



Small Group Guide: [Acknowledging Jesus](#)

Based on Matthew 10:24-39 || Pastor Justin Knowls

Key Scripture

"Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven." — Matthew 10:32-33

Summary of Main Points

1. **Expected Opposition** - If they misunderstood Jesus, they'll misunderstand us. Following Jesus doesn't guarantee approval; it guarantees resemblance.
2. **Don't Be Afraid (3x)** - Jesus repeats this phrase three times, addressing our fear of rejection, reminding us of our security in the Father, and reframing eternity vs. reputation.
3. **Public Acknowledgment** - Private belief was never meant to stay private. Faith moves from internal to external, from whispered to proclaimed.
4. **Supreme Allegiance** - Jesus isn't an addition to our lives; He reshapes everything. He must be Lord over all other priorities and relationships.
5. **Our Responsibility** - We're not responsible for saving people, but we ARE responsible for acknowledging Jesus and extending invitations.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. **Read Matthew 10:24-39 together.** What stands out to you most from this passage? What makes you uncomfortable?
2. Jesus uses three different images: Beelzebul (insult), sparrows (care), and the sword (division). What does each teach us about following Him publicly?
3. Why do you think Jesus repeats "do not be afraid" three times? What different fears does He address in each instance?
4. **Be honest:** When have you had a clear opportunity to share about Jesus but stayed silent? What held you back in that moment?
5. Pastor Justing states: "We're not afraid of rejection—we're addicted to approval." How does this resonate with your experience? Where do you most struggle with needing approval?
6. **"When eternity gets bigger, fear gets smaller."** How does keeping an eternal perspective change the way you view awkward conversations about faith?

7. The sermon distinguishes between being responsible for *saving* people versus *acknowledging* Jesus. How does understanding this difference lift pressure off you?
8. Jesus says following Him can create division even within families (v. 35-37). How do we balance honoring relationships while maintaining Jesus as our supreme allegiance?
9. What's the difference between being "obnoxious" about faith and being "clear" about faith? How can we acknowledge Jesus without being pushy?
10. **Reflect on this statement:** "What if the only thing standing between your neighbor/coworker/family member and Jesus is your silence?" How does that sit with you?

Practical Applications

Name One Person:

- Think of ONE specific person in your life who doesn't know Jesus
- Write their name down (in your phone, journal, or Bible)
- Pray for them every day this week
- Ask God for an opportunity to invite them to Easter or share your faith
- Follow through when the opportunity comes

Pair up with someone in your group:

- Share the name of the person you're praying for
- Commit to praying for each other's "one person" this week
- Text each other midweek for encouragement
- Share what happens at next week's group meeting

Practice some simple ways to acknowledge Jesus this week:

- **"Can I pray for you about that?"** - When someone shares something heavy
- **"Jesus really helped me through something similar..."** - When appropriate in conversation
- **"We're having Easter at our church—would you want to come with me?"** - Direct invitation
- **"My faith is really important to me..."** - Simple acknowledgment in natural conversation

"What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs." — Matthew 10:27