

# Jesus First!

## “The CODE” Series – Part 01

### **A 15 Minute Study Guide- Read Mark 8:31-38**

1. Jesus told Peter that his opinion and rebuke of Christ was born from a “*human point of view*”. How does your “*human view*” cloud your view of Christ and shape your responses.
2. The cross was an emblem of “death”. The instructions to take up the cross is an invitation to put self to death as we put Jesus first in our lives. What is the most recent occasion when you put yourself second and Christ first? What was the outcome and How do you feel about that decision today?
3. Most can identify with Peter’s perspective. In what area of your life are you concerned that you may fail to demonstrate that Jesus is first in your life? Write out a prayer to the Father concerning this issue.

### **A Fuller Study Guide-**

A group study connection question: Who brings out the worst in you? Why?

#### **Introduction:**

As I enter into my 65<sup>th</sup> year of life, I have found it easier to clean out my closet and storage boxes of things that I have collected and simply give them away. Each time I do so, I reflect on a period of my life when I gave these things a priority and importance in my life, and just couldn’t part with them. It seems that time has changed my priorities. Read the following story for another example of changing priorities:

*A man looking for a place to eat, searched the Yellow Pages and found an entry for a place called **Church of God Grill**. The peculiar name aroused his curiosity and he dialed the number. A man answered with a cheery, “Hello! Church of God Grill!”*

*The man asked how that restaurant had been given such an unusual name, and the man said: “Well, we had a little Christian mission down here, and we started selling chicken dinners after church on Sunday to help pay the bills. Well, people liked the chicken, and we did such a good business, that eventually we cut back on the church service. After a while we just closed down the church altogether and kept on serving chicken dinners. We kept the name we started with, and that’s **Church of God Grill**.”*

What are your first thoughts after reading this story?

How did their priorities change and speculate on why this happened?

What do you wish they had done differently?

In our study of our Core Values (The CODE) at GH Church, the first is simply stated as “**Jesus First**”. This value is expanded with this statement: “*Jesus is first in everything! We trust His Word as truth, listen to His Holy Spirit, follow His lead, and honor Him in all we do*”.

The following text speaks to what it looks like when we commit ourselves to the value that Jesus is to be first in my life:

Mark 8:31 Then Jesus began to tell them that the Son of Man must suffer many terrible things and be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but three days later He would rise from the dead.

Mark 8:32 As He talked about this openly with His disciples, Peter took Him aside and began to reprimand Him for saying such things.

Mark 8:33 Jesus turned around and looked at His disciples, then reprimanded Peter. "Get away from Me, Satan!" He said. "You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God's."

Mark 8:34 Then, calling the crowd to join His disciples, He said, "If any of you wants to be My follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow Me.

Mark 8:35 If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for My sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it.

Mark 8:36 And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?

Mark 8:37 Is anything worth more than your soul?

Mark 8:38 If anyone is ashamed of Me and My message in these adulterous and sinful days, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when He returns in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

Why did Jesus feel the need to share with His disciples the future events of His death and resurrection?

Jesus disapproved of Peter's response. What would be a more appropriate response to this news?

Jesus gives clear instructions on how we put Him first, instead of our wisdom, fears, opinions. Let's look at each one and discuss:

1. *"Turn from your selfish way"*. How can we determine that our decisions and actions are more driven by our "selfishness", rather than based on a Jesus First value?
2. *"Take up your cross"*. What are common areas of our life that we must put to death in order to put Jesus First? Can you identify a "cross" that you have refused to carry? What needs to happen for you to put that issue "to death"?
3. *"Follow Me"*. If someone asks you to explain what it means to "follow Christ", what would you say?
4. How does "losing your life (verse 35), relate to making Jesus first in our life?
5. Reading verse 38 again, do you think it is possible to demonstrate a shame for Christ and the gospel whenever we clearly allow our desires, our abilities, and our opinions to supersede the Jesus First value? Why or why not?

### **Homework:**

Is there a "Peter" moment in your life, where you said or reacted badly because Jesus was not your FIRST priority? What was happening that made you focus on self? What steps do you need to take to insure that He is first moving forward?