



# Simply FOLLOW

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## *Lent 2023*

### Growth Group Curriculum

February 26, 2023 – Matthew 4:18-25; 1 Peter 2:9; Exodus 3:1-3

“Follow Me”

**Growth groups are one of the best and easiest ways to find community at church. Thank you for loving and caring for each other.**

Matthew spends a considerable amount of time (almost four chapters) preparing his readers for the proclamation that Jesus makes in Matthew 4:17. “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” In Matthew 3, Jesus was baptized in the Jordan by John the Baptist and then was led into the wilderness by the devil, to be tested for 40 days. After hearing that John the Baptist had been arrested, Jesus withdrew to Galilee fulfilling the prophetic words of Isaiah 9:1-2.

As Jesus walks along the Sea of Galilee, he calls Peter and Andrew and James and John to come and follow him. Jesus reverses the way in which students typically became disciples of a rabbi. In Jesus’ days, students typically had to “audition” for a rabbi to see if they were worthy of becoming a student. There are no auditions for Jesus. He simply calls these four men to come and follow him. We saw this pattern before with Elijah’s call of Elisha.

We know from John 1:40-42, that Peter and Andrew had been with Jesus previously so this calling was not by a complete stranger. We are not sure about James and John. These four apostles will form the inner core of Jesus’ followers.

Peter and Andrew drop their nets and follow. James and John drop their nets and leave their father behind in order to follow. Jesus will pick up this topic, in Matthew 18:37, when he says that the priorities of God take precedent over family. In the gospel of Matthew, “following” often implies discipleship.

Jesus then leaves the private lakeside and begins his public ministry. He travels throughout Galilee preaching and teaching and healing. Large crowds follow and soon people from all over are arriving to see and hear this “good news” that Jesus was proclaiming. The disciples would soon come to understand what it means to “fish for people.”

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## Exploring the Text

### Matthew 4:18-25

New International Version

<sup>18</sup> As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. <sup>19</sup> “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” <sup>20</sup> At once they left their nets and followed him. <sup>21</sup> Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, <sup>22</sup> and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. <sup>24</sup> News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them. <sup>25</sup> Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis,<sup>[a]</sup> Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.

### 1 Peter 2:9

<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

### Exodus 3:1-3

<sup>3</sup> Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>2</sup> There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. <sup>3</sup> So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.”

## Questions

*If you are answering these questions alone, we would urge you to try journaling. Rather than just pondering the answers, try writing them out along with a prayer to the Lord.*

1. We read and hear a lot about what it means to be a good leader, but what does it mean to be a good follower? What are the characteristics, in general” of a good follower?
2. In Matthew 4:18-25, we learn that Peter, Andrew, James and John, left their families and their known way of life to follow Jesus. What does Jesus ask us to “leave behind” when we choose to follow Him?
3. What does the Bible tell us about how to follow Jesus? Do you have a favorite scripture verse about how to follow Jesus?
4. What does it mean to truly follow Jesus? What are the characteristics of a Christ follower?
5. In his book *The Jesus Way: A Conversation On The Ways That Jesus is the Way*, Eugene Peterson said: “The way of Jesus cannot be imposed or mapped – it requires an active participation in following Jesus as he leads us through sometimes strange and unfamiliar territory, in circumstances that become clear only in the hesitations and questionings, in the pauses and reflections where we engage in prayerful conversation with one another and with him.” This quote is full of interesting concepts. Which one(s) strike you the most about what it means to follow Jesus?
6. In 1 Peter 2:9, Peter says we are called to be part of a “royal priesthood.” What does that mean to you?



7. Pastor Paul quoted Russell Moore, Editor-in-Chief of *Christianity Today* who said: “For too long, we’ve called unbelievers to ‘invite Jesus into your life.’ Jesus doesn’t want to be in your life. Your life is a wreck. Jesus calls you into ‘his’ life. And his life isn’t boring or purposeless or static. It’s wild and exhilarating and unpredictable.” Does anything jump out at you from this quote?
8. Pastor Paul used the example of Moses to show us that the promise of following Jesus is that He will call us to something bigger and better than we can ever imagine. What does the Bible tell us what God promises to those who follow Jesus?

