

THE FOLLOWER PART 1

FOLLOW ME

EVERYONE FOLLOWS SOMEONE OR SOMETHING

In our fast-paced, constantly connected world, the question isn't whether we follow but who or what we choose to follow. As we embark on this faith journey, we will explore what it truly means to follow Jesus. What does it look like to align our lives with His teachings and example? We will discover the transformative power of being a diligent, intentional apprentice of Christ and how this decision shapes our purpose, relationships, and, ultimately, our destiny.

THE NEW RABBI

2000 years ago, working outside the world of social media and its vocabulary, a Jewish rabbi named Jesus offered a profound, meaningful invitation when he said, "Come, follow me!"

In saying these three words, Jesus invited everyone and anyone to follow Him.

Jesus did everything with the few to show how he feels about all of us. Eg. Baptism

He invited us into a lifestyle, a rhythm of practices and disciplines, and a way of thinking and behaving that would transform our lives. He wasn't asking us to join a group or take on membership in a club. They would have to transform themselves if they wanted to transform the world.

He was asking them to step into a way of life.

Over the past 2,000 years, countless individuals have accepted His invitation, leading to profound change and transformation. These followers have not only transformed their own lives and the lives of those around them, but they have also shaped the course of history and influenced the future of our world.”

Following Jesus can change your life, too.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FOLLOW JESUS?

“Following Jesus” - recognize this language if you have been in church...

But what does following Jesus mean?

Does it mean we follow some rules or values called Christianity? Or go to Church on Sunday? Or that we have to try hard to be a good person.

How do we follow Jesus in the modern world where we are all so busy and distracted by our devices?

In this world, burnout is a right of passage, and anxiety is

part of who we have to be. We live in cities where there are thousands of people around us with different world views, values, and morals.

Over the next 8 weeks = primer of spiritual formation.
A lifelong journey of apprenticeship to Jesus.
We have to have the discipline if we wish to be disciples.
We can all take the practices of Jesus more seriously in our lives.

JESUS CALLS HIS FIRST FOLLOWERS

One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" And they left their nets at once and followed him. A little farther up the shore Jesus saw Zebedee's sons, James and John, in a boat repairing their nets. He called them at once, and they also followed him, leaving their father, Zebedee, in the boat with the hired men.

—Mark 1:16-20

The disciples put down, surrendered everything they knew, and did that created some stability in their lives, and put it down...

Would you do the same? Jesus, with no money and seemingly no strategy, organization, or references, a

complete stranger, looks at these men and calls them to Follow Him...

What would make Simon, Andrew, James, and John drop everything?

FIRST CENTURY RABBI'S

Rabbi - Master or Teacher - Travel from city to city, not just teaching the TORAH or the Bible as the Jewish nation had it in the precious scrolls, but about a life with God.

Talmidean: selected people would form groups around the rabi who had chosen them and follow them from place to place to learn from their teachings.

Talmid -learner or student or follower. The best word for it, though, is an apprentice.

As a talmid, you were not engaging in some informational process; you were surrendering everything you were to experience transformation. You were not just learning something; you were growing to become someone.

When you were selected to be an apprentice to a master, you were the best of the best!

JEWISH SCHOOL

When you were five, you started school. You were not in elementary school; you were in the house of the book (Bet

Sepher). From ages five to twelve, you memorized the first five books of the Bible.

After Bet Sepher, many students would go home to learn to work in the fields and support their families.

The best of the best were chosen to continue to learn and study at the Bet Midrash, where they studied the whole of the Old Testament. By the time they were 17, they knew the entire OT from memory. These classes were held in rooms off the side of their local synagogue, and their teachers were called the Scribes.

Once they finished Bet Midrash, most of the students were done. School was over, and it was time to get on with building their lives, getting married, and settling down to the busyness of Jewish life.

THE VERY BEST

The very best would be selected by a Rabbi “Come Follow Me.”

Go on to apprentice to a rabbi—three primary areas of their transformation.

1. To be with your Rabbi - (Leave family to follow 24/7), Walk, eat, and sleep.
2. Become like Your Rabbi - Be with him to imitate them. Be like them.

3. Do as your rabbi did. The long process of your apprenticeship was to become a rabbi and teach others about a life with God.

One day, your rabbi would turn to you and say something like, “OK, I think it is time—go and make disciples.”

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A DISCIPLE

To BE, BECOME, DO...

To follow Jesus is to rearrange your life of the three elements of being an intentional apprentice to Jesus.

Be

Like

Do

1. To BE with Jesus...

Then he appointed twelve of them and called them his apostles. They were to accompany him, and he would send them out to preach...

—Mark 3:14

To spend every possible moment in awareness, orientation, and connection to Him.

“A familiar friendship with Jesus.” - Dutch Monk Thomas Kempis

I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me.

—John 15:15

Through his friendship, we are connected to the incredible dynamic of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit all day long, in this ecosystem of love, justice, mercy, and grace.

Jesus called this: ABIDING.

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

—John 15:4

Constant Conscious Communion.

—- AW Tozer

The first and most important thing we can and must do is to keep God before our minds.

—- Dallas Willard

To direct and redirect our minds towards Jesus.

New grace-filled habits replace distractions and habits that keep us from thinking about Jesus. As these new grace habits have us abiding in Jesus, our lives begin to transform.

2. To become LIKE Jesus

To think, feel, talk, live, and love like Jesus.

A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.

—*Luke 6:40*

Fully or perfectly trained, this is a process. None of us can become like Jesus overnight or in an instant.

Training and apprenticeship are the same thing: they are spiritual formation—the process by which one’s inner man or woman is transformed to be like Jesus himself.

Expressed through you. You becoming more loving, joyful, peaceful, and kind.

3. To DO as he did...

Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!”

—*Matthew 4:19*

Jesus tells the story of Luke 15 - of some lost things that need to be caught again, gathered back like fish in nets.

Lost Sheep - Shepherd (1-99)

Lost Coin - Women sweeps to find it

Lost son - Dad who waits to find him

We watch Jesus look for the one sheep, the coin, the lost son; we even go with him to look, but we forget that we are to become like him and do as he does...

Preaching, Teaching, serving, healing, prophesying and deliverance.

It's not just a set of moral values or a theological philosophy... it's a way of life based on Jesus himself.

To follow Jesus is to intentionally apprentice under Him and practice his ways. It is a lifelong spiritual journey of transformation.

Not Salvation - but training transformation

Put it down...

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

—Matthew 16:24

SURRENDERED TO BE TRANSFORMED

Faith is built out of surrendering yourself to be with him, to become like him, and to do as he does.

Learning the rhythms of living a life that fulfills the genuine desire behind Jesus invitation: Know, Think, Do

Surrender from who you are to become who he is...

After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after

the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me." Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath.

—John 5:1-9

States of mind that makes us sick and prevents us from following.

Blind Lamé Paralyzed...

They were all disabled.

Blind - they have no vision of where they are going

Lamé - not been the same since being hurt

Paralyzed - an area of life that is stagnated without any evidence of transformation or progression.

Following Jesus is not about being in a community that's content with complacency.

We sometimes created a community of blind, hurting, complacent, albeit saved people. They hung out together in a specific building and place, waiting for a miracle...

Jesus doesn't go ahead of you to show you where you will end up; he goes ahead of you to show you how to get there.

He walks through our circumstances so that we will follow him through them.

Surrender - Faith - Wonder - Life...

Jesus did not seek out the best of the best - he transformed frailty into divine if you follow him. If you will develop intentional practices to be with him, become like him, and do as he does.

He asks everyone to be his followers... surrender your world to his?