

**Title:** PETER ENCOUNTERS THE MESSIAH

**Text:** Mark 8:27-38

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**Peter gets it**

**Peter doesn't get it**

**Jesus spells it out**

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## CONVERSATION STARTER

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- Think about some of the greatest accomplishments of your life. Were they easy, or did they come only after hard work and at great cost? If they were difficult, why were you willing to make those significant sacrifices?
- Read Mark 8:27-38. Why do you think some mistook Jesus for John the Baptist, Elijah, or one of the prophets? After Peter's confession, why do you think Jesus charges the disciples to tell no one that he is the Christ? Why is it so difficult for Peter to accept that the Son of Man must suffer, be rejected, and killed? Why do you think Jesus' rebuke of Peter is so intense? How do you think the disciples would have understood Jesus' call to deny themselves, take their crosses, and follow him?
- Read Philippians 2:5-11. What specific characteristics and attitudes does Christ demonstrate in this passage? What does obedience to God's will cost Jesus? In turn, what was God's response to Jesus' willful obedience?
- Read the excerpt below. What part of this quote stands out to you the most? Why? How would you define self-denial when it comes to living the Christian life? How does Bonhoeffer frame the relationship between our worship of Jesus and our ability to endure hardship?
- In what ways do you find it difficult to surrender your life to a suffering Messiah? Why? Are there times when you exhibit behaviors or attitudes that betray a misguided understanding of the role of suffering in the Christian life? How might a right understanding of suffering embolden you to faithfully engage in the pains and struggles of those around you?

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**EXCERPT FROM:** *The Cost of Discipleship*

**BY:** Dietrich Bonhoeffer

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"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself." The disciple must say to himself the same words Peter said of Christ when he denied him: "I know not this man." Self-denial is never just a series of isolated acts of mortification or asceticism. It is not suicide, for there is an element of self-will even in that. To deny oneself is to be aware only of Christ and no more of self, to see only him who goes before and no more the road which is too hard for us. Once more, all that self-denial can say is: "He leads the way, keep close to Him."