

THE CALL TO FOLLOW

TAKING A CLOSER LOOK

What does the Bible say?

Take a look at Matthew 4.17-22

- What did Jesus call Peter, John, and their brothers to do?
- What did the call mean for them? How did they respond?
- What did Jesus promise he would do for them?
- What did these four men have to leave in order to follow Jesus? Were these things bad? Why did they have to leave them?
- Look up the word *repent* in a dictionary. Do you think there is a connection between repenting (verse 17) and becoming a follower of Jesus (verse 19)? Explain why or why not.

Matthew 4:17-22
New International Version

17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

Jesus Calls His First Disciples

18 As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 19 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." 20 At once they left their nets and followed him.

21 Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, 22 and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Read the following passages. What do they say about being a disciple?

| Passage | What did Jesus say? | What do you think this means? |
|---|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Matthew 16.24 <small>Matthew 16:24</small> 24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." | | |
| John 8.31-32 | | |
| John 13.34-35 | | |

THINKING IT THROUGH

What does the Bible mean?

Look again at Matthew 4.17-22

- When Jesus called men to follow him, do you think he had more in mind than just inviting them to hang around with him? What did Jesus mean when he said “follow me”?
- Does Jesus still call men to follow him?

Read John 13.15-17. Jesus said this after spending three years with his disciples.

- Why did Jesus give them an example?
- When are Jesus’ followers blessed? (v. 17)

In Acts 4.13 we find Peter and John again. This was several years after Jesus first called them, and after he had returned to the Father. What did others recognize about Peter and John?

MAKING IT COUNT

How do I live what I’ve learned?

Following Jesus involves:

- 1) Spending time with him,
 - 2) Learning from his example and teachings,
 - 3) Because you want to become like him.
- How do we spend time with Jesus today? Where do we ‘find him’ now that he no longer walks the earth as a man? (Hint: John 1.14; 14.21 and Matthew 18.20)
 - Jesus’ first disciples had to leave some things in order to follow Jesus. Are there things you will need to leave in order to spend time with Jesus and become like him? What are they?
 - Jesus promised his disciples that he would make them “fishers of men”. What do you think this means? How do you feel about Jesus making you a fisher of men?