This week, we will experience a fairly striking shift as we read the gospel of Mark. Trading parables for plain speech, Jesus will foretell his death and resurrection to his disciples three times, and will emphasize the surprising nature of his kingdom. *“The last will be first, and the first last.”* We will continue to see more evidence of Jesus’ divine authority and identity, but this week Mark’s emphasis is the unexpected mission of Jesus as he heads toward the cross. Let’s pray together that he would soften our hearts to his call this week, and that he would give us humility to understand what it really means to walk with Jesus in his kingdom.

WEEK 3 READING PLAN

October 15: Mark 8:14-9:1

October 16: Mark 9:2-29

October 17: Mark 9:30-50

October 18: Mark 10:1-31

October 19: Mark 10:32-52

October 20: Mark 11:1-26

October 21: Mark 11:27-33

GROW

To listen to an audio devotional for Mark Week 3 check out: calvarymemorial.com/women or search for the “Calvary Women” playlist by Calvary Memorial Church on Spotify or Apple Music.

SHOW

Challenge: Can you identify a way this week in which you can reflect the “unexpected” mission of Christ to someone else, perhaps someone who does not know Jesus?

Prayer: Take time to ask the Lord to reveal to you a place in your heart where perhaps you have begun to hold too tightly to some kind of earthly security. Ask that he would loosen your grasp on that thing, and grow in you the certainty that in Christ your heart’s deepest desires and needs are met.

WEEK 4

Jesus' Last Words and Final Work on the Cross

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KNOW

This week we come to our final chapters of Mark. Our readings will begin with the parable of the tenants, a sobering picture of the religious leaders' rejection of Jesus, and a sort of foreshadowing of the remaining chapters of our gospel. We will continue to see Jesus preparing his disciples for the things to come and helping them understand the true nature of his kingdom, but our climax and emphasis this week will really be Jesus' death and the events leading up to it. Let us pray that God would speak to us through our last week, deepening our understanding and drawing our hearts to see the cross as the ultimate display (and proof) of his love for us.

WEEK 4 READING PLAN

October 22: Mark 12:1-27

October 23: Mark 12:28-44

October 24: Mark 13

October 25: Mark 14

October 26: Mark 15:1-20

October 27: Mark 15:21-47

October 28: Mark 16

GROW

To listen to an audio devotional for Mark Week 4 check out: calvarymemorial.com/women or search for the “Calvary Women” playlist by Calvary Memorial Church on Spotify or Apple Music.

SHOW

Challenge: If you have received Christ’s gift of life offered to us through his work on the cross, Jesus promises eternal life in the age to come, but also *abundant life now* (Mk 10:29-30). Spend some time reflecting on what his work on the cross means for your life *now*, even *today*.

Prayer: Spend some time this week reflecting on Jesus’ experience in the garden and what his willingness to take on the cross means for you. Pray that the Lord would reveal to your heart his love for you through the cross.