

1. Be with people Mark 1:1-8

God's ultimate plan to save the world was about to be fulfilled through his own son, Jesus Christ. John the Baptist was supposed to prepare the way.

John the Baptist was there with the people. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went to meet John the Baptist. They were open about their life, and even ready to be baptized by him. Though John was dressed in an unusual manner, the people came to him. John was with the people. People need help. They want to talk about their life, hurt, ill-feelings, struggles to forgive, and most of all forgiveness of sin from God. As a disciple, we should imitate John, i.e. being with people. A disciple's lifestyle should be surrounded by people.

2. Be in step with the Spirit Mark 1:9-13

After Jesus was baptized, he received the spirit, which descended on him like a dove. God was excited about his son, as we see he openly declared his love for him. The scripture says that the spirit sent Jesus out into the desert. The bible also says that he was tempted by satan. We see that the spirit of God led Jesus to be tempted by satan. We must understand that at times we will be led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness (when we are alone or surrounded by strangers), so that we can flex our spiritual muscles in order to do greater things for God. If we give way to the devil, he will make us flee from God. If we resist the devil, he will flee from us. When faced with a temptation, we must be aware that the devil is around us. We must be equally aware that God is with us, and wants us to fight and overcome the devil.

3. Be on a mission Mark 1:14-20

John the Baptist was put in prison, yet Jesus was undeterred. Though John's time was up, Jesus spoke that the time has come. Jesus was interested to save people spiritually. He could have saved John, but he allowed John to die. Jesus understood that John was saved, and that no power on earth could stop his soul from reaching God. We see Jesus demonstrating his mission by calling Simon and Andrew; and a little later, James and John. Jesus gave them a mission to be fishers of men. We should never forget this mission.

4. Be stern with sin Mark 1:21-28

Here, a man is possessed by an evil spirit right there in the synagogue. When the impure spirit commented, Jesus was stern. Seeing Jesus stern, the impure spirit came out of the man. We need to be stern with impure spirits. The impure spirit could be lying, stealing, internet porn, impurity, smoking, laziness, drinking, slander, malice, unwillingness to forgive, being boastful, selfishness or pride. We should be stern like Jesus and make a firm decision to get rid of it. Do you have any impure spirits? [Help them to talk and share at this moment]

5. Be rooted in God Mark 1:29-39

Jesus has had a busy day. He had healed and helped many. (Can you imagine the whole town coming to meet Jesus?) Jesus had a very tiring day, and the scripture says that he got up very early in the morning to pray. As a Christian, this is going to be our greatest challenge. The sins we talked about in the above point can be overcome if we are rooted in God. We made a spiritual decision when we got baptized. But staying spiritual is the challenge. [Make a prayer book. Make a list of people you want to pray for. Pray for the leaders in the church. Pray for your family and extended family. Pray for the people you are reaching out to.] Jesus' prayer was so radical that he changed his plan after he prayed. Prayer changes our plans to follow God's plan.

6. Be willing to care Mark 1:40-45

A leper had come to Jesus to be healed. Jesus could have just said the word for the healing to take place. Instead, Jesus touched the man. [Have you ever touched a leper? You share and let them share.] People don't care how much you know, unless they know how much you care. We need to care for older brothers and sisters and the very young ones in the church. We became a disciple because someone cared for us. We need to care for others now, so that they can become disciples. Like Jesus in some ways, our caring should be daring. And to be daring, at times we must be bold like Jesus to break the rules of the society so that God's love can be displayed through us. We should be willing to care.