

## Study Guide – “Follow the Leader”, *from 5-21-2017*

### Warming Up

What are some examples of people following a good leader, and some of them following a bad leader? This time in our history is called, “The Post-Christian Era.” Why do you think so many people follow other leaders, other than the only Leader who is worthy to be followed? What caused this cultural shift in our nation? What is the answer, the solution?

### Provision – Being Organized Isn’t OCD

God used the first three days of creation to make environments for the creations of the second three days, respectively. Jesus gave His disciples detailed instructions about how to organize the five thousand people that He fed with five loaves and two fishes (in ranks on the green grass, in hundreds, fifties...) Early churches ordained pastors, elders, and deacons. Why do you think some people criticize those who are well organized, and even say that they have a disorder? (Perhaps they have “order” and not “disorder.”)

Have you ever heard the hymn that says, “I have decided to follow Jesus”? Did you ever consider that this hymn may not mean to follow Him only into an act of salvation, but also to follow Him every day? Pastor Bobby said, “It’s your responsibility to follow Jesus.” Philippians 2:12-13 tells each of us to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” Churches need to have well-organized programs to interest and disciple possible converts; but, as Pastor Bobby pointed out, if the person doesn’t commit to “follow-up”, there will be no success. (It’s not the gym’s fault if you don’t go.) Likewise, as he pointed out, Jesus’ follow-up program was, “Follow Me.” A striking example was given in Mark 10: 17-22. If Jesus didn’t follow-up after the rich young ruler, whom He loved, why do many churches spend so much energy chasing after people who are not ready to follow Jesus? Is the church failing at following-up, or are some people simply failing to follow for themselves? Do these thoughts change the way you think about pursuing people who are not interested at the time? Does this explanation cause you to trust God more with their salvation? Discuss.

As disciples of Christ, are you willing to ask someone to follow you? Is the fear of your own imperfections making you timid? Is it easier to direct them to someone else or to a discipleship program? As Pastor Bobby pointed out, “Disciples don’t just know what the leader knows, they do what the leaders do.” Isn’t this the crux of the difference between “witnessing” and “being a witness”? Share the pressures of “being” a witness, and remember, “...God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” 2 Timothy 1:7

## **True Disciples Follow Jesus in Position**

Much more than any other description, God refers to the followers of Jesus as His “children.” The position of being a child of God is so powerfully seen in Matthew 11:11, where Jesus says, “Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” What Jesus is saying here is that no one in the Old Testament is greater in God’s kingdom than the least of the children of God who follow Jesus. Does it shock you that you are greater than John the Baptist, Moses, Abraham, David, etc.? Did you do something to work to become greater, or are you just in the “position” of being a child of God?

Romans 8:16 reads, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.” The Holy Spirit, Who lives inside of us, confirms that we are his children; therefore, we have all of the rights of children, not hired help. And this position is not anything about which we can boast. As Pastor Bobby pointed out, our position with God is “inherited, not merited.” How does it make you feel that God loved you before you loved Him, simply because you are His child? How different is this from having to work for a position, like on the job? How powerful is it to “be” a child of God, one who will inherit an eternal reward for which you have not worked? Discuss.

## **True Disciples Follow Jesus in Submission**

Many people consider being submissive as negative, humiliating, and even embarrassing. So, what do you think about the truth that Jesus made Himself totally submissive to the Father. Check out these words of Jesus: John 4:34, 5:19, 5:30, and 6:38. What is the barrier that keeps some people from being willing, as Jesus was, to submit to God’s will? Why is being submissive so difficult for some people? What are ways that we can know the will of God?

## **Conclusion - True Disciples - Follow Jesus in His Mission**

Luke 19:10 tells us, “...for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

How do we join His mission? We work outwardly by preaching the gospel to all nations. – seeking the lost. We work inwardly by connecting with other believers. We work upward by connecting with God’s mission. As Pastor Bobby pointed out, you can study how to change diapers, but you’re not going to be following the mission of Jesus until you change them yourself (symbolically!). Is there a ministry in our church, or in your private life, in which your involvement would cause you to grow and change to become more like Jesus? Think about it. Jesus came to the world. We are in the world. He didn’t just teach from afar, or wait for someone else to do it. He came to this sin-infected world. Is His mission your mission? After all, from the beginning, we were created in His image.