

DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Marks of a Real Christian

The Gospel of Mark - Week 40

ICEBREAKER: What purpose do the emotions of regret, shame, or guilt serve?

OVERVIEW: Are you a Christian just because you say you are, or is there an objective definition of Christianity to which you must conform in order to be a real Christian? According to the Pew Research Center, 70.6% of Americans call themselves Christians. But with so much diversity of belief and behavior among them, either some of those people are not real Christians, or Christianity has nothing to do with belief and behavior. Today we are going to go deeper with Jesus' definition of Christianity in Mark 8:27-38 to make sure that we don't miss the real thing.

1. What insight, principle, or observation from this weekend's message did you find to be the most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? Explain. (Or what was your key takeaway from Sunday's message?)
2. Read John 1:1-18. The first mark of a real Christian is believing the right things about Jesus (orthodox Christology).
 - a. Why does John refer to Jesus as "the Word?"
 - b. How is it possible that the Word was God, and the Word was with God?
 - c. Is there any part of this passage that you find confusing or troubling?
 - d. In your opinion, what are the 3 most important truths about Jesus found in this passage?

3. Why is it important to believe the right things about Jesus?
4. What are the essential facts about Jesus that one must believe in order to be saved?
5. Read Mark 8:31-34. The second mark of a real Christian is self-denial. Do you think Jesus was too harsh by calling Peter "Satan?" Explain.
6. What does Jesus mean by self-denial? How have you had to deny yourself for Christ?
7. Have you ever regretted denying yourself for Christ?
8. The third mark of a real Christian is to take up one's cross, or the willingness to suffer for Jesus. When is the last time you had to suffer for Christ? Is there something you are neglecting to do for Jesus to avoid suffering?
9. The fourth mark of a real Christian is to follow Jesus, which refers to obeying and imitating Him. Jesus wants you to be a mirror, reflecting His character to the world. How can you become a better reflection of Christ?

The Last Word: "Our crosses come from and are proportionate to our dedication to Christ. Difficulties are not an indication of cross-bearing; difficulties for Christ's sake are. We need to ask ourselves if we have any difficulties because we are following close after Christ." R. Kent Hughes