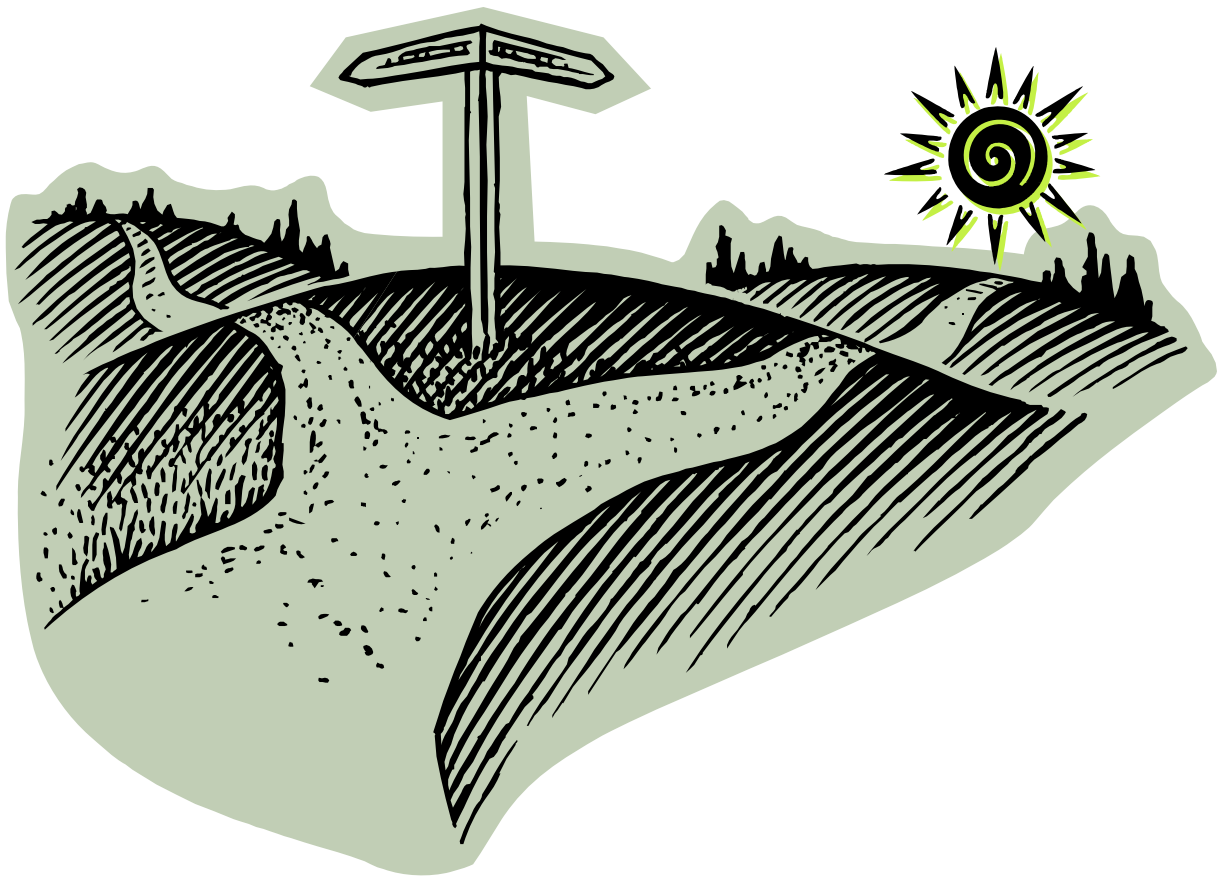


“Follow Me”

*What it means to be
a disciple of Yeshua*



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My Food is to do the Will of Him Who Sent Me.

I A few weeks back I read Henry Blackaby's book "Experiencing God". I wish that I had read the book several years earlier as it would have made some things in my life clearer, not necessarily easier, just clearer.

One of the concepts in the book is that for us to experience God in our lives, in the lives of those around us, even in our congregations, we need to find out what the **Lord** is doing in our lives and do likewise. He makes that statement because that is Yeshua's life pattern. He never did anything on His own. He always found out what His father was saying or doing and He did likewise. He reached out to the sick, notorious sinners and others because that is what the Father was doing. He asked Matthew to follow Him because that is what the Father was doing. I could go on and on. The next time you read the Gospels, keep this concept in mind.

Yeshua never did anything on His own. He always found out what His father was saying or doing and He did likewise

Here are several scriptures from the Book of John on the topic of Yeshua only doing what He sees and hears from His Father. Study them in context. Meditate and pray about them. Allow them to change your life.

John 4:34 NKJV

Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.

John 5:17 NKJV

But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."

John 5:19-20 NKJV

Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.

John 5:30 NKJV

I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

John 6:38 NKJV

For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

John 7:16 NKJV

Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.

John 12:49-50 NKJV

For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak."

John 14:8-11 NKJV

Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."

Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and

the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

John 16:12-15 NKJV

I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.

Follow Me!

2 *He said this to indicate the kind of death by which Kefa would bring glory to God. Then Yeshua said to him, "Follow me!" (John 21:19 Complete Jewish Bible)*

When I came across the phrase "follow me" at the end of John, I have to admit that I found myself somewhat intrigued. I have read the phrase before but this time it stood out on the page. I was intrigued because I find it an interesting thing for Yeshua to say to Kefa (Peter) before his ascension into heaven.

I knew that Yeshua called his inner circle of disciples/apostles and others to follow him, I knew that He said that one must take up their cross and follow Him. To say it at the end of His ministry before He returned to heaven seems to make it stand out to me. The common phrase is that when scripture repeats a word, phrase, sentence or concept over and over, it is the Lord's way of underlining it. For Yeshua to state "follow me" to many people over a multi-year period is not something that I or anyone else should ignore.

For the next few lessons, we will be exploring the various ways that the phrase is used in the gospels, primarily by Yeshua, but also by a few others. We will also be exploring the ramifications of hearing the Lord use that phrase when He speaks to those in scripture and when he speaks them to us.

A word of warning: they are not empty words. The phrase "follow me" is loaded with meaning. He is not just saying to stare at Him but to go where He goes, do what He does, say what He says. To follow Him also has a cost attached.

For some pre-study, here are some of the scripture references I might be using:

Matthew - 4:19, 8:19, 8:22, 9:9, 10:38, 16:24, 19:21, 19:27

Mark - 1:17, 2:14, 8:34, 10:21, 10:28

Luke - 5:27, 9:23, 9:57-61, 14:27, 18:22, 18:28

John - 1:43, 10:4-5, 10:27, 12:26, 21:19, 21:22

**Yeshua is still saying to us
"Follow Me"**

Follow Me and Be My Disciple

3 *"Later, as Jesus left the town, he saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at his tax collector's booth. Follow me and be my disciple, Jesus said to him. So Levi got up, left everything, and followed him." (Luke 5:27-28 New Living Translation NLT **Emphasis Added**)*

Follow Me! Even a cursory examination of the gospels clearly shows that Yeshua asked many people to "Follow me". What we see written is most likely a small percentage of whom He actually asked to follow Him. Throughout history and even in our 21st century world it is a statement and calling that He is still asking, "Follow me". It is a phrase that cannot be ignored. We must examine and prayerfully consider what Yeshua is asking of us. The answer will have lifelong implications in our life, all the way until we die and way beyond that, into eternity.

First and foremost, "Follow me" is God's calling on each person, whether they respond or not. The calling: Repent, turn from your sinful ways and follow Yeshua. In Scripture, we see Yeshua asking not only those who became His disciples and inner circle, He also called others to follow him, many did and yet some would not. The rich young ruler is a good example. Besides wealth, he may have had a prominent position in the community. Wealthy people at that time in Israel were not as common as you might think. Taxes were heavy and so were the demands of everyday life. For Yeshua to say to the young man to sell everything he had and "Follow me" was a truly life-changing request. He had a great deal of earthly things to lose and yet he did not seem to grasp what he would have gained. He may have had a gift for finances but he had no understanding of eternity and the things that really mattered. He walked away from Yeshua and into obscurity, always known as a man who made a wrong choice.

Matthew, on the other hand, though most likely equally as wealthy, had no position or authority in the community. As a tax collector for the government, he was ignored, abused and hated by everyone in Israel. Except for Yeshua! Yeshua's call to Matthew to "Follow me" was something that Matthew would not have expected to happen. His willingness to follow Yeshua is completely different from the rich young ruler. Though Matthew must have had great wealth, he understood the call and the eternal consequences of what was offered to him. He was willing to give it all up to go where Yeshua went. Matthew walked towards Yeshua and into eternal life.

When Yeshua calls to us to "Follow me", we dare not think He is just asking us to go to school, get an education and learn about Him and His kingdom. In fact, the call to "follow me" is a life-changing decision. It affects the way we think, act and believe. It definitely affects the way we treat others.

Yeshua clearly states in scripture that following him is not a decision to take lightly but to count the cost. Not out of fear but with a sober assessment of the consequences of your decision.

"But don't begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. They would say, 'There's the person who started that building and couldn't afford to finish it!'"

*"Or what king would go to war against another king without first sitting down with his counselors to discuss whether his army of 10,000 could defeat the 20,000 soldiers marching against him? And if he can't, he will send a delegation to discuss terms of peace while the enemy is still far away. **So you cannot become my disciple without giving up everything you own.**"*
*Luke 14:28-33 NLT **emphasis added***

Follow Me and Be Crucified

4 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "**If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.** For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done. I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." Matthew 16:24-28 (New International Version - NIV) **Emphasis added**

Scripture records that many people came to Yeshua and said that they would follow him. It is to be expected. When someone hears or reads something from someone that they find interesting or fascinating they want to hear more. In Yeshua's day, it was common for itinerant rabbis to surround themselves with students. Learning from the rabbi was a day and night proposition, week after week, month after month, year after year. Wherever he went so did they. I think our modern world has lost the feel of what that means. If there is someone we want to follow, we read their books, watch their videos and attend a seminar they are teaching. After doing any or all of those things we then return to our life as we knew it.

Yeshua takes the common concept of being a student or disciple and goes beyond that. Yeshua was quite upfront and straightforward about the cost of following Him and being His disciple. He says if you want to follow Him, you must do more than pursue after Him and learn from Him, you must also deny yourself. His first command to you as His disciple/student is to find the nearest cross, crawl up on it and be executed. Once that occurs, He then wants you to continue carrying the cross He told you to die on and keep allowing yourself to be executed, day after day, week after week, month after month. If it sounds to you like a full-time job, your right. Following Yeshua is the original extreme makeover.

Yeshua's first command to all of His disciples is to crucify yourself.

Dying to yourself, crucifying yourself, means you are submitting to His will, not yours, on a daily basis. Even from moment-to moment. There then become at least two choices, maybe several choices, in many situations. What you would do, what your friends and/or relatives want you to do, what books, videos and the worlds wisdom say you should do or what the Lord wants to do through you. Is someone mistreating you? Are you holding a grudge? Do you need wisdom on how to solve a particular situation? Is there a business ethics situation you need an answer to? Sometimes obeying the Lord means ignoring what your emotions or even your own brain is telling you to do and be obedient to the Scriptures and the Lord. This is where Yeshua said you are to crucify yourself and follow Him.

*Anyone who wants to be my disciple **must** follow me, because my servants **must** be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me. John 12:26 NLT **Emphasis Added***

His Sheep FOLLOW HIM Because They Know His Voice

5 "I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep **listen** to **his** voice. He **calls** his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow **him** because they know **his** voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they **do not**

recognize a stranger's voice." John 10:1-4 NIV

*"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me just as the Father knows me and I know the Father and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will **listen** to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. John 10:14-16 NIV*

*My sheep **listen** to my voice; I know them, and they **follow me**. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. John 10:27-28 NIV **emphasis added***

Part of our call to follow Yeshua is to get to know Him, spend time with Him & talk with Him. It is imperative that we dive deep into His word and allow His Spirit to speak to our hearts. We need to develop a habit of discerning the voice of the Lord. By that, I mean we have to learn to develop a habit of listening for and recognizing His voice. This takes time and patience. We will all make mistakes and fall down in the process and we must be willing to get up off the ground and stand back up on our feet. That is also part of the learning process. Learning to discern to voice of the Lord requires a continuous study of scripture, prayer and fellowship with others. Fellowship with others is important in learning how to listen for the voice of the Lord. None of us has it all together. We are all part of the body of Messiah and each of us has only a piece of the puzzle. We need each other. Dovetailing on our need of each other when it comes to following Yeshua is the fact that listening for the voice of the Lord also **REQUIRES** humility and a willingness to receive correction.

In a world that is filled with voices from every direction trying to get your attention, it is more important than ever that we spend time with the Lord and hear His voice. Not everything we hear around us, including what we hear from other followers of Yeshua, is correct. Knowing Scripture and knowing His voice will help us to separate truth from fiction or embellishment. All of us need to develop the habit of taking everything we hear, including sermons, and take it to the Word of God and prayer to test it. If you are not sure of your conclusions, or even if you are, spend some time with someone you know and trust who is a follower of Yeshua to discuss your conclusions.

*Come, let us bow down in worship,
let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;*

*for he is our God
and we are the people of his pasture,
the flock under his care.*

*Today, if you **hear his voice**,
do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah,
as you did that day at Massah in the desert
Psalm 95:6-8 NIV*