

## When the World Shakes Small Group Guide

**Warm-up Question:** (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. Is there a part of your day that you look forward to? Explain.
2. What's something that you believed as a child that is funny to you now?

**Read the following passages:** Mark 13:1-37.

When one of Jesus's disciples commented on the grandeur of the temple in Jerusalem, Jesus made a stunning prediction: The temple is going to be destroyed. Later, four of Jesus's disciples asked when all of this would happen, and Jesus spoke to this question at length.

Scholars debate how much (if any) of Jesus's response looks beyond the destruction of the temple to the greatly anticipated end of the age. What is clear in this passage is that the destruction of the temple would be a pivotal event for the Jewish people and that it would take place within a generation (see Mark 13:30).

Although our cultural context differs in many ways from that of Jesus's disciples, we still live in a world that shakes, and Jesus's instructions are still relevant: Don't be deceived; don't be alarmed; don't lose sight of the mission; and follow Jesus, even when it doesn't feel safe.

**Questions for Discussion** (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Are there any current events that are a source of significant anxiety for you? Explain. What news outlets, podcasts, political commentators or influencers are shaping your perspective on current events? Explain.
2. Read Luke 3:3-9. How does the theme of judgment appear in John the Baptist's teaching? Is God's judgment a reality you ever reflect on? Explain. Why were John's contemporaries in danger of experiencing God's judgment?
3. Jesus told his disciples not to be deceived when they heard people claiming to speak for Jesus or possibly even claiming to be Jesus! (See Mark 13:5-6, 21-23.) What are some ways we might be deceived by the political, religious, and cultural voices around us? Are there any ways you feel you were deceived in the past? Explain. What Christian voices have the greatest influence on your perspective now?
4. Why do you think Christians so often suggest that we will experience Jesus's climactic return within a generation? Given that we don't know when Jesus will return, what is a healthy posture for us to take toward this critical event?

5. Jesus's disciples firmly believed that God was in control of human history. How do we make sense of this given all the suffering and tragedy that we experience in this life? Do you draw comfort from the reality that God is in control? Explain.
6. Read Luke 12:4-7. What does it mean to fear God? How can the fear of God help us push back on fear and anxiety in our daily lives?
7. Why was Jesus concerned that his disciples might lose sight of the mission? Is there anything in your life distracting you from God's mission? Explain. How can we practically take care of our daily responsibilities (see, for example, Ephesians 4:28 and 1 Timothy 5:8) and not lose sight of God's mission?
8. How would you communicate the hope of the Gospel to someone who just wants to have fun and be happy?
9. How does the biblical concept of hope differ from mere wishful thinking? Why might it be unwise to move forward in a relationship, a course of action, or a critical decision based on wishful thinking? Can you think of any times when you have done this in the past? Explain.
10. What are some ways we might need to sacrifice our safety in order to follow Jesus?

## **Pray**