

## Follow and Lead!

It has been said that leadership and followership cannot be separated. One's followership sets the pattern for one's leadership. Nowhere is this truth more apparent than in the life of a Christian.

Being a Christian means that you are a disciple of Jesus, and being a disciple of Jesus means that you are a follower. You follow the Master, surrendering to His authority, His teaching, and His purpose for your life. **Your very existence is centered around His very presence.** In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus describes this pursuit to His disciples in the following way:

And [Jesus] said to all, "If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?" (Luke 9:23-25).

Following Jesus is illustrated by self-denial, taking up one's cross, and losing or forfeiting oneself. The terminology is shocking to the unbeliever while completely reasonable to the believer. Clearly, following Jesus is costly and difficult, requiring the surrender of one's entire life. However, **Jesus' disciples find Him to be the priceless and all-satisfying Treasure, worthy of complete commitment.**

In Nehemiah 2, we observe a man who is a model leader in lieu of his faithful pursuit of God. Despite the suffering of God's people and the condition of God's Holy City, Nehemiah is undeterred in following God. Even though neither *disciple* nor *follower* are used in the text, it is clear that Nehemiah was an ardent worshiper of God. His worldview placed God smack-dab in the center of every part of life. Nehemiah recognized that God is good, that He is with His people, and that He is for them (Neh 2:20). Consequently, there was no compartmentalizing between "real" life and "spiritual" life. Rather they were one and the same. The God of our joys is also the God of our sufferings.

The impression that we are left with in God's Word is that the almighty, sovereign Creator of the universe, by grace is all that He is for you (Isaiah 40). The question we must ask ourselves is, "Are we following Him closely enough that it affects our perspective and emulates the life of our Savior?" It is in this way that our Savior

catches the eye of the blind and the soul of the cynic, because they observe that He overcomes our anxiety, lessens our need to control, and satisfies our every longing.

***Nehemiah 1:5-6 (ESV) - "And I said, 'O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father's house have sinned.'"***