



## **GROUP ICE BREAKER**

Recall one of your favorite teachers, coaches, or bosses. What made it easy for you to follow that person?

## **REVIEW LAST WEEK'S NEXT STEPS**

What, if any, next step did you commit to last week? How did it go?

- I believe God has a purpose for my life.
- I believe pain and suffering can often bring me closer to God.
- I believe God is actively involved in my life.
- I believe God enables me to do things I could not or would otherwise do.

## **MESSAGE SUMMARY**

A priority is something that is regarded as more important than another. Or, you could think of it this way: priorities form decision-making grids in our minds, and when faced with a decision, our priorities direct us what to say, what to do, or what not to say and do.

To place Jesus First necessitates we make Him the primary priority in our lives, and it begins by understanding his invitation to "follow," a significant term for discipleship in the Gospels. A disciple means "a learner" or "student of." In Matthew 4:17-22, Jesus invites Peter and Andrew to follow him. They had met him before and followed him, but for whatever reason, they had gone home and back to life as it had been. They went back to their priorities. But Jesus gets honest in the simplest, most direct way. "Follow me." It's time to decide if I'm your priority, and the did, leaving their boat to follow him immediately. There's something about the voice of Jesus when he invites you to follow.

In Luke 9:57-62 we read of Jesus' describing the cost of following him. At times it will be uncomfortable and require sacrifice. He says to another that now is the time to determine one's primary loyalty, don't wait. To the third he says you can't move forward with me while looking back. Jesus must be first in our lives.

More than words we say, Jesus First is evidenced by the life we live. In Matthew 6:33, we are told to "seek first his kingdom and his righteousness," a kingdom that operates on a different set of values than this world, a Jesus way of life. Making Jesus our first priority determines how we pursue all secondary priorities.

## KEY STATEMENT FOR THE WEEK

- I desire Jesus to be first in my life.

## KEY VERSE FOR THE WEEK

Scripture memorization is a valuable spiritual practice in a Christ-centered life. Spend a few minutes each day committing this verse to memory.

- “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”  
Matthew 6:33

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Share a life event or experience that caused your priorities to change over the years and why.
2. How would you define Jesus’ invitation to follow him and what that means? In what ways did your life change when you began to follow Jesus?
3. What are some things in life that distract us from following Christ? If you’re comfortable, share an example from your life when you’ve told God “first let me go do this” and what you learned from that experience?
4. Matthew 4:17 tells us that Jesus had begun to preach about the kingdom of heaven.” How would you describe this kingdom to someone? In what ways does it differ from the kingdom of this earth?
5. Read Matthew 16:24-27 and discuss what Jesus meant that to be his disciple, one must deny themselves and take up their cross. What does that mean and what does that look like in this life?
6. Read Matthew 6:25-34. What negative effects have worries had on you in your life? Do you find this passage encouraging, or do you find it a challenge to believe? Share why for the answer you gave.
7. Jesus said to “seek first the kingdom.” How has making Jesus your first priority changed how you pursue all other priorities in your life?

## NEXT STEPS FOR THIS WEEK (COMMIT TO GROW)

Use these as a guide to take your next step and commit to what you learned this week:

- I will accept Jesus' invitation to follow him.
- I will self-evaluate what my activities and choices indicate are my priorities.
- I will re-evaluate those things that compete with Jesus First in my life.
- I will lean into the invitation to follow Jesus as the first priority in my life.

## PRAYER

Prayer as a spiritual practice is our conversational life with God, where He hears from us and we hear from Him, with the intent of learning and leaning into His will for our lives. Let this prayer guide you over the next week.

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Your Son who gave His life for me. I desire to follow Jesus Christ and give Him the first priority. I repent of any competing priorities in my life. I confess that Jesus is Lord over every area of my life and I surrender to Him. Help me to imitate Jesus and fulfill Your purpose in my life. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the life I live will be a proof that I have put Jesus first. I choose to seek first Your kingdom and Your righteousness. I pray in the name of Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

## SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- Matthew 4:17-22
- Luke 9:57-62
- Matthew 6:33
- Colossians 3:1
- Romans 10:9

## SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

The following are suggested resources if you would like to continue your study of this topic.

- [Doctrine of Christ](#)
- [Jesus](#)
- [What Did Jesus Do?](#)
- [Who Is The Real Jesus?](#)
- [Who Is Jesus?: Linking the Historical Jesus with the Christ of Faith](#)
- [The Problem of Jesus: Answering a Skeptic's Challenges to the Scandal of Jesus](#)