



Group Leader Guide

Series: The Heart - Week 2

Scripture: Mark 1, Specifically, Mark 1:35-39

Leader Notes:

This week we are going to consider how we can possibly keep our hearts close to God in a busy and constantly distracting world.

Blaise Pascal, the 17th century mathematician and philosopher once said, "All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone." Pascal's observation was that humanity couldn't deal with their problems because they needed to be constantly busy, constantly distracted. Quietness is uncomfortable.

I don't know if Pascal is spot on here, but I do think he is on to something. I think he is on to something because for Christians, almost all of our problems originate from our inability and inconsistency in spending time alone with God.

The road to spiritual maturity, the path to keeping our hearts close to God, is covered with rest stops where we stop to spend time with God in a world that is busy and full of distractions.

Bottom Line:

We keep our hearts close to God by intentionally seeking to spend time with God.

Introduction:

Jesus knows what it's like to live in a busy season, to face distraction after distraction, to feel pulled in 1,000 different directions. Nevertheless, Jesus models the importance of keeping our heart close to God by spending time with the Father in Mark 1.

Mark 1 examines an incredibly busy season in the life of Christ and a 24 hour period of complete chaos! The busy season is kicked off in v.9, listen to this craziness.

- V.9 Jesus is baptized in recognition of the plan of God kicking off.
- V.12 Jesus is led into the wilderness where he kicks off a 40-day period of fasting and prayer which ultimately culminates in a temptation where he looks Satan in the face and stands firm.
- V. 15 Jesus takes his ministry public by broadcasting, "The Kingdom of God is at hand."
- V. 16 Jesus picks his first disciples.

The 24-hour period of chaos starts in v. 21.

- V. 21 Jesus preaches a sermon in synagogue.
- V. 25 Jesus heals a demon possessed man in the synagogue.
- V. 29 Jesus goes into Peter's MIL's home and heals her.
- V. 31 Jesus heals the entire city's sick and demon possessed population while simultaneously shutting the mouths of demons.

This is nuts! Yet, as we come to Mark 1:35 we find Jesus showing us the necessity of keeping our hearts no matter how busy we are. He models for us a method of keeping our hearts by spending time with God. Let's intentionally follow his lead!

BELONG – Begin by allowing the group a time to connect and care for one another! Take prayer requests and start the group in prayer.

Ice Breaker Questions:

- What does it mean to spend time with God? How consistently do you spend time with God?

BELIEVE – Take time to study the Bible together.

Read Mark 1:35-39

Teaching Points:

- Meeting with God will require sacrifice and effort.
- No matter how busy life is, you cannot keep your heart unless you make meeting with God a priority!
- Meeting with God teaches us to walk in the Spirit and take our lead from God and not be influenced by the world around us.

Questions For Discussion

1. Read Mark 1:9-34, how does Jesus' schedule compare to ours? Do you think Jesus knows the pressure of busyness and distraction?
2. Read Mark 1:35-39. What did it cost Jesus to spend time with the Father?
3. Why is it important to try to start your day by spending time with God?
4. How do you make spending time with God a priority?
5. How is spending time with God important to keep your heart close to God?

BECOME – Make application and determine to follow Christ better.

Close the group by praying for God to help us lean into him and intentionally spend time with Him.