

FOLLOW ME

WEEK 3

HARVEST
BIBLE
CHAPEL

MARK 8: 31-38

Jesus Is Calling Me To Follow

There are expectations for a true follower of Jesus Christ. Expectations are something we all carry about almost everything. Start your discussion talking about what in your life you have expectations for? How do your expectations differ from those around you? What happens when those don't line up? How often do you think about what God expects from His people?

Read Mark 8:31-38. In v38 Jesus gives three clear expectations. Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me. How are these different than our expectations of a life of a Jesus follower?

1. Deny Myself. Self-denial is both the beginning of discipleship and a daily practice all disciples must walk in. As always, Christ is the example, denying himself of the privilege to be God in heaven, denying himself what he deserved, and humbling himself by coming to earth to be born and to die as a man. Being a Christian means denying what we want, what we deserve, what we need to acknowledge Christ as Lord of our lives. God must be the directing force in our life. Where in our lives do we have the most trouble applying this?

There is only room for one master. Simply put, for God to reign in our lives...we cannot. Denying ourselves requires giving up anything that we would want or seek that keep us from doing the will God. How do we know when our will/desire doesn't match up with God's? Looking out for our own interests and concerns is natural for us as a product of the broken world we live in, but is contrary to Jesus' plan for the lives of His followers. In what ways does the world encourage this self-centered mentality? How has this thinking made its way into our lives? How does that selfish thinking keep us from accomplishing His mission? Have you seen an example of this in your life?

2. Take up my cross. When Jesus said take up your cross it was essentially a continuation of calling His true followers to die to themselves, to surrender completely, to be literally willing to die. Discipleship demands sacrifice and our Lord and Savior never hid that cost. By saying this, Jesus was separating His true followers from those that were just "a part of the crowd." Following Jesus is easy when life is good but when trials come our true commitment to Jesus is revealed. Share a trial from your past or present that has challenged or is challenging your commitment.

If your wondering if you are ready to take up your cross ask yourself and share your answers, and how feel when answering them to these questions below.

- Are you willing to follow Jesus if it means losing some of your closest friends?
- Are you willing to follow Jesus if it means alienation from your family?
- Are you willing to follow Jesus if it means the loss of your reputation?
- Are you willing to follow Jesus if it means losing your job?
- Are you willing to follow Jesus if it means losing your life

Which of these would be the hardest, or maybe has been the hardest for you to answer yes to? How can God glorified and His will done when a choice like this presents itself in our lives?

3. Follow me. Although this call to deny myself and take up my cross is tough, has the highest of consequences, and is often seemingly impossible there is no greater reward. What is that reward? Jesus illustrates it for us at the end of the passage when he says, "For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospels will save it." (v35). Remember his command earlier in the passage to the disciples to set their minds on the "things of God", not on the "things of man" earlier in the chapter. What is the difference? What happens when we have our minds set on the things of God? How can we be more eternally focused?

READING PLAN:

MONDAY

Philippians 2: 1-11

TUESDAY

Mark 14

WEDNESDAY

Ephesians 4: 17-32

THURSDAY

Colossians 3: 1-17

FRIDAY

Acts 5: 27-32