

NOW WHAT?

Becoming a follower of Jesus.

Opening Scripture: John chapter 21 (Read complete chapter). Take note of verses 19 and 22. Both verses give the charge to Peter to "Follow Me."

Points To Ponder:

1. The charge to "FOLLOW ME" was both at the beginning and end of Jesus' ministry.
2. Jesus gave this charge to Peter at the beginning (Mark 1:16-17).
3. Jesus gave the charge again to Peter after His resurrection. (John 21:19)
4. "Follow Me" must mean more than just walking and living with Jesus for 3 years.
5. "Follow Me" is the true test of genuine Christianity.

What does "Follow Me" mean to you?

*Take a moment and discuss what it means to you when you hear the words Jesus stated: "Follow Me."

"FOLLOW ME" means:

1. I have chosen to dare believe the IMPOSSIBLE is possible.
 - Jesus doesn't say "follow these rules, or sing these songs, or meet in this building."
 - Jesus says, "follow ME". This, by definition, means to follow requires you to believe that the impossible is now possible. It's impossible for someone to rise from the dead and live forever. But this was Jesus' declaration, "I was dead, now I'm alive!"
 - They killed Jesus, not for the good He did, not for feeding the hungry, not for helping helping the poor, nor for His miracles. They killed Him because He claimed He was God come in human flesh. They killed Him for claiming to be God.
 - So when Jesus says, "Follow Me." He is asking you to believe the impossible. He is calling you to a faith beyond reason. He is calling you deeper in your believing.
 - When Jesus first uttered, "Follow Me." it was easy to believe. They simple had to follow a Jewish carpenter around who claimed to be God. But when Jesus uttered, "Follow Me." after His resurrection He was stating to His followers, "This requires a faith that will believe that all things are now possible."

Do you believe the impossible is still possible?

Do you act like it is so?

Does it show up in your attitude?

Does it show up in your prayers?

What do you do on a daily basis to stretch yourself to believe the impossible?

Are you governed more by logic and reason or crazy faith?

Why is logic so much easier to accept than crazy faith?

Have you ever seen God do something impossible in your life? Explain.

2. I don't get stuck in religious tradition. (John 21:1-7)

- Note Peter's response when He knew it was the Lord. In the past Peter was willing to step out of the boat and attempt to walk on water. But this time Peter puts on his cloak and jumps into the sea of Tiberias.
- Isn't it interesting that Peter didn't say to Jesus, "Bid me to walk on water again like last time." No. Peter just 'saddled up' and jump into the water. He wasn't going to let past experiences, successes or failures, rob him of this moment with Jesus.
- We cannot let past religious experiences rob us of what Jesus wants to do in our lives.

Are you willing to stretch yourself past religious upbringing to see a fresh work of God in your life?

Are there past experiences that are hindering you now?

Do you struggle to let go and trust God fully?

3. I love Jesus more than success. (John 21:6-15)

- Isn't it interesting how Peter and his partners draw in a large catch of fish - 153 total. It was a large enough catch to make for a successful work week.
- Yet, Jesus asks Peter the following question, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me more than these?"
- How telling a question. Jesus confronts Peter with a challenging decision. Peter must determine if he loves the success in the nets more than he loves Jesus.
- It's pertinent to us all as followers. "Do we love Jesus more than success?" It's a hard question to answer.
- Jesus doesn't mind us being successful. He even blessed Peter with the extra haul of fish. However, if Peter didn't settle the issue, then success would be his future downfall.

How do you see success as being a downfall to Christian faith?

How do you keep success in check as a Christian?

If one works 40-50 hours a week on a job, and only 1 hour a week in church - how does this effect 'following' Jesus?

How can you practically strive for success and continue being a devoted follower of Christ?

4. I don't get sidetracked and distracted by people. (John 21:20-25)

- Peter wanted to follow, but he also wanted to delve into the lives of other followers.
- Jesus encouraged Peter to focus on himself. Jesus would handle the 'others'.
- How easy it is when following Jesus to get sidetracked by other people.
- Never let past relationships, or failures of others, or successes of others rob you of the freedom of following Jesus.

Why do you think it's so easy to get sidetracked by people?

Has a relationship ever impacted your life negatively as a follower of Jesus?

**Why do you think people use the 'hypocrite' card as an excuse for not following Jesus?
Are there present "people distractions" in your life now?**

RECAP

A follower of Jesus:

- 1. Believes the impossible is still possible.**
- 2. Doesn't get stuck in religious tradition.**
- 3. Loves Jesus more than success.**
- 4. Doesn't get distracted by people.**