

Follow Me, and I Will Make You: Developed, Focused, Built, and Prepared for Discipleship

Matthew 4:18-20; Mark 8:34

Key Thoughts

1. **Called to be disciples, not attendees:** Jesus did not call us to become comfortable church attendees, religious performers, or title-holders. He called us into a lifelong process of transformation.
2. **A disciple follows, not just hears:** A disciple surrenders the old life, obeys Christ daily, and allows Jesus to change his character, priorities, habits, and direction.
3. **Following costs everything:** Mark 8:34 gives three requirements: deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus, with Him as Lord of body, mind, and heart.
4. **Jesus does the making:** Through discipleship He develops the whole person, focuses our character and purpose, builds faithful men and women, and prepares us for His mission.
5. **Discipleship leaves the building:** It is not about how often you are inside the church; it is about how faithfully you follow Jesus when you leave it.

Discussion Questions

1. Read Matthew 4:18-20. What did following Jesus immediately cost Peter and Andrew, and why is our true identity found in Christ rather than in jobs, titles, or positions?
2. What is the difference between a church attendee and a disciple? Which categories from the message (attendee, performer, title-holder) hit closest to home, and why?
3. Read Mark 8:34. In practical terms, what does it look like this week to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus?
4. Jesus must be Lord of our body, mind, and heart. Which of the three is hardest for you to surrender, and what influences compete with Him there?
5. The four pillars are develop, focus, build, and prepare. Where have you seen Jesus doing one of these works in your life, and which one do you sense He is doing now?
6. Personal: Discipleship must show up in our families, workplaces, and communities. Where do you most need to represent Christ beyond Sunday, and what is one concrete step this week?

Applications

1. **Count the cost daily:** Each morning this week, pray through Mark 8:34: "Lord, today I deny myself, take up my cross, and follow You."
2. **Surrender one throne:** Identify whether body, mind, or heart is least under Christ's lordship and take one specific action (a habit ended, an influence removed, a motive confessed) to yield it.
3. **Follow beyond Sunday:** Choose one arena (family, marriage, workplace, community) and one deliberate way to represent Christ there before next Sunday.

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, You did not call us to comfortable attendance but to follow You. Thank You for the promise that You will do the making: developing us from the inside out, focusing our character and purpose, building us into faithful men and women, and preparing us to represent You. Give us the courage of Mark 8:34, to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow You as Lord of our body, mind, and heart. And send us out beyond these walls to live for You, point others to You, and make disciples. In Your name we pray, amen.