

James & John, the Powerful— February 17-23

GAMECHANGERS

To prepare for discussion each week, group members should use the **Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD’S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scriptures at the bottom of this page. You will notice that we are continuing the pattern of your discussing scripture *after* the Sunday message on that passage.

Background for Mark 1:19-20; Mark 10:35-40

The twelve apostles were chosen and trained by Jesus. 2000 years later, their impact on the world is seen everywhere. These men weren’t CEOs, great speakers, or scholars when Jesus chose them. They were simply ordinary and carried baggage that would have limited their effectiveness. But Jesus called and used these ordinary men to do something extraordinary.

Both Mark 1:19-20 and Mark 10:35-40 refer to them being the “sons of Zebedee”. Though it is not known whether Zebedee’s importance stemmed from financial lineage or family lineage, it could have been both. Mark 1:19-20 shows that his fishing business was wealthy enough to employ servants.

James and John, always mentioned together in the Gospels as part of Jesus’s inner circle, were known as the “Sons of Thunder” according to the Gospel of Mark. They were zealous, thunderous, passionate, and fervent. John’s commitment to the truth led him to want to call people out (Mark 9:38-39). James responds to contempt toward Jesus with unbridled rage, asking if they (presumably he and his brother) can call down fire from heaven to “consume them” (Luke 9:54). Whether due to their own lineage as “sons of Zebedee” or their own zeal as the “Sons of Thunder”, James and John both considered themselves to be leaders among the rest of the disciples as is evident in Mark 10:35-40.

However, despite their baggage of self-image that was evident in their early bickering in the Gospels, James and John both seem to have taken a turn as a result of their time and calling from Jesus. According to history, James was one of the first disciples to be martyred and John, known as the “apostle of love” wrote a great deal of the New Testament and was exiled to the island of Patmos for his beliefs. When God changes the world, He uses those who are zealous, thunderous, passionate, and fervent as traits to further *His* name rather than *their* name.

Scriptures for the upcoming weeks:

February 24	Philip – <i>The Cautious</i>	John 6:5-7; John 14:7-10
March 3	Nathanael – <i>The Prejudiced</i>	John 1:45-49
March 10	Matthew – <i>The Half-Hearted</i>	Matthew 9:9-13
March 17	Simon the Zealot, Thaddaeus, James the Less – <i>The Unseen</i>	Mark 3:13-19, 31-35
March 24	Thomas – <i>The Doubter</i>	John 20:24-29
March 31	Judas – <i>The Traitor</i>	John 12:1-6; Matthew 26:14-16
April 7	Peter – <i>The Performer</i>	Matthew 16:13-18, 21-23