

Series: Follow

Scripture and Background Information for September 25-Oct 1.

To prepare for your group discussion each week, group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scripture below.

Basically, everyone has assumptions about Jesus and Christianity. What does it mean to be a Christian? What did Jesus invite people to do? What Jesus invited people to do is to follow him. The goal is people take the next step to follow Jesus. Which category are you in and what step is he asking of you:

- 1) Uninformed
- 2) Interested
- 3) Ready
- 4) Committed
- 5) Growing

Background for Mark 8:27-38:

Last week we saw Jesus' call to Levi and then Levi's party as Jesus declared His calling to come for the sick, not the healthy. In Mark 8 Jesus engages with his disciples as He teaches them more of what it means to follow Him. The scene is a private conversation between them as Peter first answers that Jesus is the long awaited Messiah. This is the first public affirmation of Jesus' person. It would have been an incredible moment, especially for Peter. From there, the lesson takes a turn from what the disciples would have expected as Jesus tells of his coming betrayal and death. The news of such a shocking end would have been devastating for these men who have given everything to follow Him. Peter responds likely by doing what all of them were thinking and confronts Jesus. Jesus' response is to teach about true discipleship. Jesus' statement reveals a challenge to every disciple's identity, agenda, and destiny. It's an incredible reminder that the price of following Jesus is high, but the cost of not following Him is greater still.

Insights and questions to engage with the text:

1. As you think about what it means to follow Jesus, how have you often thought of it? How does this call, particularly v.34 provide clarity about what the price truly is?
2. What do we do in those moments when we fall short of this incredibly high price that Jesus lays out in v.34? How does this synthesize with the call of Levi last week who was not called to shape up before coming to Jesus?
3. When you think about how you currently are following Jesus which of the three areas mentioned (identity, agenda, and destiny) do you have the hardest time offering to Him? What would it look like to take a step this week in that area?

Note: One great resource that focuses on this idea of following Jesus is the book, "Master Plan of Evangelism". Coleman goes into the details of what that initial call looked like, but also the process Jesus implemented to invest in these first followers so that they could be sent out to change the world.