



## Small Group Curriculum

### Topic: **FOLLOW**

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The foundation of the Christian faith is a relationship with our Saviour. When we pursue a list of things to do, the Christian life becomes performance focussed instead of relationally based.

#### **Jesus' Invitation to Matthew the Tax Collector**

*Matthew 9:9 (NIV) As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow Me," He told him, and Matthew got up and followed Him.*

Jewish tax collectors were despised by fellow Jews. Matthew was a social outcast. Jesus says, "*Follow Me.*" Matthew simply did!

#### **Why did Matthew just get up and follow Jesus?**

Matthew knew what it was like to be rejected and now he felt accepted.

Jesus was not a part of the religious establishment, but He was considered a Rabbi. When Jesus says to Matthew *Follow Me*, He got Matthews attention.

Matthew dropped everything at once without any hesitation, left the booth and followed Jesus. **Matthew finally felt accepted!**

Matthew's life changed dramatically because of his willingness to follow Jesus.

## The Christian life is a lifestyle of following Jesus!

**It you have been a Jesus follower now for some time;** are you still passionately following Jesus?

**Or, do you feel like Matthew?** Rejected and not accepted by those around you?

Matthew found acceptance by following Jesus ... and so can you!

## The Pharisees Complaint against Jesus

*Matthew 9:10-13 (NIV) While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with Him and His disciples. <sup>11</sup> When the Pharisees saw this, they asked His disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"*

The Pharisees had become so focused on people obeying to the law; they lost sight of leading people into a relationship following God. Instead of doing the will of God, the Pharisee's found themselves in opposition to it!

*Matthew 9:12-13 (NIV) On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. <sup>13</sup> But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."*

Being a sinner is not an automatic disqualification from following Jesus - it is a prerequisite! Jesus invites people who know they are not all they should be!

## Jesus' invitation is to have a relationship with Him.

Notice that Jesus went home with Matthew to spend time with him. We change when we are exposed to Jesus' love and acceptance of us.

## Jesus' invitation causes us to focus on our journey.

When we are in **follow** mode, we are more conscious of the work Jesus has **yet** to do in us, and the less critical we are about what He has **yet** to do in others.

When I am focused on where Jesus is leading me, I have little time to judge others.

## Challenge

Jesus' initial invitation to Matthew and to us is a simple one, to Follow and to continue to follow! Not to watch, listen or to consider, but to **"follow"**.

Following Jesus will cost us. Refusing to follow Him will cost us a lot more!

**Are you passionately following Jesus?**

- Write your questions and/or comments below so you can present to your group when you meet.

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## Group Prayer / Needs

1. Are there any prayer requests from group members that can be prayed for before closing?
2. Are there any needs that the group can help each other with? (*Discuss*)