



Week Three: Follow His Lead – Study Guide

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Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee when He saw two brothers who were fishermen by trade, Peter and Andrew, casting their fishing nets. Jesus invited them along on a journey that would forever change their lives. The Bible says, “Immediately they left their nets and followed him.” Little did they know what was lying ahead, nor the depth of what it meant to “follow” Jesus. Certainly they soon learned that following Jesus involved a crash course on loving your way through conflict.

Where Am I Today?

- 1) Lives spent in pursuit of following Jesus have a great depth to them. It’s about so much more than simply following Him down dirt road after dirt road in first century Judea. Certainly, the disciples would agree, given all the challenges and conflict they faced along their journey. When you think of what it means to follow Him, do you consider yourself someone who daily seeks out relational peace and restoration as part of the journey? Feel free to elaborate on some things that you consider to be a normal part of your daily experience with God.

Into the Bible

- 2) Read **Matthew 18:15**. Who is “a brother”? In this verse it says that the objective is to “gain,” or in some versions, “win” your brother. What does this mean? What would be the alternative to gaining a brother, and what might that experience involve relationally?

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- 3) What would be the purpose of going privately to someone to discuss a wrong? Does this mean that you can tell all your friends and put comments on social media prior to talking with that person, just as long as you go to them one-on-one?

- 4) Read **Matthew 18:16**. When your personal best effort did not work, then you can bring one or two others into the conflict. This is definitely not biblical permission to build a team against your opponent! Remember, we are striving for God's help in resolution as He instructs. What kind of people would you suggest bringing in at this point? If you were in the other person's shoes, what would you think if someone brought two of their best friends? How might those one or two others help BOTH sides see that they are being misunderstood, not just the one accused?

- 5) Read **Matthew 18:17**. Let's say we are down to our last-ditch effort where all else has failed, but we are not giving up just yet! Describe in your own words what it would mean to "tell it to the church." Many of us have heard horror stories where people have been humiliated before the entire congregation as some sort of trial with judge, jury, and any attendee with an opinion. This obviously is not God's idea in verse 17. At The Cove, we have a Peacemaking Team. This is a ministry where the church can interact with a given dispute, yet still keep as few people as possible involved. Would you be willing to allow the Peacemaking Team help you through a seemingly impossible conflict? Why or why not?

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- 6) Read **1 Corinthians 6:1-7**. In the book of Exodus, God gave Moses what came to be known as The Law during Israel's 40 years of wandering in the desert. Parts of this Law were detailed instructions on how to handle conflict. (For example, Leviticus 6:1-6 explains what they did if someone was robbed.) Jesus knew that His sacrifice would completely cover over any need to carry out the rituals of The Law; however, the Jewish people did not yet understand this. Without the Law to give detailed instruction on handling wrongs committed, Christians would be tempted to take their dispute to the local court. Why does Paul write to the church against this? Does this mean we are forbidden to go to court? What would a person risk by not getting justice in a court system?

How Does This Apply?

Following Jesus daily is all about relationships with God and with others. Are you currently involved in a conflict or dispute within the body of believers (the church) that is hindering the unity of the church? What next step do you need to pray about taking this week? Maybe you need to stop gossiping and go to somebody one-on-one, or perhaps you are at the next step of needing to involve the Peacemaking Team.

Prayer Focus

This series, we are praying for the "It Starts Now" event starting the weekend of November 16 and 17. Specifically, please be praying for:

- 300 Salvations
- 200 Neighborhood Experiences
- 200 Baptisms
- 1,000 First Time Guests

Also, please continue to pray for the new Statesville Campus location, for the funding needed for renovations and the opening on November 17.

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Increase Your Learning on Your Own

- 7) One theme we keep seeing throughout any Peacemaking effort is keeping the integrity of the situation and the people involved at the forefront of our minds. There are many reasons why people break confidence and privacy in situations; usually it's an attempt to gain favor for a side. Many don't realize that you can go from the rightfully victimized to the rightfully sinful just by gossiping. Read **Acts 15:36-41**. What was the disagreement between Paul and Barnabas? What does Barnabas' name mean? With what you know now of peacemaking, which of the two probably handled the situation best?