

Who Are You Following? – Part 1

Matthew 4:18–19, 21

*18 And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. 19 And he saith unto them, **Follow me**, and I will make you fishers of men. 21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and **he called them**.*

Jesus invited these men to “follow Him.” How are we to understand this invitation? (Some view this command to “follow” in the same sense we view following someone on social media. Today when you talk about “following” someone on social media you are talking about staying up-to-date with everything their doing. It’s about fully *knowing* what they are doing. But is this what Jesus meant when He said “follow me”? Was He telling them to follow Him so they would **know** what He was doing (or saying) so they could, in turn, tell others about it?

Others view this command to “follow” in the sense of going wherever another person goes. Back in the day when you talked about “following” someone, you probably meant putting a “tail” on them (i.e. staying close and not letting them out of your sight). But is this what Jesus meant when He said “follow me”? Was He telling them to follow Him by simply **going** wherever He went?)

No. Following the Lord doesn’t mean either of these things. Following Jesus is not simply about **knowing** or **going**. Following Jesus is about **becoming** a DISCIPLE.

DISCIPLE

A disciple is someone who devotes themselves to their teacher to learn from them so that they might become like them.

There are a lot of people who view discipleship the way they view membership. They believe they’re being a good member because they *know* what the church is doing or what Pastor has been saying at any given time. Or, they think they’re a good member because they go wherever the Pastor goes or get involved with whatever the church is doing.

However, discipleship is not simply about knowing what Christ said or going where we think He went (i.e. church, nursing homes, soup kitchens, mission fields, etc). Instead, it’s about walking like He walked. Don’t be a say-whatever-Jesus-said disciple. Neither be a go-whenever-Jesus-went disciple. Be a do-whatever-Jesus-did disciple!

Now, in order to accomplish this, it's going to take some TIME. When I say that it will take some time, I don't *just* mean that it will take *time* to happen. I mean it will take an investment of *your* time to happen!

It's interesting to note that when Jesus gave this command to "follow" Him (be a disciple), He gave it to men with not a lot of time on their hands! This tells us that discipleship is not something we "get around" to or try to work into our schedule.

Luke 9:59–62

*⁵⁹ And he said unto another, **Follow me**. But he said, Lord, **suffer me first to go and bury my father**. ⁶⁰ Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. ⁶¹ And another also said, Lord, **I will follow thee**; but **let me first go bid them farewell**, which are at home at my house. ⁶² And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is **fit** for the kingdom of God.*

Jesus had zero tolerance for any excuse why a person couldn't follow Him. In fact, anyone making excuses why they can't follow Him is not fit for discipleship!

Not only did the early disciples answer the call, but they answered (or followed) immediately!

Matthew 4:20, 22

*²⁰ And they **straightway** left their nets, and followed him. ²² And they **immediately** left the ship and their father, and **followed him**.*

The words "straightway" and "immediately" means **without delay or hesitation**. A true disciple responds *promptly*, and not *eventually*! (If you're someone who *debates* or *hesitates* to respond to a command from the Lord, then you're not *following* Him!)

Philippians 3:12

*¹² Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but **I follow after**, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*

This word "follow" means **to move energetically and quickly towards an objective** (i.e. to "press" towards).

Philippians 3:14

*¹⁴ I **press toward** the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

When it comes to “following” the Lord, there can’t be any hesitation or delays. Being a true follower of God requires haste and eagerness.

Now, while it’s important that we learn to “follow” must be careful not to follow just ANYONE or even EVERYONE!

1 Corinthians 4:15, 16

*¹⁵ For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, **yet have ye not many fathers**: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. ¹⁶ Wherefore I beseech you, **be ye followers of me**.*

While we may have many who we allow to instruct or teach us, there shouldn’t be many we allow to father us.

(Instructors are tutors. They give us information. However, not all information is safe to follow. This is why we have fathers. Fathers give us our *traditions*. They show us what information we need to follow and how to practice it.)

1 Corinthians 4:17

*¹⁷ For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, **who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways** which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.*

True ‘sons’ (followers) are looking to blaze new paths, or go into places no one has ever gone before. Instead, ‘sons’ (followers) are looking for the path that has been laid by their ‘father.’

Jeremiah 6:16, 17

*¹⁶ Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and **ask for the old paths**, where is the good way, **and walk therein**, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, **We will not walk therein**. ¹⁷ Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, **We will not hearken**.*

Not only are many not walking in the paths that have been laid by our forefathers, but many are also following the wrong leaders. Not everyone is qualified to be a father (leader)!

Matthew 23:1–3

*1 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, 2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: 3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; **but do not ye after their works:** for they say, and do not.*

Some people are safe to listen to, but not to follow! In fact, following them will inevitably be fatal!

Matthew 15:12, 14

*12 Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? 14 Let them alone: they be **blind leaders** of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, **both shall fall into the ditch.***

In this passage, Jesus teaches that a man must be careful who he chooses to follow. Following the wrong person can be harmful and even fatal!

2 Peter 2:1–3

*1 But there were **false prophets** also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. 2 And **many shall follow their pernicious ways;** by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. 3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: **whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not,** and their damnation slumbereth not.*

Revelation 2:18–22

*18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; 19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. 20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because **thou sufferest that woman Jezebel,** which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. 21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. 22 Behold, **I will cast her into a bed, and them** that commit adultery with her **into great tribulation,** except they repent of their deeds.*

Notice that simply following the wrong person puts you in danger of receiving their judgment and fate. (Although the Lord commended the church at Thyatira for their love and for their service, they were rebuked for listening and following the wrong people!)

Some people are good members, but their problem is they keep joining and following the wrong pastor. Some people are good friends, but their problem is they have a tendency to befriend the wrong people. Some people are good wives and good husbands, but their problem is they keep marrying the wrong people!

Again, I ask you, "Who are you FOLLOWING?"