

GROWING IN FAITH



Mark 8:36

For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?

For More Information Contact:
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STARTING OUT

Begin with a prayer. You can offer your own prayer or use the one below. God of grace, before we ever knew your name, You were already at work in our lives. You have gone before us every step of the way always taking the initiative in our relationship. Let us now open our hearts to receiving Your love and devote this time wholly to you. Amen.

Open by asking everyone to share one thing they thought they absolutely had to have as a child in order to "fit in" with everyone else. Leaders should be prepared to share something from your own childhood.

Read the scripture verse for the day - Mark 8:34-37.

PLAY THE VIDEO

GOING DEEPER

The marketing and advertising world are constantly filling our lives with messages about what we "need" in order for our lives to be better. Have you ever bought something you thought was going to make your life exponentially better, only to realize it didn't? Why does advertising rarely tell us we need to be more selfless?

St. Augustine believed it was possible to be part of the "City of God" here and now by living selflessly and being willing to sacrifice. In what ways is our world today different from the Christian Roman Empire of Augustine's time? In what ways is it the same? What does it look like to be a citizen of God's Kingdom over and above all other earthly kingdoms?

Mark 8 is the first time Jesus makes a prediction about his coming suffering, death, and resurrection.

Why do you think Peter responded the way he did?
What is your response to hearing Jesus refer to Peter as "Satan"?
What are you tempted with today to place above your faith?

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GOING DEEPER

Josh mentioned in the video that Jesus would typically tell his disciples and other followers not to tell anyone about the miracles they witnessed him perform in Mark's gospel. In our scripture today, Jesus does just the opposite. Why was this so different that Jesus wanted to make sure everyone heard it? The message Jesus wanted everyone to hear was about living selflessly. If you had an opportunity to gather crowds of people together and share just one message, what would it be?

Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 together. Paul reverses what the world considers wise and successful when talking about the cross. The world considers the cross foolish, but God showed how powerful it is by using the cross to redeem the world.

How does our world define success?

How does the cross define success? How can "taking up our cross" help us live successfully as God defines it?

Integrity plays an important role in this. We must live out our faith in all circumstance 25 cents at a time, not just when it is convenient. Have you ever had a close friend or family member with whom you disagreed strongly on something? How were you able to maintain integrity and do what you believed was right in the face of that adversity?

"Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But if God be for you, who can be against you? Are all of them together stronger than God? O be not weary of well doing!"

- John Wesley

Closing

Take time to lift up joys and concerns in your group before closing in prayer. You can offer your own prayer or use the one below.

Jesus, we are grateful for your willingness to turn aside from the temptations of this world in order to fix your eyes upon the cross. Help us each day to turn away from our own temptations that we might deny ourselves, pick up our crosses, and follow after you with every part of our lives. Amen.