

# WordOne Bible Study

## Keep Watch - Advent 1 Gospel

by Bob Baker

Text: Mark 13:24-37 for the First Sunday in Advent, Lectionary Series B

### OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

1. Be reminded of their need to stand firm in their faith in Christ.
2. Look at the "what's, why's" and "how's" of temptations that come between them and their faith in Jesus.
3. Look at things that seek to destroy a relationship with Christ.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

1. Newsprint
2. Markers
3. Bibles
4. Recording of "Walk With the Wise," from Steven Curtis Chapman's album "The Great Adventure"
5. A copy of the words for each participant as well
6. Candle and matches
7. Deck of playing cards

### BUILDING COMMUNITY

Play several rounds of "Killer," a great game of stealth, skill and observation. In groups of less than forty people, everyone sits in a circle of chairs or on the floor, facing inward. The leader has a deck of playing cards and lets everyone in the room take one card without showing it to anyone. (There are only as many cards as there are people in the room.) One of the cards is a "Joker," and whoever draws it becomes the "Killer." No one, of course, knows who the killer is except the killer himself. Play begins with everyone looking around at each other and talking casually. The killer "kills" people by winking at them. When a person is winked at (killed) that player waits five seconds, throws in his or her card and then says, "I'm dead," or for more drama, falls over "dead." Once someone is winked at, he or she is dead and cannot reveal to the group who winked. Anyone making a wrong guess is also dead. If someone is asked if he or she is the killer, that person must answer truthfully. The killer tries to see how many people he can pick off before getting caught. When the killer is caught, the cards are collected and reshuffled, and the game is repeated for as many rounds as there is time. (Do not allow game to drag.)

### GROUP GUIDELINES

GETTING TO KNOW YOU – A simple, lively way to now divide your larger group into teams of four persons is to redistribute the deck of playing cards, one card per player. (Divide the number of participants ahead of time by four to determine the number of face value of the cards you'll distribute. For example, if you want to end up with three groups of four, then you'll need a deck with four 4's, four 5's and four 6's or whatever combination you choose. For larger groups add sets of four; for smaller groups eliminate cards.)

Now call out different combinations (as suggested below) as the size of your group allows and lead the groups in the sharing of questions that follow. Remind participants that every person has an opportunity to share, although they are free to pass.

1. Pair up with someone with the same suit.

SHARING QUESTION: In two minutes, discover as many things as possible from your past week's experiences that you share in common (i.e., both had an algebra exam, both went to the dentist, both had a headache on Tuesday, etc.)

2. Find five (three, two, etc., depending on your group size) numbers in a row of any suit.  
SHARING QUESTION: Share a time you were caught sleeping when you shouldn't have been. What happened?
3. Find your whole suit.  
SHARING QUESTION: What are some ways people "sleep" through life? Consider the many different aspects of our lives: emotional, social, mental, physical, spiritual, etc.
4. Find four of you – four 3's, four 8's, etc.  
SHARING QUESTION: "Be on guard! Be alert! Watch!" As a group, develop a list of the top five things in the faith/life walk of Christian teens that threaten to come between them and their relationship with Jesus Christ. (Groups should be specific. Don't settle for "peer pressure." Ask, "What areas of peer pressure are most difficult to overcome?" For some, the pressure might be to "party," for others it may be to cheat in school, and for still others the pressure might be to use foul language.) Have each foursome share their list with the entire group.

## GETTING INTO SCRIPTURE

1. Read Mark 13:24-37. Ask the groups to refer back to the lists they just compiled. How might being on guard help us to overcome some of the dangers we listed and keep us from "sleep-walking" through life?
2. Is it easier staying awake alone or with a group? Why? What evidence do you find for this in the text (see verse 34). What are some specific ways members of this group can help one another keep watch? Again, refer to your lists to come up with specific answers.

## REINFORCING WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED

Have the group listen to "Walk With the Wise" by Steven Curtis Chapman and Brent Lamb, from Chapman's album "The Great Adventure." Have participants follow along with the words. Ask them as they listen to pick out the word, phrase or line that speaks to them personally. At the end of the song have them share these, and explain why their selection was meaningful to them. In what ways does this song relate to the passage from Mark? Jesus said, "Be alert! Be on guard! Watch!" Specifically, how can you do this? As an individual? As a group?

## CLOSING

With everyone seated in a circle on the floor, take specific prayer requests. Then, with the room darkened and a lighted candle in the center of the circle, allow time for individual sentence prayers.

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