



Learn Your Bible

Resources to help you learn and understand the Bible

Short Study 019: "Follow Me"

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Read Matthew 16:24 and John 8:12

1. The call to follow. Jesus called those who were to be his disciples with the words "Follow me".

In Jesus' day, some followed him literally as he travelled around Israel preaching, teaching and healing. (In fact, the call to the fisherman disciples "*Follow me and I will make you fishers of men*" (Matt 4:19) can be translated "Come with me".)

Today, we cannot be with Jesus physically, so how we be faithful followers, as I am sure you want to be?

In most cases (the example just cited being an exception), the word used in the original language of the New Testament is *akolouthēin*, which was used by Greek speakers of the time in the following contexts. Think how each of these uses can be applied to following Jesus:

- A soldier following a captain
- A slave following his master
- A citizen following the law
- Following a counsellor's advice
- Following the gist of a speech or the line of an argument

Another way of following Jesus is to follow his example, as encouraged in 1 Peter 2:21. Can you think of some examples set by Jesus?

2. The commitment to follow.

(i) Count the cost. Read Luke 14:26-33. This sounds somewhat harsh in literal translations. THE MESSAGE (the Bible in colloquial language) puts v26 in a way that better carries the meaning in modern speech: "*Anyone who comes to me but refuses to let go of father, mother, spouse, children, brothers, sisters—yes, even one's own self!—can't be my disciple*". (THE MESSAGE, Peterson, Eugene H., Colorado: NavPress, 1993.)

(ii) Keep it up. Read Luke 9:61-62. Ploughs were normally pulled by oxen. They provided most of the power, but the ploughman had a responsibility to push down hard on the plough handles to make the furrow deep, and to keep his eyes fixed ahead to keep it straight. It would be impossible to do either if he were looking back over his shoulder. How do you think this applies to a life of following Jesus?

To think about: How closely and consistently am I following Jesus?

To dig deeper: With the aid of a concordance, read the passages about Jesus telling people to follow him. Make a note of who those people were. Using your knowledge of those characters, or by reading about them in a Bible Dictionary, note how they went about following him.