

FOLLOWERS ACCEPT THE CALL TO COMMIT

A **FAN** OR A **FOLLOWER**

PRECEPT

MATTHEW 4:18-25

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. ²³ Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. ²⁴ News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them. ²⁵ Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.

PROMISE

Turning followers into fans is a large business for today's online platforms. In regard to social media, "followers" are users who choose to see the content that another user posts within their newsfeed. Newsfeed on social media channels like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter deliver content to users. This content in general consists of posts, images, videos, and articles that users post. When a person "follows" another user, they can see the content that user posts within their feed. Do you own any item endorsed by a celebrity? Is there something you purchased recently that were suggested by an influencer? Businesses know how to turn followers into fans. Fans willingly spend large sums of money to attend and support their favourite teams. "The global licensed sports merchandise market size is expected to reach USD 49.0 billion in 2030. One of the major factors driving the market's expansion is the growing population of sports enthusiasts, together with increased urbanization and the expansion of the online retail industry" (*Licensed Sports Merchandise Market to Be Worth \$49.0 Billion by 2030: Grand View Research, Inc., Cision, January 9, 2023*). In 2017, Americans were expected to spend \$56 billion travelling to and attending major sporting events, which would double the number from only two years before. What if we put the same amount of passion into being followers of Jesus?

John 13:34-35 tells us that followers are the image of the "influencers." It says, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Matthew 4 narrates Jesus calling the disciples and the crowds following Him. The text tells us that the disciples dropped what they were doing and committed to following Jesus. The crowds, after seeing Him perform miracles and teach, began following too. We don't know how committed the people in these crowds were initially, but the word Matthew uses for "followed" is *akolouthēō*, which means "to follow one who precedes, join him as his attendant, accompany him, join as disciple, side with his party." Followers of Jesus become pure from the inside out rather than the outside in. Fans of Jesus often present good things, but because they haven't fully committed to him, their goodness is surface level. They will likely abandon him when the going gets tough. Following Christ means being a reflection of Him at home, school, work; wherever we go. We are to accept the call to commit to Him our lives and all aspects of it.

PRACTICE

1. Influences. When thinking about the influences and influencers in your life, who or what impacting you the most right now? If comfortable and time allows, explain.

1. Following Christ. Where is the one place you find it most difficult to follow Jesus? How can the group help with this struggle?

PRAYER

I. Worship Services

- May our services encourage us to love God & others.

II. West Life Groups

- Pray for these couples as they lead the West groups: Solidum, Fabregas, and Gamboa.

III. South Life Groups

- Pray for these couples as they lead the South groups: Drapeza & Tablan.

IV. East Life Groups

- Pray for these couples as they lead the East groups: Domingo & Torres.

V. North Life Groups

- Pray for these couples as they lead the North groups: Ocampo & Ico.

VI. Circles

- Pray for Manalo couple as they lead our youth and singles groups.

VII. Young Couples Life Groups

- Pray for these couples as they lead the Young Couples' groups: Imperial & Oliveros.