
Lesson Overview

Biblical Passage	Matthew 4:18-22; 9:9-13
Supporting Passage	Matthew 4:18-22, 9:9-13; Luke 5:1-11; 9:1-6
Memory Verse	Matthew 4:19
Biblical Truth	Jesus calls you to follow Him because He wants to use you to reach other people.
Context	<p>In this lesson and the seven that follow, students will consider how Jesus revealed Himself to His followers. During Jesus' time in the desert, He spent focused time praying and fasting. After His temptation, Jesus returned to His home region of Galilee and began His public ministry. During this time, Jesus used the words, "Come, follow me," for the first time as He called the twelve disciples. The call of the disciples comes very early in the Gospel of Matthew. This suggests that Jesus wanted the disciples to be a part of His ministry from the very beginning.</p>
Learning Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will consider how Jesus calls those who would follow Him.• Students will determine ways to follow Christ's call in their daily lives.
Prayer Suggestions	<p>As you prepare to teach this lesson, pray for those in your group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pray that students will consider how Jesus calls those who would follow Him.• Pray that students will determine ways to follow Christ's call in their daily lives.• Pray that students will be willing to become fishers of men.

Biblical Commentary

Investigation

Following His temptation by Satan in the desert, Jesus returned to the Galilee area and walked along the Sea of Galilee. He encountered Peter and Andrew, who were fishermen, and called them to follow Him and become fishers of men. They immediately left their nets to follow Him. Shortly thereafter He made the same call to two other fishermen, James and John. They, too, followed Jesus. On another occasion, Jesus saw Matthew, a tax collector, whom he called to follow Him. Matthew later held a party and introduced Jesus to many of his friends. This lesson focuses on the passages from Matthew's account that record the call of two pairs of fishermen brothers and a tax collector. The remaining seven disciples are not mentioned by name until they are seen in the list of the Twelve (Mt. 10:2-4).

Importance

This passage teaches that **Salvation is by Faith Alone**. It emphasizes the need to abandon all for Christ by placing one's faith in Him. Matthew 4:20 records the example of Peter and Andrew: "At once they left their nets and followed him." Their actions demonstrated their faith in Jesus. Matthew 9:9 includes a similar response from Matthew, a tax collector: "Matthew got up and followed him." By faith alone these men entered into relationship with Jesus. His call was not based on their righteousness, education, or even prior desire to be His disciple, but solely on the basis of faith. Just as the Twelve abandoned all and followed Jesus by faith, believers today enter into a relationship with Christ by faith.

Interpretation

Matthew 4:18-20 Along the shores of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus called two men to be His disciples. Both **Peter** and his brother, **Andrew**, were fishermen—a common occupation that required patience, persistence, and strength. It may have been early morning because Luke 5:5 notes that the men had been fishing all night. While they were involved in their work of "casting a net into the lake," Jesus summoned the two men to follow Him. Apparently this was not the first time the brothers had met Jesus. John 1:40-42 indicates that Simon was first introduced to Jesus by Andrew, who told his brother, "We have found the Messiah" (Jn. 1:41).

Though the brothers already believed in Jesus as the Christ and had spent time with Him, they had not given their full attention to the One they referred to as "Master" (Lk. 5:5). On this day, when they encountered Jesus at the seashore, Jesus issued both a call and a challenge to them that was destined to change their lives.

Jesus' call to "follow me" was a summons to become attached to Him as an apprentice would become attached to a master—to accept His authority and imitate His actions. In calling these men, Jesus referred to their

occupation. He promised to alter their focus if they followed Him--He would turn them from fishing for fish to fishing for people. Jesus wanted to give these men a new purpose and identity. Jesus first called them to discipleship, following Him in order to learn from Him. Jesus also called them to evangelism in order to join Him in sharing the message of the Kingdom of God.

Unlike the Jewish culture of the day, in which a man would choose a rabbi, or teacher, from whom to learn, Jesus was the One who did the choosing. He initiated the call to these fishermen. He differed from the rabbis in that He did not teach the Jewish tradition that had been handed down to Him by another teacher; rather, He taught direct revelation from God. Unlike the rabbis, Jesus made high demands of His disciples, calling them to give up the people and things closest to them (Lk. 14:25-27).

Luke's Gospel reveals that prior to calling these men, Jesus had been sitting in Simon's boat along the seashore while He taught the crowds. When He finished speaking, Jesus told Simon to take the boat out to deep water and throw out the nets. Though the conditions were less than favorable to catch any fish, Simon did as Jesus commanded. So many fish filled the nets that they began to break. The catch filled two boats, which began to sink.

In witnessing this miracle, Simon recognized his sinfulness. He also realized that he was in the presence of God. He bowed before Jesus and called Him "Lord" (Lk. 5:8). Prior to this event he had simply called Jesus "Master" (Lk. 5:5).

Although Matthew did not record any conversation between the fishermen and Jesus after He called them, he did note their response: they followed immediately. Luke noted that the men "left everything" (Lk. 5:11). Jesus' authority was such that they did not hesitate to leave their nets, boats, and other tools of their trade to join Him in His work.

Matthew 4:21-22 Jesus saw two more brothers who were also fishermen. James and John were the sons of Zebedee. They were mending their nets after a night of fishing. Luke 5:10 identified these brothers as "Simon's partners" in the fishing business. Jesus also called these brothers to follow Him, and, just like Peter and Andrew, they followed without hesitation. They left not only their nets but also their boat and their father.

Matthew 9:9 Later, Jesus was again in His "own town" (Mt. 9:1), a reference to **Capernaum**, which was the base of operations for Jesus' Galilean ministry. Because of Capernaum's location, it was an important customs town with booths set up to receive taxes and impose tolls on merchants and traders who worked in or traveled through the area. The collectors who worked at these booths could charge exorbitant rates and generally make life miserable for those engaged in commerce.

Matthew was most likely working at one of these collection booths. As Jesus passed, He stopped at Matthew's booth and simply said, "**Follow me.**" Though Scripture doesn't indicate it, Matthew was probably familiar with Jesus. He may never have met the Lord personally, but he probably had heard of Jesus and the things He had done, for they were widely known. Responding in the same way as the fishermen Jesus had called earlier, Matthew immediately left his lucrative occupation and followed Jesus.

Matthew 9:10-13 Because it was a special occasion for this former tax-collector-turned-disciple, Matthew threw a formal banquet in Jesus' honor (Lk. 5:29) and invited other tax collectors. These may have been his only friends, since tax collectors were despised by the Jewish people as having sold out to the occupying government. Also enjoying the dinner party were Jesus' disciples and others who were classified as "sinners." This term may have referred to immoral people. It also was often used to refer to those who did not keep the fine details of the Jewish religious traditions. Usually it was the Pharisees, who considered only themselves righteous, who used

this term to refer to those who did not follow their interpretations of the Law.

It was not unusual during such a banquet for others to stand outside and observe the celebration. Among them were the Pharisees, who always seemed to be watching Jesus to catch Him in some infraction of the Law or their interpretation of it. When these Jewish leaders saw Jesus enjoying the company of those whom they considered undesirable, they were appalled. They could not fathom why any religious person would have anything to do with those who didn't keep God's Law as they did.

Instead of confronting Jesus directly, these Jewish leaders spoke to His disciples. Their question (v. 11) was a criticism of Jesus' actions and a judgment against Him. Perhaps they hoped to discredit Jesus in the eyes of His disciples and others who followed or looked up to Him. Though the question was asked of the disciples, who may not have known how to answer, Jesus personally responded.

In Jesus' reply, He noted that healthy people do not need a doctor's visit; the sick are the ones who need healing. His words emphasize that He is the Great Physician who came to bring healing to those suffering from the ravages of sin. Jesus quoted Hosea 6:6 to remind His hearers that God wants His people to exercise His mercy toward others rather than focusing on the details of the Jewish interpretation of the Law. Since this is what God desires, it was only natural for Jesus to be carrying out His Father's will. Thus, instead of focusing on those who consider themselves "righteous," which was probably a reference to the self-righteousness of the Pharisees, Jesus emphasized He was focusing on those who knew they were "sinners" and needed Him most. Jesus came not only to lead sinners "to repentance" (as noted in Lk. 5:32), but also "to call" them into full citizenship in God's Kingdom.

Jesus' words were not intended merely as a rebuke of the Pharisees, but perhaps more importantly as a lesson for His disciples. They were to show the same unconditional concern as Jesus.

Implications

Students often struggle to understand how Jesus calls them and how they should respond to follow Him. Your students are in the process of being called or of following the call of Christ. In our modern-day culture of choice, we sometimes start to believe that we choose whether to follow Jesus or not. However, Jesus chooses us when He calls us to be His disciples, and we are called to follow Him completely by faith, understanding that

Salvation is by Faith Alone.

In this passage, the disciples left all to follow Jesus and become fishers of men. As many students have already experienced, following Jesus begins with a call from God to join Him in His purposes. However, it may not always be easy to determine how this call plays out in daily living. For each of Jesus' disciples, answering His call took a variety of expressions. Like the disciples, students have different gifts and talents to use, and different roadblocks to overcome—but they all must follow the call of Jesus to be fishers of men.

Teaching Plan

Connect

Review Questions

(5-8 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will answer five review questions from the previous lesson.

Print one copy of the "Review Questions" activity sheet for your use.

After greeting students, use the review questions to test what they can recall from the previous lesson as well as to provide the context for today's lesson.

Master Teacher Option: Whom Would You Follow?

(10 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will discuss which celebrities they would follow and why they would follow him or her.

Print off several pictures of current public figures in entertainment, sports, or politics from the Internet.

Instruct students to form groups of two or three. Distribute one picture to each group, and then instruct groups to devise an argument about why their assigned person is the best person in the world to follow. Explain that they may consider issues such as success, values, monetary worth, and world impact. Allow one or two minutes for groups to create their arguments. Next, instruct groups to select representatives to voice their arguments in less than a minute each.

When all groups have presented an argument, lead students to vote for the best person to follow. Then, ask: **How did you decide which person you wanted to follow?** Allow students to respond. Then conclude the activity by explaining that today students will look at how Jesus' disciples immediately obeyed Jesus' command to follow Him.

Explore

Master Teacher Key Study: He Called His Disciples

(15-20 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will study Matthew 4:18-22 and 9:9-13 to understand Jesus' call for disciples to follow Him.

Print one copy of the Master Teacher Key Study for your use. Provide a copy of the Student Worksheet and a pen for each student.

Learning Goal: Students will consider how Jesus calls those who would follow Him.

Pass out pens and copies of the Student Worksheet. Then, use the Master Teacher Key Study to teach Matthew 4:18-22 and 9:9-13.

Transform

Deeper Discussion

(10 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will discuss why how they follow Christ's call in their daily lives.

Learning Goal: Students will determine ways to follow Christ's call in their daily lives.

Use the following questions to lead students in a discussion about how to follow Christ's call in their daily lives:

- **How difficult do you think it was for the disciples to forsake everything to follow Jesus' call?**
- **What would be difficult for you to sacrifice for the sake of following Christ?**
- **Why should following Christ become the greatest priority in our lives?**
- **What is required for someone to become a true fisher of people today?**

After discussion, emphasize that Christ's call is before all of us . . . and that each of us has to make the decision about whether or not we will accept that call. Lead students in prayer, asking God to help students recognize His call upon their lives.

Master Teacher Option: Paths to Follow

(10 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will discuss the value of following people or things that are not Christ.

Provide a copy of "Paths to Follow" activity sheet and a pen for each student. Also provide a dry erase board and dry erase marker.

Learning Goal: Students will determine ways to follow Christ's call in their daily lives.

Distribute pens and copies of the "Paths to Follow" activity sheet to students. Ask: **What people or things (other than Christ) can we follow in life?** Encourage students to name people or things that we can follow, such as money, parents, friends, coaches, and even ourselves. Write their answers on the dry erase board. Then instruct students to pick six of the answers on the board that they relate to and write each one above an arrow on their activity sheet.

Explain that when we choose to follow something or someone in life, we are guided by that leader in all areas of our lives. Say: **We cannot be led by more than one leader.** Instruct students to put an X over

each path that is not following Christ. Ask: **By looking at your sheet, when we follow Christ, what or whom can we not follow?** Emphasize that following Christ means that we live differently and make decisions based on following Christ alone.

Ask: **How can following Christ's path instead of any other path make a difference in the way that we relate to our family and friends?** Allow students to share their thoughts. Suggest answers that include showing respect to parents, getting along with siblings, not gossiping about friends, and caring for others. Emphasize that when we follow Christ, He affects our lives, and we must seek to obey Him above any of our own desires. Conclude by praying that God will help students to stay on the path that guides them to Him.

Take Home Activity

Family Devotion

(10-15 minutes at home, easy set-up)

Distribute copies of the Family Devotion to students and encourage them to share the devotion with their family.

A copy of the Family Devotion will be included in your lesson PDF download.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

(5-8 minutes, easy set-up)

Use these questions to review the content from Lesson 8: "His Victory Over Temptation"
The correct answer for each question is printed in bold, italic font.

1. After His baptism, Jesus was led into the desert by _____.
 - a. the devil
 - b. John the Baptist
 - c. His disciples
 - d. ***the Holy Spirit***
2. Jesus spent _____ in the desert with no food.
 - a. 10 days
 - b. 5 days
 - c. 25 days
 - d. ***40 days***
3. Knowing that Jesus was hungry, the devil tempted Him with _____.
 - a. ***bread***
 - b. water
 - c. meat
 - d. vegetables
4. Where was Jesus when the devil tempted Him to worship Satan rather than God?
 - a. the Temple
 - b. the desert
 - c. ***a high place***
 - d. the Mount of Olives
5. The devil's final temptation of Jesus was for Him to _____.
 - a. ***throw Himself from the Temple***
 - b. put God to the test
 - c. have all that He could see
 - d. worship the devil

HE CALLED HIS DISCIPLES

(15–20 minutes, easy set-up)

Use this outline and any of the corresponding activities to share the Biblical Truth with students.

Introduction: Jesus calls His followers to follow Him above everything else. When Jesus calls people to follow Him, they often abandon their jobs, families, and ultimately their lives to follow Him. The call of Christ on our lives demands that everything take second place to Him.

1. Jesus calls His followers to follow Him with immediate and full obedience (Matthew 4:18–22).

Biblical Background: Instead of waiting for disciples to choose Him, Jesus found Peter and Andrew, and called them to change their focus from fishing for fish to fishing for men (vv. 18-19). Then, Jesus called two more fishermen, the sons of Zebedee—James and John. His call required the fishermen to leave behind the things from their past (vv. 20-22). Jesus' authority as the Christ was evident in the way that His followers immediately responded to His call. They followed Jesus with no second thoughts. They simply responded to His command without letting the things of the world hold them back.

Illustration: In BASE-jumping, people jump off buildings, antennas, spans, and other high elevations with parachutes and hope to land safely. One instructor even tries to talk people out of BASE-jumping by telling them that if they are not prepared to die, they are not ready to jump. A previous jumper explained that once someone is committed to jumping, there's no turning back—you just do it. Following Christ is similar in that you know you may have challenges, but you commit and don't turn back to anything that the world has to offer.

Application: When we think about obeying Christ, focusing on things of the world can easily distract us. To follow Christ fully, we must respond with immediate obedience to His call without worrying about what we are leaving behind.

2. Jesus' call for His followers to follow Him can change their vocation (Matthew 9:9).

Biblical Background: Jesus saw Matthew the tax collector and called Matthew to follow Him, too. Matthew immediately walked away from his tax collector's booth and his vocation, and followed Jesus (v. 9).

Illustration: Following Jesus can have a cost. For example, Saudi Arabia is a country in which following Christ as the Messiah is dangerous. Recently, a father burned his daughter to death because she had converted to Christianity. Although most Christians in the United States will not face this kind of persecution, this daughter demonstrated her obedience in following Christ by following Him at all costs.

Application: Fully following Jesus requires that His disciples make Jesus their first priority—no matter what the costs are.

3. Jesus calls His followers to follow Him in showing love to unbelievers (Matthew 9:10–13).

Description: Matthew, who was not well received in Jewish circles, invited Jesus and the disciples to his house to eat with other tax collectors and sinners (v. 10). The Pharisees could not understand why Jesus and His disciples chose to be with these people who were unacceptable to the Jews (v. 11). Jesus explained that He came to care for those who were sinners (vv. 12-13).

Illustration: In a complete disregard for human life, onlookers in Great Britain prodded a suicidal 17-year-old boy to jump from the top of a multi-story parking lot. The onlookers yelled, “Jump” and “Get on with it.” After he jumped, several students took pictures of him with their cell phones. This story is an example of the complete opposite of what Jesus desires for His followers. He commands His followers to love people with a heart that breaks for the hurting and the lost.

Application: Jesus obeyed and fulfilled the regulations set by the Law. He never allowed other’s interpretation of Scripture to dictate His interaction with those people who needed Him—unbelievers. While obeying Jesus’ call to righteousness, we must also allow Christ to develop a heart for the lost in us.

Conclusion: Even though there are an abundance of choices in our world today, Jesus still finds us and says, “Follow Me, and I’ll make you fishers of men.” Today’s disciples are also called to forsake all and follow Christ to share the gospel with those who are in need of Christ.

LESSON 9

HE CALLED HIS DISCIPLES

Biblical Passage: Matthew 4:18-22; 9:9-13

Memory Verse: Matthew 4:19

“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.”

1. Jesus calls His followers to follow Him with _____ and _____ obedience (Matthew 4:18–22).
2. Jesus’ call for His followers to follow Him can _____ their _____ (Matthew 9:9).
3. Jesus calls His followers to follow Him in showing _____ to _____ (Matthew 9:10–13).

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How difficult do you think it was for the disciples to forsake everything to follow Jesus’ call?
- What would be difficult for you to sacrifice for the sake of following Christ?
- Why should following Christ become the greatest priority in our lives?
- What is required for someone to become a true fisher of people today?

JESUS AND SINNERS

Read Matthew 9:10–13, and then answer the following questions below:

How did the Pharisees view the following people?

SINNERS	JESUS	PHARISEES

How did Jesus view the following people?

SINNERS	JESUS	PHARISEES

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT . . .

“There simply is no special religious vocation since the call of God comes to each at the common tasks.”—*Martin Luther*

LESSON 9

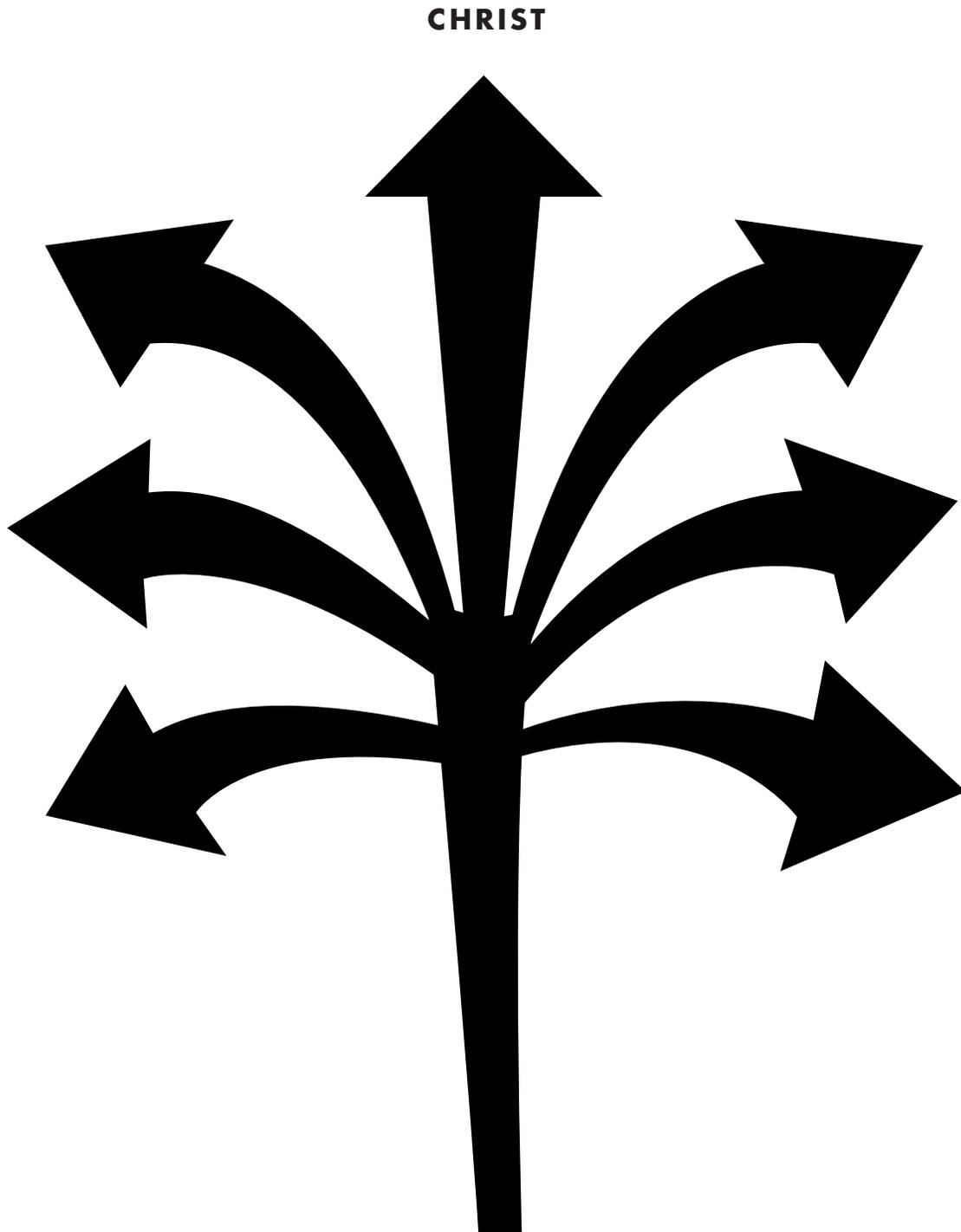
HE CALLED HIS DISCIPLES

Biblical Passage: Matthew 4:18-22; 9:9-13

CHRISTOS
STUDENT EDITION

PATHS TO FOLLOW

Whom or what can we follow in life?



LESSON 9

HE CALLED HIS DISCIPLES

Biblical Passage: Matthew 4:18-22; 9:9-13

What do you remember about playing the game of “Follow the Leader” when you were just a kid? As each family member shares their favorite memories of the game, discuss whether they preferred playing the Leader or the Follower. If you preferred to follow, what did you want the leader to do? If you preferred to lead, what did you want your followers to do? How do childhood games like “Follow the Leader” help us determine how to lead well and follow well as we grow up and become adults? Emphasize that whether we are teenagers or adults, we will have the opportunity to follow the leadership of any number of people, so it’s important to choose wisely the people we will follow.

Read Matthew 8:18-22 and 9:9-13. The twelve men Jesus chose to be His disciples were a far cry from what anyone in Jesus’ time and culture would have expected. Most of these men were uneducated members of the working class of that day. To top things off, Jesus even chose a tax collector as one of the Twelve. Because tax collectors were considered traitors for collecting taxes from the Jews to give to the Roman authorities, they were especially despised among the Jews. Yet these men quickly gave up their chosen professions to become one of Jesus’ disciples.

Disciple is an interesting word. Probably Jesus’ best definition of a disciple comes from John 8:31, when He said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.” So, a disciple is one who submits to the teaching of another.

Are you a disciple of Christ? How is Jesus transforming you into one He will use to change the world? Don’t look at your life and doubt that He can do it. He’s done it before.

CONNECTION QUESTIONS:

- Which teenagers in your school could be named “mostly likely to succeed” upon graduation? What characteristics do these teenagers have that make them successful?
- Think of the disciples Jesus chose. Would you identify any of them as successful? How is Jesus’ definition of success different from the world’s definition of success?
- How is our family different because we are followers of Christ? What changes can we make as a family so we can bold followers of Christ?