

LESSON 2

REDUCING YOUR THREAT LEVEL

MARK 1:1—2:28



1 What picture comes to mind when you hear the words *Pharisee? dress? life-style? attitudes?*



Read Mark 1:1—2:28 and the following notes:

- ☐ 1:4 ☐ 1:5 ☐ 1:12, 13 ☐ 1:14, 15 ☐ 1:16 ☐ 1:21 ☐ 1:23, 24
☐ 1:29–31 ☐ 1:32, 33 ☐ 1:35 ☐ 1:39 ☐ 1:40, 41 ☐ 2:3 ☐ 2:4 ☐ 2:14
☐ 2:16, 17 ☐ 2:18ff ☐ 2:22 ☐ 2:23 ☐ 2:24

2 List all of the people mentioned in these first two chapters and place them on this chart as open and receptive, cautious and uncertain, or closed and suspicious toward Christ and his message (1:1—2:28).

Open and Receptive	Cautious and Uncertain	Closed and Suspicious

3 If you had been from a family of struggling fishermen and had been in the crowd at this time, how would you have responded to Christ and his message (receptive, uncertain, or suspicious)?

4 If you had been from a prosperous family, a leader in a local synagogue, and had been in the crowd at this time, how would you have responded to Christ and his message (receptive, uncertain, or suspicious)?

5 Why do you suppose the religious leaders—the very ones who should have been the first to recognize Jesus as the Messiah—were threatened by his teaching and miracles?



In these two chapters we see a dramatic contrast between those who felt hopeful and those who felt threatened. On the one hand, the fishermen immediately left their nets to follow Jesus, leaving their occupation and livelihood behind. On the other hand, many of the religious leaders began to criticize Jesus for differing with their viewpoint and ignoring certain religious customs. Today Jesus still receives a mixed reaction, and many people are still threatened by him. How do you respond to Jesus?

6 Why do some unbelievers feel threatened by the church, the Bible, and Christians?

7 Why are some Christians threatened by the teachings in the Bible or by the faithful lives of other Christians?

8 Making a positive change can be difficult. Why is it even more difficult to face change or to make a change in the spiritual area of our life?



9 In what areas (home, school, work, church, neighborhood) do you feel most like the fishermen—immediately ready to drop what you are doing and follow Christ? (In other words, in what areas are you most willing to give things up for Christ?)

10 In what areas (home, school, work, church, neighborhood) are you slower to respond—perhaps even feeling threatened by the changes that God may want to make in your life?

11 What steps can you take to become more responsive to what God wants to be and to do in your life?

12 Select one area of your life in which you feel embarrassed, hesitant, or threatened when you think about submitting it to the Lord. Begin by writing down your feelings of fear and the reasons for your reluctance to change. Then pray about them during the week—tell God how you feel.



13 To help you feel more comfortable about this area, go to God in prayer. Ask the Lord to give you a willing heart to obey him fully, immediately, and unreservedly in this area of your life.

- A** Why was this just the right time for Jesus to come?
- B** Why did John the Baptist dress the way he did?
- C** How did John the Baptist prepare the way for Jesus? How can you prepare to meet Jesus and prepare others to meet him?
- D** Why was it important for Jesus to be baptized?
- E** How was Jesus prepared for his ministry?
- F** Why did Jesus spend so much of his ministry time in Galilee instead of Jerusalem?
- G** How was Jesus able to preach in many synagogues when the religious leaders were so suspicious of him?
- H** What kinds of people did Jesus help? What kinds of people need Christ's help today? How can you bring them to Christ?
- I** Why wasn't it against the Sabbath law for Jesus and the disciples to pick the grain?
- J** Why was Jesus criticized for eating with tax collectors?
- K** How did Jesus pose a threat to each of the Jewish religious and political groups listed in the chart?

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