

# Following Jesus

## **FOLLOW JESUS . . . BECOME HIS DISCIPLE**

**Matthew 4:18-22**

- Today we're learning about becoming a disciple of Jesus and connecting to a *Life Group* - because aspiring "disciples of Jesus" will want to be involved in learning, fellowshiping, growing, worshiping, praying and serving with other Christians.
- "Disciple" is the Holy Spirit's favorite word in the New Testament for describing Christians, and it means someone who is a "learner" or a "follower."
- The first disciples were ordinary individuals who had previous encounters with Jesus (John 1:35-49), and who had dedicated their lives to following Jesus.
- "Calling the crowd to join His disciples, Jesus said, 'If any of you wants to be My follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow Me.'" (Mark 8:34)
- There was a big difference between the crowds that followed Jesus, and those who became His real disciples.
- **What does it take to "follow Jesus" and be His disciple in 2022?**

***Following Jesus And Being His Disciple Requires:***

### **GETTING INVOLVED IN FISHING FOR PEOPLE**

- "Jesus called out to them, 'Come, follow Me, and I will show you how to fish for people!'" (Matthew 4:19)
- "Fishing for people" involves using our time, abilities and resources to connect people to Jesus, bring them into His Church, and help them grow in their faith.
- We are "fishing for people" when we *Serve Others* through our Church.
  - We should regularly look for ways we can help and serve others because we care about them and because we want to connect them to Jesus.
  - Paul - "I have become a servant of everyone so that I can bring them to Christ." (1 Corinthians 9:19)
  - **What are ways I could be involved in serving people in the Church or world so that I can show them Christian love and help connect them to the Lord?**
- We are "fishing for people" when we *Share Jesus* with others.
  - While it's good to care for and serve others, they'll not spend eternity in Heaven with us unless they receive Jesus as their Savior.
  - Paul - "God gave us the courage to declare His good news to you boldly, even though we were surrounded by many who opposed us." (1 Thessalonians 2:2)

- We can share the “good news” about Jesus with people by: 1) sharing our faith stories with them, 2) giving them Christian materials or websites that will introduce them to the Christian faith, 3) inviting them to Church services or Life Groups, etc.
- **Who are some people that I should be “sharing Jesus” with?**
- We are “fishing for people” when we **Disciple** others.
  - Jesus - “Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you . . .” (Matthew 28:19-20)
  - **We disciple others by spending time with them, modeling real Christianity to them, sharing with them what we’ve learned and doing what we can to help them grow in their faith and relationship with the Lord.**
  - **Who are some people I should be discipling so they can grow in their faith?**
- We can “fish for people” by ourselves, but we will “catch” a lot more people when we are “fishing for people” with others (i.e. a Life Group).

**Following Jesus And Being His Disciple Involves:**

**RESPONDING IMMEDIATELY AND COMPLETELY TO THE LORD**

- “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.” (Matthew 4:19-20)
- To respond to the Lord we have to first **Hear From Him**.
  - The Lord speaks to us through His Word (Psalm 119:104-105), His Spirit (Acts 13:2), Dreams and Visions (Joel 2:28), Our Circumstances (Revelation 3:7) and other Believers.
  - “Don’t go to war without wise guidance; victory depends on having many advisers.” (Proverbs 24:6)
- To respond to the Lord we also have to be willing to **Obey Him**.
  - “Andrew and Peter left their nets at once and followed Him.” (Matthew 4:20)
  - **Real disciples of Jesus follow His instructions in their decisions and lives (John 8:31).**
  - “A little farther up the shore He saw two other brothers, James and John . . . repairing their nets. And He called them to come, too. They immediately followed Him, leaving the boat and their father behind.” (Matthew 4:21-22)
  - **Many people are waiting on the “right conditions” to become obedient to the Lord, but immediate obedience is the best step to take.**
  - “If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done.” (Ecclesiastes 11:4)
  - **The first disciples left their vocations to follow Jesus, which reminds us we also will have to give up some aspects of our lives to really follow the Lord.**
  - Jesus - “If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for My sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it.” (Mark 8:35)
  - **The call to follow Jesus is a call to surrender everything to be His disciple.**
  - “The only thing that Christianity cannot be is moderately important.” (C.S. Lewis)

- The Lord wants us to give 100% of our life to Him, so we must be careful not to allow work, play, sports, hobbies, friends, school, dating, pleasure, making money, having possessions or even our family to push the Lord out of “first place” in our life and keep us from being a real “disciple of Jesus.”
- **What excuses do I keep giving God for not fully obeying Him in my life?**
- *“In everything you do put God first, and He will direct you and crown your efforts with success.”* (Proverbs 3:6 LB)

**Following Jesus And Being His Disciple Requires:**

**SHARING LIFE WITH OTHER BELIEVERS**

- **Peter, Andrew, James and John didn’t just follow Jesus individually, but they joined in with others who were completely committed to following Jesus.**
- *“Jesus called His twelve disciples together . . . Here are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (also called Peter), then Andrew (Peter’s brother), James (son of Zebedee), John (James’s brother), Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew (the tax collector), James (son of Alphaeus), Thaddaeus, Simon (the zealot), Judas Iscariot (who later betrayed Him).”* (Matthew 10:1-4)
- **The four disciples in Matthew 4 joined in with others like we do in Life Groups, and they and other early Christians shared their lives together as followers of Jesus.**
- *“All the believers shared everything they had. They worshiped together at the Temple . . . , met in homes . . . and shared their meals with great joy and generosity”* (Acts 2:44, 46)
- **Disciples of Jesus share their Knowledge and Experiences with others.**
  - *“As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.”* (Proverbs 27:17)
  - **Everyone has some knowledge or experience that can benefit others.**
  - *“Learning is a social process that occurs through interpersonal interaction within a cooperative context. Individuals, working together, construct shared understandings and knowledge.”* - David Johnson
- **Disciples of Jesus share their Problems with others.**
  - **Everybody either has a problem, is a problem, or lives with a problem.**
  - *“Share each other’s burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.”* (Galatians 6:2)
- **Disciples of Jesus share their Abilities with others.**
  - *“God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well.”* (Romans 12:6)
  - **The abilities we have are a strong indication of how God wants to use us to encourage and serve others.**
  - *“A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.”* (1 Corinthians 12:7)
- **Disciples of Jesus share their Resources with others.**
  - *“All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had.”* (Acts 4:32)
- **Jesus’ first disciples probably would not have made it if they hadn’t shared their lives and forged such strong bonds with other believers.**
- *“There are no successful ‘Lone Ranger Christians.’”* (Dr Randy Millwood)

- ***What steps do I need to take to get involved in a small group with others so that I can really grow as a disciple of Jesus?***
- *“News about Jesus spread as far as Syria, and people soon began bringing to Him all who were sick. And whatever their sickness or disease, or if they were demon possessed or epileptic or paralyzed - He healed them all.” (Matthew 4:24)*
- **The people who became Jesus’ closest disciples and shared their lives with others got to see Him work His greatest miracles in the lives of people.**
- **Some people in that day were interested in being Jesus’ disciples, but were unwilling to make the commitment to follow Him wholeheartedly (John 6:60-66).**
- *“From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed Him. Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, ‘Are you also going to leave?’ Simon Peter replied, ‘Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God!’” (John 6:66-69)*
- ***What steps do I need to take to deepen my relationship with the Lord and become a real “disciple of Jesus”?***