

[NO] MEN'S
REGRETS CONFERENCE

TAKE UP YOUR CROSS AND

FOLLOW **ME**

MATTHEW 16:24

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FEBRUARY 6, 2027

noregretsconference.org

PRE-CONFERENCE STUDY

Session 1: The Heart of Following

Matthew 16:21-28

Introduction

Following Jesus is a phrase we hear a lot in the Church. It is the heart of what Jesus called people to do. But it is also a foreign concept to our modern culture and minds. Does following mean literally walking where He walks? Is it agreeing with His teachings? And why did Jesus' best friends have such a hard time putting it into practice? In this first session, we will hear from Jesus himself with some pointed words, phrases, and commands that clarify and draw us into the heart of what it means to be His follower.

Discovery Bible Study

Icebreaker

1. What are you thankful for today?
2. What's one area of life that feels especially hard right now?

Read Matthew 16:21-28 Together

3. What does this passage reveal to you about God?
4. What about Peter's interaction with Jesus reveals to you about the nature of humans when it comes to following Jesus?
5. In what area of your life do you feel you need to apply the challenge "Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me?" And what must you do as a response this week?
6. Who do you need to inform about your commitment this week?

Perspective

Jesus says *"...whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it."* This is one of Jesus' difficult statements. Have you seen its truth played out in your life over time? How so?

Application

Jesus asks us, *"What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?"* Where in your life are you settling for things less than God's best, and what is your first step towards reorienting yourself to Jesus?

Prayer:

Session 2: When Following Means STOP

Acts 16:1-10

Introduction

When we think of following Jesus, we usually think of what He is calling us towards. It might be a ministry, a person, a cause, or a mission. It's also easy to think that Jesus is calling us to everyone, everywhere in equal measure. However, Jesus called particular people by name, and Jesus was called to specific places of ministry at specific moments of his life. Our passage for this session helps us trust God's voice and direction, even when He leads us away from something good.

Discovery Bible Study

Icebreaker

What are you thankful for today?

What's one area of life that feels especially hard right now?

Read Acts 16:1-10 Together

What is perplexing, intriguing, or insightful about how God reveals His will in our lives from this passage?

Share an experience of a time when what not to do was clearer than what to do. Was that a welcome experience, or was it difficult? Why?

What do you think we need to hear when the pathway in front of us appears to be blocked or restricted?

Where is the Spirit blocking you right now, and what other path is the Spirit leading you towards?

Perspective

We operate with limited perspective while God operates with an eternal one. Share an example of a time when God saved you from your own limited perspective and decision-making.

Application

In this story, following Jesus meant tuning in to the spiritual realm. First, in hearing from Jesus' Spirit (vs. 7), and second, in hearing from the man from Macedonia in a vision (vs. 9). What spiritual practice is God asking you to strengthen so you can hear His instruction more clearly?

Prayer:

Session 3: Following Is Learning to Listen Well

2 Samuel 5:17-25

Introduction

You've been here before, and you've seen God work. You've seen God work in this place, and you know what His movement looks like. Maybe you've been leading groups for 20 years, and you've seen Him change people - so you assume He'll do it again. He's led you through incredible difficulties, so you assume the mundane moments will be easy. But learning to follow means following Him in each new moment, with new expectations for the new ways God will surprise you. Today's passage dives into this dynamic in the life of David.

Discovery Bible Study

Icebreaker

What are you thankful for today?

What's one area of life that feels especially hard right now?

Read 2 Samuel 5:17-25 Together

What does this passage teach you about God?

What does this passage teach you about humanity? What stands out about David's interactions with God?

What is the LORD convicting you to do as a response to this passage?

Which part of this passage is something you want to share with a friend or co-worker? Who will you share it with?

Perspective

The passage mentioned that David heard an answer from God with specific words and directions. How do you imagine David heard God's direction? What are some of the ways people hear God's voice in their lives?

Application

What is one thing you can begin today that will improve your ability to hear God more clearly?

Prayer:

Session 4: Jesus Leads Me Personally

Psalm 23

Introduction

Following Jesus means trusting Him enough to let Him lead us personally. Psalm 23 provides a captivating image of what that looks like. David describes God as a shepherd who guides, provides, restores, walks alongside, protects, blesses, and pursues. The Shepherd is not far from you. He is deeply involved in every aspect of your life. Following Jesus means trusting that He knows where He is taking you and He will be with you every step of the way. As you read Psalm 23, consider what it would look like to surrender control and follow Jesus wherever He leads.

Discovery Bible Study

Icebreaker

What are you thankful for today?

What's one area of life that feels especially hard right now?

Read Psalm 23 Together

What does this passage teach you about God?

What does this passage teach you about what it means to be a man loved and led by the Good Shepherd?

David says that the Shepherd "makes me," "leads me," and "guides me." In what situations or relationships do you sense God trying to make you rest, lead you into greater peace, or guide you along a better path?

Psalm 23 is comforting, but it also includes dark valleys, danger, and enemies. What aspects of following Jesus seem difficult or frightening for you right now?

Perspective

Following Jesus when He leads you somewhere you wouldn't choose to go on your own is very difficult. What are three things that might prevent you from trusting and following Him? How can you overcome these enemies?

Application

Where in your life do you most need to apply Psalm 23 by trusting Jesus and following His lead right now?

Prayer:

Session 5: Jesus Leads Me to Others

Acts 9:20–31

Introduction

It's easy to view following Jesus as something between you and God. But Jesus often leads you through investing in other men and leads others through your investment in them. In Acts 9, Saul is a passionate new follower of Jesus with a dangerous past. Many believers fear him, but Barnabas is willing to pursue Saul, take a risk on him, and walk beside him. Following Jesus may involve listening when God speaks to you through someone else. It also means becoming a man that God uses to step out in faith and pursue others.

Discovery Bible Study

Icebreaker

What are you thankful for today?

What's one area of life that feels especially hard right now?

Read Acts 9:20–31 Together

What does this passage teach you about God and how He uses people to accomplish His purposes?

What do you learn about the messiness involved in helping others follow and be used by Jesus?

The believers in Jerusalem were afraid of Saul, but Barnabas chose to pursue him, enter the story God was writing for him, and contribute to the next chapter in his life. What risk did Barnabas take? Why do you think he was willing to take it?

The messiness in Saul's life made believers hesitant to invest in him. In what ways does the messiness in other men's lives prevent you from taking a risk on them?

Perspective

Who might God be asking you to take a risk on? Who is someone you could encourage, believe in, stand beside, or invite to take a next step toward serving Jesus more fully?

Application

Who is one man you can boldly invite to join you at the No Regrets Men's Conference? When and how will you do it?

Prayer:

Session 6: Jesus as a Follower

JOHN 5:16-30

Introduction

When we talk about following, it implies there is a leader. And it's easy to think the leader cannot be a follower. And most of us, if we're honest, would prefer to lead. To follow implies not knowing, while leadership implies having knowledge and a capacity to teach others. With that in mind, we close our study with a simple idea: Jesus was also a follower. It sounds strange to say out loud, but an examination of his life shows that his habit of seeking His Father led to a close relationship with God's heart and mind. Jesus followed His Father and invites us to do the same.

Discovery Bible Study

Icebreaker

What are you thankful for today?

What area of life feels especially hard right now?

Read John 5:16-30 Together

What does this passage reveal to you about God?

What does this passage reveal to you about how humans are to engage with God in relationship?

As a group, name some phrases Jesus says in this passage that show His heart and attitude toward His Father. (Verses that either show how Jesus follows/listens to His Father, or that show His connection to the Father)

Since Jesus is demonstrating a fully alive human life (see John 10:10), what are you challenged to change about your relationship with God based on Jesus' example from this passage?

Perspective

Jesus spoke boldly about his closeness to His Father. What do you think made him this bold, and how can you incorporate this into your life?

Application

Who is one person you can begin to go deeper with in your desire to know God more (someone who can walk alongside you and encourage you)? If comfortable, name that person to your group members as a first next step in faithfulness to God.

Prayer: