

# **WEEKLY GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE**

**Week of Sunday February 22, 2026**

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## INTRODUCTION

In **Mark 8:27–38** Jesus is not inviting us into a comfortable add-on to our existing life, and He's not asking for religious lip service. He is inviting us into real discipleship—an honest surrender of control and a public allegiance to Him. Most of us feel the tension of wanting Jesus while still wanting to stay safe, in control, and approved by the people around us. As we talk today, the goal isn't to impress each other—it's to let Jesus name what's really on the throne of our hearts and take one real step toward following Him.

### **Main Passage:**

Mark 8:27–38

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

# Exchange Your Life!

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### READ ALOUD

Mark 8:27–38

### DISCUSS

**Opening Question:** Where do you feel the strongest pull right now to stay comfortable, stay in control, or stay liked?

- In verses 27–29, Jesus asks, “Who do you say that I am?” Why do you think Jesus makes this personal instead of letting it stay “what people say”?
- Jesus says, “Deny yourself”. The sermon emphasized that this is not just denying things but denying self, renouncing being your own king. What’s the difference between those two in real life?
- Jesus says, “Take up your cross”.. The sermon clarified that our “cross” isn’t everyday inconvenience, but the cost of publicly identifying with Jesus. What kinds of costs make following Jesus feel risky today?
- Why is it tempting to say we love Jesus while staying hesitant or embarrassed about His words?
- Verses 36–37 ask what it profits someone to gain the whole world and lose their soul. Where do you see “profit and loss” thinking shaping the way people make decisions today, including Christians?

### DISCUSS & APPLY

- What's one area of your life where you feel the need to control outcomes, and what does that reveal about what you trust?
- The sermon connected “what you're most anxious about” to what you may be refusing to surrender. How does anxiety show up for you, and what might it be pointing to beneath the surface?
- What obedience are you currently avoiding because it might cost comfort, reputation, or control? What makes that cost feel so heavy?
- What would it look like for your allegiance to Jesus to be visible this week without being weird, aggressive, or performative?

### RESPOND

- **Renounce the throne:** What's one area you're still holding tightly? What's one surrender step you'll take this week?
- **Count the cost:** What obedience are you avoiding because it will cost comfort, reputation, or control? What's one concrete act of obedience you'll do anyway?
- **Don't be ashamed:** Where do you feel most tempted to hide your faith? What's one simple way you'll identify with Jesus this week?

### PRAY

Take a quiet moment and ask Jesus to show you where you're holding on to control or living for approval. Confess it, and surrender those areas to His leadership. Ask for courage to follow Him publicly, and pray for one person who needs the gospel—asking for an open door and calm boldness this week. Thank Him for His grace and for leading you forward one faithful step at a time.

## QUESTIONS FOR FAMILIES

Mark 8:27–38

- Jesus asked, “Who do you say I am?” What would you say about Jesus in your own words?
- What does it mean to “follow Jesus” at home, at school, and with friends?
- Jesus said to deny yourself. What’s one thing that’s hard to say “no” to so you can say “yes” to Jesus?
- Jesus said some people might feel ashamed of Him. What are some moments when it can feel hard to follow Jesus in public?

*For younger children:* Parents, help them name one small way they can listen to Jesus and obey Him this week.

*For older kids or students:* Ask them, What’s one area of your life where following Jesus this week might feel uncomfortable or costly—and what’s one step you can take anyway?

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## BIBLE READING PLAN (OPTIONAL)

**Scripture to read as you pray this week:**

- Day 1: Mark 9:1–13
- Day 2: Mark 9:14–29
- Day 3: Mark 9:30–37
- Day 4: Mark 9:38–41
- Day 5: Mark 9:42–50

**COMMENTARY**

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## **What's Going On?**

Mark 8 is a major turning point: Jesus moves from being celebrated for miracles to clearly explaining the path of the Messiah, suffering, rejection, death, and resurrection. Peter can correctly confess Jesus as Messiah but still reject the idea of a suffering Savior, because the cross doesn't match the kind of victory people expect.

Jesus responds by calling the crowd and disciples to understand discipleship as allegiance: deny self-rule, accept the cost of identifying with Him, and follow Him as a continuing way of life. The point isn't that suffering is good, it's that Jesus is King, and following Him reorders what we live for, what we fear, and what we value.

## **A Bit of Background**

In the Roman world, crucifixion wasn't only a method of death, it was public humiliation meant to warn everyone watching. To "take up your cross" would have sounded like accepting shame and loss for loyalty to Jesus, not just enduring everyday problems. That's why Peter's reaction matters: he isn't just confused, he's resisting the shame that would come from being connected to a crucified Messiah.

Jesus exposes that the real battle isn't information; it's allegiance, who sits on the throne, what we're trying to save, and whether we'll be loyal to Jesus and His words even when it costs us.