

The Art of Following Jesus

Part 1: What does it mean to follow Jesus?

2 Peter 1:1-9 - [watch online](#)

Summary:

What does it actually mean to be a Xian... to follow Jesus? Just believe the right stuff, follow the right list of rules and you're good to go? Honestly, that sounds terrible. There's another way. It's time we practice the art of following Jesus

Main Points:

[00:38] How we order our lives keeps us from living true life.

[02:45] If the Holy Spirit is truly the personal presence of God himself, Jesus followers will have remarkably different lives.

[03:10] Living the life Jesus offers is an art that requires practice.

[05:14] Trust is the first step that empowers the rest of the steps of following Jesus

[06:13] The deeper we know Jesus the more we experience the life he offers.

[07:14] Living a godly life is to participate in God's own life and love... everyday, in every interaction.

[08:21] Everything we need to become like Jesus is available to us through knowing Jesus

[13:40] Mature Jesus following isn't just for the good of the Jesus Follower. It's for the good of everyone.

[18:31] Following Jesus isn't just about what we believe. It's about what we do with what we believe.

The Invitation this week: 16:55

1. Commit to the Journey
2. Pray: Holy Spirit, I believe you are guiding me. Make me aware of my thoughts that are you guiding me. Help me.

Discussion Questions:

1. What 3 words would you use to describe your journey in knowing Jesus so far? On a scale of 1-10, How satisfied are you with your depth of relationship with Jesus at this moment?
2. What thoughts, pictures, feelings come to mind when Jon says, "Practicing the Jesus way?"
3. Read James 2:14-20. In your own words, what would you say James is getting at? How do you think this relates to the passage (2 Peter 1:1-9) we explored this week?
4. What questions do you have going into this new series? What are you curious about?
5. How can your group pray for you this week?

Transcript:

INTRO: What does it actually mean to be a Xian... to follow Jesus?

Just believe the right stuff, follow the right list of rules and you're good to go? Honestly, sounds terrible.

There's another way.

It's time we practice the art of following Jesus... so let's talk about it together.

WE: We are...

- Busy, tired, angry, stressed, irritable, distracted, addicted to being comfortable
- DISCONNECTED from each other, our world, ourselves.

How we order our lives keeps us from living true life.

And we know something isn't right. There's some engine noise that we just can't figure out...

So we try different ways to fix/deal/cope... not all are bad

Maybe try to change our thinking... Just think positively...

Maybe we try to push harder for what we want... just try harder... get more education... get better job... get more money

Maybe try to make our own happiness... treat yourself, do whatever feels right/good

Or maybe we try the religion route... just get more spiritual.

And the way we're taught to do that most often times is to have as many God experiences as possible (church)

- Sometimes morning church, evening church, mid week church, with a bible study on top.
- Give treasure, time, talent and then... you'll be good.

Or we try to follow all the right rules/rituals to make sure God is happy with us.

And many of these things work... for a while...

Then life does what it always does... it gets difficult.. Even Overwhelming.

Realize what we keep trying to do to "fix us" just doesn't work... start feeling like there is something wrong with us, so we either try harder, or hide it, numb the pain/fear, or give up.

- Result...Guilt, frustration, loneliness, addictions

Horrible, endless and empty cycle...

Whether we call ourselves Xian or not...

Our lives and experiences look very similar to every other person around us... whether they follow Jesus or not.

- Same fear, frustrations, short fuses...

Last series: **If the Holy Spirit is truly the personal presence of God himself, Jesus followers will have remarkably different lives.**

But how does that actually happen?

Is it something that some people just get and others don't?

- Like, some people are just holy and others just have to keep trying harder until they get zapped w/ holiness.

Here's what we are going to discover... **Living the life Jesus offers is an art that requires practice.**

GOD: Peter knew what it was to practice the Art of the Jesus way... he was a fisherman turned disciple. Part of Jesus' inner circle. *KNEW* Jesus. *Literally* followed him.

The first one to declare Jesus was Son of God/Messiah

Also the one who denied Jesus the night Jesus was arrested.

Then he experienced eating w/ Jesus after resurrection and was personally restored to his position by Jesus.

Became Leader of Apostles... preaches first sermon (book of Acts)...

As he's getting older, (60's AD) he's in Rome and is pretty sure he's about to be killed by Nero... he writes a letter to a network of churches in the mediterranean world.

Kind of like his farewell speech. Telling these early JF's what it looks like to actually follow Jesus...

Like most of NT... Writing to JF's... but I want to give not-JF's view of life offered.

- And how following Jesus might be very different than how it's been presented/modeled by others.

Here's how Peter opens his last letter...

V. 1 Side note: Notice deity of Jesus being discussed as early as 60's AD... not a myth that snuck in over 100's of years.

But point is... He is writing to a new community that has been created through each individual's... Faith/trust in Jesus.

Trust is the first step that empowers the rest of the steps of following Jesus... sadly so many people stop there... "I believe... get out of hell free."

Sad b/c there is so much more available.

Jesus is our God and Savior but he is also our Lord, King, Teacher, and Friend. Who offers to give us a full abundant life now...

V. 2 Grace: God giving us his ability to become like him as we grow in knowing Jesus.

More and more... Something that can increase... something God wants to increase in us through our knowledge OF Jesus... not about... but **of**.

The deeper we know Jesus the more we experience the life he offers.

How? How can we actually experience this life...

God is so amazing and loving... we aren't left alone to figure this out, muster up enough knowledge or faith, or try everything we can think of... grasping at straws...

V. 3 By his power, God has given us everything we need to live a godly life.

Godly life? Always took it to mean... being good and nice and boring and going to church and reading Bible.

- That's like eating chalk when you could be enjoying an amazing plate of Pad See Ewe.

Living a godly life is to participate in God's own life and love... everyday, in every interaction.

But it's not something we force, or muster up... try really hard to live out

It's something he gives us through his POWER.

Ever tried to live out the Sermon on the MT? Tried to be good Christian or just good person...?

Exhausting... often we just give up. Say- Oh I just can't do it...

Or sometimes we make it sound spiritual... "I'm just a sinner saved by grace"... so defeatist.

See we often don't realize what JF's actually have as HS-filled children of God

By God's POWER he has given us everything we need.

We have received it by coming to know him...

Everything we need to become like Jesus is available to us through knowing Jesus.

V. 4 Share divine nature... share God's nature... become new creation (2 Cor 5:17)

Other translations say "participate in the divine nature"... The idea is that we are new creations reborn to be like Jesus and can now participate w/ God in his work in the world.

Escape world's corruption?

- Exactly what we were talking about at the beginning... the horrible endless and empty cycle... trying over and over to get through life on our own...

So how do we realize these promises?

How do we use what we have been given? How do we participate with God?

V. 5a Make every effort to respond to God's promises.

Peter is not talking about earning God's love, forgiveness, salvation.

He's not talking about keeping ourselves on God's "good list" by doing all the right things.

He is saying to experience the life Jesus gives we need to participate with what God (HS) is doing in us.

We can work with the HS or get in his way.

It's not just hoping we change somehow... or following a list of rules to make us more holy...

Peter is talking about a commitment to working w/ the HS to develop the character traits that mark God's own divine nature, life, and love

It's like seeds in the ground... we have them but they haven't grown yet because they need time and water and sun.

The moment we accept Jesus' invitation to follow him, the HS gives us what we need to follow Jesus but these things need to be developed... they need to be developed, practiced, grown.

Like musical instruments- For the most part... we all have the body parts and brains needed to learn any instrument and make great music... but in order to actually make music, we need to develop the skills through practice.

And like any other kind of art that needs to be practiced... it's a process...

What comes next is not an exhaustive list or the order in which things are developed... they are traits someone who is becoming like Jesus has.

V. 5b-7 SO basically Peter is talking about becoming more spiritual right?

No... **John Ortberg- God isn't interested in your spiritual life. He's interested in your life... the whole of it.**

So these are 7 traits, examples, of what a godly life looks like.

And the final one encompasses all of them... LOVE= Devoting oneself to the well-being of others. No matter their response or the cost to you.

- **To love is to share in God's own life.** (Tim Mackie)

See these traits are examples of what we become... They become part of who you are...

Someone who is practicing the art of following Jesus will instinctively and effortlessly display these types of traits b/c they become so ingrained thru practice.

- Music/Bike/Sports- "My training just kicked in"

It all comes from practicing certain skills over and over.

This doesn't come from 'trying harder' ... we can't just try harder to be a better painter... "the only reason you can't sculpt like Michelangelo is b/c you don't try hard enough..."

No! We have to develop skills. Through a process.

What is the result?

V. 8 Productive/useful... And here's a secret that was never meant to be a secret... b/c it's basically the whole point of the Jesus Way...

Mature Jesus following isn't just for the good of the Jesus Follower. It's for the good of everyone.

Of course we benefit... but we benefit b/c we are becoming, we are being, what we were designed to be... a picture of Jesus' love to the rest of the world.

A community of JF's who are continually growing and maturing in their relationship with Jesus can't help but change the community around them.

But unfortunately... so many Jesus followers don't mature...

V. 9 This is why so many Xians seem just like everyone else... no difference.

They haven't developed and practiced their art and have forgotten/or never truly discovered what it means to live like Jesus in their regular life.

- What the author of Hebrews was talking about... **Heb 5:12-14**
- It's why we saw so many people fall apart when things hit the fan for the last few years.

We at CCC want to be productive and useful!

So this idea of 'practice' is what we are going to focus on for the next few weeks.

Just like any art there are as many ways to go about following Jesus as there are individual JFs.

But just like any art there is a typical/useful starting point... and for 2000 yrs JF's have matured by practicing many of the same things Jesus modeled in his life. So...

We are going to look at what Jesus did, how he practiced and arranged his life... and follow him.

- Like when kids try to be like favorite sports star... dress like, talk like, act like
 - It's Nolan Time.

Our goal is to find new rhythms and practices that allow us to arrange our lives around our King and God.

Sound difficult? Jesus said his Yoke is easy and his burden is light.

He has given us everything we need to live his way.

As we practice, the easier things become... the more ingrained they become and we can't help but look, sound, think, act like our teacher.

We will look at practical steps and rhythms and practices that will allow us to work w/ the HS

YOU: So as we start our journey here's my invitation...

Commit to the journey.

- Do you want to be a follower and student of Jesus or just a fan of Jesus?
- This is something that is an ongoing lifestyle. Not just something we sit and listen to for however long this series lasts and then move on to the next one.
- It's not an overnight change
- We are talking about "long obedience in the same direction."

Pray: HS, I believe you are guiding me. Make me aware of my thoughts that are you guiding me. Help me.

This is how we begin looking and acting like the already not yet people of God.

A lot of this will be new for me... so we are going to explore and journey together.

WE: But I'm excited to see where this will take us. B/c I think it's time.

We've been promised we already have everything we need to live the life Jesus offers.

A life of peace, purpose, joy, patience, kindness, godly power, and love... so it's time to accept that promise and allow the HS to develop us into who we were created to be.

It's time to stop just hoping that something changes in us.

It's time to stop just trying harder to be who we think we should be...

it's time to move beyond just saying what we believe... It's time to actually practice following Jesus.

Following Jesus isn't just about what we believe. It's about what we do with what we believe.