

# GROUP GUIDE – FORMED BY THE GOSPEL

## SESSION 1:2 | FOLLOW ME

---

### Key Scriptures

- Mark 8:34–38
- Luke 23:26
- Hebrews 12:1–2
- John 12:24–25
- Matthew 6:19–21
- Matthew 10:32–33

### Big Idea

Following Jesus means a transfer of authority, from self-rule to Christ's rule, that reshapes how we live, what we value, and where our life is headed by "getting behind" Jesus.

### Ice Breakers

- When you hear the phrase "follow your heart," what comes to mind?
- Growing up, who did you naturally imitate or want to be like

### Discussion Questions (As time allows)

1. Mark 8:34 — Jesus begins with a condition: "If anyone wants to follow after me..." What does that tell us about discipleship?
2. Mark 8:34; Luke 22:57–60 — Jesus says to "deny yourself." How is this different from self-improvement or self-denial as discipline?
3. Take Up Your Cross — Where do you see self-rule most clearly competing with Jesus' authority in everyday life?
4. Mark 8:34; Luke 23:26 — Why would Jesus use the image of the cross, and how would His original audience have heard this?
5. Behind Jesus — Luke says Simon carried the cross behind Jesus. Why does position matter in discipleship?
6. Mark 8:35; John 12:24–25 — Why does Jesus say trying to save your life actually leads to losing it?

7. Mark 8:36–37 — What “gain” does Jesus contrast with the value of the soul?
8. Mark 8:38; Matthew 10:32–33 — Why does Jesus connect allegiance to Him with public identification?
9. Formation Over Time — How does the shoe / dust-of-the-rabbi illustration help clarify spiritual formation?

### **Application**

Where do you sense Jesus inviting you to get back behind Him instead of running ahead or resisting? Obedience does not earn life, but it flows from trusting the One who gives it. Identify one area where Jesus’ authority needs to replace self-rule this week.

### **Examples**

- Control & Trust: Releasing anxiety-driven control over finances, schedule, or outcomes by intentionally praying before making decisions.
- Obedience: Saying yes to a clear command of Jesus you’ve been delaying (forgiveness, reconciliation, generosity, or honesty).
- Allegiance: Choosing faithfulness to Jesus over cultural pressure at work, online, or in relationships.
- Identity: Letting go of an identity rooted in success, approval, or comfort and embracing identity as a follower of Jesus.
- Direction: Adjusting how time is spent this week to reflect who you are following (media, habits, rhythms).

We don’t put these on to earn God’s favor — we put them on because we already belong to Him.

### **Key Takeaway**

*Everyone is following something. Jesus invites us to follow Him — not to lose life, but to find the life our souls were made for. Discipleship is not about perfection, but direction: denying self-rule, taking up the cross, and walking closely behind Jesus as He leads us into true life. “Jesus, help us deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow You. Teach us to trust that Your way leads to real life. Amen.”*