

## session 4 study guide

# discipleship

### message

The following short Scripture reading comes from Mark 8:34-37, in which Jesus is teaching in the small villages outside of Caesarea Philippi. As you read Jesus' words, keep the following questions in mind: (1) What has it cost you to follow Jesus? (2) What would you give your life for? A person? A cause?

*Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:34-37).*

### dig

1. What does the phrase "come after me" mean to you?

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2. Jesus says that we must “take up our cross.” What do you think He means?

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3. Summarize the following verses in your own words: “For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?”

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4. Notice who Jesus is speaking to in this passage—not just His disciples, but also a growing crowd of people who had come to hear Him speak. Imagine you are a member of this crowd and you hear this speech. How would it have made you feel? Would it have made you want to follow Jesus, or would it have given you second thoughts about being one of His followers?

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5. Why do you think Jesus gave this speech? What was the purpose? (For help, read the account of this story in Luke 14:27-33.)

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6. In Luke 9:23, Jesus has a similar conversation with His disciple Peter. What additional information does this conversation give about how frequently we must “take up our cross”?

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### **apply**

In this passage, Jesus provides two clear requirements for those who want to follow Him: (1) They must deny themselves, and (2) they must take up their cross.

#### **deny yourself**

1. What does it mean to deny yourself?

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2. You belong to Christ, not to yourself. You were bought at a high price by Jesus' death on the cross. In order to follow Christ, there is a sense of denial of your own needs for the sake of Christ's purposes. What needs, wants or desires in your life are the hardest to give up for Jesus?

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3. According to Luke 14:33, how far do you have to deny your own desires in order to follow Jesus?

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**take up your cross**

1. What is *your* cross?

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2. In the passage from Luke 9 that you read above, Jesus says that we must take up our cross *daily*. Why is this not a one-time deal? Why must you do this every day?

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3. What has being a Christian cost you? What has been the cost of becoming Christ's follower in your relationships at home, at school or at work?

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**reflect**

1. What makes discipleship costly?

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2. Why is it so difficult to deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Jesus?

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3. What would you give your life for?

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4. In the passage we read in Mark 8:34-37, Jesus is asking for our lives. Do you think His request is literal or metaphoric?

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5. Give illustrations of people you know who have gained all the world has to offer but do not have the blessings of a relationship with God.

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### meditation



Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him,  
we will also live with him; if we endure, we will  
also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also  
disown us; if we are faithless, he will remain faithful,  
for he cannot disown himself.

2 TIMOTHY 2:11-13