

**Group discussion** *Each number below includes questions that relate to the scripture. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for “the big question.”*

Read Mark 8:14-34 aloud. This passage records four conversations that work together to make a single point. The first four sets of questions work through those conversations.

*You could break into four sub-groups and ask each group to discuss one section for 5-10 minutes. Then re-group to discuss the big question.*

1. What happened in the first story (14-21)? Re-tell it in your own words.

Why were the disciples worried about food?

As Jesus reminded them of the massive food miracles they had observed, what was he saying to the disciples?

What was the focus of the disciples in this story?

*Looking at their abilities and resources instead of listening to Jesus. Their focus was on themselves.*

2. What occurred when they got to Bethsaida?

Why was the blind man only half-way healed? Did Jesus experience a power outage or was he making a point?

*Can you think of any other partial healings?*

How was this man like the disciples?

*After being with Jesus for a short time his vision got better, but he was not yet seeing clearly.*

3. What question did Jesus ask in verse 27?

What were some possible answers, and which one was correct?

Why did Jesus warn them not to tell anyone he was the messiah?

*The crowd's curiosity worked to his advantage. He told nearly every healed person in Mark not to tell. See 1:25, 1:34, 1:37-38, 1:45, 5:43, 7:36.*

4. Now that the disciples understand that Jesus is the Messiah, how does his teaching strategy change?

*Note the word “began” in 31. The rest of the book is devoted to Jesus “un-teaching” their misconceptions about the Messiah.*

How well did Jesus' definition of Messiah match the disciples' understanding?

Why did Jesus call Peter Satan?

In this exchange, how was Peter like the blind man?

*He could make out the big picture, but he was way off on the details.*

5. “Messiah” was a loaded term for Jesus' peers. What did it signify to the Jewish people?

*“Messiah” is the Hebrew, and “Christ” is the Greek. Both words mean chosen or anointed one. For 1<sup>st</sup>-century Jews, the term represented God's agent to save them from over 600 years of oppression and violence.*

What did Messiah mean for Jesus?

*He came to save the Jewish people, but his task was much larger (save all people) and his approach was totally unexpected (destroy the enemy by sacrificing himself).*

6. According to verse 34, what does it mean to follow the Messiah?

What are some ways we deny ourselves?

How might our view of our sacrifices be different than God's view?

*We hesitate to let go, even if we know something is bad for us.*

† **The big question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It's okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

How do you feel about denying yourself? What motivates you to do it?

## Resources

### **Bible notes**

- As we have seen in recent studies, Jesus is constantly misunderstood in the gospel of Mark, particularly by the disciples.
- Mark 8:31 is a hinge in Mark's gospel. The first eight chapters are filled with Jesus' amazing power (Did you notice how many of Kevin's sermons on healing came from Mark 1-8?), leading to Peter's confession in 8:29. The second half consists of Jesus demonstrating what Messiah means.
- In Mark, stories are often written in a way that they become commentaries on one another.

### **Prayer ideas**

Praise God for Jesus and his focus on his mission to save.  
Pray for someone who does not yet know Jesus as Lord.  
Ask for help with denying ourselves.

**Kid-friendly activity.** *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

### Play the game "Black Magic."

- Arrange with one person ahead of time to help you.
- Tell the group that your partner can read your mind.
- Send your partner out of the room, and let the group select an object to be "it."
- The person comes back into the room, and you begin to point to objects in the room – is it the fireplace? Is it Susie's purse? Etc.
- The person who is it amazes the group by guessing "it" correctly.
- Repeat several times. Maybe let someone else try to be it.
- Promise to reveal your secret after the Bible discussion.

Read Mark 8:14-21 aloud.

What was on the disciples' mind? What was on Jesus' mind?

What were some things Jesus said that were hard for them to understand? See Mark 8:31-34.

What are some ways it is difficult for kids to follow God?

*Tell the secret to Black Magic – As you name items, point to something black immediately before the item that is "it."*



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## **LIFE Group Guide**

### **Mark 8 – Seeing**

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme: **Seeing what God sees.**

Mark 8 tells how the disciples began to see Jesus more clearly, and it records a story of a man who required a second touch before he was fully healed. His story can be read as a commentary on how the disciples were slow to see what Jesus saw.

College Hills has set up a private meeting with Buddy Bell at Lipscomb this Thursday (July 3) at 11 a.m. We have a room reserved in the bottom floor of the student center. It is not too late to sign up.

Leadership tip: This guide suggests using sub-groups. These are a great tool to cultivate leaders and to allow a large group to re-discover the strengths of small group conversation. Bring some extra copies of this guide, and ask three others to lead one section of questions.

Relate *Use a few to introduce the theme, check everyone's spiritual pulse, and "break the ice." No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage through these questions.*

- ❖ You know it has been a good LIFE group meeting if...
- ❖ I only need glasses when...
- ❖ If you could be any superhero for one day, who would you choose to be?