

Cursing and Cleansing

Discussion Questions for Mark 11:12-27

1. Where did the events of this story take place? (11:12)
2. Where did Jesus go? Why? (11:12–13)
3. Why did the fig tree have no fruit? (11:13)
4. What did Jesus do to the fig tree? Why? (11:13–14)
5. How did this event differ from every other miracle Jesus performed? (11:13–14)
6. What do both the cursing of the fig tree and the cleansing of the temple tell us about Jesus' attitude toward the people of Israel? (11:13–17)
7. What happened when Jesus entered the temple area in Jerusalem? (11:15–18)
8. Whose authority was Jesus challenging when He drove the money changers from the temple area? (11:17)
9. What was Jesus saying about His own authority? (11:17)
10. Why was Jesus so upset about the "marketplace" atmosphere in the temple? (11:17)
11. How did the crowds and the religious leaders react to Jesus' actions in the temple? (11:18)
12. What happened when the disciples saw the fig tree withered along the road? (11:20)
13. How did Peter react to what he saw? (11:21)
14. How did Jesus use a seemingly insignificant event as an opportunity to teach the disciples? (11:22)
15. On what do answers to prayer depend? (11:22–25)
16. What truth did Jesus illustrate with the withered fig tree? (11:23–24)
17. What elements did Jesus single out of this object lesson regarding a strong prayer life? (11:23–25)

18. What promise did Jesus offer about receiving answers to prayers? (11:24)
19. How can a person be sure God has forgiven his or her sins? (11:24)
20. What can stand in the way of God's forgiveness? (11:25)
21. How can holding a grudge affect the way God answers prayer? (11:25)
22. How is some unanswered prayer accounted for? (11:25)
23. The fig tree had leaves but no fruit; what is one area of your life that looks good, but isn't producing what God wants?
24. How can you grow and become more productive in one of your weak areas?
25. Where is God's temple today?
26. How should we treat God's temple?
27. What specific steps can you take this week to concentrate on a weak area of your spiritual life, aiming to bear fruit for the Lord?
28. How can you show respect for God's temple?
29. What does this passage say about the relationship between faith and forgiveness?
30. What should we be willing to do to resolve conflicts between ourselves and others?
31. Why is it necessary to forgive others for what they have done?
32. What will happen if you refuse to forgive others?
33. In what ways has this passage challenged you to reexamine your faith and your prayer life?
34. What is one specific request that you want to commit yourself to pray for regularly this week?
35. What can you do today to let go of a grudge or feeling of offense?