

# LIVING STONES DISCIPLESHIP GROUP



SECOND SEMESTER  
UNIT 1



"[Y]ou yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

1Peter 2:5

# UNIT 1: Follow Me



## IN THIS SESSION

- :: What does it mean to be a Christian?
- :: What is the cost of following Jesus?
  - :: Is this price too high to pay?
- :: How can Jesus ask so much of us?

# UNIT 1 // Follow Me

## // OPENING SCRIPTURE

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

(Matthew 16:24-25)

## // OPENING PRAYER

## // FOLLOW-UP FROM PREVIOUS UNIT

Memory Verse :: 2Timothy 1:9

Homework :: Did everyone in the group complete this unit's work and activities (if applicable)?

# UNIT 1: Follow Me

Fill out the activity guide below. If you have any questions about the material, contact your group leader.

## // Come, Follow Me.

:: Read Matthew 4:18-22. When Jesus called the first disciples, He told them to “follow Me”. The word “disciple” refers to a pupil, the student of a teacher. In Jesus day, a disciple often lived with their teacher to observe his/her way of life. From verse 19, we learn three things about discipleship. Look at the verse closely. Let’s see if we can use them to come up with a definition of discipleship.

:: Jesus says, “**Follow me.**” For these men, this meant leaving behind their former way of life. What did they have to give up (“leave”) to follow Jesus?

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:: The first thing we learn is this: discipleship means being willing to give up everything to follow Jesus anywhere. The disciples left behind comforts and careers to follow Jesus. They left behind family and friends. They didn’t know where Jesus would lead them. They just had to trust Him and follow.

:: Jesus says, “**I will make you fishers of men.**” This teaches us something else about discipleship: disciples are made. Notice, Jesus is doing the *making*, the disciples are *being made*. This is the second thing we learn: discipleship is a process, the work of God Himself.

:: From what you know of the life of Jesus with His disciples, what did this process look like? Describe as best you can, Jesus’ method of making disciples.

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:: Finally, this teaches us discipleship means taking on Christ's purposes above one's own. The disciples set aside their life's work, professional ambitions, and purposes to adopted the mission of Jesus. They would become "**fishers of men**". What do you think Jesus meant by the phrase "fishers of men"?

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:: Now we are ready to define discipleship. Take those three parts of being a disciple and write your own answer to the question: "*What is a disciple of Jesus Christ?*"

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## // A Call to Come & Die

:: Read Matthew 16:24-26. In verse 24, Jesus gives three conditions to anyone who wants to be His disciple. Fill out the passage below to learn what they are:

**"Then Jesus told His disciples, "If anyone would come after Me, let him**

(1) \_\_\_\_\_ **himself and (2) take up his \_\_\_\_\_ and**

(3) \_\_\_\_\_ **Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever**

**loses his life for My sake will find it."**

:: The first thing Jesus tells His followers to do is to deny themselves. In our day, we are often told just the opposite: "accept yourself". What do you think Jesus meant by "let him deny himself"?

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:: The second condition of following Christ is to take up your cross. Crucifixion was a gruesome death sentence for criminals. The cross was a symbol of death. It'd be like the electric chair of the 20th century. Jesus is actually saying the call to follow Him is a call to die! What do you think Jesus means to convey about discipleship by using this radical metaphor?

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:: According to Luke 9:23, how often are we told to take up our cross? Why does dying to self require such a frequency? What does this tell us about the disposition of our sin-nature?

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:: What is the third requirement for discipleship in verse 24?

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:: Over and over in the Bible we learn following Jesus means a change in priority, trajectory, and even in identity. This may seem to be a high price to pay, but the reward is worth it! Not only does the Bible promise Christ-followers an eternity in Heaven, but Jesus also says those who obey His commandments will receive unimaginable joy. Consider His promises in John 15:10-11,

**“If you keep My commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.”**

“God created us for Himself. If we live with any center other than Jesus, we will be living incompletely... He knows He is the only One in the universe who can control us without destroying us... No one will ever love you like Jesus.”

- Rebecca Pippert

## // Is the Price Too High?

:: Read the story of the Rich Ruler in Luke 18:18-23. In verse 22, Jesus said this man lacked “**one thing**”. What did Jesus tell the ruler to do? (three things)

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:: Verse 23 tells us that the ruler went away sad. Why?

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:: There is no discount on discipleship. It costs everything we have and everything we are. The rich ruler was not willing to give up his wealth to follow Jesus. How easily the things we own can begin to control us. For this ruler, his trust and dependance on his money kept him from giving full allegiance to Jesus. The problem was not his money, it could have been anything. The problem was his trust.

:: Consider the following list. How can trusting in these things keep us from giving full allegiance to Christ?

|| Career || Self-image || Leisure activities || Friendships ||  
|| Marriage || Physical health || Church Involvement ||

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“Cheap grace is the enemy of the church... [It] is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance... grace without discipleship, grace without a cross... Costly grace is the gospel... It is costly because it costs a man his life, and grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of His Son... it is grace because God did not reckon His Son too dear a price to pay for our life... When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die. This is why the rich young man was so loath to follow Jesus, for the cost of his following was the death of his will. In fact, every command of Jesus is a call to die, with all our affections and lust.” - Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*

## // How Can Jesus Ask So Much?

:: The call to come and die is a high price to pay. Does God really expect us to give Him everything? How can He ask so much of us? The answer is straightforward: God can ask us to give all for Jesus' sake, because Jesus gave all for our sake.

:: Fill out 1Peter 3:18, "**For Christ also suffered once for sins, the \_\_\_\_\_ for the \_\_\_\_\_, that he might bring us to God...**" Jesus Christ left glory in Heaven, became a Man, suffered the wrath of God for sin on the cross, to bring sinners to God. Jesus gave everything to bring us to God. We owe everything to Christ. Therefore, the price He asks of us is never too high.

:: Motivation for obedience to this call is not payback for what Jesus did. It's love. Jesus said, "**If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.**" (John 14:15) The Apostle Paul put it like this in 2Corinthians 5:14-15, "**For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.**"

## // GROUP ACTIVITY

:: During your LivingStones Discipleship Group meeting, go around the room and share one thing Jesus has done for you and how it can motivate love-based obedience.

### **What Jesus did for me:**

*Ex: "Jesus forgave my sins."*

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### **My love-based response:**

*"I forgive the others when they sin against me."*

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# UNIT 1: Follow Me

## PRAYER REQUESTS // PRAISE REPORTS

Go around the room and have each person share a prayer request and/or a praise report. Members should commit to praying for these requests.

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## ACTIVITY

Consider the list on page 7. Write these items below. What other things keep you from giving all to Christ? Write those down, too. Take some time this week and ask the Lord to reveal anything you have been trusting in which is keeping you from giving Jesus full control over your life. Be ready to share these with your group during your next meeting.

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# UNIT 1: You Shall Be Holy

## HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

:: Memorize the following verse(s):

**Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.**

(Matthew 16:24-25)

:: Complete the Unit 2 worksheets and activities (when applicable).

:: Pray for the needs of your brothers/sisters in your group.

:: Ensure you are able to attend the next session.