



Week 1

- **What's one of the biggest "A-Ha" moments you have ever had? How did this change the way you think and see the world?**

And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance (change your thinking: paradigm shift) for the forgiveness of sins. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And this was his message: "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him.

When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

Mark 1:4-20 (NIV)

- **Did Jesus call the disciples to be part of a Bible study group or something different? What exactly did He call them to do?**

- **What differences and similarities do you see in the way the modern church makes disciples and the discipleship process that Jesus used in calling His first followers?**

Key Thought: There are three paradigm shifts we need to make: 1). I cannot know God without obeying Him. 2). I am empty without Bible reading and prayer. 3). The stakes are too high for you to fight this war alone.

- **What things are keeping you from addressing the "elephant in the pew" and what steps do you need to take in your church to begin the process?**
- **What can you learn from Jesus' example in the way He prepared for action?**
- **What can you do beginning today individually or with your family, friends or small group to prepare for the action that is to come?**
- **What can you do to fight against the temptations that will likely come as you prepare for action?**
- **What selfish things do you need to let go of that might be keeping you from following God's plan of action in your life?**
- **Where do you feel called to go and minister to those who need to see Christ's love firsthand? How have you responded to this calling thus far?**
- **Which is easier for you: talking about your faith with others or demonstrating love towards them? Explain.**

Final Thought: God has called you to action and it is up to us to respond that calling. It will require drastic changes in our thinking, but with God's help those changes can be made. Allow Him to prepare you for action so that you can begin fighting the war.

For Further Study

To use this resource, simply select one or two questions from each category below that you think will help your group discussion. Alternatively, you can use these questions and Scriptures in your own personal devotions during the week.

Open

- How would you prepare for a home visit from your boss or another important person?

Explore

Read Mark 1:1-8.

- What do Mark's first words tell us about his Gospel? (1:1)
- Who was John the Baptist? (1:2-3)
- Who sent the messenger? Why? (1:2-3)
- How was Isaiah's prophecy fulfilled? (1:4)
- What were the two aspects of John's ministry? (1:4)
- What reasons to be baptized did John give the people? (1:4)
- What had to happen before John could baptize a person? (1:5)
- When John said, "After me will come one more powerful than I," to whom was he referring? (1:7)
- What was John's attitude toward Jesus? (1:7)

- What was the theme of John's message? (1:7-8)
- How did Jesus' baptism differ from John's? (1:8)

Reflect

- What is your reaction to the fact that Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled?
- In what ways can we allow the Holy Spirit to work through us?
- How can Jesus' gift of the Holy Spirit make a difference in our lives?
- What does the message of Jesus offer to people?
- What usually prevents us from being Christ's witnesses?
- How can a person's witness reflect humility and respect for Jesus?
- How can we ensure that our lives focus attention on Christ, and not on ourselves?
- In what ways can you prepare others for Christ?

Apply

- What step could you take this week toward becoming a better witness for Christ?
- With whom can you share God's promise of forgiveness of sins? How?.