

# Island Group Discussion Guide

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Week of July 27, 2025

**BOOK OF MARK • WEEK 36**

**A QUESTION OF AUTHORITY • MARK 11:27-33**

## OPENING PRAYER TIME

Begin your meeting with 10-15 minutes of prayer using these prompts:

- Thank God for His presence with us today and His desire to work in our hearts
- Ask the Holy Spirit to guide our discussion and open our minds to His truth
- Pray for humble hearts that are willing to submit to Jesus' authority
- Invite Jesus to reveal areas where we need to surrender control to Him
- Ask for courage to be honest about where we resist His leadership
- Pray for our church to be a place where Christ's authority is welcomed and celebrated

## DISCUSSION

- **Ice breaker:** Have you ever been in a situation where someone asked you "Who do you think you are?" How did that make you feel, and how did you respond?
- **Read Mark 11:27-28.** What is your initial impression of the religious leaders' question to Jesus? What do you think they were really trying to accomplish?
- Pastor Charlie explained that this confrontation happened on Tuesday morning of Passion Week, right after Jesus had cleansed the temple and cursed the fig tree. How does this context help us understand why the leaders were challenging Jesus now?
- The religious leaders who came to Jesus weren't just random people - they were "the chief priests and the scribes and the elders," representing the full power structure of Israel. Why do you think they came as a group rather than individually?
- Pastor Charlie said, "*When Jesus threatens our comfort, we oftentimes start questioning his authority.*" How have you seen this play out in your own life or in the lives of others?
- **Read Mark 11:29-30.** Instead of directly answering their question, Jesus asks them about John the Baptist's authority. Why do you think Jesus responded this way rather than simply telling them where His authority came from?
- **Read Mark 1:4-5.** Pastor Charlie noted that many of the priests had likely been baptized by John when he first appeared. How does this background make their current position even more problematic?



- **Read Mark 11:31-32.** The religious leaders had an internal debate about how to answer Jesus. What were they afraid would happen if they answered either way?
- **Read Luke 20:6 and Proverbs 29:25.** How were these leaders demonstrating the truth of this proverb in a negative way?
- Pastor Charlie observed: *"Fear of God is healthy and leads to righteousness. Fear of man is dangerous and leads to sin."* **Application question:** What situations in your life right now are you approaching with fear of man rather than fear of God?
- **Read Mark 11:33.** The leaders finally answered, "We do not know." Pastor Charlie said they *"weren't being honest - they were dodging the question!"* Where in your life might you be giving Jesus the "I don't know" answer when you actually do know what He's asking of you?
- Even though Jesus said He wouldn't answer their question, Pastor Charlie pointed out that He actually had answered it by connecting His authority to John the Baptist's. **Application question:** How does understanding that Jesus' authority comes from heaven change the way you should respond to His teachings?
- Pastor Charlie shared the story about hiking Grandfather Mountain with his son Zach, where they almost tried to jump across a dangerous gap before discovering there was a safe path around the rock. How does this illustrate the way *"Jesus offers us a better path than we see for ourselves"*?
- Pastor Charlie made this important distinction: *"Following Jesus doesn't mean talking about the path. It means taking the next step."* **Application question:** In what areas of your life are you talking about following Jesus rather than actually taking steps to follow Him?
- Pastor Charlie said, *"Jesus can't be Lord of some things in our life. He's either Lord of it all or not at all."* Why won't Jesus accept partial surrender from us? How does this challenge the way many people approach their relationship with Him?
- Pastor Charlie's homework included praying this prayer: *"God, where am I not letting you have authority in my life? Show me."* He was confident that God will answer this prayer. **Application question:** Are you willing to pray this prayer? What area do you think God might want to address in your life?
- Pastor Charlie concluded: *"You can talk about following Jesus for your whole life, or you can actually follow him."* **Application question:** What's one specific area where you need to stop saying "I don't know" and start letting Jesus have authority? What will your first step be this week?

## CLOSING PRAYER TIME

Share prayer requests and concerns with the group. Be sure to write these down and send them to all group members so everyone can pray throughout the week, including those who were absent today.