

LIFE OF A SERVANT**The Messiah****Mark 8:22—9:1***“He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things. . . .”* Mark 8:31**Day 1: Read Mark 8:22–26.**

1. Note all the touching in this miracle. What do you think this conveys to the blind man?
2. List some of the similarities between this miracle and the healing of the deaf man in 7:32–36. What is unique about the healing in chapter 8?
3. Look back at 8:17–21. How do these two miracles show hope for the “blind and deaf” disciples?

Day 2: Read Mark 8:27–30.

4. What do others say about Jesus? Is their opinion of him favorable or unfavorable? How do their guesses fall short?
5. Learning what the crowds think is interesting, but what is Jesus really after here? (vs. 29)
6. Flip through earlier chapters of Mark. What are some of the things the disciples have seen Jesus do and heard him say that bear witness to his identity?
7. The disciples have experienced all these things, and have even received special instruction (e.g., 4:11, 34), but until now they have not understood who Jesus is. (8:17–21) How is Peter able to come up with the right answer now? (Mt. 16:17)

Day 3: Read Mark 8:30—9:1.

8. What expectations did many Israelites have for the Christ, that is, the prophesied Messiah or “Anointed One”? (Jer. 23:5–6; 30:8–9; Mic. 5:2–5a; cf. Jn. 6:15)
9. What did they fail to understand about the Messiah's mission? (Isa. 53:2–12)
10. Jesus has often felt a need for secrecy about his identity (7:36; 8:26, 30). How does the fact that Jesus' mission is so different from what anyone expected help us understand this need for secrecy? (compare the crowd's desire in Jn. 6:15 to the necessity Jesus speaks of in vs. 31: “the Son of Man must suffer...;” cf. Lk. 24:44–46)

11. Mark makes a point of saying that Jesus “spoke plainly” (vs. 32) about his suffering. How does this contrast with his earlier speech? (4:11–12; 33–34) Why do you think Jesus’ manner of speech is different here?
12. Jesus’ suffering is prominent in this passage, but what signs of hope are embedded in it?

Day 4: Read Mark 8:31—9:1.

13. Why is Jesus’ response to Peter’s rebuke so unexpectedly vehement? What was so bad about what Peter said?
14. The sharpness of Jesus’ rebuke shows how seriously Jesus viewed the danger of having in mind “the things of men” rather than “the things of God” (vs. 33). What strains of this kind of thinking can you detect in your own mind? How can such thinking be dangerous?
15. Peter really messes up in this passage. Later, he denies all knowledge of Jesus (14:66–72). And we learn that even after the resurrection and Pentecost, Paul has to confront him, because he is again in error (Gal. 2:11–14). Nevertheless, Jesus calls Peter to be the rock on which he will build his church (Mt. 16:18–19). How does this encourage you?

Day 5: Read Mark 8:31—9:1.

16. What three demands does Jesus make of those who would be his disciples? (vs. 34)
17. Jesus’ listeners know that if you’re carrying a cross, then you’re marching to your death.
 - a. As followers of Jesus, what effect should our figurative cross-bearing have on the way we view our lives?
 - b. What does this look like for you?
 - c. This sounds difficult and scary, but what comfort do we have? (Mt. 11:28–30; Rom. 8:17–18; 2 Cor. 4:8–11; Rev. 7:9–10, 13–17)
18. Paraphrase vs. 35 to tease out its meaning. (Consider it together with the verses that surround it.)
19. Why does Jesus’ statement about being ashamed of him follow those about saving one’s life or losing it and gaining the world but losing one’s soul? How are these ideas connected?
20. When have you found yourself ashamed of Jesus or embarrassed because of him? What was in your heart that caused you to feel this way? Pray that God would strengthen your spirit and give you boldness.

21. Read Peter's bold proclamation of Jesus in Acts 2:22–39, and praise God for the magnitude, effectiveness, and grace of his plan of salvation.