

Hebrews 12:1-3 (GW) ¹ Since we are surrounded by so many examples of faith, we must get rid of everything that slows us down, especially sin that distracts us. We must run the race that lies ahead of us and never give up. ² We must focus on Jesus, the source and goal of our faith. He saw the joy ahead of him, so he endured death on the cross and ignored the disgrace it brought him. Now he holds the honored position—the one next to God the Father on the heavenly throne. ³ Think about Jesus, who endured opposition from sinners, so that you don't become tired and give up.

23) Who are the examples of faith?

24) Why does the writer of Hebrews say to focus on Jesus?

25) How does focusing on Jesus help us to follow more nearly?

26) What is the key to following Jesus more nearly based on all these passages we have looked at today?

27) What will you do to follow Jesus more nearly this week?

Follow Thee More Nearly

Matthew 4:18-20 (GW) ¹⁸ As he was walking along the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (called Peter) and Andrew. They were throwing a net into the sea because they were fishermen. ¹⁹ Jesus said to them, "Come, follow me! I will teach you how to catch people instead of fish." ²⁰ They immediately left their nets and followed him.

1) Do you think this was the first time that Peter and Andrew had heard or met Jesus? Why or why not?

2) How did Jesus call them?

3) What do you think Jesus meant by telling them he would teach them how catch people?

4) What do you think Peter and Andrew thought Jesus meant by following him?

Matthew 10:37-39 (GW) ³⁷ "The person who loves his father or mother more than me does not deserve to be my disciple. The person who loves a son or daughter more than me does not deserve to be my disciple. ³⁸ Whoever doesn't take up his cross and follow me doesn't deserve to be my disciple. ³⁹ The person who tries to preserve his life will lose it, but the person who loses his life for me will preserve it.

5) How does Jesus describe the cost of following him?

6) Which of the things he lists would be most hard for you?

7) Does Jesus say that we cannot love our family?

8) How was the cross seen in the days of Jesus?

9) What does this say about following Jesus?

1 Corinthians 1:12-13 (GW) ¹² This is what I mean: Each of you is saying, “I follow Paul,” or “I follow Apollos,” or “I follow Cephas,” or “I follow Christ.” ¹³ Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in Paul’s name?

10) What was the problem in the church at Corinth?

11) Why was this a problem?

12) What is Paul’s answer to this problem?

13) How does this problem creep into the church today?

Galatians 5:16 (ESV) ¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

14) What do you think it means to walk by the Spirit?

15) How did Jesus do this?

16) How can you do this?

Matthew 28:18-20 (GW) ¹⁸ When Jesus came near, he spoke to them. He said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ So wherever you go, make disciples of all nations: Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach them to do everything I have commanded you. “And remember that I am always with you until the end of time.”

17) What does Jesus tell his followers to do?

18) How can Jesus tell them to do this?

19) What did Jesus command?

20) What does obeying Jesus have to do with following him more nearly?

1 Peter 2:21-23 (GW) ²¹ God called you to endure suffering because Christ suffered for you. He left you an example so that you could follow in his footsteps. ²² Christ never committed any sin. He never spoke deceitfully. ²³ Christ never verbally abused those who verbally abused him. When he suffered, he didn’t make any threats but left everything to the one who judges fairly.

21) What does Peter tell us about following Jesus?

22) Do you find these words encouraging or discouraging? Why?