



Week 2

Discipleship Study Questions



Mark Part 3: The Cost of Discipleship

Let's be honest—some of Jesus' words are hard to hear. He talks about denying ourselves, carrying a cross, letting go of power, laying down pride, surrendering money, and even redefining faithfulness in marriage. These aren't just feel-good teachings—they're costly invitations. In chapters 1–8, Mark shows us the Good News of the Kingdom of God breaking into the world through Jesus. But starting at the end of chapter 8, the tone shifts.

In **Part 3** of our yearlong journey through Mark, Jesus begins telling His disciples—and us—what it really means to follow Him. He speaks directly about humility, surrender, trust, leadership, marriage, and sacrifice. But these difficult teachings come with a compelling promise: that the life Jesus calls us to is the path of deep impact, joy-filled obedience, and eternal purpose. This is the invitation of discipleship—not just to follow Jesus, but to become like Him. What might God do through a church that truly counts the cost and still says yes?

Read the Scripture:

Individual: Read the passage from two or three different translations.

Group: Have two different group members read the passage using different Bible translations.

Speak the Scripture:

Individual: Recite the story aloud from memory (as best you can) or tell it to a friend or family member. The goal here is to get the essence of the passage in your heart.

Group: Have someone volunteer to recite the passage aloud in their own words, as best they can.

Understand the Scripture:

Individual or Group: Use the Discovery Questions to help ensure you understand the passage.

Dig Deeper into the Scripture:

Individual: Work through the Digging Deeper questions and pray about what God reveals to you through His word. Discuss with a Christian friend or family member if you choose.

Group: Work through the Digging Deeper questions as a group, celebrating the work God is already doing in each person's life, and encouraging each other to trust Him in the places that need growth.

Small Group Guidelines

This is a Safe Group

Confidentiality is key—what is said in the group stays in the group. Be aware of how you are affecting the environment with your words, actions, and non-verbal communication. This needs to be a place where people feel comfortable opening up and sharing.

No Crosstalk

Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations, phone time, texting etc.

Listen

Let's value one another by listening to what is being shared. Allow a pause after someone shares to allow them to finish and others to consider what was said. Eye contact and body posture play key roles in creating a positive or negative group environment.

No Rescuing or Fixing

We are not here to fix each other; Jesus does that part. Avoid the tendency to rescue when someone is struggling to get the words out or shares a struggle or conviction.

Use "I" Statements

It's easy to talk about the issues of others, or respond with "we," "us," or "the church," but for us to grow as disciples and build relationships, we want to use "I" statements.

Don't Over-Talk

We want to create time for all members of the group to participate in the discussion. Be careful not to always be the first responder or regularly give long responses.

Fight for Relationship

It's not if conflict or hurt feelings will happen, but when. We commit to fight for relationship with each other. Go to the person and share your struggle or seek wise advice if you are not sure how to handle the conflict.

Background: Jesus' teaching in Mark 9:42–50 may sound intense, but it comes from deep love. He wants to protect our hearts, strengthen our witness, and lead us toward true freedom. In His hands, even conviction becomes an invitation to grow. Jesus uses strong words to remind us that sin is serious because it hurts us and those around us. But His goal isn't to shame us — it's to free us. He invites us to let His Spirit refine us so that our lives reflect His grace and goodness.

Read: Mark 9:42-50

Discovery Questions:

What do we learn about God in this passage?

What do we learn about what it means to be a follower of Christ in this passage?

What do you think the Holy Spirit might be teaching you personally through this passage?

Is there anything God is leading you to do after reading this passage?

Digging Deeper:

Jesus says it would be better to drown with a millstone than cause another believer to stumble. What do you think He's trying to show us with such strong imagery?

Where might you need to be more intentional about reflecting Christ in your words, actions, or attitudes?

Why does Jesus use such vivid images — cutting off a hand or plucking out an eye — to describe how we should deal with sin?

How do we balance taking sin seriously without falling into guilt or self-condemnation?

How can we support each other as we go through refining or convicting seasons?

End this time with a prayer.

Heavenly Father, thank You that You love us enough to speak hard truths. Help us live as people of influence, courage, and grace. Give us the courage to cut off what needs to be cut off, and to continue the work so that our hearts are transformed as well. Refine us so Your image shines through our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.