

January 8, 2023

## “Followers”

*“Large crowds followed Him wherever He went- people from Galilee, the Ten Towns, Jerusalem, from all over Judea, and from east of the Jordan River.” Matthew 4:25 (NLT)*

**Introduction:** Everyone follows something...friends, popular culture, family, selfish desires, or God!

**Jesus chose His followers:** Galilee was a remote part of the nation, less cultivated, less refined, language was uncouth, their speech betrayed them, not polished but everyday people...the disciples were poor, unlearned, businessmen, hard workers, accustomed to hardships and hazards.

**Before He called them as disciples:** Jesus had experienced His baptism and traveled from Galilee to the Jordan River, experienced the great temptation in Judea, preached in Galilee and Capernaum, taught in synagogues, escaped stoning, cast out demons, healed Peter’s mother-in-law, preached throughout Judea, preached from Peter’s boat and challenged Peter to cast his net on the other side of the boat! Then...He said, “Follow Me!”

### A. What does it mean to be a follower?

1. Make His chief aim yours!

*“Jesus called to them, ‘Come, be My disciples, and I will show you how to fish for people!’” Matthew 4:19 (NLT)*

2. Follow His example!

*“I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you.” John 13:15 (NLT)*

3. Live a life of love!

*“Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered Himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.” Ephesians 5:2 (NLT)*

4. Give up, take up, and follow me!

*“Then, calling the crowd to join His disciples, He said, ‘If any of you wants to be My follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow Me.’” Mark 8:34 (NLT)*

### B. Following is an ongoing journey...

1. Following is a continued journey...following has only begun when you receive Christ!

*“And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow Him.” Colossians 2:6 (NLT)*

2. Following is a journey of obedience!

*“Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has become a child of God. And everyone who loves the Father loves His children, too. We know we love God’s children if we love God and obey His commandments. Loving God means keeping His commandments, and His commandments are not burdensome.” 1 John 5:1-3 (NLT)*

3. Don’t slip back into your old life!

*“So you must live as God’s obedient children. Don’t slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. You didn’t know any better then. But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy.” 1 Peter 1:14-15 (NLT)*

4. No matter what, don’t give up!

*“Jesus said this to let him know by what kind of death he would glorify God. Then Jesus told him, ‘Follow Me.’” John 21:19 (NLT)*  
*“Jesus replied, ‘If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? As for you, follow Me.’” John 21:22 (NLT)*

### C. There is a battle against followers...

1. Following leads to difficult choices.

*“For God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey Him and the power to do what pleases Him.” Philippians 2:13 (NLT)*

2. Followers can follow only one thing at a time.

*“No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.” Matthew 6:24 (NIV)*

3. Following has enemies.

*“I am shocked that you are turning away so soon from God, who called you to Himself through the loving mercy of Christ. You are following a different way that pretends to be the Good News.” Galatians 1:6 (NLT)*  
*“You were running the race so well. Who has held you back from following the truth?” Galatians 5:7 (NLT)*

4. Following must keep focused.

*“When I saw that they were not following the truth of the gospel message, I said to Peter in front of all the others, ‘Since you, a Jew by birth, have discarded the Jewish laws and are living like a Gentile, why are you now trying to make these Gentiles follow the Jewish traditions?’” Galatians 2:14*

### D. Jesus calls determined followers...

1. Realize you cannot follow in your own strength.

*“For God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey Him and the power to do what pleases Him.” Philippians 2:13 (NLT)*

2. Obey His commandments.

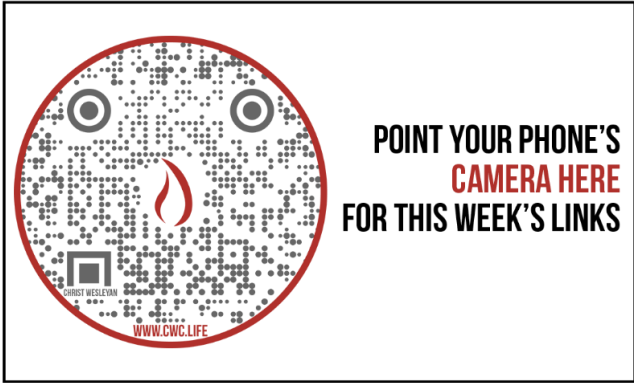
*“And we can be sure that we know Him if we obey His commandments. If someone claims, ‘I know God,’ but doesn’t obey God’s commandments, that person is a liar and is not living in the truth.” 1 John 2:3-4 (NLT)*

3. Follow in every part of your life.

*“Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit’s leading in every part of our lives.” Galatians 5:25 (NLT)*

4. Follow...follow...follow!

*“Then, calling the crowd to join His disciples, He said, ‘If any of you wants to be My follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow Me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it. And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?’” Mark 8:34-36 (NLT)*



**Stewardship Update**  
Salvations to date: 190 | Baptisms to date: 40

**Upcoming Happenings:**

- January 11    Happy All the Days**  
(Midweek Family Life event)
- January 13    Classics’ Hockey Night**
- January 14    Men’s Breakfast**
- January 15    Connection’s Breakfast (Milton)**
- January 27    Soul Sisters Worship Night**
- January 29    CWC Kidz Volunteer Connection**