

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. Do you have a “loaves and fishes” kind of story – where God provided in an impossible situation? Tell everyone in your group about it, and describe your reaction to it.
2. What do you think is the most common reaction to this story? Why do you think people react to situations like this in the way they do?

BIG IDEA

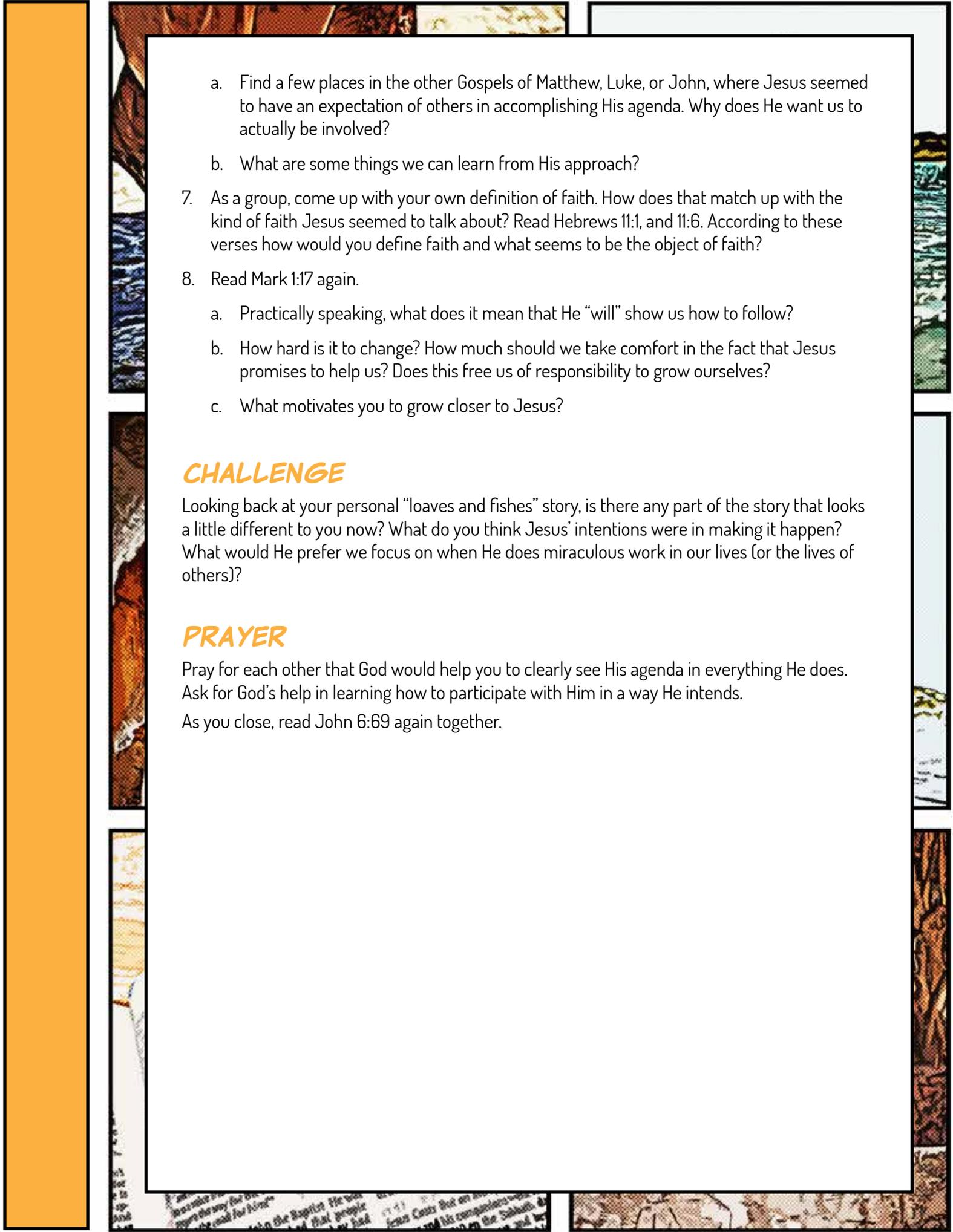
There is a lot more to this story – and every story that speaks about Jesus doing a miracle – than meets the eye.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This weekend we looked at Jesus’ miracle of feeding the 5,000. As we look into it further in this study, it becomes apparent that Jesus had an agenda that isn’t as easily seen on the surface. The lessons we learn through understanding Jesus’ agenda will change how we view everything Jesus does.

1. Read Mark 6:30-44 together and discuss some of the context and culture surrounding the story. Does it make a difference that they actually fed closer to 20,000 people; this story was recorded in all 4 Gospels, etc.?
2. Describe some practical situations where we may be inclined to try and make God more “manageable.” Why do you think we might try to do that?
3. Read Mark 6:52 together. The literal definition of “understand” as Mark puts it is, “to take our ‘perception’ of things and join it with the thing ‘perceived.’” Practically, it refers to joining what we “think” with what actually “is.” Describe a circumstance where you had one of those “light bulb” moments. What did it feel like after it happened?
4. Now read John 6:69. Can you come up with a few ways that we separate our belief in things and actually knowing things? What happens when we join what we believe with what we actually come to know? Specifically, list a few implications of both believing and knowing Jesus.
5. If knowing Jesus means we will have compassion for people (Mark 6:34), what is it that holds us back from living that out?
6. Read verse 37. What would your reaction be if Jesus said that to you? Do you think He has ever said that to you? Do you think Jesus ever says that to His followers in our modern day world – what might an example be of that?

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

- 
- a. Find a few places in the other Gospels of Matthew, Luke, or John, where Jesus seemed to have an expectation of others in accomplishing His agenda. Why does He want us to actually be involved?
 - b. What are some things we can learn from His approach?
 7. As a group, come up with your own definition of faith. How does that match up with the kind of faith Jesus seemed to talk about? Read Hebrews 11:1, and 11:6. According to these verses how would you define faith and what seems to be the object of faith?
 8. Read Mark 1:17 again.
 - a. Practically speaking, what does it mean that He “will” show us how to follow?
 - b. How hard is it to change? How much should we take comfort in the fact that Jesus promises to help us? Does this free us of responsibility to grow ourselves?
 - c. What motivates you to grow closer to Jesus?

CHALLENGE

Looking back at your personal “loaves and fishes” story, is there any part of the story that looks a little different to you now? What do you think Jesus’ intentions were in making it happen? What would He prefer we focus on when He does miraculous work in our lives (or the lives of others)?

PRAYER

Pray for each other that God would help you to clearly see His agenda in everything He does. Ask for God’s help in learning how to participate with Him in a way He intends.

As you close, read John 6:69 again together.