

NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

NIV BOYS'

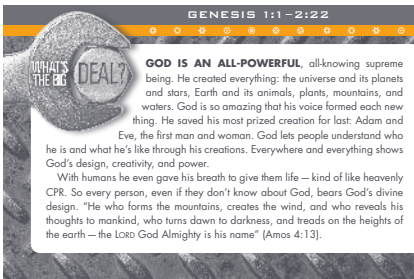
BIBLE

HOW TO USE THIS BIBLE

The Bible is huge — sixty-six books in one. It may look daunting to try to read it on your own. But the Bible tells God's story about himself, people, heaven, and earth. In this epic from God, he used different guys to write about battles, victories, kings and queens, supernatural visions, promises, tragedies, all kinds of families, and so much more. Each character, story, and message has something to do with God's creation, character, and compassion. To get started, read a little bit at a time, and use the special features to navigate the pages.

BOOK INTRODUCTIONS

A quick look at the author, setting, and background will help you understand the characters and stories in each book.

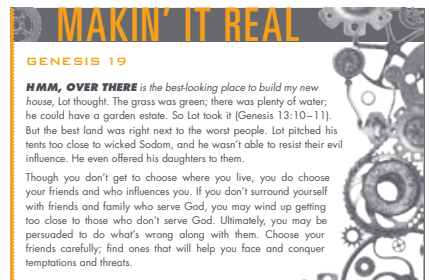


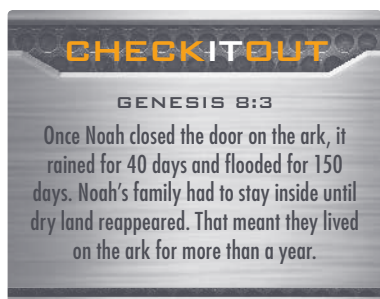
WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

While everything in the Bible is important, certain people, places, and things stand out. Find out who's who, what's what, and how they connect to God. You'll discover the adventures and challenges of mankind.

MAKIN' IT REAL

Think the Bible is too ancient to make sense today? You'll be surprised. Get the scoop on what boys like you can learn from the Bible — no matter what century you live in.



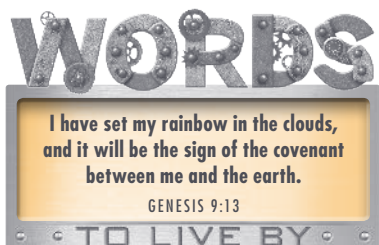
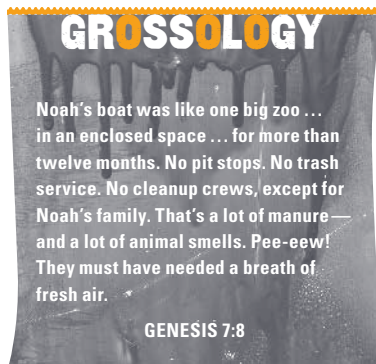


CHECK IT OUT

Boost your smarts with fascinating facts and trivia. Read about the cool and interesting stuff in the life and times of the Old and New Testaments.

GROSSOLOGY

If it oozes, bleeds, smells, or makes your spine tingle, it's in the Bible. God didn't avoid the messy parts of life. He left them in, so get ready to squirm.



WORDS TO LIVE BY

Verses to help you keep God's Word in your heart — you may want to memorize them!

At the back of this Bible, there also are a few other tools that may be helpful to you:

- **THROUGH THE BIBLE IN A YEAR** — A checklist for daily Bible reading if you want to tackle reading the entire Bible in a year.
- **PROMISES FROM THE BIBLE** — When you are sad, tempted, or are seeking God's direction, check this for suggested Bible verses to read.
- **PERSPECTIVES FROM THE BIBLE** — Like a topical index, this will show you where to read verses about all kinds of topics like anger, faith, and heaven.
- **JOURNALING PAGES** — This is where you can write your own notes, questions, and prayers.

God bless you as you read his Word.

WHO WROTE THIS BOOK?

A young man named John Mark wrote down stories Peter told about Jesus.

WHY WAS THIS BOOK WRITTEN?

Mark shows people who Jesus is by telling what Jesus did.

FOR WHOM WAS THIS BOOK WRITTEN?

Mark wrote this book for Gentiles (people who were not Jews).

WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS BOOK?

Jesus shows his power by performing miracles that help people, and he teaches his disciples.

WHO IS THE KEY PERSON IN THIS BOOK?

Jesus is the most important person in this book.

WHEN DID THIS HAPPEN?

Jesus worked miracles and taught from AD 26 to 30.

WHERE DID THIS HAPPEN?

Most events in Mark 1–9 happened in Galilee. Most events in Mark 10–16 took place in or near Jerusalem.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE STORIES IN THIS BOOK?

- ⚙️ Jesus heals a paralyzed man Mark 2:1–12
- ⚙️ Jesus calms a storm. Mark 4:35–41
- ⚙️ Jesus raises a dead girl. Mark 5:21–43
- ⚙️ Jesus walks on water. Mark 6:45–56
- ⚙️ Jesus feeds 4,000 people Mark 8:1–10
- ⚙️ Jesus heals a young boy Mark 9:14–32
- ⚙️ Jesus holds the Last Supper Mark 14:12–26
- ⚙️ Jesus dies and is buried Mark 15:21–47
- ⚙️ Jesus is raised again. Mark 16:1–8

JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY

1 The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah,^a the Son of God,^b ²as it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

“I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way”^c —
³“a voice of one calling in the wilderness,
‘Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.’”^d

⁴And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵The 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. ⁶John wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷And this was his message: “After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸I baptize you with^e water, but he will baptize you with^e the Holy Spirit.”

THE BAPTISM AND TESTING OF JESUS

⁹At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

¹²At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, ¹³and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted^f by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

JESUS ANNOUNCES THE GOOD NEWS

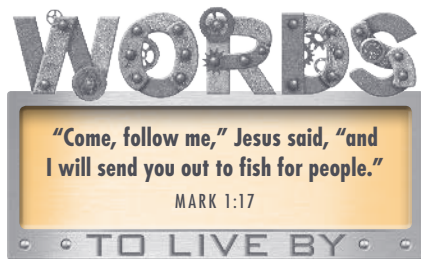
¹⁴After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

JESUS CALLS HIS FIRST DISCIPLES

¹⁶As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother

Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” ¹⁸At once they left their nets and followed him.

¹⁹When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. ²⁰Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.



JESUS DRIVES OUT AN IMPURE SPIRIT

²¹They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. ²²The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. ²³Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, ²⁴“What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are — the Holy One of God!”

²⁵“Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!” ²⁶The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

²⁷The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching — and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.” ²⁸News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

JESUS HEALS MANY

²⁹As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. ³⁰Simon’s

^a 1 Or *Jesus Christ. Messiah* (Hebrew) and *Christ* (Greek) both mean *Anointed One*. ^b 1 Some manuscripts do not have *the Son of God*.

^c 2 Mal. 3:1 ^d 3 Isaiah 40:3 ^e 8 Or *in*

^f 13 The Greek for *tempted* can also mean *tested*.

mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. ³¹So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

³²That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. ³³The whole town gathered at the door, ³⁴and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

JESUS PRAYS IN A SOLITARY PLACE

³⁵Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. ³⁶Simon and his companions went to look for him, ³⁷and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!”

³⁸Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else — to the nearby villages — so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” ³⁹So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

JESUS HEALS A MAN WITH LEPROSY

⁴⁰A man with leprosy^a came to him and begged him on his knees, “If you are willing, you can make me clean.”

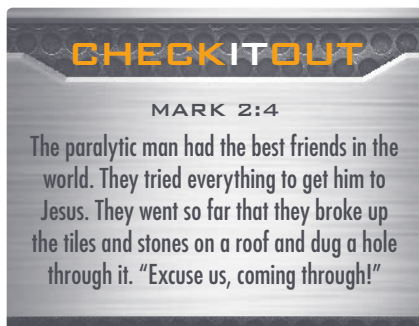
⁴¹Jesus was indignant.^b He reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” ⁴²Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.

⁴³Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: ⁴⁴“See that you don’t tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them.” ⁴⁵Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.

JESUS FORGIVES AND HEALS A PARALYZED MAN

2 A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. ²They

gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. ³Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. ⁴Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. ⁵When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”



⁶Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, ⁷“Why does this fellow talk like that? He’s blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

⁸Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, “Why are you thinking these things? ⁹Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk’? ¹⁰But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the man, ¹¹“I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” ¹²He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”

JESUS CALLS LEVI AND EATS WITH SINNERS

¹³Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he

^a 40 The Greek word traditionally translated *leprosy* was used for various diseases affecting the skin. ^b 41 Many manuscripts *Jesus was filled with compassion*

began to teach them. ¹⁴As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.

¹⁵While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. ¹⁶When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

¹⁷On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

JESUS QUESTIONED ABOUT FASTING

¹⁸Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, "How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?"

¹⁹Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them. ²⁰But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast.

²¹"No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. Otherwise, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse. ²²And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins."

JESUS IS LORD OF THE SABBATH

²³One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. ²⁴The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?"

²⁵He answered, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? ²⁶In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for

priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions."

²⁷Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. ²⁸So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

JESUS HEALS ON THE SABBATH

3 Another time Jesus went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. ²Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath. ³Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Stand up in front of everyone."

⁴Then Jesus asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they remained silent.

⁵He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. ⁶Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.

CROWDS FOLLOW JESUS

⁷Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. ⁸When they heard about all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon. ⁹Because of the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, to keep the people from crowding him. ¹⁰For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him. ¹¹Whenever the impure spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." ¹²But he gave them strict orders not to tell others about him.

JESUS APPOINTS THE TWELVE

¹³Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. ¹⁴He appointed twelve^a that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach ¹⁵and

^a 14 Some manuscripts *twelve* — designating them apostles —

to have authority to drive out demons. ¹⁶These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter), ¹⁷James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means “sons of thunder”), ¹⁸Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot ¹⁹and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

JESUS ACCUSED BY HIS FAMILY AND BY TEACHERS OF THE LAW

²⁰Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. ²¹When his family^a heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, “He is out of his mind.”

²²And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons.”

²³So Jesus called them over to him and began to speak to them in parables: “How can Satan drive out Satan? ²⁴If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. ²⁶And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. ²⁷In fact, no one can enter a strong man’s house without first tying him up. Then

he can plunder the strong man’s house. ²⁸Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, ²⁹but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin.”

³⁰He said this because they were saying, “He has an impure spirit.”

³¹Then Jesus’ mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. ³²A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, “Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you.”

³³“Who are my mother and my brothers?” he asked.

³⁴Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.”

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

4 Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water’s edge. ²He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: ³“Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴As he was scattering the seed,

^a 21 Or his associates

MARK 3

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

“THIS SOUNDS LIKE A JOB for Superman!” You’ve read that in comic books. Then Superman would come in to save the day. Jesus was like Superman, but the men called to work with him were not. They were just regular guys like you. They came from different types of families and did normal jobs such as fishing. They didn’t stand out as heroes or leaders, yet along with Jesus they changed their world. The disciples’ only qualification was that they said, “Yes!” when Jesus called them. Then he gave them the power to work for him.

It’s as though a sign in God’s window reads, “Wanted — any one. No ability, background, or previous experience necessary.” The posting doesn’t ask for any qualifications. Sounds like a job anyone can take.

some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow.⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain.⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times.”

⁹Then Jesus said, “Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.”

¹⁰When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables.¹¹ He told them, “The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables¹² so that,

“they may be ever seeing but never perceiving,
and ever hearing but never understanding;
otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!”^a”

¹³Then Jesus said to them, “Don’t you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable?¹⁴ The farmer sows the word.¹⁵ Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.¹⁶ Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy.¹⁷ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.¹⁸ Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word;¹⁹ but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.²⁰ Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop — some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.”

A LAMP ON A STAND

²¹He said to them, “Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don’t you put it on its stand?

²²For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open.²³ If anyone has ears to hear, let them hear.”

²⁴“Consider carefully what you hear,” he continued. “With the measure you use, it will be measured to you — and even more.²⁵ Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.”

THE PARABLE OF THE GROWING SEED

²⁶He also said, “This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground.²⁷ Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how.²⁸ All by itself the soil produces grain — first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head.²⁹ As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.”

THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

³⁰Again he said, “What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it?³¹ It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth.³² Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.”

³³With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand.³⁴ He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.

JESUS CALMS THE STORM

³⁵That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side.”³⁶ Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him.³⁷ A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped.³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”

³⁹He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the

^a 12 Isaiah 6:9,10

wind died down and it was completely calm.

⁴⁰He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”

⁴¹They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”

JESUS RESTORES A DEMON-POSSESSED MAN

5 They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes.^a ²When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. ³This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. ⁴For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. ⁵Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

GROSSOLOGY

The man from the region of the Gerasenes knew dead people better than his own family. He lived with the dead, slept in the tombs, and spent every day there. Good morning, bones and decomposing bodies!

MARK 5:3

⁶When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. ⁷He shouted at the top of his voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God’s name don’t torture me!” ⁸For Jesus had said to him, “Come out of this man, you impure spirit!”

⁹Then Jesus asked him, “What is your name?”

“My name is Legion,” he replied, “for we are many.” ¹⁰And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.

¹¹A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. ¹²The demons begged

Jesus, “Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them.” ¹³He gave them permission, and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

¹⁴Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. ¹⁵When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. ¹⁶Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man — and told about the pigs as well. ¹⁷Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

¹⁸As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. ¹⁹Jesus did not let him, but said, “Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.” ²⁰So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis^b how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

JESUS RAISES A DEAD GIRL AND HEALS A SICK WOMAN

²¹When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. ²²Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. ²³He pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” ²⁴So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed around him. ²⁵And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. ²⁶She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. ²⁷When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak,

^a 1 Some manuscripts *Gadarenes*; other manuscripts *Gergesenes* ^b 20 That is, the Ten Cities

²⁸because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.” ²⁹Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

³⁰At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?”

³¹“You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’”

³²But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. ³³Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. ³⁴He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

³⁵While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore?”

³⁶Overhearing^a what they said, Jesus told him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”

³⁷He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. ³⁸When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. ³⁹He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.” ⁴⁰But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹He took her by the hand and said to her, “*Talitha koum!*” (which means “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”). ⁴²Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. ⁴³He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

A PROPHET WITHOUT HONOR

6 Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. ²When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.

“Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What’s this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing? Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph,^b Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.

⁴Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home.” ⁵He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. ⁶He was amazed at their lack of faith.

JESUS SENDS OUT THE TWELVE

Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. ⁷Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits.

⁸These were his instructions: “Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. ⁹Wear sandals but not an extra shirt. ¹⁰Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. ¹¹And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.”

¹²They went out and preached that people should repent. ¹³They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

JOHN THE BAPTIST BEHEADED

¹⁴King Herod heard about this, for Jesus’ name had become well known. Some were saying,^c “John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him.”

¹⁵Others said, “He is Elijah.”

And still others claimed, “He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of long ago.”

¹⁶But when Herod heard this, he said, “John, whom I beheaded, has been raised from the dead!”

^a 36 Or *Ignoring* ^b 3 Greek *Joses*, a variant of *Joseph* ^c 14 Some early manuscripts *He was saying*

¹⁷For Herod himself had given orders to have John arrested, and he had him bound and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, whom he had married. ¹⁸For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." ¹⁹So Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But she was not able to, ²⁰because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled^a; yet he liked to listen to him.

²¹Finally the opportune time came. On his birthday Herod gave a banquet for his high officials and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. ²²When the daughter of^b Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests.

The king said to the girl, "Ask me for anything you want, and I'll give it to you." ²³And he promised her with an oath, "Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

²⁴She went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask for?"

"The head of John the Baptist," she answered.

²⁵At once the girl hurried in to the king with the request: "I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a platter."

²⁶The king was greatly distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her. ²⁷So he immediately sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. The man went, beheaded John in the prison, ²⁸and brought back his head on a platter. He presented it to the girl, and she gave it to her mother. ²⁹On hearing of this, John's disciples came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

JESUS FEEDS THE FIVE THOUSAND

³⁰The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. ³¹Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

³²So they went away by themselves in a

boat to a solitary place. ³³But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. ³⁴When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

³⁵By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. ³⁶Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat."

³⁷But he answered, "You give them something to eat."

They said to him, "That would take more than half a year's wages^c! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?"

³⁸"How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see."

When they found out, they said, "Five — and two fish."

³⁹Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. ⁴¹Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. ⁴²They all ate and were satisfied, ⁴³and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. ⁴⁴The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

JESUS WALKS ON THE WATER

⁴⁵Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. ⁴⁶After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

⁴⁷Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. ⁴⁸He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. Shortly before dawn he went out to

^a 20 Some early manuscripts *he did many things*

^b 22 Some early manuscripts *When his daughter*

^c 37 Greek *take two hundred denarii*

them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them,⁴⁹ but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out,⁵⁰ because they all saw him and were terrified.

Immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”⁵¹ Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed,⁵² for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.

⁵³When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. ⁵⁴As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. ⁵⁵They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

THAT WHICH DEFILES

7 The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus

²and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. ³(The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. ⁴When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.^a)

⁵So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, “Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?”

⁶He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:

“These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.
⁷They worship me in vain;
their teachings are merely human rules.’^b

⁸You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.”

^a 4 Some early manuscripts *pitchers, kettles and dining couches* ^b 6,7 Isaiah 29:13

MAKIN’ IT REAL

MARK 7:5–14

WEARING A SIGNATURE SNEAKER doesn’t make you an Olympic athlete. Owning a rockin’ electric guitar doesn’t make you a guitar hero. And while obeying your parents’ and teachers’ rules is cool, it doesn’t make you right with God. Ouch!

Jesus’ message was radical: *Changed lives don’t create changed hearts, but changed hearts do create changed lives.*

Connecting with God starts in your heart. When you have faith in God and love for him on the inside, God transforms you on the outside. Just like with a well that gushes impure water, you have to purify the water source to get clean water. Your behavior will change because of your heart for God. Trying to be a godly person by behaving better will only lead to frustration because you’ll never get it just right. Start by going to the source—your heart—and getting it right with God. Then let him take care of the outside.

