

DISCUSSION GUIDE

What to Expect From the Fully-Devoted Life The Gospel of Mark — Week 65

ICEBREAKER: What does “success” mean to you?

OVERVIEW: Unrealistic expectations can be very dangerous for your spiritual life. In Mark 14:1-11 we are given a clear picture of what to expect, and what not to expect when we follow Christ with full devotion. In this study we will go deeper with how to prepare for and respond to the challenges of following Christ in an evil world.

1. **Read Mark 14:1-11.** What insight, principle, or observation from this weekend’s message did you find to be the most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? Explain. (Or what was your key takeaway from Sunday’s message?)
2. In this story, Mary was criticized for being wasteful. Do you think her actions were wasteful? Explain.
3. How does following Jesus today lead you to do things that unbelievers and uncommitted Christians see as wasteful, a waste of time, foolish, or even evil?
4. The reason that Mary was criticized and disliked was because she took God’s word seriously (she believed Jesus’s predictions about His coming suffering and death). Have you made the decision to be totally committed to believing and obeying God’s word? Explain. How do you need to grow in this way?

5. In the story in Mark 14:1-11, Jesus came to Mary’s defense and praised her. What are some ways that you can follow His example by defending and encouraging other believers who are coming under fire for their devotion to Christ?
6. The sermon mentioned 3 unrealistic expectations of the fully-devoted life: The praise of people; the absence of trials; and the abundance of prosperity. What are some other unrealistic expectations that Christians tend to have of the fully-devoted life?
7. How are unrealistic expectations dangerous for the Christian life?
8. Should we expect to be financially, physically, and relationally prosperous if we are living the fully-devoted life? Explain.
9. Read Mark 10:29-30. This verse seems to promise great rewards for full devotion in this life (“now, at this time”). If this is true, then why do so many Christians around the world suffer from persecution, sickness, and poverty?
10. One result you can expect from the fully-devoted life is to be different from unbelievers and uncommitted Christians. How has following Jesus caused you to be different? What have you learned about effectively resisting the pressure to conform to the world around you?

The Last Word: As a Christian there’s perhaps no greater pleasure than living in a way that is pleasing to Christ.