

# Discipleship- a life long journey

## Week 1

### Following Jesus-a primary task

To be really really basic. Discipleship is about following Jesus. But sometimes it is not a simple following. It gets complicated, it gets tricky and can be plain hard work.

YET

**Following Jesus is our primary task.**

It is our primary task as Christians. We are all told to follow Jesus.

Jesus gives us numerous insights into what this actually means. So let's follow so we can effectively follow.

Let's start with John 10:27 but not each verse that states follow me, we will put the context around it so we have read John 10:25-30

*Joh 10:25 Jesus answered them, "I have told you, but you do not believe it. The actions that I do in my Father's name testify on my behalf,*

*Joh 10:26 but you do not believe because you do not belong to my sheep.*

*Joh 10:27 My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me.*

*Joh 10:28 I give them eternal life, they will never be lost, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.*

*Joh 10:29 What my Father has given me is more important than anything, and no one can snatch it from the Father's hand.*

*Joh 10:30 I and the Father are one."*

Jesus is using a metaphor just prior to this passage about him being a good shepherd. He is the powerful, deeply caring shepherd who can care, provide for, protect and even rescue his sheep. He carries this forward to the discussion with some

Jewish people at the temple. They don't believe in him. Notice what it says in v27:

*Joh 10:27 My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me.*

It is an identification of who is with Jesus and those are the people who are in his flock. IN this passage how do we know who is a Christian – those who follow Jesus. And look at the next verses. (28-29)

*Joh 10:28 I give them eternal life, they will never be lost, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.*

*Joh 10:29 What my Father has given me is more important than anything, and no one can snatch it from the Father's hand.*

Following Jesus has consequences – eternal life, never being lost, and the protection of God.

A question: Are these the things we see as consequences of following Jesus? What would you add? (I could use the term benefits of following Jesus but we'll stick with consequences for now)

We'll move on to the next passage.

John 12:26 and again we'll give it some context reading from v20

*Joh 12:20 Now some Greeks were among those who had come up to worship at the festival.*

*Joh 12:21 They went to Philip (who was from Bethsaida in Galilee) and told him, "Sir, we would like to see Jesus."*

*Joh 12:22 Philip went and told Andrew, and Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.*

*Joh 12:23 Jesus told them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.*

*Joh 12:24 Truly, I tell all of you with certainty, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone. But if*

*it dies, it produces a lot of grain.*

*Joh 12:25 The one who loves his life will destroy it, and the one who hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life.*

*Joh 12:26 If anyone serves me, he must follow me. And where I am, there my servant will also be. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him."*

A few questions first up:

Is Jesus talking about consequences here? The consequences of following Him meaning dying?

But look at v26 specifically.

*Joh 12:26 If anyone serves me, he must follow me. And where I am, there my servant will also be. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him."*

If anyone serves me he must follow me – What does that mean? Well straight off the bat we realise that if we call ourselves Christians we have to participate in the following thing. SO what does following Jesus mean?

Well let's unpack a few things here.

Disciple means *mathetes* – a learner and a follower.

Follow means (*akoloutheo*) Be on the same road.

When these two are combined we get what discipleship is about. A disciple is someone who is a learner about Jesus and someone who does what the learning suggests.

So the simplicity of this is:

To call our selves Christians we must continue to learn about Jesus

And

Do what we learn.

This is probably a good place to mention that as a church we have ways of assisting this process. That's what we are designed to do.

Learn about Jesus: We have church services and departments for all ages that assist in the learning process, we provide bible

studies and programs to do the learning process. Get involved, find a bible study.

Doing what we learn is as much part of it. We have opportunities to minister and mission, we are a missional church that aims to support and care for our community – we are to be what Jesus designed us for. Get involved – Find a ministry.

Our final verse comes from John 21:22 and again we will read around the verse to get the context.

*Joh 21:20 Peter turned around and noticed the disciple whom Jesus kept loving following them. He was the one who had put his head on Jesus' chest at the supper and had asked, "Lord, who is the one who is going to betray you?"*

*Joh 21:21 When Peter saw him, he said, "Lord, what about him?"*

*Joh 21:22 Jesus told him, "If it is my will for him to remain until I come back, how does that concern you? You must keep following me!"*

*Joh 21:23 So the rumor spread among the brothers that this disciple wasn't going to die. Yet Jesus didn't say to Peter that he wasn't going to die, but, "If it is my will for him to remain until I come back, how does that concern you?"*

This is an interesting verse and it talks to us in our modern context. We spend so much time worrying about others and where they are at that we forget to do our primary task – follow Jesus. Jesus is pretty blunt here. You follow me or as he states in the verse: ***You must keep following me!***

So does that mean we aren't to worry about others? No, it means we need to focus on what is primary – Following Jesus. It is easy for us to get caught up in not liking someone's behaviour or maybe their lack of spiritual growth or even their aggression or anger. You are not responsible for their spiritual walk – they are. We are responsible to provide all the help we can so they can spiritually develop but their relationship to Jesus is theirs.

I have always felt that the more we focus on following Jesus the more we will assist others to follow Jesus but somehow we let them do the following better if we are doing our own following. Now that is a mouthful. I'll put it on the screen.

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So where have we got today?

1. Following Jesus is our primary task.
2. To call our selves Christians we must continue to learn about Jesus  
And  
Do what we learn.
3. *You must keep following me!"*