



## FOLLOW JESUS - Every Member A Minister

As we continue on in this series on Following Jesus, we come now to the main mission that Jesus gave his followers, to make disciples.

This lesson can be very personally challenging, but also very fruitful as it calls participants to both be disciples and to make disciples.

Be sure to read the verse which is in the title graphic above.

### CONNECT

- Have you ever been fishing? Did you enjoy it? Why or why not?
- Are you a person who loves to go through all the instructions and follow them in detail or just jump into a project and only refer to the instructions as needed?
- Would you consider yourself to be more of a follower or a leader? Why?

You might point out that they are going to discover that discipleship requires both leading and following and that we will all learn to do both.

### THOUGHT

Discipleship means to be a follower of someone or to make a follower of someone. It is much more than just transferring information. Being a Christian is not just knowing about Jesus, it is about following him. We are not simply to go to church or hear about God, we are to set aside our own agendas and lives to serve and follow him. This means that we are to live in the same

way that Jesus lived and in the same way that he and his followers taught us to live. Like Peter and Andrew in the verses above, if we are to follow Jesus, we must set aside our own agendas and lives to be serve him, and to teach others to do the same.

## WORD

*"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."*

**MATTHEW 4:19 [NIV]**

*<sup>28</sup> "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

**MATTHEW 11:28-30 [NIV]**

### 1. Step One: Follow Jesus

*"Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."*

**MATTHEW 16:24 (NIV)**

*"To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps."*

**1 PETER 2:21 (NIV)**

Many seem content to see Jesus from afar, but Jesus calls us to come and follow him. At first glance, Jesus' invitation to follow him can seem very un-inviting. To the weary, Jesus offers rest, but only through getting 'yoked up' with him, a position which implies that there is work to be done. He offers abundant life (*John 10:10*) but only through taking up our cross, an instrument of suffering and death. How did Jesus call you to Himself and how did you respond to His invitation?

Don't worry if some of the participants are not believers. Be encouraging, even if they are at different stages of responding to Jesus or have not yet recognized that God is calling them. Give God time to work

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## 2. Step Two: Follow Other Jesus Followers

*"Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ."*

**1 CORINTHIANS 11:1 (NIV)**

*"Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do."*

**PHILIPPIANS 3:17 (NIV)**

Although responding to Jesus is a highly personal decision, following him is not a solo endeavor. Every great athlete seeks out coaching and every great team seeks to build chemistry among teammates. Even Jesus said he only followed the Father. What does it mean to *follow* someone? Why do we need to follow others who are following God?

It would be great to include an example of some aspect of life where we learn from others who have gone before us. Like a school or career mentor, someone who has been at the school or company longer than we have can help us adjust quicker and more easily. Or you can point out that humans live with their parents far longer than any other animal species, illustrating our need for mentors.

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## 3. Step Three: Help Others Follow Jesus

*". . . I will make you fishers of men."*

**MATTHEW 4:19 (NIV)**

*"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit . . ."*

**MATTHEW 28:19 (NIV)**

Jesus initial invitation and his final instructions to the disciples were really one and the same, to fish for men and to make disciples. What we've learned and experienced about God shouldn't stop with us, we are to pass it on to others and bring them into the same experience. Why is following Jesus without fishing for men incomplete? How did you become a fisher of men?

Following Jesus without fishing for men is incomplete because for two reasons: 1) Jesus fished for men and made disciples, so if we are following him, we too will fish for men and make disciples. 2) Jesus promised that if we followed him, he would make us fishers of men, so if we aren't yet fishers of men, we need to keep following.

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**PERSONAL APPLICATION**

- Are you a follower of Jesus? What is the largest obstacle in your life to following Jesus?

Again, it is totally okay if there are participants who are not followers of Jesus. It would be great if we had non-Christians at every one of our Connect Group meetings! This is actually an excellent question for us to learn what the greatest obstacles to faith are for the non-Christians we are sharing with. Perhaps you could even thank them for their response if it is appropriate.

- Are there other Godly men or women, followers of Jesus that you are associating with? Whose example are you following?
- Who are you helping to follow Jesus? How can you help others know and follow God this week?

**PRAYER**

- Thank God for calling you to follow him. Pray that, like Peter, Andrew, and the other disciples, you would leave everything to follow Him.
- Ask God to help you know and follow him more closely and to follow others who are also following God.
- Pray that you would be a fisher of men. Pray specifically that your friends and family who don't know God yet would meet God and become followers of Jesus.

**NOTES**

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