

**Uncomfortable: The Awkward and Essential
Challenge of Christian Community
Week 2: Uncomfortable Cross**

TALK IT OVER

BIG IDEA OF THE MESSAGE:

We should expect uncomfortableness because the crucifixion and what Jesus did for us on the cross are at the center of our faith. We should look to Jesus as an example for how to deny ourselves and take up our crosses, for it's in His work that we find true comfort.

KEY POINTS & SCRIPTURES

- 1. At the center of the Christian faith is the cross—an execution device.**
- 2. Following Jesus means denying ourselves and taking up our own crosses.**
- 3. Jesus provides the ultimate example.**

Mark 8:34, 1 Peter 4:12-13

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Day 1: Mark 8:34

Day 2: 1 Peter 4:12-13

Day 3: Galatians 5:24

Day 4: Colossians 3:1

Day 5: Philippians 3:7-10

Day 6: Romans 6:4-6

Day 7: 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

Start talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- What do you do when someone says something you don't want to hear?

Start thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- Read Mark 8:31-38. How would you paraphrase what Jesus says in verse 34?
- In verse 34, who did Jesus include in this invitation?
- In the sermon, Pastor Matthew shared a few examples (loss of being your own boss, loss of pride, loss of being cool). What are some other examples of what it means to deny one's self and take up one's cross?

Start sharing. Choose some questions to create openness.

- In Mark 8:34, Jesus says if anyone would follow Him, they *must* take up their cross. In other words, it's not optional. What examples have you seen in American Christianity of people trying to make it optional?
- What does it mean for us to lose our lives for Jesus' sake (v. 35)? What other things do people lose their lives for? What do those things promise? What do they ultimately deliver?
- What gets in the way of us taking up our cross and losing our lives for Jesus' sake?

Start praying. Be bold and pray with power.

Almighty God, You sent Your Son, Jesus Christ, to seek and save the lost—a mission that took Him to the cross for us. As we strive to follow Him, help us every day to take up our cross and to lay ourselves down at His feet. When we get distracted and leave our cross behind, call us back to repentance and enable us by Your Holy Spirit to take it up once more as we follow Him. In Jesus' name, amen.

Start doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Deny yourself. Following Jesus means putting God and others first. In what area of your life might you need to practice "denying yourself" so that you can better follow Jesus?
- Take up your cross. We're called to take up our cross or embrace the discomfort that comes with following Jesus—a path that goes against the world. What discomfort might you be avoiding that God is inviting you to embrace?
- Follow Jesus. Jesus extends us all an invitation to follow Him every day. Pray that the Holy Spirit would help you on that journey as you begin each day.