

Calls
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Mark 1:9-20

Opening: **Do you know the term “bandwagon fan?” What does it mean?**

Urban Dictionary says a “bandwagon fan”, *“is a fan of a team simply because they are the reigning champions/have the most championships/doing the best at the moment.”* **How can you identify a “bandwagon fan” vs a real fan?**

- What does this have to do with Mark chapter one?
- In Mark 1 we see Jesus preparing to begin His ministry on earth.
- God has chosen to accomplish His work through people, so Jesus called a “team” of disciples to carry out His work on earth. He still does that today.

Big Idea: When it comes to your relationship with Jesus: Are you just wearing the team logo or have you joined the adventure! Are you a Jesus “fan” or a Jesus follower?

Quick intro to the book of Mark:

- Written by John Mark, cousin of Barnabas
- Written from Rome based on the eyewitness accounts of Peter
- Written for a Gentile audience in a fast paced style like a news report.
- It is considered to be the earliest of the Gospels.
- It is focused on Jesus’ actions and deeds. “Immediately” is a key word.
- It portrays Jesus as the “suffering servant”
- Purpose: Who Jesus was, why He came, and His call to discipleship
- Key Verse: Mark 10:45 (ESV) ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

- In the first verse of Mark's gospel he declares Jesus as the Son of God, then he quotes Old Testament prophecy (Mal. 3:1; Isaiah 40:3) to introduce us to John the Baptist.

Mark 1:9–20 (ESV)

⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

- Two striking and opposite images: The heavens were "torn open" as God breaks into the world with His promised Messiah; the Holy Spirit gently settles on Jesus "like a dove." The entire trinity is involved.
- God affirms Jesus as His beloved (only) Son with whom He is pleased.
- There is debate as to whether only Jesus could hear and see this.
- Verse four says John's baptism was for repentance of sins. **Why would Jesus (who was sinless) have come for baptism? Scripture doesn't tell us but what might have been His reasons?**
- We can be sure Jesus was modeling obedience to the Father. That obedience continued in verse twelve.

¹² The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³ And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

- Mark doesn't give us the detail that Matthew and Luke do, but a key phrase is the Spirit (Holy Spirit) "...*immediately drove him.*" While on earth Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit and obeyed.
- The word "immediately" is one of Mark's favorites used over 40 times.
- Jesus was "tested" by Satan's temptation for 40 days under terrible conditions so He could "*sympathize with our*

weaknesses” because “...in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.” (Heb. 4:15)

- Hebrews 2:18 (ESV) ¹⁸ For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, ¹⁵ and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

- Mark doesn’t explain that John the Baptist was arrested for calling out Herod about his immoral marriage to his brother’s wife.
- After 400 years of no new revelation from God, Jesus declared the heart of His gospel (good news) message to all people: “the time is fulfilled” and the “kingdom of God is at hand.” The Message: *“Time’s up! God’s kingdom is here. Change your life and believe the Message.”ⁱⁱ*
- Wiersbe: *“Jesus preached that people should repent (change their minds) and believe (see Acts 20:21). Repentance alone is not enough to save us, even though God expects believers to turn from their sins. We must also put positive faith in Jesus Christ and believe His promise of salvation. Repentance without faith could become remorse, and remorse can destroy people who carry a burden of guilt.”ⁱⁱⁱ*
- We said, God has chosen to accomplish His work through people, so Jesus called a “team” of disciples to carry out His work on earth.

¹⁶ Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ And Jesus said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” ¹⁸ And immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹ And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. ²⁰ And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

- *“Mark did not mention any previous contact with Jesus by these fishermen, though John 1:35–42 indicates that they had already acknowledged Him as Israel’s Messiah.”^{iv}*
- He says when Jesus called them to leave their fishing business to follow Him as disciples they did not hesitate; they responded “immediately.”
- **What does it mean to “follow” someone? Not a trick question.**
- *“Literally, this verb means, “to go the same way”; the metaphorical extension of this idea connotes imitating the thoughts, beliefs, actions, or lifestyle of another. Similarly, we might say of a boy adopting his father’s occupation, “He’s following in the footsteps of his father.”^v*
- In the “caravan” of Christian life, if we aren’t following behind Jesus we’ve taken a wrong turn! If we’re not imitating Him we’re not following Him.
- In the age of social media, “follow” has a whole new connotation as we follow (pay attention to) certain people or groups.
- There’s even a term for it in today’s lexicon: *“Influencers - a person with the ability to influence potential buyers of a product or service by promoting or recommending the items on social media.”^{vi}*
- You might say, *“I’m my own person; I’m not a follower. I’m not influenced by others.”* Really? At this age do you ever hear yourself say something and think: *“That sounded just like my mother/father?”*
- *“Motivational speaker Jim Rohn said that we are the average of the five people we spend the most time with. When it comes to relationships, we are greatly influenced — whether we like it or not — by those closest to us. It affects our way of thinking, our self-esteem, and our decisions. Of course, everyone is their own person, but research has shown that we’re more affected by our environment than we think.”^{vii}*
- I would contend that like it or not we all “follow” others by imitating their ways and ideas even if we do it unintentionally and subconsciously.
- Because it’s easy to follow unintentionally and subconsciously, it’s important to BE INTENTIONAL about whom we follow.

- That brings us to Jesus. People have lots of labels for those who claim to be converted by Christ: “Christians,” “believers,” (those are fine) “religious,” “pious,” “spiritual” (nothing to do with Jesus!)
- Those labels can be misunderstood. *“I go to church.” “I was confirmed. My parents are Christian.” “I believe in God (like the flag and America!)”*
- Because of the confusion, more and more I have shifted to referring to a converted, confessing, and regenerate believer as a “follower of Christ.”
- That term implies a lot more commitment than the others.
- We asked regarding Jesus: Are you just wearing the team logo or have you joined the adventure! Are you a Jesus “fan” or a Jesus follower?
- Several years ago, Kyle Idleman wrote a book entitled “Not a Fan.”
- The premise of the book is that Jesus is not looking for fans (“enthusiastic admirers”) but followers.
- Using the metaphor of a romantic relationship, Idleman pictures Jesus saying to those who claim Him as Lord, *“It’s time we define this relationship.” He wants to know how you feel about him. Is your relationship with Jesus exclusive? Is it just a casual weekend thing or has it moved past that? How would your relationship with him be defined? What exactly is your level of commitment?* ^{viii}
- He continues: *“The biggest threat to the church today is fans who call themselves Christians but aren’t actually interested in following Christ. They want to be close enough to Jesus to get all the benefits, but not so close that it requires anything from them.”*^{ix}
- When these fishermen left their old lives, Jesus became the focal point their new lives. **What do you think it means to have Jesus as the focal point of your life? What does it mean to be a follower of Christ?**

Charles Stanley gives us nine quick characteristics of a follower of Christ:

1. Must Be born again - John 3:3
2. Prayer is a major part of your life - Luke 6:12

3. You Listen to Him - Matthew 17:5
4. You Believe Him - John 3:16 (Trusting Him is essential to following Him.)
5. You Obey Him - John 8:12
6. You Love Him (With all your heart and mind) - Mark 12:30
7. You Share Him - Matthew 28:19
8. You Serve Him - John 12:26
9. You (are willing to) Suffer for Him - Phil. 1:29^x

So, What's the Takeaway?

- Chip Ingram writes:

"Before I became a Christian, I followed a formula...If I work really hard and please people, then I'll be a success. In reality, my fear of failure was the "light" I was following. I was a prisoner to my fear and sin. After I accepted Christ, I finally realized that Jesus is the One I should be following. Little by little, I began to follow Jesus' truth and believe that God loves me just the way I am. I realized that I didn't have to be a chameleon and conform to the image of what others expected me to be in order to be accepted. I also didn't have to sin any more. I was truly free."^{xi}

- What about you and me? When it comes to our relationship with Jesus: Are we just wearing the team logo or have we joined the adventure!
- Are we Jesus "fans" or Jesus followers?
- Are there outward indications that Jesus is the focal point of our lives?
- Jesus called those men to be "followers" not "fans." He calls us to the same adventure!

ⁱ <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Bandwagon%20Fan>

ⁱⁱ Peterson, E. H. (2005). *The Message: the Bible in contemporary language* (Mk 1:15). Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.

ⁱⁱⁱ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 112). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

^{iv} Grassmick, J. D. (1985). *Mark*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 108). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

^v Swindoll, Charles R. (2016-11-07T22:58:59). Insights on Mark (Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary Book 2) . Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.. Kindle Edition.

vi <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/influencer>

vii <https://www.businessinsider.com/jim-rohn-youre-the-average-of-the-five-people-you-spend-the-most-time-with-2012-7>

viii Idleman, Kyle. Not a Fan: Becoming a Completely Committed Follower of Jesus (p. 23). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

ix *ibid*

x https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gv_iDdtuSIY

xi <https://livingontheedge.org/2015/10/19/what-does-it-mean-to-follow-jesus/>