



# small groups

*Discussion Guide*



## **Our Agendas**

Mark 8:27-38

### **Ice Breaker**

*(5 minutes)*

#### **Discuss**

- Craig talked about sharing “highs” and “lows” around the family dinner table. What were family dinners like for you as a kid? Did your family eat together? Are those happy memories?
  - How do they compare with your “family dinners” at small group time?
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### **Lesson Review**

*(40 minutes)*

#### **Read Mark 8:27-38**

Craig said that the question Jesus asks in this passage — “Who do you say that I am?” — is the most important question anyone ever answers.

- Unbelievers might answer that Jesus was a wise teacher and a good person. But in doing so, they misunderstand what Jesus said about himself.
- Believers might answer that he is the Son of God and Messiah, but fail to take any steps to follow him beyond believing in him.
- But Christ-followers confess that Jesus is both Messiah and Lord. He calls the shots and we surrender to him more than intellectual ascent.

Craig asked us to imagine the “highs” and “lows” Simon might have shared around the family dinner table the night after these events.

## High

### Read Matthew 16:13-20

- Jesus gave him a new name — Peter, which means “rock” — and promised to build on Peter a church that would prevail against the very gates of hell.
- Jesus promised Peter the keys to his kingdom — access and authority.
- And Jesus promised Peter power to “bind” and “loose” things in heaven.

This must have seemed like an overwhelming vote of confidence for Peter.

As Peter clearly demonstrates in the next verse, God doesn’t appoint people for service based on their ability. God didn’t choose Simon to be Peter, or Moses to be deliverer, or Andy McQuitty to be senior pastor based on their ability. They were all anointed for service, not awarded for their resume.

### Discuss

- Why do you think God insists on choosing stumbling disciples like Peter?
- What can we learn from that?

## Low

### Read Matthew 16:21-26

In the very next verse, immediately after Peter has declared that Jesus is God himself and Lord of everything, he chooses to correct Jesus’ thinking.

Craig said he imagines Peter expecting a “thank you” for speaking up here. As if Jesus would say, “You’re right, Pete. I was just feeling a little defeated what with the Pharisees and all. I guess I needed you to return that vote of confidence. You’re right. Now where can we get some RPGs?” Instead, Jesus calls him Satan and tells him to stand down.

Craig pointed out the the temptation Peter was bringing to Jesus was the same Satan brought in the wilderness.

**Read Matthew 4:1-11**

**Discuss**

- How was Peter's rebuke similar to Satan's temptation?

Craig said that, up until this point in Mark's gospel, the disciples had enjoyed a pretty spectacular ride with big crowds and miracles. But now Jesus changes his tune and starts talking about sacrifice and martyrdom. This brings into relief the Christian teaching of surrender, of choosing God's will over our own. Craig contrasted the difference between a believer and a follower with two quotes:

*I have a lot of beliefs, and I live by none of them. That's just the way I am. They're just my beliefs. I just like believing them. I like that part. They're my little "believies." They make me feel good about who I am. But if they get in the way of a thing I want, I [sure as heck] do that.*

*– Louis C.K., Comedian*

*Oh God, I give you the right to change my agenda any time you like, and you don't have to inform me in advance. Amen.*

*– Bob Pierce, Founder of World Vision*

A believer can hold on to moral truths, but not lose his life for the sake of the gospel. He can ascent to a belief system but hang on to his idols. But to follow, one has to choose his leader's path.

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# Application

*(15 minutes)*

## **Discuss**

- Craig asked, "What are you holding onto tightly? What are you afraid to lose for the sake of following Jesus?" Answer that honestly.

Craig said the first step of surrender is to pray a simple prayer: "Lord Jesus, I want to want what you want more than what I want." Finish your group time by praying that prayer and filling in a blank at the end:

"Lord Jesus, I want to want what you want more than I want \_\_\_\_\_."