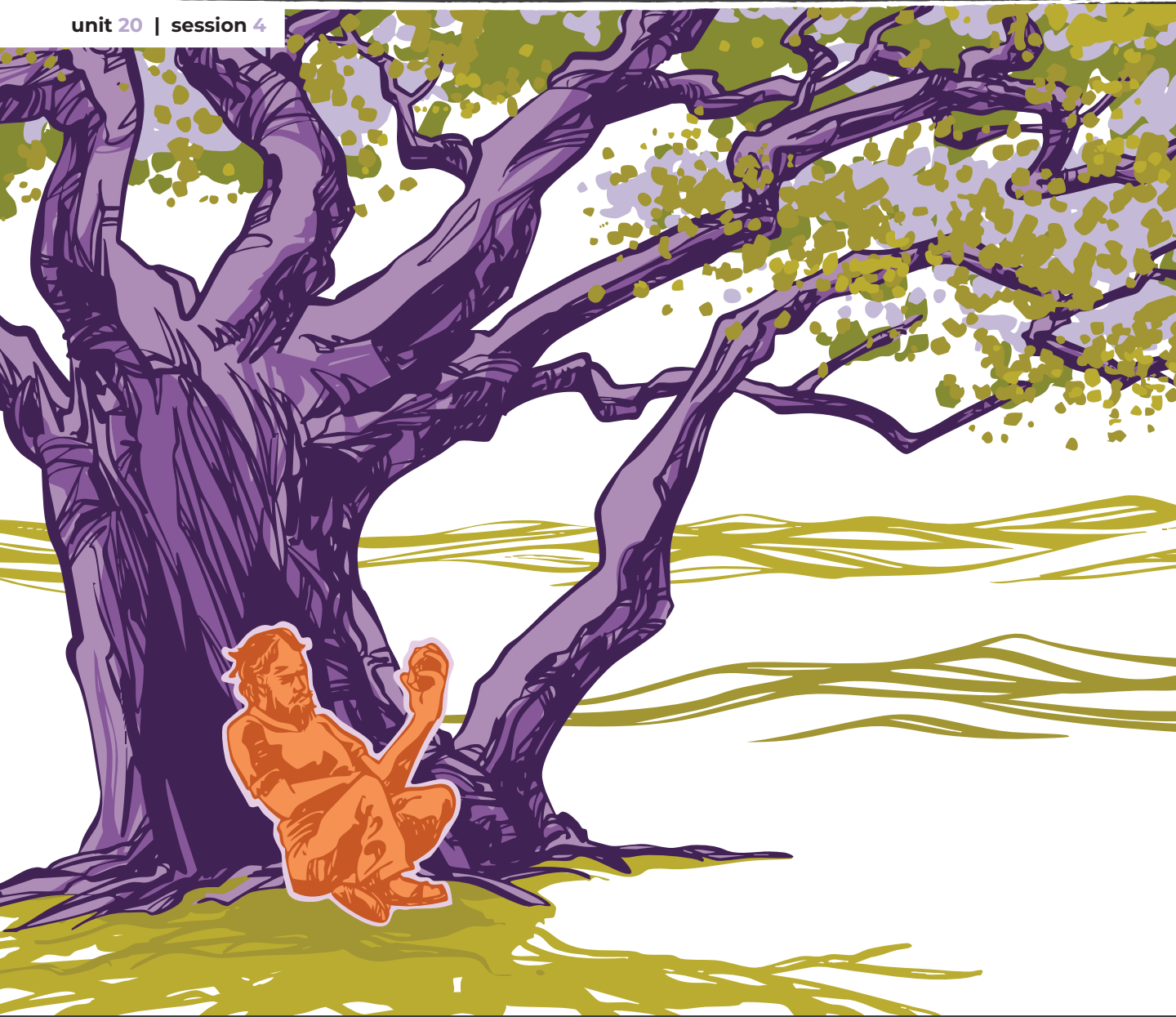


FOLLOW ME

unit 20 | session 4



CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus came into the world to call sinners to repentance and to lay down His life on their behalf. Likewise, as His followers, we are to tell others about Jesus and call on them to turn from their sin and trust in Jesus.

FINDING AND TELLING

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

John 1

WHEN WE FIND JESUS, WE TELL OTHERS

JOHN 1:35-46

35 The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" 37 The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. 38 Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?" And they said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" 39 He said to them, "Come and you will see." So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. 40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). 42 He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter). 43 The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." 44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." 46 Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

JESUS SEES US AND KNOWS US

JOHN 1:47-51

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" 48 Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." 49 Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" 50 Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." 51 And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

MAIN POINT.

Following Jesus changes us and gives us new purpose.



THEOLOGY CONNECTION

EVANGELISM

Every Christian and every church has the duty and privilege to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of a person's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary efforts rest on a spiritual necessity for all people to be renewed and is clearly and repeatedly commanded in Jesus's teachings. Jesus commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. Every child of God has the duty to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness and by a Christian lifestyle.

DISCUSSION

WHEN WE FIND JESUS, WE TELL OTHERS

JOHN 1:35-46

- What do people search for in life? What did Jesus ask the two men (v. 38)? What does Jesus's response show about Him (v. 39)?
- 🧠 • Share your nicknames. Why did Jesus rename Simon?
- 📖 • How did Andrew and Philip react to realizing that Jesus was the Messiah? Why don't we have this same reaction and desire to tell others?

JESUS SEES US AND KNOWS US

JOHN 1:47-51

- How did Nathaniel first react to news about Jesus? How can Jesus's response to his questions comfort us?
- ♥ • Have you ever felt like God didn't understand your life or see you? What does verse 48 help you know?
- ✝ • How do people try to get to God or heaven on their own, apart from Jesus? Read Genesis 28:10-17. What did Jesus reveal about Himself in John 1:51?



IF PEOPLE "COME AND SEE" WHERE YOU'RE GOING IN LIFE (V. 46), WHERE WOULD YOU LEAD THEM? WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE SO THAT YOUR LIFE LEADS TO JESUS?

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Does the idea of sharing your faith make you nervous? Do you freeze? Do you worry how people will react if you talk about Jesus in class, on your teams, or with your friends? If you do, you aren't alone. When we encounter Jesus, He changes us. Some of those changes are drastic and immediate, while some happen more slowly, as God continues to work in us. But the people who knew us before we knew Jesus may not understand the change. Instead of being up front about who Jesus is and what He has done in our lives, we stay quiet. Why? We worry more about people's opinions of us than their salvation. We worry that they'll think we're strange, radical, or judgmental. But if the gospel is really the best news—if we've been saved from sin and death—how can we keep silent? How can we not share the best news with others?



DAY ONE

1 KINGS 19:19-21

In the verses leading up to today's passage, God told Elijah to anoint Elisha to be the next prophet in his place. Elijah calling Elisha to join him in ministerial service gives us an example from the Old Testament of what it looks like to give up everything to follow someone. When Jesus walked on earth and invited men and women to follow Him as disciples, Jews would have remembered Elisha being called and understood the weight of the call. The call to follow Jesus is not a casual invitation to be acquaintances with Him but a strong call to live with Him, walk with Him, and forsake all else to follow Him.

This story of Elisha paints a picture of what it means to give up everything for something much greater. Choosing to follow Jesus comes at a great cost. When Elijah found Elisha, Elisha was working in the fields with twelve pairs of oxen, which symbolized Elisha's great wealth. The call to follow Elijah meant that Elisha must walk away from wealth, material possessions, his way of life, and even his family, but Elisha considered following Elijah worth it. How much more should we as believers consider following Jesus as worthy, even when it costs us our life, our popularity, our wealth, and our own desires? No matter what it costs us, we can trust that Jesus is always better. Following Jesus comes at a cost, but we will study this week that not following Him is more costly. Do you believe God is worthy of your whole life? Then trust Him and make Him the most important thing in your life. Do you believe God is worth it to follow all the days of your life? Then live like He is worthy.

- **WHAT HAS IT COST YOU TO FOLLOW JESUS? WHAT HAVE YOU STRUGGLED TO GIVE UP, AND WHY WAS IT SO HARD?**
- **WHAT WOULD IT COST YOU TO NOT FOLLOW JESUS? WHAT WOULD YOU MISS OUT ON IF YOU CHOSE TO FOLLOW THE WORLD INSTEAD OF JESUS?**

PRAY

GOD, YOU ARE WORTHY OF MY WHOLE LIFE AND OF FOLLOWING FOR ALL OF MY DAYS. WHEN I AM TEMPTED TO BE DISCOURAGED BY THE COST OF FOLLOWING YOU, REMIND ME OF THE FAR GREATER COST OF NOT FOLLOWING YOU.



DAY TWO

MATTHEW 16:24-26

These words of Jesus continue to help us form our understanding of how much it will cost us to truly follow Him. While the invitation to follow Jesus is absolutely extended to everyone, it comes with some costly requirements: Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Him. Denying yourself is intentionally turning away from selfish or worldly living. Taking up your cross is committing to endure whatever comes in this life, knowing Jesus is always worth any cost or suffering. Finally, following Jesus is not being casually familiar with Jesus, but wholeheartedly trusting Him, conforming to His ways instead of the world's ways, and remaining steadfast even when life gets hard.

If you spend your life clinging to worldly comforts, you will lose everything in the end. But if you die to your worldly desires and live for God instead, you will find eternal life. New, abundant, eternal life is guaranteed for every believer who gives up the worldly way of living to follow Jesus; it's as simple as that! But something being simple doesn't make it easy. Knowing that God walks with us and gives us strength to die to ourselves and live for Him gives us great hope. If you want to find real life here on earth and for all of eternity, then it's time to put your selfish desires to death and live for Someone so much greater. Following Jesus is a narrow road that many will not choose, but that doesn't mean it's not worth it in the end. Jesus's death and resurrection give us the promise that while death may be part of the story, it is never the end of the story for His followers. In His kingdom, death to sin always leads to new life. Will you decide that Jesus is worth following no matter what you have to give up?

- **IN THE PAST, HOW HAVE YOU LIVED FOR THE WORLD? HOW HAVE YOU SEEN THAT LIVING FOR THE WORLD TEMPORARILY WORKS OR FEELS GOOD BUT IS ULTIMATELY DESTRUCTIVE?**
- **HOW CAN YOU REMIND YOURSELF THAT LIVING FOR JESUS IS WORTH PURSUING EVEN WHEN IT'S HARD OR LONELY?**

PRAY

GOD, THANK YOU FOR MAKING A WAY FOR US TO HAVE A FULFILLING LIFE HERE ON EARTH AND ETERNAL LIFE WITH YOU. HELP ME TO REMEMBER THAT FOLLOWING YOU IS THE ONLY PATH TO A FULFILLING, ABUNDANT LIFE.



DAY THREE

MATTHEW 6:25-34

Following Jesus brings peace, joy, and fulfillment that we can never know apart from Him. But this decision can also come with moments of rejection, loneliness, and fear. What if my friends stop hanging out with me? What if my family makes fun of me or feels offended when I try to share the gospel with them? What if people view me differently? What if I stop getting invited? What if I mess this up? These are just a few examples of how doubts, fears, and what-ifs can enter our minds and spiral into worry that keeps us distracted and stuck. The words of Jesus in Matthew 6 remind us that only when we listen and obey Him will we find peace and a cure for the anxious feelings that cause us to spiral. Worries and fears will pop into your head and show up in your life; the question is what will you do with them? Will you choose to lean into that fear and stay stuck, or will you choose to live by faith, running to God with every worry?

To live from a place of fear and worry is to live a life that is distracted from the abundant life God has for you. Jesus gives us a better way in verse 33: “Seek first the kingdom.” Other verses in the Bible teach similar ideas, commanding us to set our minds on things above (Col. 3:2) and to focus on what is unseen and eternal (2 Cor 4:18). We are commanded to intentionally and consistently focus our minds and hearts on Jesus alone. When we feel tempted to wander into worry, we confess that to God and redirect our attention to Him. And we practice that over and over again. Following Jesus comes with uncertainty; we may not always know how our lives will play out, but He promises us His presence and His peace for every step of the journey!

- **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE WORRIES OR WHAT-IFS THAT POP INTO YOUR HEAD AND DISTRACT YOU FROM LIVING FOR GOD?**
- **HOW DOES JESUS'S PRESENCE AND PEACE CALM YOUR FEARS?**

PRAY

**GOD, THANK YOU FOR SEEING EXACTLY WHERE I AM,
MEETING ME THERE, AND DEEPLY CARING FOR ME.
HELP ME TO KEEP MY FOCUS ON YOU—THE ONE WHO
CALMS THE STORMS AND WALKS WITH ME.**



DAY FOUR

JOHN 1:43-49

Toward the end of John 1, we read about multiple encounters where Jesus invited people to follow Him as His disciples. A few of the first disciples to follow Jesus were brothers named Andrew and Peter and a man named Phillip from Bethsaida. When Jesus invited Phillip to follow Him, Phillip not only decided to follow Jesus, but he also couldn't keep it to himself. He went to Nathanael to share the news that he had met Jesus—the promised Messiah prophesied about for centuries—and to invite Nathanael to meet Him too. What a beautiful picture of how we are also called to follow Jesus and then spend our lives inviting others to meet this same, life-changing Messiah for themselves.

Nathanael went with Phillip to meet Jesus. When Jesus saw Nathanael coming, He said, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit” (v. 47), demonstrating His supernatural ability to know our hearts. Nathanael confusedly asked, “How do you know me?” (v. 48). Jesus answered his question with a powerful truth about who Jesus is. Jesus explained to Nathanael that He already knew him before his friend Phillip ever went to find him under the fig tree. This brings us to a second beautiful picture of the gospel—before we ever knew or went looking for God, He knew us and looked for us. In other words, God created you, saw you, loved you, and pursued you before you were ever aware of Him. As followers of Jesus, we must remember where God brought us from and how He pursued us. And may we share our personal testimony with others so that they, too, can find God, who has always been pursuing them.

- **WHERE DID GOD SEE YOU AND CARE FOR YOU BEFORE YOU EVEN KNEW THAT YOU NEEDED HIM? WRITE OUT YOUR TESTIMONY OF HOW GOD CALLED YOU.**
- **HOW CAN GOD'S GREAT LOVE AND PERSISTENT PURSUIT OF YOU ENCOURAGE YOU TO LIVE IN GRATITUDE TO HIM AND TO SHARE THIS GOOD NEWS WITH OTHERS TODAY?**

PRAY

GOD, THANK YOU FOR LOVING ME AND PURSUING A RELATIONSHIP WITH ME BEFORE I WAS EVER LOOKING FOR YOU. HELP ME TO BE BOLD IN SHARING WITH OTHERS HOW YOU FOUND ME AND HOW YOU WANT TO FIND THEM TOO.





DAY FIVE

PHILIPPIANS 3:7-9

Gold is a precious metal that is recognized as a valuable treasure. Fool's gold, on the other hand, is shiny like gold and looks like gold but has no value. In a similar way, our achievements and worldly treasures may shine and look impressive, but they have zero eternal value. Knowing Jesus personally, however, is like real gold—a precious treasure that is eternally and immeasurably valuable. In the verses leading up to today's passage, Paul basically explained that he had what the world would recognize as an impressive list of achievements and titles. Then, he takes a sharp turn to say that the whole list is nothing compared to the value he found in following Christ. He even goes so far as to say that he now considers those things to be to be rubbish. Yes, you read that right; Paul described everything that he once considered valuable to now be manure, garbage, and waste.

As we have studied this week, following Jesus does cost us. Paul's words in this passage remind us that even though the cost is great, we find a far greater reward in following Jesus. Does Paul's testimony that Jesus is better than everything else mean that he never faced hardship in following Jesus? Absolutely not. Paul suffered persecution, imprisonment, and even violent death, but something being easy is different than something being worth it. For Paul, knowing Jesus intimately was better than anything and everything he had once considered valuable; his relationship with Jesus was his greatest joy and source of fulfillment. Jesus invites us to do the same—to give up worldly “treasures” that might seem shiny but have no lasting value and to treasure the valuable, eternal gift of relationship with Him.

- **WHAT WORLDLY TREASURES AND ACHIEVEMENTS ARE YOU TEMPTED TO VALUE ABOVE GOD?**
- **WRITE A PRAYER TO GOD REFLECTING ON WHO HE IS TO YOU AND HOW HE IS BETTER THAN ANYTHING ELSE.**

PRAY

GOD, NOTHING IS BETTER, MORE VALUABLE, OR MORE IMPORTANT THAN KNOWING YOU. REMIND MY HEART THAT A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU IS WHERE THE REAL TREASURE IS.