



Life of Christ

A study of the life and teachings of Jesus

Doing the Words of Jesus

by Jerry Biuso

What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus Christ? Most of us will agree it means to follow Jesus, but what does that practically look like? When I think about following someone, I think of leadership, like the children's game, "Follow the Leader." The object of the game is to do exactly what the leader does. Could that be what we are being invited to do when it comes to following Jesus, our true leader?

When many of us think of being Jesus' disciple, we settle for just believing in him or admiring him, versus studying what he says and doing what he says. It's not that believing and admiring Jesus are bad things, but it's just not the whole picture. He is calling us to more! He willingly gave His life for us, so that we can live a life full of all the good things God has for us, abundantly and free!

A word that I have been studying lately is "discipleship," which means to put God's word into action, being like Christ and living like Christ. To do that, we need to follow Jesus' instruction on how to live our lives.

"But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it." —*James 1:22-25, NLT*

Maybe deep down we avoid the subject, because we know how impossible it is—we can never be perfect like Jesus! But what if we see this as a journey, with a view on becoming more like Christ every day, as we submit our will to His Spirit and choose each moment to let Him live His life through us? It is this act of submission to His Spirit that makes us perfect and complete, lacking nothing, rather than our attempts toward perfection in our own strength—as noble as that may be. Our prayer for you is that you grow in understanding who Jesus is, as you grow closer in your relationship to Him and stronger in your relationships with the Body of Christ, that you learn that this faith that you have in Jesus is about walking out a

life-giving relationship with your Creator who passionately loves you, rather than a list of heavy rules to follow.

So, where do we go from here? That's a great question! During this semester, we are walking through the Life of Christ as a discipleship plan. We strongly encourage you to begin with these simple steps:

- Form a small group of 3-4 friends or family members.
- Commit as a group to follow NLC's Life of Christ study every day this Fall.
 - › Don't just listen to learn more stuff, or listen to strengthen your belief. Instead, listen for things you need to do to change your life to be more like Jesus. Write them down, share them with a friend, and then do them! Do just a little each day!
 - › Why do we suggest you do this in a group? So that we can all learn from each other how to apply the teaching of the day.

Committing to walk through the Life of Christ with others is exactly what discipleship is! Doing life, following Jesus, in community with others who can help shape you, challenge you, and change you. And the same goes for your friends! God wants to use you, in your relationships with them, to help them grow, as well! The best part is, you have people who can pray for you and encourage you!

However you decide to pursue being more like Jesus, start by receiving the Holy Spirit as a gift that Jesus gave us to help on this journey. Listen for the Spirit's prompting throughout the day as He guides you to make changes.

“Jesus replied, “All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them. Anyone who doesn't love me will not obey me. And remember, my words are not my own. What I am telling you is from the Father who sent me. ...But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.”—John 14:23-24, 26 NLT