

## **Genuine Discipleship**

### **Discussion Questions for Mark 8:34-38**

1. How is Jesus' call to discipleship "radical"? How have we made the normal Christian life less radical than what the Bible calls for?
2. Why is it inadequate to consider Jesus only a great moral teacher? Why is it inadequate to see Him as merely an example to follow?
3. In what way is it commendable to "proudly" declare that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God? How should we be cautioned regarding such an attitude?
4. What kind of King did the Jews of Jesus' day expect the Messiah would be? How do we sometimes expect Jesus to do the same for us?
5. How would you answer a child who asked, "Why does it say Jesus 'must' suffer, die, and rise again?" How would you answer a Muslim?
6. What do you suppose Peter was thinking when he rebuked Jesus (8:32)? What are man's concerns (8:33)?
7. How does the world entice you to live the self-centered life? How does giving up the right to self-determination counter those temptations?
8. Compare the sayings "The safe life must be put to death" and "The safest place to be is in the middle of God's will." What is the definition of safe in each case?
9. Jesus says that if you give up your life for him, that you find it. When Missionary Jim Elliot was martyred, his journals revealed an outlook on giving up his life for Jesus when he wrote, "He is no fool who gives what he can not keep to gain what he cannot lose." How would you argue that the death of the missionary Jim Elliot was not a great tragedy?
10. Read Bonhoeffer's full statement below and discuss his remark: "In fact every command of Jesus is a call to die."

"The cross is laid on every Christian. The first Christ-suffering which every man must experience is the call to abandon the attachments of this world. It is that dying of the old man which is the result of his encounter with Christ. As we embark upon discipleship we surrender ourselves to Christ in union with his death—we give over our lives to death. Thus it begins; the cross is

not the terrible end to an otherwise god-fearing and happy life, but it meets us at the beginning of our communion with Christ. When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.... But it is the same death every time—death in Jesus Christ, the death of the old man at his call. Jesus' summons to the rich young man was calling him to die, because only the man who is dead to his own will can follow Christ. In fact every command of Jesus is a call to die, with all our affections and lusts. But we do not want to die, and therefore Jesus Christ and his call are necessarily our death as well as our life. The call to discipleship, the baptism in the name of Jesus Christ means both death and life." (Bonhoeffer, *Cost of Discipleship*, 99)