

How to Christian: Follow Me
The 6 Marks of the Disciple
John 1:43-46
Week of March 7

In this 7-week series, 'How to Christian,' we will be looking at the six marks of the disciple that Jesus spoke clearly about. Jesus said that his followers or 'disciples,' would be marked by the following behaviors: They would follow Jesus; they would deny themselves; they would hold to Jesus' teachings; they would love others, they would bear fruit in keeping with who they were in Christ, and they would make disciples themselves. All these behaviors would speak to their new identity in Christ.

As we think of these marks, its important to remember that these characteristics were not behaviors to be forced. We'll find in the text that these came from relationship with Jesus. I can't make myself 'bear much fruit' for Christ. It's like telling an apple tree to produce an apple on command. The apple comes from *who the apple tree inherently IS*. Who I am is constantly changing as I grow closer and closer to Jesus.

As we are changed by our practices—prayer, walking in faith, listening to the Word, meditating, just to name a few—the Spirit changes who we are on the inside. THEN....we will begin to see that we are loving others, bearing fruit, and denying ourselves. We are not alone in this work—the Spirit is within us, doing it for us as we walk in obedience.

We have this source of power, within us, as believers. The Spirit lives inside us. And we can always ask for the change we want to see in ourselves. He is so faithful to answer that call for change. 'Lord, I believe, help me in my unbelief!' I can't count the number of times I have asked God to change my heart when it wasn't going the right direction. You can too. The only person that wants your heart change more than you-is the Spirit himself!

*As you enter prayer now, take a moment to settle your mind. Put aside your concerns and what needs to get done today, or what didn't get done today. Take a slow, deep breath. Center yourself in His Peace. He is the Alpha and Omega. The Beginning and End. You are found in Him.
Be Still.*

Pause and Pray.

Jesus, I am here because I want to experience You. As I meditate on this passage, draw to mind those things that You would have me become more aware of. Center my heart and mind on Yourself. Use your Word to draw my heart to You. Amen.

Our reading today is from John 1:43-46.

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, “Follow me.”

⁴⁴ Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

⁴⁶ “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked.

“Come and see,” said Philip.

REFLECT.

The rabbinical experience was so different from anything that we experience today in the world of education. For the Jews, not knowing the Torah, their Scriptures, had meant grave consequences for them as a people. Because of this, their dedication to the Scriptures and devotion to study was unlike anything we know today. Their children were schooled in the Scripture, they could recite it—they poured over it—and then the most astute students would be chosen to go on to deeper study, and eventually would be called by a Rabbi. These students really did EVERYTHING with their Rabbi. Ate together, studied together, every waking moment—together. In their world, your relationship with your Rabbi was literally closer than family. If you were chosen by a rabbi, he was responsible for you—more responsible for you than your parents were.

Men like Phillip and Nathanael had not been chosen as students. They had returned to the working world, to do the work of their fathers, to learn a trade. When Jesus called them—what an opportunity. To sit at the feet of the Rabbi. To do everything with Him, and to learn and live out His teachings.

Like the disciples, Jesus has looked at each of us and said, “Follow Me.” It is a great privilege. It also does have a cost. As you consider how you are following Christ right now, meditate on the many ways that it is a privilege. PAUSE.

Take a moment to share your gratitude with the Lord for the many ways following Him is a blessing. PAUSE.

It’s not clear from the New Testament what kinds of cost the disciples paid early on in their relationships with Jesus. We know they left jobs and families behind, but we don’t know how long, or how much time they spent away from their families, or the details of the sacrifices they made. We do know however that in the long term, they would all pay very high prices, including their lives. Imprisonment. Torture. Starvation. Suffering.

Each though, refused to back down about the truth of who they knew Jesus to be. And their dedication is part of the reason we have a New Testament, and a body of believers called the church, today.

Is there an area of your life right now where your faith is going to cost you something? PAUSE.

Perhaps there is something that you need to give up, in order to get closer to Jesus? PAUSE.

PAUSE, PRAY AND ASK.

Lord, we want you and need you in our lives. Give us the tenacity to pursue you tirelessly as we should. You are so worthy of our whole lives, every nook and cranny. We lay down every area at your feet now. PAUSE.

That area that I am really struggling to hand over to you now—I name it before you and I ask you to speak into this challenge. Speak to my heart. How have I been deceived to think that this is more important than my walk with You? Speak to my heart. PAUSE.

YIELD.

We return to John 1:43-46.

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CLOSE IN PRAYER.

I love this prayer from the Theology of Work project. It is a wonderful reminder that Jesus is all around us, ready to work in and through us. If we aren't seeing Him at work, we need to step into His presence, walk closer, and look harder. He is there. The prayer was written by John V Taylor.

Lord Jesus Christ,
alive and at large in the world,
help me to follow and find you there today,
in the places where I work,
meet people,
spend money,
and make plans.
Take me as a disciple of your kingdom,
to see through your eyes,
and here the questions you are asking,
to welcome all others with your trust and truth,
and to change the things that contradict God's love,
by the power of the cross
and the freedom of your spirit.
Amen.