



Follow

PART FIVE: NEXT STEPS

Religion says, *Change and you can join us.* Jesus says, *Join us and you will change.* There's a huge difference. Jesus doesn't expect you to be perfect. He just wants you to follow him. Being a sinner doesn't disqualify you from following him. Being an unbeliever doesn't disqualify you from following him. In fact, following almost always begins with a sinner and unbeliever taking one small step.

BIG IDEA: You don't have to make a leap of faith. Just take a next step.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you ever feel like following Jesus is like competing in the long jump in track & field? Like Jesus is asking us to make a HUGE leap of faith and take one giant step? From knowing nothing about the Bible to knowing everything? To obeying everything?
2. Have you ever been discouraged feeling like Christianity is a giant leap that maybe you can't make?
3. Talk about a major goal you've achieved in your life. When you first set that goal for yourself, did it feel unachievable? How did you go about pursuing it?
4. Have you ever met a Christian whose faith impressed and intimidated you? How did that person influence your view of Christianity? How did he or she influence your view of your own faith?
5. On the first week of this series, you were challenged to answer the question, *Am I following Jesus?* As you thought about that question, where did it lead you?
6. What risks do you associate with following Jesus? How do those risks cause you to hesitate?
7. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Matthew 4:18-22.*

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him. Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Matthew 4:18-22 (NIV)

8. What invitations does Jesus give to these fishermen? What seems unusual about their response?
9. When you read Matthew's account about following Jesus, it almost seems like the disciples act irresponsibly by following Jesus. They doesn't seem spiritual, they seem irresponsible. What prior knowledge of Jesus do you think they had? (*see verses 13 & 17*) If you were Zebedee—James and John's Father—how might you have felt?
10. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Luke 5:1-11.*

One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, he saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

Luke 5:1-6 (NIV)

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.
Luke 5:7-11 (NIV)

11. What extra details does Luke give of this account that Matthew leaves out?
12. In the message, Chris talked about four stages of following Jesus:
 - Listening and learning;
 - Taking a small, inconvenient step;
 - Allowing Jesus to do something unusual in one area of your life; and
 - Surrendering all aspects of your life to him.

Which stage best describes where you are right now? Explain.

13. Based on where you are right now, what is your next step in following Jesus? What can this group do to support you?
14. Spiritually, are you going to fish or cut bait? How soon?

MOVING FORWARD

The question isn't where you are on some continuum of spiritual maturity. The question is, *Are you following Jesus?* That doesn't mean radical change all at once. It means taking a next step. Whatever *your* next step is, take it. Whatever your point of challenge right now, that's where God wants to work in your life.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." Matthew 4:19

