

Following the Lord

What it Means and What is Required to be a Follower of Christ

INTRODUCTION

When we gave Jesus our lives, we became disciples, or followers, of Christ. Since we have committed ourselves to Him, we are called as Christians to active seek to follow Jesus Christ in every area of or lives.

In Luke 9:23, what two things does Jesus say a person must first do to follow Him?

-he must _____ himself

-he must take up his _____ daily

What do you think it means to deny yourself? _____

What do you think it means to daily take up your cross? _____

In Galatians 2:20, Paul the Apostle wrote about the same thing Jesus was taking about in the book of Luke. Read this verse and fill in the blanks:

“I have been _____ with Christ and I no longer _____, but Christ _____ in me. The life I live in the body, I live by _____ in the Son of God, who _____ me and gave _____ for me.”

From the Bible, we see a clear picture of the true commitment of a follower of Christ. We are to take up our cross and be crucified with Christ. This picture for those who lived in Biblical times was capital punishment. We are to put ourselves to death in that we must deny our selfish and sinful desires and live our lives for Jesus. We must no longer live a lifestyle of sin or worldliness- we are called to commit the entirety of our lives to Jesus Christ.

Today, as we examine the issue of being Christ’s followers, remember that Jesus isn’t asking you to do anything for Him that He hasn’t already done for you. He gave His life for us, and we in turn must give our lives to Him.

DISCIPLESHIP LESSON #3

In this lesson, we will examine four aspects of being Christ’s followers. We will look at His part (grace), our part (obedience), what the Holy Spirit does inside of us (sanctification), and an act of faith and obedience in which every new Christian should follow and obey the Lord (water baptism).

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I. GRACE

Grace is a term that means “unmerited favor.” Even though we don’t deserve it and we haven’t done anything to earn it, God shows us favor and blesses us as his followers. His grace is so great, in fact, that He began to show it to us before we were his followers. That is how we were able to be saved!

“For it is by _____ you have been saved, through faith- and this not from yourselves, it is the _____ of _____ - not by _____, so that no one can boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

By sending Jesus Christ to die for our sins, God showed his unmerited favor to us. By receiving this gift of God, which comes by faith in Him and not the works we do, we have been saved from God’s wrath and now enjoy his favor.

“All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our _____ and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of _____. But because of his great _____ for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us _____ with Christ even when we were _____ in transgressions- it is by _____ you have been saved.” (Ephesians 2:3-5)

Further, God blesses us, lets us approach him in prayer, and meets our needs because of His grace. We read about this in Hebrews 4:16-

“Let us then approach the _____ of _____ with confidence, so that we may receive _____ and find _____ to _____ us in our time of _____.”

What do John 1:16 tell us we receive because of God’s grace?

-we have all received one _____ after another

Read Romans 3:22-24. What other things are given to us by God because of grace?

- _____ from God that comes through faith in Jesus Christ

-we are _____ freely by his grace

-the _____ that came by Christ Jesus

God gives us righteousness that is not our own. Even though we are sinful, the grace and forgiveness of Jesus Christ causes God to see us as righteous. We are also justified, which means we are made free from guilt so the need for justice is without facing sin’s punishment. And we are redeemed, which means God has purchased us. We are no longer slaves to sin; we are God’s free men. It is the grace of God through Jesus Christ that allows us to follow him, and even though we are sinful, to make heaven our home.

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II. OBEDIENCE

Some people get confused about grace. They think that, since we have forgiveness, we are free to do what we want, and Jesus will accept us as his righteous children. The truth is, we are called to obedience. The Apostle Paul clarifies this for us in Romans 6:1-13.

“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on _____ so that _____ may increase? By no means! We _____ to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don’ t you know that all of us who were baptized into _____ were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a _____ life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his _____. For we know that our old self was _____ with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be _____ to sin—because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also _____ with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin _____ for _____; but the life he lives, he lives to _____. In the same way, count yourselves _____ to sin but _____ to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let _____ reign in your mortal body so that you _____ its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of _____, but rather offer yourselves to _____, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of _____.”

So grace does not mean freedom TO sin, it means freedom FROM sin. If we truly love Jesus and have given our lives to Him, we will be obedient to His commands.

‘If you _____ me, you will _____ what I _____.’ (John 14:15)

“This is _____ for God: to _____ his commands. And his commands are not _____, for everyone born of God _____ the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.” (1 John 5:3-4)

Read Matthew 22:35-40. What did Jesus say are the two greatest commands?

- _____ the _____ your _____ with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

- _____ your _____ as _____.

If we are born of God, if we really are his children, if we really love Him, if we really have received His grace, we will be obedient to His commands. We are called to overcome the world and its sinful desires by denying ourselves and obeying Him.

Following the Lord

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III. SANCTIFICATION

We have already recognized that we have a sinful nature. So the call to obey God isn't always so easy. But God, in His grace through Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit within you, helps you. As you follow and obey Him, he sanctifies you.

Sanctification is a big word with a simple yet profound meaning: it is the process in a Christian's life where the Holy Spirit makes you more holy and righteous by causing you to become more and more like God as you follow Him. We covered a big step in sanctification in lesson 1 when we talked about repentance.

“If we _____ our sins, he is faithful and just and will _____ us our sins and _____ us from all _____.” (1 John 1:9)

When we confess our sins to God, the immediate result is the forgiveness of our sins. The long-term result is being cleansed from unrighteousness. This is the process called sanctification.

Read Romans 15:15-16. According to verse 16, who sanctifies the believers?
-they are sanctified by the _____

Read 1 Corinthians 6:11. What two other key words are used when this verse talks about being sanctified? _____ and _____

WASHED. When the Holy Spirit sanctifies us, He not only washes away our sins, he washes us clean from unholiness.

JUSTIFIED. We already talked about justification earlier in this lesson. It means God removes our guilt.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23. How is sanctification described in this verse?
-may your whole _____, _____ and _____ be kept _____ at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ

“The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean _____ them so that they are _____ clean. How much more, then, will the _____ of _____, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, _____ our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!” (Hebrews 9:13-14)

As we obey the Lord and surrender our sins to God in repentance, the power of the blood of Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit within us sanctifies us, cleansing us inwardly and making us holy, set apart from sin. We must always be sensitive to the direction of the Holy Spirit and allow Him to work freely in our lives.

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IV. WATER BAPTISM

Water Baptism is an act of obedience, identifying yourself publicly with Jesus Christ. It is commanded by God, and is something every new Christian should do.

In Matthew 28:19, God commands those who bring people to Christ to baptize them:

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, _____ them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...”

In Acts 2:38, those who come to Christ are in turn commanded to be baptized:

‘Peter replied, ‘ Repent and be _____, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” (Acts 2:38)

Read Matthew 3:13-15. Why Jesus say it was necessary that He be baptized?
-to fulfill all _____

Let your spiritual leaders know if you have not been baptized SINCE you have given your heart to Jesus as an act of faith. God will bless you and honor you for following Him in this area.

CONCLUSION

When we asked Jesus in our hearts and gave him our lives, we became disciples, or followers, of Jesus Christ. When we do this, God gives us His grace and we are called to submit to Him in obedience. As we do so, the blood of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit continue to sanctify us, washing us from sin and making us more like God. One of the easiest ways new Christians can show obedience and surrender to God is by following the Lord in water baptism.

ASSIGNMENT

This week, try to pray for at least 20 minutes a day. Also, try to memorize 1 John 1:9 and read one of the following scriptures each day:

- | | | | |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1) John 3 | 2) John 5 | 3) John 10 | 4) John 11 |
| 5) John 14 | 6) John 15 | 7) John 16 | |