

Follow Me

Scripture Reading: John 21:15-25

In our last lesson we discussed Peter's reinstatement to ministry and the emphasis on love and feeding the flock (John 21:15-17). In this lesson we are going to focus on the Lord's call to follow Him. "*Follow Me*" is a gospel call to forsake self-ambition and self-reliance and yield to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. See Matthew 16:24-27; Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:22-26; John 8:12; 10:27-28; 12:24-26.

What does it mean to follow Christ? (Gleanings from John chapter 21)

Fishers of men – Jesus used this metaphor, when calling some of His disciples to follow Him (Matthew 4:18-20; Mark 1:16-18). In **John 21:1-14**, Jesus used this miracle to remind them of His previous calling (Luke 5:1-11). Though Peter had a unique calling, we all share in such a great work. See Matthew 10:32-33; 5:13-16 (cp. Philippians 2:14-16); I Corinthians 9:19-23; II Timothy 2:8-12.

Shepherds – We follow Christ by loving what He loves (His People / His sheep – John 10:1-30). We follow His example of caring for His people as a shepherd would care for sheep. See **John 21:15-17**; Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:1-4. This is not just for Elders and Pastors. It is a work that concerns all of us. See John 13:34-35; Matthew 18:1-20; I Corinthians 10:23-24, 31-33; 12:25-27; Romans 12:4-16; 14:17-19; 15:1-7, 13-14; Philippians 2:1-5; Hebrews 10:24-25 cp. Jeremiah 33:12.

Taking up our cross and following Him – In general, we all are to die to self and yield our new lives to Christ and to the will of God (Galatians 2:20; Romans 6:9-18; II Corinthians 5:14-15). Besides his call to service, Peter was foretold that He would physically die in like manner as Christ (**John 21:18-19**; 13:36 cp. II Peter 1:14). Each person has a unique calling and plan from God. It is our responsibility to seek His will and lovingly submit to His plan for us. See Matthew 16:24-27; John 16:33; I Thessalonians 5:18; I Peter 1:3-9; 2:19-25; 4:12-19; II Timothy 3:10-12; 4:6-8, 16-18.

Note: This is a spiritual metaphor, telling us to...

- Die to self-will.
- Surrender our personal ambitions and agendas.
- Depend on the strength of Christ – not on our own strength.
- Yield to God's will / to God's glory.
- Seek the benefit of Christ's kingdom, more than our own personal benefit.

See Philippians 3:10 cp. Philippians 2:1-11, 17-24; 3:17-19; 4:10-13; I Corinthians 10:23-24; II Corinthians 5:14-21.

Make no mistake. This can mean death and suffering in a very literal and physical way. See Philippians 1:20-21 cp. Philippians 1:12-31; II Timothy 4:6-8.

Addendum: Distractions from following Christ.

John 21:20-22 – Getting our eyes off of Christ and onto others (Hebrews 12:2-3; Galatians 1:15-17; Philippians 1:20-21; 2:5; 3:10; 4:13).

John 21:23 – Getting sidetracked by non-issues or by issues of lesser importance (II Timothy 2:14-18,23; I Corinthians 2:1-2; Colossians 2:6-10; Hebrews 13:9; Romans 1:16; Galatians 6:14).