

## **LIFE Group Leader Handout**

**November 6, 2016**

### **Discovery—Jesus in the Gospel of Mark: Man of Truth**

Pastor Mike O'Connor

#### **Scripture—Mark 1:1-8**

*[1:1] The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*

*[2] As it is written in Isaiah the prophet,  
"Behold, I send my messenger before your face,  
who will prepare your way,*

*[3] the voice of one crying in the wilderness:  
'Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight,"*

*[4] John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. [5] And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. [6] Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. [7] And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. [8] I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."*

#### **Main Idea—John the Baptist Lived His Message**

God Uses "Way Preparers." It was true in the time of John the Baptist and it is still true today.

What made John the Baptist so effective?

- Intimacy with God. *"...the word of God came to John...in the wilderness."* Luke 3:2
- Limiting his freedom—his life choices backed up his message of repentance
- Knowing His calling—He was not the bridegroom, only His friend, so he could say of Jesus: *"He must increase; I must decrease."* (John 3:30)

#### **Application—**

What new insights did you get from this message?

The message points all ended with a question. Which one of these was most important, most convicting for you?

- *Am I before the face of God in the wilderness?*
- *Am I limiting my freedom in order to enlarge my ministry?*
- *Am I willing to decrease so that my Jesus can increase?*

What life changes came out of this message for you?

## **ADDING VALUE TO YOUR GROUP MEMBERS**

By Heather Zempel

Speaker, author, and leadership guru John Maxwell often refers to his personal life mission and the purpose of his organization as “adding value to people”. Jesus was the master of adding value to people. Think about the Samaritan woman at the well who was despised by society; Jesus turned her into the most popular woman in the village one day when he welcomed her company at the well. The woman, caught in the act of adultery, went from certain death to new life because of a few simple words from Jesus. The 12 disciples were transformed from stinky fishermen, tax collectors, and political activists into world changers whose names are plastered in books, on street signs, on schools, and giant cathedrals today. Jesus did more to promote the value of women than perhaps anyone else in history. He reminded the religious crowd that lepers were real people.

Many times, it’s not so much adding value to people as it is recognizing, acknowledging, and appreciating the value God has placed in them and giving them an opportunity to let that value blossom.

Here are a few things to put into practice in your small group as you seek to add value to your group members:

**Pray to see the image of God in people.** Sometimes it begins with a simple prayer to see people the way that Jesus sees them. If someone really bugs you, pray for them. Usually, adding value to people results in more radical transformation in us than it does them. I think that Barnabas probably did this regularly. When Paul had a life-changing encounter with Christ, Barnabas was the guy that stepped in to reconcile him with the Church that had grown so fearful of him. When Paul got ticked at John Mark, Barnabas still saw potential in him, took him under wing, and invested in the young man who would eventually write a Gospel account bearing his name.

**Make their day.** The book “Fish” outlines the business practices of the famous Pike Place Market in Seattle. One of the daily challenges they give to their employees is to “make their customers’ day”. What if we got up every morning with the goal of making someone’s day?

**Listen.** One of the best ways we can acknowledge that we value people is by simply listening to their tale. Dale Carnegie said “You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years trying to get other people interested in you.”

**Ask transformational questions.** When we really listen, we have the opportunity to ask questions that help others recognize their value and unleash potential in them. There are two questions that I am asking people right now: “What do you love most about...(your job, your classes, your family, etc)?” and “What is the most challenging thing you are experiencing right now?”. They certainly aren’t the most profound questions in the world, but I’ve discovered that they open the floodgates.

**Approach every person as someone who can teach you something.** Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “I have never met a man who was not my superior in some particular.” What can we learn from those around us? How can we let them know the impact they have had on our lives? Identify their strengths. Most people just need someone to acknowledge their strengths. If you don’t know what they are, ask God to show you. Applaud when they do something well.

**Believe in them.** Believing in people usually brings out the best in people. Mark Twain said “Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great.” Find creative ways to communicate that you believe in people.