

## **Is Jesus Most Important?**

*A Framework for Loving and Pursuing Jesus Supremely*

As he was walking along the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter), and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. “Follow me,” he told them, and I will make you fish for people.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him. Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat with Zebedee their father, preparing their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him. —Matthew 4:18-22 CSB

### **Three Questions to Consider...**

#### **What has my heart and affection?**

*Matthew 4:18-20*

Whatever we are most passionate about, we will run the hardest after. Now think about this—what if Jesus called us to leave altogether our passions behind to pursue Him? When we become a Christ-follower, that is precisely what he calls us to do. When we surrender our lives to Jesus, we commit to nothing coming before our relationship with Him. Nothing. Sometimes we leave things behind, and in all things, we leverage them to the glory of God and expansion of His Kingdom. In other words, our families, careers, and activities all belong to Him and for His glory.

Take some time now and read Matthew 4:18-20. Think through and write down your responses to the following questions:

- What might have been your initial reaction to Jesus’ request? Would you have followed Jesus immediately or asked a few questions first and then decided if you were going to follow Him?
- How did Peter and Andrew display their commitment to Jesus? What might that look like in your life?

Life Evaluation: Take some time, think through, and write down your responses to the following questions:

- If you had a free afternoon with no responsibilities, what would you spend your time doing?
- What two things in your life make “your heartbeat a little bit faster?” What would they share about your characteristics, qualities, likes/dislikes if someone were to ask your best friends about you?
- On a typical, non-church-going day, what are the top three things that get the most attention in your life?
- What three apps on your smartphone do you tend to spend the most time on? Why?

## Do the people in my life notice my pursuit of Jesus?

*Matthew 4:21*

People don't have to spend much time with us to find out what is most important in our lives. We must wrestle with this: Do we push people towards Jesus, or do we cause people to run in the opposite direction? Our call as Christ-followers is to point people to the person and work of Jesus Christ. They might "leave their nets and follow Jesus." They might continue in their tasks, dreams, and pursuits without Christ. The Holy Spirit draws a heart to Christ, yet we may be the vehicle God chooses to use.

Take some time now and read Matthew 4:21. Think through and write down your responses to the following questions:

- Why do you believe it was so important to Jesus to have followers that believed in, experienced, and carried out His mission?
- If you ask people to follow you on a mission, what characteristics do you look for in followers? What characteristics stand out about the people Jesus asked to follow Him intimately? In other words, what did people see in those that followed Jesus?

Life Evaluation: Take some time, think through, and honestly evaluate these three areas of your life.

- **Identity:** *What* defines me... *what* I do or *who* I am? Evaluate what really speaks to your identity, the things you are good at, and receive affirmation for and from. Who you are as a person when all this goes away?
- **Influence:** *Who* am I allowing to speak into my life? Make a list of the people you spend the most time around. List your top five. We will call this your *circle of influence*—you influence them, and they impact you. What things do you do with these people? What things do you tell these people? What things do they tell you? If you had to process a decision and tell someone something, these are the people you turn to for advice and guidance.
- **Impact:** *Where* am I making a difference? Look at your life now. Think through and process where you are making a difference, good or bad. Home? Work? School? On your team? In a band? On stage? In other words, where are areas in which you have some leadership responsibility and therefore make an impact?

Bottom Line: We must be very *intentional* in the way we live our lives.

- What does it mean to live a life of intentionality? Are you doing this? If yes, what evidence exists in your life? If not, what is stopping you?
- When we don't live with intentionality, what can happen to our witness?

## What am I willing to sacrifice in continuing to place Jesus first in my life?

*Matthew 4:22*

The call to follow Jesus is a call of sacrifice—but what a gift! Notice the word *immediately* that often repeats in the text. Jesus never desires to be second or third place in our lives. Furthermore, there is

no “sort of” follow Jesus in the biblical narrative. When we continually sacrifice for the cause of the Kingdom, we renew our hearts and passion(s) for the things of God.

Take some time now and read Matthew 4:22. Think through and write down your responses to the following questions:

- What is the significance of the word *immediately* in this text? How would it change this passage if these men did not immediately decide to follow Jesus?
- Do you think this was a one-time decision, or do disciples of Jesus always live sacrificially? What ultimately did disciples of Jesus give up following Jesus? Read Luke 9:23.

Life Evaluation: Take some time, think through, and write down your responses to the following questions:

- If you had a free afternoon with no responsibilities, what are some ways you could serve others? Be a blessing to others?
- After reading Scripture and examining the life of Jesus, what are some things that make Jesus’ heart beat a little bit faster? Why were people who didn’t even believe the message of Jesus drawn to Jesus?
- On a typical, non-church-going day, what are the top three things you can do to stay connected to Jesus and His mission? What might you have to give up making the necessary room for these things in your life?
- What apps on your smartphone do you need to reconsider how much time you spend on? What do you think this will do in your life?