

# LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION

- 1 Are you a fan or a follower? In your view, how does being a follower of Jesus differ from merely identifying as a Christian?
- 2 What changes have you seen in your life since you started following Jesus?
- 3 What led you to become a follower of Jesus? Share an experience where you realized the importance of moving from admiration to actively following Jesus' teachings.

## WE DO LIFE TOGETHER!



SCAN QR

If you haven't been involved in a LIFE Group yet, send us a message us thru Fb, and we will get you connected to a small group.



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Sundays  
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# THE WORD

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Being a FAN of Jesus is different from being a FOLLOWER of Jesus. This one man took all the hardships for Jesus and His Gospel. His name is Paul. 2 Corinthians 11:23-27 - "23 Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. 24 Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, 26 I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. 27 I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked." (NIV)

## FOUR BASIC AND CRITICAL QUESTIONS:

1. What does it mean to be a fan?
2. Why do we think being a fan is even an option?
3. What does Jesus say about following Him?
4. Why is following Jesus worth it?

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A FAN?

What is a fan? It's the guy who sits in the stands and cheers for his team. But he's never in a game. He never sweats or takes a hard hit on the court. Sure he knows all about the players and can recite their latest stats. But NOTHING IS REALLY REQUIRED OF HIM. There is NO SACRIFICE HE HAS TO MAKE. And the truth is, as excited as he seems, if the team he is cheering for starts to let him down and has a few off-seasons, his passion will fade pretty quickly because he is an enthusiastic admirer, not a follower.

Jesus has lots of fans. Fans who cheer for Him when things are going well, but who walk away when there's a difficult season or when they find out there is a better offer on the table. Fans who sit safely in the stands cheering, but they know nothing of the sacrifice and pain of the court. Fans who think they know all about him, but they don't really know him.

Jesus was never interested in having fans. Many of our churches in the Philippines have gone from being sanctuaries to becoming stadiums. And every week all the fans come to the stadium where they cheer for Jesus but have no interest in truly following Him. The biggest threat to the church today is fans who call themselves Christians but are not interested in following Christ. They want to be close enough to Jesus to get all the benefits, but not so close that it requires anything from them."

You see, Jesus never left open the option of SELECTIVE commitment or PARTIAL surrender. Essentially, what a fan says to Jesus is, "Jesus I love you. I am committed to you. But let's not make this thing exclusive." Fans don't mind Jesus making some MINOR changes in their lives, but Jesus wants MAJOR changes. Fans come to Jesus thinking TUNE-UP, but Jesus is thinking OVERHAUL. Fans think a little MAKEUP is fine, but Jesus is thinking MAKEOVER. Fans want Jesus to INSPIRE them, but Jesus wants to INTERFERE with their lives.

#### WHY DO WE THINK BEING A FAN IS EVEN AN OPTION?

Our culture is consumer-driven. And we tend to bring that mindset into the churches that we choose to attend. This is also the reason why people like to go to hotels and malls for worship services. Many come to church asking this question: "What can the church do for me?"

If everyone around us is a Fan, we can convince ourselves that we are all followers of Christ, when in reality we are still just fans. Every follower of Christ is by definition 'RADICAL.' It should be the norm. If you need proof, read the book of Acts.

The reason why radical disciples are rare is that we have God's Word but we have chosen not to read it. We would rather listen to our favorite pastor on YouTube who has watered down God's word. Some Christians have chosen to ignore what the Bible says or at least ignore the parts that we don't like or that make us uncomfortable.

Matthew 7:21-23 - "21 Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers (NIV)!" Do those words of Jesus scare you a little? These words should terrify all of us.

#### WHAT DOES JESUS SAY ABOUT FOLLOWING HIM?

This is an important question. The word 'DISCIPLE' is an important word used about 100 times more than the word Christian. DISCIPLE implies an ONGOING commitment, a decision that has DAILY IMPLICATIONS. In other words, it's not just this one decision where you say, "Okay, I made that DECISION, so that's me." Instead, it's this ongoing COMMITMENT. A decision is entirely different from a commitment.

Jesus explains in verse 28: Luke 14:28 - "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it (NIV)?" Jesus is being straight with them and with anyone who wants to follow Him. He wants us to fully understand the cost of what we are signing up for. And that's one of the reasons we're having this conversation as a church family - to remind ourselves what it is we have signed up for and we should expect there's going to be a great cost.

If we follow Jesus, there will be a cost. What has following Jesus cost you? One way that following Jesus will begin to cost us more and more is in the area of moral values. In the last ten years, it's been nice to see Christians becoming more aware of how people think and feel. Instead of judging others right away, they take the time to listen to their stories and understand their feelings. This is a good thing. In doing so, however, many have made a mistake: they lost sight of God's thoughts and desires. In their compassion for people, they have ignored the holiness of God. They have forgotten that God's thoughts about a matter should come first before what any person feels.

True compassion takes into account more than what a person feels today; it takes into account what he or she will feel on Judgment Day. What some do in the name of being open-minded and compassionate is done out of self-love and cowardice. We want to be accepted, so we listen and cuddle but refuse to rebuke. If that is love, then the prophets, apostles, and Jesus were the most unloving people to ever walk the planet.

Real compassion considers not only what a person feels in the present but also what they might feel on Judgment Day. Some, in the name of being open-minded and compassionate, are driven by self-love and fear. We desire acceptance, so we listen and comfort but refuse to rebuke and make corrections. If this is love, then the prophets, apostles, and Jesus would be considered the most unloving people to ever walk the planet.

In contrast, Jesus loved so much that He was ready to endure a lifetime of being rejected. He always remembered how holy God is and how wrong sin is. He faced hardship for telling the truth, teaching us that genuine love can be turned away. This is Jesus' path. It's the path of love. While we might not have to escape from physical pain like some people worldwide, many are deciding to avoid the pain of being rejected. Increasingly, folks are toning down their beliefs because they don't want to upset anyone.

Luke 9:23 - "Then he said to them all: 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me (NIV).'" The term 'whoever wants' was a phrase commonly used in the context of a romantic relationship. He's describing a passionate pursuit of someone you love.

#### WHY IS FOLLOWING JESUS WORTH IT?

If I ask you to give me P1,000 but I told you I would give P10,000 in return, would you take my offer? Why is following Jesus worth it? Because we get back so much more in return. We receive so much more in return: a full and meaningful life, a close connection with Jesus, a peace that goes beyond understanding, freedom from worry, a living hope, and a life in God's Kingdom. Our lives gain purpose, and we become part of something really important—changing the destinies of lost people, bringing hope to the hopeless, healing to the hurting, and fixing what's broken.

Bo Chancy said: (I'm Going To Light Myself On Fire): "Following Jesus is an all-or-nothing deal." There is no such thing as partial surrender. To follow Him, we must completely lay down our lives. We can't choose what to keep and what to give up—it's all or nothing. TOTAL SURRENDER is the ONLY OPTION. Take a moment to examine your life. Who is in charge? Who is calling the shots? Who's running the show? Is it you? Or Jesus? It can't be both. If you say both, then you haven't completely surrendered. And Jesus won't accept that. He won't share His throne. Call Him selfish if you like, but that's just the way it is. Jesus wants all of you.

