



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

Special Study:

## **FOLLOWING CHRIST TILL THE END**

Luke 9:59,60,57,58,61,62; John 21:19-23; Revelation 14:4

Many people profess they follow the Lord. While some follow Him aright, others do not. To hear the Lord say, "**Follow me**" is a great privilege and call. The response of some is, "**Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.**" They prioritized on personal obligations, pursuit and goals before responding to divine imperative. Christ teaches that we should place the spiritual above the mundane, divine call above legitimate personal obligations and leave earthly concerns that conflict with God's demands upon our lives for others to handle. Out of personal volition, some other people say, "**Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest**" without knowing the full implications. They soon renege on their promise because of their unwillingness to pay the accompanying price. "**I will**" indicates readiness, decision, determination to follow the Lord and fulfil destiny in spite of difficulties and challenges that may come. Not to sound frivolous, we need to thoughtfully weigh the words we speak in the presence of Christ. "**And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.**" This represents yet another of group who express their desire to follow the Lord but prioritize on self or other pressing obligations above Christ. All who are called or seek to follow the Lord but do not give Him first place in their lives are not "**fit for the kingdom of God.**" The word, "**follow**" is repeated in verses 57,59 and 60. Christ's call and demand from everyone to "**follow**" is ever current. This call is personal, pertinent and peculiar. Christ teaches that following Him requires erasing every other person, programme, project and problem competing for attention from the mind and concentrating on Him. People who take the decision, possess the determination and maintain the discipline to follow the Lord through are those who will eventually get to heaven. Following Christ till the end is His desire, demand and declaration.

### **THE MASTER OF TRUE FOLLOWERS**

John 13:13,15; Matthew 6:24; Luke 6:40; 2 Timothy 2:19-21; Exodus 21:1-6.

"**Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.**" Jesus is our Master. Every believer must acknowledge Him as his only Master who has no rival. Accepting Jesus as Master comes with obligation: "**that ye should do as I have done to you.**" As our Master and Model, we are to live like Him, obey Him in all things and serve Him. No true believer can serve two masters at the same time. Two masters will have conflicting perspectives, understanding, approaches, outlooks, worldviews and projects. It is literally impossible to obey two masters. With Jesus as our Saviour, Lord and Master, we cannot belong to two religions at the same time. Neither can we take money, man, Satan or society to be our master. Our resolve will be to follow, live, walk, pray, think and act like Jesus. Our yardstick for decision on any issue regarding our faith will be, "what would Jesus do?" Having been cleansed, "**sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work**", we will continue to "**follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart**". The covenant between us and the Master will generate commitment from us towards Him. To own Christ as a loving Master who gave us salvation, healing, deliverance and entitlement to heaven will lead to reciprocal bonding to Him. While those who backslide lose all the privileges and blessings they receive from the Master, believers who cleave to Him bear the marks of divine ownership.

### **THE MARKS OF TRUE FOLLOWERS**

Matthew 16:24; Luke 9:23; John 8:12;12:24-26; Hebrews 12:14.

"**Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, LET HIM DENY HIMSELF....**" Self and the Saviour are opposed to each other. Self with the flesh make unholy demands for cigarette, alcohol, hard drugs, sinful pleasures/dresses and other things that Christ disapproves of. True followers of Christ do not give to self the things their Master hates and rejects; they will not accept worldly dressing God forbids (Deuteronomy 22:5). People who claim to follow the Master but live careless and indulgent lives are not true followers of His. God does not have a separate Bible and lower standard for any indulgent group of people. "**And he said to them ALL, If any man will come after me, let him ... TAKE UP HIS CROSS DAILY, and follow me.**" Opposition, contradiction and persecution with which unbelievers intend to crush

our determination to follow the Lord bring pressure, burden and pain to us. This is the cross Christ instructs us to bear as a mark of true discipleship.

True disciples of Christ do not also walk in darkness. They do not participate in idolatrous feasts, worship and cult activities because they are done in darkness. They continually yield to the Saviour for transformation. Professing believers who retain sinful characteristics, who are ruled by self, who are uncontrolled by the Spirit and untransformed by the Word are not true followers of Christ. True disciples continue to serve and follow Him; they have undisturbed peace and transparent holiness that make them God's living epistles. Christ is the Prince of peace; all His disciples do "**Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.**"

## THE MINISTRY OF TRUE FOLLOWERS

Acts 6:4; 20:24; 2 Timothy 4:2-5; Colossians 4:17.

Followers of Christ have a "**ministry of the Word**". This involves ministering the word of salvation to sinners and preparing believers for heaven. We must be dogged, persevering and uncompromising to fulfil this ministry of the word in whichever area we are engaged in the Lord's service. In spite of temptations, trials and challenges that may come, we are commanded not only to "**Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season**" but also to "**watch thou in all things, endure afflictions...**" Followers of Christ do not become careless and frivolous but keep their gaze on Christ their Master. We must follow the Master, possess the marks of true followers and get involved in serving the Lord to receive full rewards in heaven.

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