

twelve ordinary men study guide

Twelve Ordinary Men Study Guide

The book "Twelve Ordinary Men" by John MacArthur explores the lives of the twelve apostles chosen by Jesus Christ, emphasizing their backgrounds, personalities, and the transformative power of their calling. This study guide aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the main themes, lessons, and character studies presented in the book. By understanding the lives of these men, readers can gain deeper insights not only into the apostles themselves but also into the broader implications of discipleship and faith.

Overview of the Book

"Twelve Ordinary Men" is structured around the lives of the apostles, detailing their humble beginnings and how they were transformed by their experiences with Jesus. MacArthur emphasizes that these men were not extraordinary in their own right but were called and empowered by God for a divine purpose. The book is divided into chapters that focus on individual apostles, providing readers with a detailed look at each man's character, strengths, weaknesses, and ultimate contributions to the early Christian church.

Main Themes

Understanding the key themes in "Twelve Ordinary Men" can enhance the reader's comprehension of the text. Some of the most prominent themes include:

1. The Power of Calling

- Each apostle was called by Jesus, which signifies that their purpose was divinely ordained.
- MacArthur highlights how God often chooses the ordinary to accomplish extraordinary tasks.

2. Transformation through Discipleship

- The apostles underwent significant personal transformations during their time with Jesus.
- Their experiences shaped their faith, character, and leadership skills.

3. The Nature of Leadership

- The book discusses how the apostles exemplified different leadership styles.
- It emphasizes servant leadership, humility, and the importance of following Christ's example.

4. The Role of Faith

- Faith is a recurring theme, particularly in how it empowered the apostles to spread the Gospel.
- The book stresses the importance of faith in overcoming challenges and doubts.

5. Community and Brotherhood

- The relationship among the apostles is examined, highlighting their camaraderie and support for one another.
- The communal aspect of their mission emphasizes the importance of fellowship in the Christian faith.

Character Studies

Each chapter provides a detailed character study of one apostle, offering insights into their life and contributions. Below are summaries of a few key apostles featured in the book.

1. Peter

- Originally a fisherman, Peter was impulsive and often outspoken.
- His transformation from a simple fisherman to a leading figure in the early church is a focal point.
- Notable for his confession of Jesus as the Messiah and his role in Pentecost.

2. John

- Known as "the beloved disciple," John had a close relationship with Jesus.
- He is characterized by his deep theological insights and emphasis on love.
- Wrote several New Testament books, including the Gospel of John and

Revelation.

3. Matthew

- A tax collector, Matthew was seen as a traitor by his fellow Jews.
- His calling illustrates the theme of redemption and inclusivity in Jesus' ministry.
- Contributed to the Gospel of Matthew, emphasizing Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies.

4. Thomas

- Often referred to as "Doubting Thomas" due to his skepticism regarding Jesus' resurrection.
- His doubts ultimately led to a profound declaration of faith.
- Represents the struggle with doubt that many believers face.

5. Judas Iscariot

- The apostle who betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver.
- His story serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of greed and disloyalty.
- Raises questions about free will and predestination in the context of God's plan.

Study Questions

The following questions can help facilitate discussion and deeper understanding of the book's content:

1. What does MacArthur suggest about the significance of Jesus' choice of the twelve apostles?
2. How did Jesus' teaching and example transform the lives of the apostles?
3. In what ways do the character traits of the apostles reflect the challenges of modern-day discipleship?
4. How does the communal aspect of the apostles' journey contribute to their effectiveness in spreading the Gospel?
5. What lessons can be learned from the lives of the apostles that can be applied to contemporary Christian life?

Application of Lessons

MacArthur's exploration of the apostles provides several practical lessons for readers:

1. Embrace Your Calling

- Understand that everyone has a unique purpose in God's plan.
- Be open to the ways God may be calling you to serve.

2. Value Transformation

- Recognize the importance of personal growth and spiritual transformation.
- Engage in discipleship practices that foster spiritual maturity.

3. Practice Servant Leadership

- Emulate the leadership style of Jesus by serving others.
- Prioritize humility and selflessness in your interactions.

4. Cultivate Faith in Uncertainty

- Acknowledge that doubt is a part of the faith journey.
- Seek to strengthen your faith through prayer, study, and community.

5. Foster Community

- Engage with a community of believers for support and encouragement.
- Share experiences and struggles to build stronger relationships.

Conclusion

"Twelve Ordinary Men" by John MacArthur is a profound exploration of the lives of the apostles and their journey of faith. Through detailed character studies and thematic analysis, MacArthur emphasizes the power of God's calling and the importance of transformation in the life of a disciple. This study guide serves as a helpful resource for individuals or groups seeking to deepen their understanding of the apostles' impact on Christianity. By

reflecting on the lessons learned from these twelve ordinary men, readers can find inspiration for their own spiritual journeys and discipleship.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main theme of 'Twelve Ordinary Men'?

The main theme of 'Twelve Ordinary Men' is the transformative power of faith and the idea that ordinary individuals can accomplish extraordinary things through their devotion and commitment to Jesus Christ.

Who is the author of 'Twelve Ordinary Men'?

The author of 'Twelve Ordinary Men' is John MacArthur, a well-known pastor and author recognized for his biblical teaching and expository preaching.

How does 'Twelve Ordinary Men' portray the disciples of Jesus?

The book portrays the disciples as ordinary individuals with flaws and weaknesses, emphasizing that their transformation into leaders of the early church was due to their faith and the Holy Spirit's empowerment.

What kind of study guide is available for 'Twelve Ordinary Men'?

The study guide for 'Twelve Ordinary Men' typically includes discussion questions, key themes, and insights for deeper understanding, making it suitable for group studies or personal reflection.

What can readers learn from the lives of the twelve disciples as presented in 'Twelve Ordinary Men'?

Readers can learn about the importance of humility, faith, perseverance, and the impact of divine calling, as well as how God uses imperfect people for His purposes.

How does 'Twelve Ordinary Men' encourage readers in their spiritual journey?

The book encourages readers by showing that despite their shortcomings, they can be used by God in significant ways, fostering hope and motivation to deepen their relationship with Christ.

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