

## **Study Guide: Self-Denial**

*Carter Sanger, Mar-10*

### **Introduction**

Read Mark 8:27-38.

- Jesus begins with an important question which seeks to help his disciples get to the heart of who he is. Why is his identity such a difficult thing to grasp? The episode just prior to the question, beginning in verse 22, may provide some insight.
- What changes regarding the direction of Jesus' ministry at this point in Mark's gospel?

### **I. Messiah**

The term "messiah" means anointed. In the Old Testament, a prophet or priest anointed a person with oil. Aaron was perhaps the first to be anointed. King David was another.

- Was just anyone anointed? Why or why not? What was the purpose of being anointed?
- What kinds of things did Jesus say and do that made him different from other prophets?
- By the first Century, the term messiah had become used in a specific sense. It came to refer not just to any anointed person but someone specific. It was the buzz word for the expected political savior, the "son of David" that would take back his throne, presumably from the Romans. With this associated with the title, is it surprising that Jesus orders them to tell no one?
- Even though the title had become polluted with skewed expectations, why is it important to know that Jesus is the Messiah?
- How could it change your prayer life by knowing that Jesus really is the one "anointed" (and thus empowered) to set His people free?

### **II. The Things of God**

In verses 31-33 Jesus gives some startling information about his ministry direction.

- What is Peter's response? Why does Peter respond this way?
- Why does Jesus give his harshest criticism to Peter at this point?
- From what kind of oppression was Jesus working to set them free?
- In what ways do you have in mind the "things of man" rather than the "things of God"?

### **III. Self-Denial**

- In verses 34-38 Jesus describes what it looks like to deny oneself. When he references the "cross", remember that this was before Jesus was hung on one. What would this have conjured up in the disciples' minds?
- What is the key to making sense of Jesus statement that the way of the cross is the way to life?
- What is it about "saving your life" now that causes you to lose it? What does Jesus mean by this?
- You are already denying yourself in some respects. What are they? How does knowing the person of Jesus cause you to shift your self-denial?

### **Wrap-up**

- What is God calling you to deny yourself of today?