



Island Groups

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Week of March 9, 2025

BOOK OF MARK – WEEK 24

GET BEHIND ME!

(MARK 8:31-38)

Welcome to our discussion guide for Week 24 in our journey through the Book of Mark.

OPENING PRAYER TIME

As we continue our journey through the Gospel of Mark, diving deeper into Jesus' interactions with His disciples, let's make sure we are anchoring everything in prayer. We are asking each Island Group to begin their weekly meetings with 10-15 minutes devoted exclusively to prayer.

You might guide the group through prayer by offering the following prompts. Be sure to pause and give 30-60 seconds or so between each one so they have time to reflect and pray:

- Thank God for the gift of His Son Jesus and the ransom He paid for our souls
- Confess any areas where you've been setting your mind on worldly things rather than God's purposes
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you deny yourself and follow Jesus more faithfully
- Pray for courage to take up your cross daily, even when it feels difficult or costly
- Thank Jesus for His loving discipline that shapes and grows us
- Invite God to help you see your life's story through His eyes of grace and purpose
- Pray for our church to treasure Christ above everything else in this world

You may want to incorporate a time of silence for personal reflection and listening, or to encourage members to voice simple one-word prayers of praise and gratitude. The key is to allow room for the Spirit to lead, while still being intentional about prioritizing prayer.



Remember, **PRAYER IS THE WORK** that empowers everything else! So let's commit to pursuing Him wholeheartedly as we gather.

DISCUSSION

Begin the discussion by asking, "**Have you ever had a moment when someone told you something you definitely didn't want to hear? How did you react?**"

Ask someone to read **Mark 8:31-38**. What initially stands out to you from this passage?

Pastor Paul pointed out that Jesus predicts His suffering, death, and resurrection three times in Mark's Gospel (**Mark 8:31, 9:31, and 10:33-34**). Why do you think this repetition is significant? What does it reveal about the importance of Christ's death and resurrection to Mark's message?

In **verse 31**, Jesus speaks "plainly" about what will happen to Him in Jerusalem. What four elements did Pastor Paul highlight from Jesus' prediction? (*He's going to die, His death is intentional, He will be murdered, and He will rise again in three days*)

Have someone read **Mark 10:45**. According to this verse, what is the "why" behind Jesus' suffering and death? What does it mean that Jesus came "**to give his life as a ransom for many**"?

Look at Peter's reaction in **verse 32**. Pastor Paul suggested that Peter was scared, overwhelmed, and unprepared for what Jesus was saying. Can you relate to Peter in this moment? Share about a time when you felt unprepared for or overwhelmed by something God was doing in your life.

Pastor Paul suggested that Peter's reaction revealed more about Peter than about Jesus. How does this principle apply to our lives? When has your reaction to challenging circumstances revealed something about yourself that you didn't particularly like?

Jesus' response to Peter in **verse 33** is harsh: "**Get behind me, Satan!**" Why do you think Jesus responded so strongly? What did He mean when He said Peter was "**not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man**"?

Have someone read **Hebrews 12:5-8**. How does this passage help us understand Jesus' rebuke of Peter? What does it mean that "**the Lord disciplines those he loves**"? How have you experienced God's loving discipline in your own life?

Pastor Paul reminded us that our lives are like books still being written – more than just one moment or image. Looking at Peter's life throughout the Gospels, what other "pictures" do we see? (*walking on water/sinking, confession/denial, sleeping in Gethsemane/being restored to "feed my sheep"*) How does this encourage you when you fail or struggle in your faith?

Jesus calls His followers to "**deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow me**" (v.34). What does this look like practically in our daily lives? What might you need to deny in order to follow Jesus more faithfully?

Notice how **verses 35-38** each begin with "for" (or "because"). How do these verses build on each other to explain why we should follow Jesus, even at great cost?

Pastor Paul explained that **verse 38** shows that being ashamed of Jesus means the opposite of being proud of Him, admiring Him, and wanting to be identified with Him. Why do people sometimes feel ashamed of Jesus or His words? Have you ever struggled with this?

According to **verse 36**, what ultimate choice are we all making in life? What does it profit someone to "gain the whole world" but lose their soul? How does this perspective challenge our culture's priorities?

Pastor Paul closed by urging us to "**get behind Jesus**" rather than being defined by our failures or weaknesses. What does it mean to let Christ define us rather than our past mistakes or present struggles?

APPLICATION

Identify an area in your life where you're currently resisting God's direction or struggling to accept His plan. Take time this week to surrender that area to Him, asking for the grace to "set your mind on the things of God."

Choose one specific way you can "deny yourself" this week to follow Jesus more faithfully. This might involve sacrificing time, comfort, money, or pride for the sake of Christ and others.

Reflect on moments of failure in your spiritual journey. Rather than staying stuck in guilt or shame, look at these moments through Jesus' eyes of love and restoration. Write down how God has used even your failures for growth.

Memorize Mark 8:34-35 this week as a reminder of what it means to truly follow Jesus. Let these words challenge and transform your daily decisions.

CLOSING PRAYER TIME

Take time to share prayer requests. Write these down and distribute them so the group can be praying throughout the week. In addition considering praying along these themes:

- Thank Jesus for willingly going to the cross as a ransom for many. Praise Him for His intentional sacrifice and victorious resurrection.
- Confess any areas where you've been setting your mind on the things of man rather than the things of God. Ask for forgiveness and a renewed perspective.
- Ask for the courage to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus, even when it's costly or countercultural.
- Pray for those who are struggling with shame or embarrassment about their faith. Ask God to give them boldness to identify fully with Christ.
- Thank God that He sees beyond our failures and is still writing your story. Praise Him for His loving discipline that shapes us into Christ's image.

Close by declaring that Jesus is worth more than gaining the whole world, and that you choose to lose your life for His sake and the gospel's, knowing that in Him, you will truly find life.