

DISCUSS

Francis started off the video by explaining Jesus’s discipleship model. He explained why the varied terrain near the Sea of Galilee was ideal for illustrating the different kinds of soil in the Parable of the Sower. Not everyone was privy to the true meaning of Jesus’s teachings. He chose just a few to mentor up close.

We could make a big deal about the suitability of the disciples but take a closer look at Mark 3:7–19. **What sets the disciples apart from the crowds following Jesus?**

Discipleship is no “add-on” program. It’s not something we can have in addition to the rest of our pursuits. Francis summarized Jesus’s message in chapter 4 by saying, “You want to follow Jesus? You have to give everything up.”

Think about that for a second. **If you were to pursue true discipleship, what would you stand to lose? Are you okay with that?**

Take a minute or two and think about how Francis presented the two groups of people: the called-out disciples and the crowds. **If you were to look at your life honestly, which group would you belong to?**

What’s one thing this week you can begin to surrender to Jesus in order to better embrace the call of discipleship?

The challenge of Jesus’s road of discipleship lies primarily in what it costs us. Success in Jesus’s mind is completely different than success by the world’s standards. We have to live in this world, yes, but to be a disciple of Jesus means prioritizing his call over everything—even family, as Jesus points out in Mark 3:31–35.

Read Mark 3:7–35. Mark is playing with two main themes, but he splits them up across four sections of text (which are easier to see in a print Bible than digital). Those four are Mark 3:7–12, 13–21, 22–30, and 31–35.

Read each of the passages. What similarities do you notice between 3:7–12 and 22–30, as well as between 3:13–21 and 31–35? Note especially the main characters in each vignette apart from Jesus.

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GO DEEPER

The Go Deeper section has two potential functions. It can supplement your small group discussion by providing extra discussion material. We've highlighted a place where each of the following segments could fit in the Discuss section of the study guide.

But you can also use these sections as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting.

1. What Does It Mean: The Unforgivable Sin

In Mark 3:22–30 we find one of the more difficult teachings from Jesus—the so-called unforgivable sin. Here, the scribes confront Jesus about his teachings. They've begun to spread the rumor that he is possessed by a demon named "Beelzebul," which was a high-ranking deity worshiped in Canaanite religion. Jesus easily points out the flaw in their logic, however. If Jesus worked for Satan, why would he cast out demons that *also* work for Satan? He would be fighting against his own cause.

But then Jesus utters a frightening statement: "But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin" (3:29). Clearly, it's a warning, but what does it mean? And how can we know whether or not we are guilty of such a terrible sin?

Note the verb in Mark 3:30. Most translations say "they were saying" (*erchontai*) and, while that's accurate, the verb's tense in Greek implies an action that occurred on a habitual basis. In other words, this wasn't a one-time event. The scribes *regularly* and *continually* attributed the works of the Holy Spirit through Jesus to the power of Satan, which is what Jesus declares unforgivable.

Despite the seriousness of Jesus's accusation, we should not miss the hope in Jesus's words before his warning: Jesus says, "all sins will be forgiven" along with "whatever blasphemies" when we turn to him. But someone who's has made a habit of declaring Jesus a servant of Satan demonstrates his or her refusal to turn to Jesus in repentance.

So, if you're worried about whether or not you've committed the unforgivable sin, you can be sure already

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