

## Life Group Guide – Week Starting Sunday June 14<sup>th</sup> 2026

This study is based on **Mark 11:12-12:12** and follows the key movements of the sermon: unfruitfulness, unrighteous worship, unbelief, and the grace of Jesus Christ. It is designed to help followers of Jesus reflect honestly, discuss deeply, and respond with repentance, faith, and renewed devotion.

**Aim:** To see clearly what Jesus exposes in false religion, to welcome His loving authority in our lives, and to grow as people who are fruitful, repentant, faithful, and shaped by grace.

- Before you start discussions, read out those verses as a group.
- Please note, there are a lot of questions to consider on this guide. You're unlikely to get through all, so please don't try to. Feel free to pick and choose!

**Big Themes:** Jesus confronts outward religion that looks impressive but lacks the fruit of a life surrendered to God. In these moments, He reveals His authority, exposes what is hollow, and points to Himself as the only true way into forgiveness, freedom, and restored fellowship with the Father.

- *Unfruitfulness:* Leaves without fruit are a warning against appearances without spiritual reality.
- *Unrighteous worship:* Jesus rejects worship that is manipulative, transactional, or self-serving.
- *Unbelief:* The religious leaders resist Jesus not for lack of evidence, but because they do not really want to surrender to Him.
- *Grace and invitation:* Jesus is not only Judge but Saviour; through His sacrifice, He makes a way for us to be forgiven and restored.

### Opening Questions

- What part of this passage or sermon stood out to you most, and why?
- Which image feels most encouraging or challenging in this section: the fig tree, the temple, the confrontation over authority, or the parable of the vineyard? Why?

### Study and Discussion

**The Fig Tree:** A warning about spiritual appearance without fruit

- Read Mark 11:12-14. Why do you think Mark includes this moment before the temple scene?
- What does the fig tree reveal about the difference between outward appearance and inward reality?
- What kinds of spiritual “leaves” can make a Christian life look healthy from a distance?
- Where might Jesus be inviting you to move from empty display to genuine devotion?
- What fruit of the Spirit do you long to see grow more clearly in your life right now?

**The Temple:** A warning about hollow and distorted worship

- Read Mark 11:15-18. What does Jesus' response show us about the heart of God?
- Why is it important that Jesus calls the temple a ‘house of prayer for all nations’?
- How can worship become transactional, performative, or self-protective in our own lives or church culture?
- What “tables” might Jesus want to turn over in your discipleship, habits, or motivations?
- How can repentance become a grace-filled return to God rather than a performance to impress Him?

**Authority and Unbelief:** Resisting Jesus as a form of self-preservation

- Read Mark 11:27-33. Why do the religious leaders struggle to answer Jesus honestly?
- What do fear, pride, and the desire for control have to do with unbelief?
- Are there areas of your life where you prefer debating Jesus over obeying Him? Why?
- What does true surrender to the authority of Jesus look like in everyday decisions?
- How can a small group help one another move from defensiveness to trust?

**The Vineyard:** Rejecting the Son

- Read Mark 12:1-12. What is Jesus revealing about the history of God's people and their leaders?
- Why is rejecting Jesus presented as the deepest problem in this passage?
- What does it mean for Jesus to be the 'Cornerstone' of your life rather than an optional part of it?
- In subtle ways, how might believers still resist Jesus while claiming to follow Him?
- What would it look like for your life this week to be built more consciously on Christ?

**Practical Response**

What one habit of worship, prayer, repentance, or obedience could be focussed on deliberately this week; in order to become more intentional in your love and discipleship?

Spend time sharing that decision, and prayerfully committing to it, in order to foster a level of action and accountability.