

“Follow Jesus!”

John 21.18-25

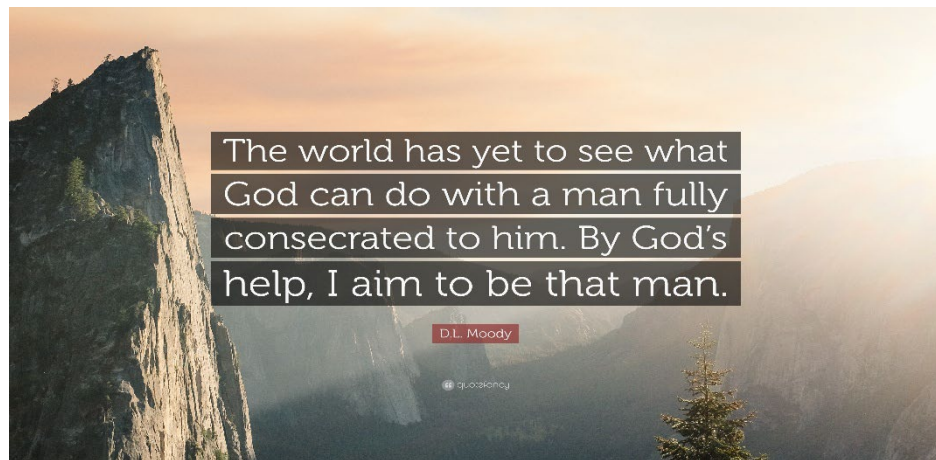
In Jesus’ final dialogue with Peter at the end of John 21, He twice exhorts him, “Follow Me!” Jesus had told them to follow Him at the beginning of His ministry, but His words take on new meaning here. Jesus is calling us to be ready to give up our lives for Him. You have one life to give...

What ‘discipleship’ meant while Jesus was on earth

- Leaving secular occupations behind
- Physically following Jesus wherever He went
- Learning by listening to Jesus’ teaching
- Telling others that the Messiah was here

What ‘discipleship’ means now that Jesus is not here

- *Be ready to give up your life for Christ (18-19)*
- *Focus on Christ, not on what others do (20-23)*
- *Be amazed at what God will do through you! (24-25)*



1. The immediate context to this final, intimate dialogue between Jesus and Peter is Jesus three times asking Peter, “Do you love Me?” Now Jesus tells Peter that he is going to suffer and die for Him. Suddenly ‘loving Jesus’ has taken on a more sober meaning. It’s no longer just an attitude or emotion – it’s life and death! We sing songs declaring “I love you, Lord,” and express loving thanks in our prayers, but do we conceive of love in this way?
2. What did it mean when Jesus initially told people (some became His disciples) to “Follow Me”? What facets of being a follower of Jesus do you sense in these references: Matthew 4.19; 8.22; 9.9; 19.21. On a few occasions, Jesus hinted at a deeper cost of being His follower; see Matt. 16.24 and Luke 14.27. What did the mention of a “cross” mean in the first century? (Hint: It wasn’t a piece of jewelry!)
3. Every Christian can choose to be a follower of Jesus, but this is not ‘automatic’. It is an intentional decision, a willful response from a heart of love in which we offer our very lives as an offering to God. In Romans 12.1, we are exhorted to “present your bodies as a living sacrifice... which is your reasonable service.” The Greek word translated “reasonable” is λογικός (*logikos*), from which we get our English word “logical”. In other words, it is “logical” for us to give our lives sacrificially for Christ. Why is this? What did He give for us? In what *ways* are you *giving* your life for Christ?
4. Peter’s follow-on question to Jesus, inquiring about what was going to happen to John, is a very normal thing. It’s natural for us to ask, “Why do I have to suffer when someone else doesn’t? Is that fair?!” Jesus’ response to Peter is abrupt, and emphatic: “What is that to you? *YOU* follow Me!” While we compare ourselves to others, the path of a Jesus-follower is focused on Him. See Hebrews 12.1-2.
5. Do you want to be ‘amazed’ at what God does through you? Would you like to hear, “Well done!” when you stand before Jesus? What we’ll hear *then* depends on how we live *now* (2 Cor. 5.10)! Do you love Jesus...enough to give your life for Him? “Follow Me!”