Session 1: Fan or Follower

Introduction

If this is a new group (or you have new people), allow some time for everyone to introduce themselves and share what they hope to gain out of the study. If your group is already familiar with each other, they could share what the phrase "Not a Fan" means to them and/or what they think God wants from them in a relationship with Him.

Watch Session 1 Video

All videos are located at: https://www.rightnow.org/Content/Series/1277

Discussion & Word

1. What is your initial response to the first episode?

→ ***Read Luke 9:18-25***

2. What stands out to you from this section of scripture?

3. Why do you think Jesus asked the questions in vs 18 & 20?

4. How do vs 23-25 relate to his two earlier questions?

Personal Challenge

5. When have you been most alive? Can you describe it? Were you dead to yourself at the time or alive to yourself?

6. Kyle talked about "Define the Relationship." How would you define what happens between you and Jesus? What terms would you use? Fan, follower, something else? How do you feel about your answer?

Study Notes:

Notice the progression in the passage:

First, in vv. 18-21, Jesus is recognized as the Christ or Messiah of God. In another Gospel, Peter's confession includes the title,"Son of God."

Next, in v. 22, Jesus reveals that even though He is the Christ, or actually because He is the Christ, He will suffer, die, and then rise again. If He is the anointed of God, why must He die?

Finally, in vv. 23-25, He tells his followers that they must die as well, die to themselves. But if they do, they too will be raised, their lives will be saved. Jesus adds,"If anyone tries to save his life, he will lose it." Why is this so? How does trying to save one's life, lead to losing one's life?

7. What has following Jesus cost you?

8. Are there any areas of your life that are off-limits to Jesus?

9. If you suddenly died, and family and friends were asked for one thing to say about you, what do you believe they would say?

Prayer

What do you really hope for this group?

Use the space below to write your observations of the group and prayer concerns for the members.

If you would like to explore more during the week between LIFE Group meetings, consider purchasing the book "Not a Fan" and/or the "Not a Fan Follower's Journal."

Session 2: Follow Me

Opening Discussion

1. What is the best thing that happened to you this week?

2. How would you define your relationship with Jesus Christ since we last met?

Watch Session 2 Video

All videos are located at: https://www.rightnow.org/Content/Series/1277

Discussion & Word

3. Why did Gary feel disqualified to follow Jesus? When he finally arrived at Kyle's door, what do you think would be Gary's first question to Kyle – and Kyle's answer?

→ ***Read Matthew 9:9-13***

4. Why did Jesus call someone like Matthew to follow him? Why were the religious leaders appalled?

5. What did Jesus mean by his responses?

Personal Challenge

6. What did it take to wake YOU up spiritually?

7. When you first came to Christ, did you expect condemnation?

8. Who shaped your definition of following Jesus? Was that shaping good or bad?

9. A person can live in guilt or grace. What is it like to live in each of these?

10. Do you have some stains of your own that make it hard to say "yes" to following Jesus even now?

Prayer

Have each person express in prayer their appreciation to Jesus for who he is and what he want to do in their life.

Session 3: What Must I Do?

Opening Discussion

1. Tell us about any experiences you have had this week as you attempted to follow Jesus.

2. When do you feel most closely connected to Jesus?

Watch Session 3 Video

All videos are located at: https://www.rightnow.org/Content/Series/1277

Discussion & Word

3. Where does Darren get his map? What is his source of direction? Why would he accept a life map from this source? Why would Darren hold onto this map for his life after the one who gave it to him – Eric – basically tears up the map and throws it away as worthless?

4. What do you make of the symbolism of Darren tossing the heart back in the box and eventually passing it on to Kyle?

→ ***Read Matthew 19:16-30***

5. Why is the young man sad? He still has his money, his status, and all the freedom that comes with those privileges.

6. So why would it be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God, considering these advantages?

Study Notes:

Perhaps you've heard this passage explained by saying there was a small entrance to Jerusalem called "Eye of the Needle." There is no evidence for such a gate, and we must take Jesus' words to literally mean a sewing needle!

Jesus said it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God, and the disciples are surprised at this statement because in that era people considered the reality to be just the opposite. The rich were believed to be rich because they were blessed by God.

Plus the rich had time to study the Scriptures so as to better know God's will. The rich also had the resources to give large amounts to the temple treasury and to the poor, and thereby gain greater favor with God. In the case of this rich man, he knew the commandments and seemingly tried to keep the Law meticulously.

7. In v. 29 we find Jesus saying that whatever anyone gives up for Him, they will receive a hundred times as much. What do you think he means by this? Is it literal? Figurative? What does it mean for you?

Personal Challenge

8. Kyle asserts, "The problem wasn't that he had money; the problem was money had him." Has anything ever had you? What was it like? Is there anything that might have you now?

9. Can a person follow Jesus and yet not give away or sell everything?

10. When was the last time my relationship with Jesus cost me something?

11. Have you found it to be true that when you give up something significant for Jesus, that some time later you don't regret it or miss it, but rather it feels like an honor? Can you give an example?

12. What, if anything, do you think Jesus is asking you to give up these days?

Prayer

How can your group pray for you? What do you need most this week as you try to be a follower of Jesus?

Session 4: Bury the Dead

Opening Discussion

1. Do you or someone you know struggle with living out their faith in the workplace?

2. How are some days harder than others?

Watch Session 4 Video

All videos are located at: https://www.rightnow.org/Content/Series/1277

Discussion & Word

3. In the story, Anna began to feel resentful about Eric following Jesus. What held Anna back from joining her husband in his full blown following of Jesus?

4. How do you feel about the way Eric tried to lead Anna and his family in being followers of Jesus?

→ ***Read Luke 9:57-62***

5. Why is Jesus so demanding?

Unlike what happened in last week's passage about the rich young ruler, Jesus doesn't tell any of these three would-be followers to sell everything before following Him. We see another contrast in Luke 8 where it records that Jesus actually sent one man back to his family!

6. Why these different responses from Jesus to different would-be followers?

Personal Challenge

7. Consider what Kyle had to share about the symbol of the cross in ancient times. With all of that historical context in mind, what does the phrase, "Take up your cross and follow me," now mean to you?

8. Share how you came to Jesus… Was it more by way of a sales pitch or deep call to commitment? What was the effect of coming to Jesus in that way?

9. Would you say most believers are "sold out" or fully committed?

10. Have you ever been around someone who changed like Eric does in the story? What was it like for you?

11. What do you think Kyle means by, "Following is not trying every day but dying every day?"

12. Are you hitting the snooze button on God's alarm clock? Is there something He's calling you to do and you are putting it off?

Prayer

Get into groups of 3 and pray for one another. What is the greatest burden on your heart that they can pray for you this week?

Session 5: Dead Mens Bones

Opening Discussion

1. Thinking back on last week, did anyone tackle something they had been procrastinating on? If so, how did it go?

Watch Session 5 Video

All videos are located at: https://www.rightnow.org/Content/Series/1277

Discussion & Word

2. How can someone end up like Bill, knowing so much of the Bible yet so little of the grace and love of Jesus?

3. How can someone like Bill believe they are right to be so hard and judgmental? What is the best way to reach out to someone like Bill?

→ ***Read Matthew 23:1-12***

4. Why does Jesus say these things? What is his purpose?

→ ***Read Matthew 23:15-32***

5. These Pharisees and teachers are doing many things right, but why is Jesus so upset with them?

Personal Challenge

6. Is it ever okay for a follower of Jesus to be mad at self-righteous people? If you were a fully committed follower of Jesus, would you have more anger or less?

7. Why do you think some people settle for "religion"? Why is it more appealing to follow rules rather than follow Jesus?

8. What would you say is at the core of Christianity? Traditions, rules, a relationship with Jesus or something else? Explain.

9. What is your most prominent feeling as you follow Jesus? Guilt, joy, fear, love, frustration, excitement? Is that feeling tied more to a relationship with Jesus or to a perception that you must follow certain rules?

10. For you, is your faith more "no, no, no" or "yes, yes, yes"?

11. Do you find yourself pursuing Jesus more than any other relationship? Why or why not?

Prayer

If prayer time was really relationship rather than a rule to follow, how would we pray? After group members give their opinions, suggest the group try to follow them in this prayer time and see where it leads.

Use the space below to write your observations of the group and prayer concerns for the members.

Session 6: Decision Time

Opening Discussion

1. Share one area of your life where you think God is calling you to follow.

2. How did it go last week trying to passionately pursue Jesus and be with Jesus rather than just follow all the rules and do the right things?

Watch Session 6 Video

All videos are located at: https://www.rightnow.org/Content/Series/1277

Discussion & Word

3. What did you find most striking or moving in this last episode?

4. What was it about her dad that actually changed Natalie?

5. What appears to be Anna's reaction to the various people sharing about her husband?

→ ***Read Matthew 7:13-14***

6. How do you recognize the narrow gate and path, and how do you recognize the broad gate and path?

7. Last week we learned that following Jesus is not about rules and doing the right things, but about a relationship with Jesus. However, Jesus also challenges us, "If you love me, you will keep my commands." How can we love someone who says such hard things as we find in Matthew 7:13-14?

Personal Challenge

8. If you died this week, what do you think people would say at your funeral? How do you feel about your answer?

9. How has your relationship with Jesus changed during this 6-week journey?

10. Of the exercises and activities you have tried during this series, which ones seemed to have the best impact on your desire and ability to follow Jesus?

11. How do you see your life changing in the future?

12. What practices do you think you will put in place to help you become the follower Jesus is calling you to be?

Prayer

Since this is the last episode in this series, close with an open time of prayer. Pray when and how you like or led by Jesus. Use the space below to write your observations of the group and prayer concerns for the members.

Acknowledgements:

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