

BIBLE STUDIES

# WALK ALONGSIDE

*For youth and young adults groups to  
explore what it means to walk alongside  
those who walk alone*

**MICK DUNCAN**



surrender co.

# surrender your life to the radical call of jesus

SURRENDER friend and speaker Mick Duncan has created this Bible study series for your youth or young adults group to start thinking about what it means to walk alongside those who walk alone. Mick has spent years being a friend and mentor to vulnerable and bypassed people.

He's put together this four-week series so you can explore what it's like to be active in following Jesus to the margins. Jesus modelled a way for us to share life with marginalised and broken people, and it's this example that we aim to embody in our lives.

As you journey through the studies, we want you to be inspired to get out into your neighbourhoods and see where God's Kingdom is thriving. Where are you, or the people around you, walking alongside your neighbours? Who walks alongside you?

Let us know how what you're learning, and what actions you are taking by posting on social media (using hashtag #Jesusinthemargins) or emailing us your stories.

## tell us your stories

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# A LETTER FROM MICK

**Welcome to the SURRENDER conversation.**

We really do count it a privilege that you want to join our merry little band. At our SURRENDER gatherings we make it a point not to go hyper or get too emotional about things. We are not trying to manufacture something or fake anything. Nor do we want to lay heavy burdens on people or make people feel guilty.

Rather, we want people to meet people, and in those encounters hear the heart of God. We all know what to do but how to do that which we know to be right; well that's the rub. So SURRENDER is about giving tools to people. We are about empowering you and others.

Part of this wisdom-getting, tool-giving, empowering venture is interacting with classical ancient texts, like the Bible.

So, to begin the journey of SURRENDER we invite you to interact with the following reflective exercises. Each of them has the theme of - to Walk Alongside. To make poverty personal, justice personal, mercy personal and evangelism personal; we must be in face-to-face, one-on-one relationships with people. These kinds of relationships can be so much fun. So, if you need a bit more fun in your life then jump into these reflective exercises and let the conversation begin.

**Mick Duncan**

# BIBLE STUDY 1

Name all the worlds you live in.  
For example, your school world, work world, family world and so on.  
Come up with at least 10 worlds.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

List the names of at least 5 people who populate each of your above worlds.

Is there someone in one of your above worlds who no one else has anything to do with? In other words, no one else likes them and so leaves them alone. Name that person, describe them and write as much about them as you can. Recall everything you can about them.

Why is it that they're being socially isolated?

What about you? Have you also walked around them, kept your distance? How do you feel about that? How do you interpret that?

Read Matthew 25:31-46.

What word, phrase, sentence, verse or part of this text caught your eye and attention? Take that part into your day, chew on it, and meditate on it.

At the end of the day, turn that part into a prayer. Go talk to God about it.



# BIBLE STUDY 2

Think of a situation when someone has come up to you and told you about a conflict they are having with someone else. It could have been a conflict they were having with their parents, a fight with a girl or a quarrel with their boss etc. When people tell us about the conflicts they are having with someone else, what are we tempted to do as we listen to their story?

You got it – we humans are side-takers. We take sides. Is that okay? As Christians, is it right to take sides? For example, imagine someone is telling you about an abusive relationship they are in. Should we take sides?

Did Jesus take sides? Does he take sides? He definitely judges situations and says things are right or wrong, good or bad, true or false. But does Jesus take sides or is he still for all sides, even though someone may be clearly in the wrong?

If we take sides, we run the risk of turning people into enemies. We begin to do hate-work.

Read Matthew 5: 43-45.

We are called to love those we hate. When have you done this? Write down all the details you can remember of a time when you came alongside someone you absolutely knew to be in the wrong and may have even done some bad and horrible things.

Pray for that person. Take their name into your day and send up prayers to God for them.

# BIBLE STUDY 3

Read the following two stories. What do you learn from them?

1. One day at the local supermarket someone screeched out, "Hi Mick." I turned to see a youngish woman in a wheelchair grinning at me.

"Do I know you?" I asked. She admitted that I probably didn't, but she knew me, or at least had heard me speak at a conference. Inching toward our respective checkout counters we chatted until she passes through and waves goodbye.

A few minutes later there she was again outside the supermarket, still grinning. Could we talk, she asked? Embracing the interruption we headed for a nearby café.

An hour and half later, she asks if I am still a Christian. I nod. Her grin becomes a grimace as she asks, "How can God be real if he's allowed me to remain in this wheelchair all my life – 38 years?"

Sensing we were now on sacred and scary ground, I simply declared that I was real and asked whether she would like to get another coffee next week? I didn't feel it was my responsibility at that point to somehow defend God. Over the next four years we had coffee meetings weekly, fortnightly or monthly, depending upon the season of our relationship.

2. Several months into alongsiding with wheelchair-bound Mary [not her real name] I got a phone call from a distraught parent in Australia who I had never met. Like Mary, she had heard me speaking at a conference. She asked if I could visit her son who had just been in a horse-riding accident and was in Auckland hospital paralyzed. I stammer out a 'yes...' and a few days later headed down the motorway in my 1300cc 'Nana' car to meet with another complete stranger.

For about an hour we ask each other awkward questions, stare and endure uncomfortable silences. Still he seemed keen on another visit. Eventually Dick [not his real name] gained enough strength and movement to shift into a wheelchair friendly flat near where I lived, making it possible for us to continue what became a two-year alongsider relationship.

Several months into my three weekly catch-ups with Dick, he informed me that I was the only person visiting him; he simply had no one else in his life! Later he mentioned that he desperately needed to get his motorbike from his place of former employment. Clearly being wheelchair-bound meant his options were limited so I arranged for someone to drive a truck and help load and bring the bike back to Auckland where Dick was able to sell it for much needed cash. He then informed me, he was thinking about taking action against the owners of the horse that threw him and wanted to know where he stood legally. I arranged for a lawyer friend to engage in that conversation with him.

One Christmas Dick proudly declared to me that he was heading back to Australia to visit his mum. I asked what he would do with his two cats. He said it had been all sorted with his social workers.

He flew home and as the weeks went by no one came to look after the cats. Neighbours complained of the smell and the feline yowling and screeching emanating from his apartment. Eventually they had to break in and to their horror the apartment was a wreck. Desperate for food and drink, the cats had torn everything to shreds and in the process urinated and defecated everywhere. The authorities retrieved the cats but left the place a festering, stinking mess.

Late one night my friend arrived back from Australia, opened the door and was immediately repelled. He stayed overnight at a nearby motel and rang me in the morning. After learning for the first time what had transpired, it was obvious what my next kingdom task was to be.

Okay: so what did you notice in these two stories? Write your observations down.

Two key scriptures spring to mind when reflecting on these stories:

- Proverbs 3:27
- Luke 10: 30-35

Make the connections between these scriptures and my stories.

A clue: "if you don't start small you start at all."

Another: "you only have to do that which is in your power to do." So what did the Good Samaritan do and not do? What was not in his power to do?



# BIBLE STUDY 4

Imagine you get a text from heaven. God wants you to get alongside the least popular person at school, church, work or wherever. What is your reply?

Imagine that you decide to go through with it. It's now up to you to make the first step, to take the initiative so as to get the relationship rolling. What will you do? Describe your initiatives.

Imagine you've connected with the person several times over the past four months. You now understand why no one else likes this person. In fact, you don't even like them. What do you do?

Imagine that you got over the not liking them and despite your preferences stuck at it. Two years later they ask you what does it mean to become and be a Christian? How would you answer that? I mean, what would you say? What Bible verses would you turn to?