

JESUS: THE SERVANT AT WORK

VOLUME ONE

STUDY ONE

Snapshots of the Servant of God

Selections from Mark

Mark offers snapshots of the remarkable Servant of God, Jesus, engaged in life, doing things that really matter.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

IN a world with constant noise and urgent demands, we rush through our days with a feeling of perpetual haste. We have so much to do and not enough time to do it all. Though we try hard, we often sense that we're missing the significant. If only we could find Someone who knows what it means to have a packed schedule and yet do the things in life that really matter.

Look no further! The gospel of Mark presents the Servant of God on the move toward very clear objectives. Hardworking but never without focus. Active but never in a hurry. Confronting demonic opposition but never defeated. Available to people but never a people pleaser. Though His days were full, Jesus walked in full alignment with God's purpose and plan.

Welcome to our *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study series: *Jesus: The Servant at Work!*

You'll discover some of the life secrets of the One whose life mission was "to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). His ministry lasted only three years and yet, more than 2,000 years later, His life still transforms lives around the world. He is not some distant figure from the past. He is God incarnate, and He is present right now offering Himself to you in an intimate and life-changing relationship. Get ready for the gospel of Jesus Christ according to Mark.



INSIGHT FOR LIVING



Scan to listen to
Chuck's message.

The Bible-Teaching Ministry of Chuck Swindoll
Study 1 • Page 1

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES
BIBLE STUDIES

Snapshots of the Servant of God

Selections from Mark



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Before searching the Scriptures, we always pray for God's Spirit to illumine our minds and hearts. You may wish to pray as Pastor Chuck prayed:

Our Father, there will never be another like Christ. Teach us much of Him in the book of Mark. May the truth as it enters our hearts make us kind, loving, compassionate, and caring. May You cause the Scriptures to change the way we live. —Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

Prayer really matters. Bring your own petition to God to ready your heart for study.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

In this overview of the gospel of Mark, we'll look at snapshots of Jesus, the Servant of God, as Mark depicts Him, and we'll take our first steps in following Jesus and modeling His way. Before we open the book, though, let's get to know Mark himself.

Meet the Writer

The book of Acts offers a glimpse into Mark's background, when the church met in his mother's house to pray for Peter's miraculous rescue from Herod Agrippa's imprisonment (Acts 12:1–12). As a young man, he assisted Saul and Barnabas, his cousin, on their first missionary journey (13:1–6). When they came to Pamphylia, however, Mark suddenly left and went home to Jerusalem (13:13). We're not certain why he left, but he was considered a deserter for abandoning the mission.

Snapshots of the Servant of God

Selections from Mark

When Paul and Barnabas started to plan their second journey, Barnabas wanted to give Mark another chance and ask him to come along again. Paul “disagreed strongly” (Acts 15:38). What happened next, according to [Acts 15:38–39](#)?

Barnabas’ encouragement was transformative for Mark. He matured spiritually and became close friends with Peter, who later called him “my son” (1 Peter 5:13). Even Paul, near the end of his life, witnessed Mark’s growth. What did he say to Timothy about Mark in [2 Timothy 4:11](#)?

Although the name “Mark” never appears in the gospel, the early church fathers identified him as the writer. In His gracious plan, God chose a former deserter to tell the world about Jesus—the Servant whom God sent to save sinners in need of second chances. Jesus is “the Messiah, the Son of God” (Mark 1:1). Mark boldly testified, and his commitment to Jesus never wavered again. How does Mark’s life story encourage your heart?

Observe Mark’s Style

Mark wrote to a gentile Roman audience sometime in the middle of the AD 60s, maybe earlier. Romans were people of action, so Mark depicted Jesus as a man of action. Information about Jesus’ genealogy, fulfilled prophecy, and Jewish customs and laws was meaningless to gentiles, so Mark didn’t include these matters, along with many of Jesus’ discourses. Instead, Mark focused on what Jesus did.

Mark’s gospel is fast-paced. His favorite word is *immediately*, appearing ten times in the first chapter alone. Switching quickly from event to event keeps readers on the edge of their seats, and by using the Greek historical present tense rather than past tense, Mark invites readers to personally enter each scene.

Snapshots of the Servant of God

Selections from Mark

Around the time of Mark's writing, Roman Emperor Nero was heavily persecuting Christians—crucifying them and burning them to light up his gardens at night.¹ Most of Mark's readers were believers. How might their circumstances also explain Mark's style?

Drawing from Peter—Mark's spiritual father—as his primary source, Mark wrote his account of the life of Jesus from Peter's perspective. It is the briefest gospel and the earliest. As we turn to Mark's gospel, let's sample a few snapshots of Jesus' ministry in a quick, summary-style overview.



Observation: Snapshots of the Servant of God

Observation is the first step in *Searching the Scriptures* and most foundational. Simply read the passage by looking closely at what it says without trying to interpret it. Find a checklist for Pastor Chuck's method of Bible study at insight.org's online article "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)"²

The Key Verse of the Gospel of Mark

The gospel of Mark pivots on a single verse: Mark 10:45. Read this verse within its context ([Mark 10:32–45](#)) thoughtfully and in various translations. Summarize the events surrounding this key verse.

So, the emphasis at the beginning of the book is His serving; the emphasis at the end is His death and His resurrection—the price He paid for our sins.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Snapshots of the Servant of God

Selections from Mark

The Gospel of Mark at a Glance

Take time to read through Pastor Chuck Swindoll's chart of Mark, observing each of the components that are like snapshots of the book. Note the three main sections.

MARK OVERVIEW BIBLE CHART

	INTRODUCTION AND PREPARATION	THE SERVANT AT WORK	THE SERVANT REJECTED . . . THEN EXALTED
	Mark 1:1–13	Mark 1:14–8:30	Mark 8:31–16:20
	<i>A brief introduction sets Jesus' ministry in motion.</i>	<i>An unbroken chain of events reveals Jesus helping people in need.</i>	<i>A growing discontent among the authorities leads to Jesus' suffering and death.</i>
	John the Baptist prepares the way. Jesus is tempted in the wilderness.	Because people are afflicted, He heals. Because people are without hope, He encourages. Because people are in bondage to satanic control, He liberates. Because people are sinful, He forgives.	He presses the claim of being the Messiah. He spends more time alone with His disciples. He comes into open conflict with His enemies. He is hated, deserted, tortured, crucified, and buried. He is raised bodily from the dead!
EMPHASIS	Service to others		Sacrifice for others
SCOPE	Ministry to the multitudes		Ministry to the Twelve
SECTIONS	Action . . . reaction . . . confrontation		Revelation . . . crucifixion . . . exaltation
THEME	Jesus is the Suffering Servant who gives His life to save the world.		
KEY VERSE	Mark 10:45		
CHRIST IN MARK	Jesus suffered and died so that salvation would be available to all people.		

Copyright © 1982, 1997, 2010 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.
Chart taken from *The Swindoll Study Bible*. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers.

Do you notice how the book hinges in the middle—eight chapters highlighting Jesus' service and eight chapters highlighting Jesus' sacrifice? What other notable aspects do you observe?



Interpretation: The Meaning of Servanthood

Finding the intended meaning of what we observed is interpretation. By using different resources such as dictionaries and commentaries, we'll gain an in-depth understanding of these snapshots from Mark's gospel so that we can follow Jesus' life and model His way.

Snapshots of the Servant of God

Selections from Mark

Jesus came “to serve” in [Mark 10:32–45](#). Look up the Greek verb [diakoneo](#), translated “serve,” at biblehub.com. Read its definition, as well as the brief explanations at the bottom of the webpage: “Service as Christological Paradigm,” “Servant Leadership and Discipleship,” and “Ministry of Practical Care.” How would you define *servanthood* and its importance in Jesus’ ministry? Why do you think servanthood is so central to following Jesus as His disciple?

I love it that Mark presents Him as a Servant. A Servant.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Jesus appointed His disciples to be with Him before sending them forth for ministry in [Mark 3:14–15](#). Why did the disciples need to be with Jesus before doing ministry? What spiritual qualities can we learn only from being with Jesus?

We would be with Him. That’s first. And then, having been with Him, we’re to learn from Him, be trained by Him, be deepened through Him, be guided by Him, and be directed with gifts given because of Him. He then sends us out to minister. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: Imitating Jesus’ Servanthood

Correlation compares Mark’s snapshots with other images of Jesus in Scripture to ensure that we have an accurate understanding of the passage.

Approximately 700 years before the birth of Christ, the prophet Isaiah spoke of the Suffering Servant in [Isaiah 53](#). What are the similarities between Mark’s depictions of Jesus as the Servant of God in [Mark 10:32–45](#) and Isaiah’s prophecy? How do both authors highlight Jesus’ servanthood?

Snapshots of the Servant of God

Selections from Mark

Compare Mark's snapshots of Jesus as the Servant of God with [John 13:1–17](#) and [Philippians 2:1–8](#). Note the similarities. How do these passages emphasize the importance of us imitating Jesus' servanthood?

If you're going to minister effectively, you need knowledge and you need prayer and you need devotion and you need time. And in the process of time, you'll be better prepared to minister to others. You are never more Christlike than when you serve another person. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Follow the Life of Jesus and Model His Way!

Now, take the last step of our *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, application. Let the Holy Spirit use our overview of Mark to show you how to emulate Jesus in the different areas of your life.

First, *if Jesus is our model, then servanthood is the method*. What do you admire most about Jesus' servanthood?

Second, *if servanthood is the method, then people are our ministry*. Jesus was active but never rushed. He was focused, never distracted. He did what mattered most: *minister to people*. What about Jesus' focus on people means the most to you?

Snapshots of the Servant of God

Selections from Mark

Third, *if people are our ministry, involvement is the means*. Think about someone who has significantly touched your life by the way he or she has emulated Jesus. As you take some time to thank God for this person, ask Him to transform your life in this journey through the gospel of Mark.

As you move through your busy day, how can you emulate Jesus' unhurried, focused, people-centered pace?

Wouldn't it be great when we finish the book of Mark that we're all asking that genuinely? "What can I do for you?" When we do, we are most like Christ. And by then, we'll not only have gone through the book of Mark, the book of Mark would have gone through us. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



A FINAL PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I thank You for the snapshots of Your Servant, Jesus. I look forward to this journey to know Him better. May His life change mine. May His motivation purify mine. May His ministry affect mine so I become a servant before an Audience of One. In His name I pray these things. Amen.

ENDNOTES

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on Mark*, Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary, vol. 2 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2016), 2–3.
2. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)" at [insight.org](#).

For the 2026 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Mirlenda Noëlliste in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 2010, 2026 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

[insight.org](#)

[illegible]

[illegible]