

Not a Fan Daily Journal

Are you a Fan...or a Follower?

This journal is intended to help you answer that question.

First, this journal will help you discover how your relationship with Jesus impacts your daily decisions.

Second, this journal will help you develop the daily discipline of studying and applying Scripture to better know and obey your Creator.

Finally, your participation in this journal will 'prime the pump' for discussion among your Home Group.

So for the next 6 weeks of your Not a Fan experience, we are asking you to:

- 1) Read this journal daily.
- 2) Write in this journal daily.
- 3) Bring this journal each week to your Home Group to share what you are learning.

The significance of this series in your life is up to you. Your spiritual growth during the next six weeks will likely be linked to the amount of time that you spend in these daily exercises.

This journal is designed to be used on specific days **beginning on Sunday, February 3.**

Indebted to Kyle Idleman's *Not a Fan Journal*, your Fellowship staff has invested much time in tweaking and rewriting this material, all designed to help you recognize and celebrate your development in the daily decision to be a *completely, committed, follower* of Jesus.

Let's begin the journey!

*All Scripture is ESV (English Standard Version) unless otherwise specified.

not a fan.

week 1: FAN or FOLLOWER?

DAY 1: Sunday, Feb. 3

What impacted or challenged you from Sunday's teaching?

SCRIPTURE STUDY

²³ And he Jesus said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. ²⁵ For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? ²⁶ For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. (Luke 9:23-26)

This doesn't sound like giving God 1 hour a week at a church event does it? What is Jesus is saying? Write down some of your insights or questions from the passage above.

"We say to Jesus, 'I don't mind you making some changes in my life,' but Jesus wants to turn your life upside down. We say, 'I don't mind a little touch-up work' but Jesus wants complete renovation. We're thinking tune-up, He's thinking overhaul. We think a little decorating, why not, but Jesus wants a compete remodel." - Kyle Idleman, NAF Study

DTR: Define The Relationship

Take a few minutes in the space below to define YOUR relationship with Jesus. What is it now? What do you want it to be?

DAY 2: Monday, Feb. 4

SCRIPTURE STUDY

¹ *If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.* ² *Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.* ³ *For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.* ⁴ *When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.* (Colossians 3:1-4)

According to the passage, where should the Follower’s daily thoughts be focused and why?

Living like this could really change your focus for the day, couldn’t it?

“Whenever I listen to you preach, I feel like you are trying to interfere with my life.” – Kyle, NAF Study

FEET TO FAITH

Look ahead to what you have scheduled today. Are you willing to have Jesus *interfere*? Give some specifics on what that might look like in real life. (e.g. how that would affect your decisions, language, schedule)

Write your reply below.

Try repeating this phrase aloud 5 times, **“Lord Jesus, come interfere in my life.”**

(This is one of the suggestions that may sound childish or impractical. But what do you really have to lose in trying it?)

What comes out of this little exercise for you?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

What did you learn today about yourself and your willingness to have Jesus interfere in your daily life?
I learned...

End your day in a short prayer, thanking God for the gift of life and the chance to honor Him today.

SCRIPTURE STUDY

³⁷ *Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.* ³⁸ *And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.* ³⁹ *Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.* (Matthew 10:37-39)

This passage is similar to Luke 9:23. In context, verses 34-36 warn potential followers that those within their own family could become enemies if a person trusts Jesus with his/her life. According to verse 37, compared to other relationships, what place is Jesus to have in the life of a **Follower**?

Is giving Jesus first place in your life easy or difficult? Explain your answer.

“Is Jesus one of many, or is He your one and only?” – Kyle, NAF Study

Just as Jesus warned (cf. Matt. 10:37-39 - top of page), His **Followers**, those who put Jesus first, were *persecuted*. As Stephen, a servant of the early Church, is about to be killed by his own people,

“He, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.” (Acts 7:55)

Stephen is given a glimpse into heaven and he is aware of the Presence of God. This no doubt encouraged him, even as it became obvious that he was about to die for Jesus.

You see, it’s God Presence that makes the difference. Maybe this is part of the problem, the part that keeps us from really communicating with God in prayer (and in musical prayer/worship). We aren’t able to see Him, which might lead us to question whether He sees us.

FEET TO FAITH

1. Bring a favorite worship song or hymn to mind.
2. Find a quiet place (e.g. bedroom, walk outside, sit in your vehicle).
3. Now, imagine seeing what Stephen saw, “Jesus standing at the right hand of God.” Try singing out loud, even if softly, the words to a favorite worship song or hymn to Him.

After doing so, write your reaction to what you have done. Was it tough or easy to consider Jesus responding to your worship? **If you really believed** He was listening and responding, how might that change the way you pray or sing?

When a person has a “one and only,” he often writes love notes, even poetry, to the beloved. Before moving on with your day, write a few words to Jesus telling Him what you think of Him.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Whatever you are doing today, imagine Jesus being with you (He is you know). Write one difference that makes to you.

DAY 4: Wed. Feb. 6

“Is your relationship with Jesus moving from casual to committed?” – Kyle, NAF Study

Describe the difference you see between admiration and devotion.

Admiration is... _____

Devotion is... _____

Which description looks most like your relationship to Jesus? Explain your reasoning.

At this point, would you consider yourself a **FAN** or a **FOLLOWER** (circle one)?

If you're a FAN, and are ready to discuss how to be a FOLLOWER, call a Christian friend or touch base with Fellowship Staff ASAP. We want to help! (Jackie@fellowshipofmadison.com; or substitute another staff member's first name followed by [@fellowshipofmadison.com](http://fellowshipofmadison.com) - including Edwin, TJ, & James)

If you're a FOLLOWER, you need to be aware that you are not immune to distractions. In fact, today's *Scripture Study* demonstrates the danger of those who serve Jesus publicly without seeking Jesus passionately.

SCRIPTURE STUDY

³⁸ As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" ⁴¹ "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, ⁴² but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:38–42 NIV84)

Which lady was doing what pleased Jesus most, and what was the difference between the two?

Circle the characteristic that best fits each woman:

Martha Devoted or Distracted

Mary Devoted or Distracted

Which lady, Martha or Mary, best represents YOUR relationship to Jesus? Explain your reasoning.

FEET TO FAITH

What are some practical ways you can seek Jesus more passionately this upcoming week?

SCRIPTURE STUDY

¹⁵ I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! ¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷ You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. (Revelation 3:15–17 NIV84)

What's *that* all about? John MacArthur gives us insight into the significance of this hot/cold/lukewarm language for the original first century audience:

This metaphorical language is drawn from Laodicea's water supply. Because it traveled several miles through an underground aqueduct before reaching the city, the water arrived foul, dirty, and tepid. It was not hot enough to relax and restore, like the hot springs at Hierapolis. Nor was it cold and refreshing, like the stream water at Colossae. Laodicea's lukewarm water was in a useless condition.¹

In other words, by the time the water left the source and arrived at the destination (Laodicea), it was no longer able to help heal (hot) nor refresh (cold). The context including verse 17 makes clear that these people have become **lukewarm**, self-sufficient, with no desire to change. This wealthy town thought they were **rich** but Jesus says they are **poor**. They had become **lukewarm**, purposeless and prideful. As you might do with lukewarm tea when expecting it to be cold or coffee when expecting it to be hot, Jesus says, ***I am about to spit you out of my mouth.***

What can we learn from this how might we make sure this isn't true of US?

First, we must examine ourselves - check our temperature. Are YOU **passionate and purposeful** or **lukewarm**? Today we will do a self examination of our habits. It is important to see what you are doing with your time. This is very purposeful and it will make more sense by the time you complete the exercise. Consider filling this out throughout the day.

The way I wake up is...

What I do first is...

My morning routine is...

¹ John F. MacArthur, Jr., *Revelation 1–11*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 136.

My food, drink, tobacco, caffeine, alcohol and drug consumption is...

What is most important to me in the morning is...

The most influential thing on my mood most mornings is...

While I drive / commute, I...

Journal about your habits during the day (this might be at work, school, or daily routines).

My routine at work/school/home is...

When I have a chance for a break I...

Those I talk to the most are...

The way I problem solve is...

My food, drink, tobacco, caffeine, alcohol and drug consumption is...

For a pick-me-up, I...

During my commute home (from school,work, or appointments), I...

EVENING REFLECTION: Catalogue your typical evening pattern.

When I get home, the first thing I do is...

My exercise practice is...

My food, drink, tobacco, caffeine, alcohol and drug consumption is...

I spend most of the evening...

I never miss / my favorite thing is...

My TV habits and internet usage are...

The way I spend my weekends is often...

FEET TO FAITH

1. Now, go back and **circle the habits** that help you appreciate life & seek Jesus.
2. **Put a box around** those that habits that might cause your interest in Jesus to become less passionate or lukewarm.

* **Note:** We are not asking if a certain habit is sinful or not. This question is about you and how these habits modify your spiritual passion.

What do you gain from this exercise?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

As you lay your head down on your pillow, think about what you could change tomorrow that would encourage you to seek Jesus passionately. Then put them into practice!

SCRIPTURE STUDY

66 After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. 67 So Jesus said to the Twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" 68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, 69 and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."
John 6:66-69

What in the world just happened? Who turned back and why (v.66)? Does this surprise you? Explain your answer.

(go back on read context of passage - maybe starting with verse 22)

Why didn't Peter and the others leave too?

KEEP OUT - RESTRICTED AREA - AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY

"Are there certain areas of your life labeled 'off limits,' or does Jesus have all access?" - Kyle, NAF Study

Before leaving for the day, walk around your house or apartment - considering Jesus with you - asking yourself the question, is anything I am seeing off limits to Jesus? Write what you discover below.

During your day (school, home, or work), again with the thought of Jesus walking with you, is anything you see off limits to Him? If so, write it below.

“Death. That is really what it means to follow Jesus. We choose to die to ourselves and live for Him.”

- Kyle, NAF Study

FEET TO FAITH

In the evening, try walking around your home saying to Jesus, “I give you this, and this, and this...”

(‘this’ might include Material possessions such as electronic equipment, vehicles, pictures, or your house itself)

Describe below what that exercise was like for you.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Just before bed, consider getting on your knees and saying to Jesus, **“I surrender all.”** Then close your day out in prayer. If you are married, ask your spouse to pray with you as well.

SCRIPTURE STUDY

44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. 45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, 46 who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it."
(Matthew 13:44-46)

What is gaining the kingdom of God worth to the men in this story? What is the point of this passage?

Now it's time to get real. Isn't it true that most of us haven't given up much for the sake of gaining the kingdom? Isn't it true that there are many other people and things competing for our attention?

WHO or WHAT are you most tempted to put ahead of Jesus (the King) & His Kingdom?
WHO or WHAT are you pursuing instead of Jesus & His kingdom? Get honest & write it down.
(This could be a relationship, something you own, or something you desperately want.)

FEET TO FAITH

Imagine having a dream in which you see a parade, a long line of people. As you look closer you notice that each person represents the WHOs and WHATs that you have put ahead of Jesus & His kingdom. But, in your dream, you bring each WHO and WHAT, one by one, and force them to bow before Jesus.

It's only a dream, but you could make this a reality.

1. Grab a separate piece of paper and tear it into several strips - where you will write a WHO or WHAT (the things you have previously put ahead of Jesus).
2. Then, if you are willing, take each piece of paper and lay it on the floor in front of you.
3. Get on your knees (maybe even bow with your head to the floor) and pray:

"Forgive me for allowing THIS to get in the way of my pursuit of You, Lord Jesus. Today, I lay this at Your feet, and make You my first priority."

not a fan.

week 2: Follow Me

DAY 1: Sun, Feb. 10

What challenged or caused you to change after Sunday's teaching?

SCRIPTURE STUDY

²³ For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. ²⁴ Yet God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. ²⁵ For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood... Romans 3:23-25 (NLT)

* note: This passage is full of many tough terms and the New Living Translation helps give the writer's intent)

According to this passage, what is **everyone** guilty of? What makes people (you & me) **right with God**? How would you explain this passage to a friend who thinks he/she can live good enough to please God?

In the Home Group video we learn that Kyle's daughter tried to cover up the stain she made on the couch by flipping the cushion over & refusing to tell anyone about it. What have YOU done to try and cover up the stains caused by your sinful disobedience to God? Get honest as you consider some of your most memorable sinful actions (aka 'it'). Check what you have done to cover your sin.

- Denied it Ignored it Blamed others for it Rationalized it
- Justified it Lived in guilt over it Tried to forget it

How has attempting to cover your sinful stains, rather than repent of sinful actions, impacted your life?

Here's the good news: we don't have to carry the weight of our past sins anymore. We can be declared *right with God* through the sacrifice of Jesus. Look at the last part of our study passage again:

People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood...
(Rom. 3:25 NLT)

When we believe, that is - put faith in Jesus (we have learned that word means 'Total Trust'), God declares us *right* in his sight.

FEET TO FAITH

So what about our forgiven past?

Just as the Idleman's daughter began to use the story about the stain on the couch to share the good news of her father's forgiveness, you can use your story to share how God has forgiven you.

Have you been sexually sinful? Have you lied or stolen? Have you used bad language or been addicted to an intoxicating substance? Have you been hooked by pornography or slandered others? How could God use YOUR STORY to offer hope to others who have been caught in the same sin? Finally, WHO might you need to share your story of forgiveness with?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

As you lay your head down on the pillow tonight, can you rest trusting that you are fully forgiven?

Or is there still a stain, a sin that you have yet to get honest about?

SCRIPTURE STUDY

¹⁸ While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." ²⁰ Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹ And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. ²² Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Matthew 4:18-22

Maybe you've seen this passage before. Maybe you heard it in Sunday School and Vacation Bible School. We you have heard it so many times that you forget what actually happened. When Jesus called a disciple, he was to leave everything behind and **follow Jesus**. It was not a temporary call or a call to give up a few things. It was a lifetime commitment to leave everything behind and dedicate every day to following Jesus.

Kyle Idleman (the author *Not a Fan*) writes, "**Following Jesus isn't something you can do at night when no one notices. It's a twenty-four-hour-a-day commitment...**"² Following Jesus means being totally sold out to Him - living like Him, acting like Him, talking like Him, treating others as He would.

Take some time to examine your life in comparison to Jesus. How do your actions, attitudes & words compare to how Jesus lived? Do you normally treat others like Jesus did? Do you normally have the attitude of hope and compassion that Jesus had? Do you treat people with kind words or harsh words? What differs between His lifestyle and yours?

SCRIPTURE STUDY

⁵ But those who obey God's word truly show how completely they love him. That is how we know we are living in him. ⁶ Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did. 1 John 2:5-6 (NLT)

There are many excuses you could use to justify the differences between you and Jesus. He was God in skin after all, right? "I can't live like Jesus," you say. Did you know that *a call to follow Jesus is a call to imitate Jesus*. In fact, the the word **disciple** actually means, "imitator of the teacher."³

Based on this passage, what is the evidence that a person loves God?

² Kyle Idleman, *Not a Fan* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2011), 212.

³ R.S. Rayburn, "Disciple" In *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Ellwel. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001) 235.

FEET TO FAITH

Imagine your day ahead. Anticipate the situations you might have to face.

Now imagine Jesus taking your place & living YOUR life today.

How would *Jesus* handle the major situations you face each day? How would *He* treat your co-workers? How would *Jesus* respond in the meetings you attend? How would *He* talk to your family members? How would *Jesus* react to the stresses in your day to day living?

What do you think you might learn as you watch Jesus respond & react to the challenges & relationships that you typically have to deal with?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

What areas of your life do you need to **change** to follow in the footsteps of Jesus? Take some time to create a simple action plan below.

SCRIPTURE STUDY

²⁰ When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the obligation to do right. ²¹ And what was the result? You are now ashamed of the things you used to do, things that end in eternal doom. ²² But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:20-23 (NLT)

Based on the above passage, compare the differences between being *slaves to sin* and *slaves of God*.

Slaves to sin: _____

Slaves to God: _____

In a culture where slavery has been abolished for many decades we have very little concept of what being a slave looks & feels like. We do not understand what it would be like to be born into slavery & never know any other lifestyle. Or worse yet, we cannot fathom what it would be to have been free, and be forced into a life of servitude to someone else.

“Doulos is the Greek word for slave. A slave had no rights. A slave signed over everything to the master, even his own identity. A slave’s one word just description was obey.”

- Kyle Idleman, NAF Study

FEET TO FAITH

Take some time to write out your primary **possessions** (house, cars, bank accounts, etc.) Then make a list of all the **skills** & talents you have (music, gardening, building, teaching, etc.) Next, add your core **identities** (husband, wife, coach, leader, mentor, etc.). Then, sign all these over...to Jesus.

Possessions	Skills	Identities
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Lord Jesus, in view of You being the Giver of everything listed above, and remembering Your sacrifice for me, and in thankfulness of the free gift of forgiveness & eternal life You promise me; in recognition of you as my Master, I hereby relinquish my rights over all the above to You and Your will.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Being *slaves to God* means that we are no longer free to live the way we want to live. Our actions are to reflect our Master. Possessions are no longer our own. Our time now belongs to God, to do with as he pleases. Our money is His, and we are simply responsible for taking care of it.

Which possession, skill, or identity is most difficult for you to sign over? Why?

Tonight, as you go to sleep, imagine either:

1. Laying this at the feet of Jesus.

OR

2. Clutching this thing to your chest while telling Jesus, "No."

SCRIPTURE STUDY

¹⁷ These people are as useless as dried-up springs or as mist blown away by the wind. They are doomed to blackest darkness. ¹⁸ They brag about themselves with empty, foolish boasting. With an appeal to twisted sexual desires, they lure back into sin those who have barely escaped from a lifestyle of deception. ¹⁹ They promise freedom, but they themselves are slaves of sin and corruption. For you are a slave to whatever controls you. 2 Peter 2:17-19 (NLT)

In this passage, Peter warns of false teachers who were twisting the words of Jesus and the Scriptures to provide an excuse for their sinful lifestyles. On top of that, they were dragging other Christians back into sin with them.

There are many false teachers in our contemporary culture as well. They are not only found in the ranks of the Church, but are littered throughout higher education, entertainment, media, ect. They claim that people can gratify sinful pleasures and God will turn a blind eye. Worse yet, many teach that God created & intended them to engage in wicked practices, twisting the Bible to fit their beliefs & behavior rather than conform to God’s standard. The end result is that they are still slaves. But instead of being a slave to Christ, they are slaves to sin.

“I meet people every week who are slaves to something, but they found freedom when they became a slave to Jesus Christ. They were slaves to possessions or slaves to their own pleasures, they were slaves to people, what other people thought of them. But they discovered that true freedom is only found when they live as a slave to Jesus Christ. Instead of shame and bondage and death, we find joy and grace and eternal life. You will never know true freedom until you have completely surrendered and become a slave to Jesus Christ.” - Kyle Idleman, NAF Study

Our culture teaches us that by being wealthy, good looking, sexually active, and indulgent in food and drugs we will be free. Yet, time after time we see the people who have that lifestyle fall into the trap of slavery. In our own lives we have found ourselves living with the guilt and pain that a life full of those things brings. How many times have you thought to yourself, “I can’t believe I did *that*” or “I can’t believe I did that, *again*”?

Have you seen where slavery to sin leads? When people live our our culture’s concept of a party lifestyle, **what do you see as the real life end result?** Take some time to write out what happened in the lives of yourself and others who are slaves to sin:

FEET TO FAITH

Try saying the following OUT LOUD & noticing how you feel when you say each phrase:

- I will be a slave to pleasure.
- I will be a slave to possessions.
- I will be a slave to what others think.
- I will be a slave to money.
- I will be a slave to sex.
- I will be a slave to status & reputation.
- I will be a slave to my career.
- I will be a slave to to my family.
- I will be a slave to Jesus.

What is your reaction as you say these things out loud?

Which one of the things you spoke aloud tends to enslave you most often? What is it that you find yourself going back to over and over again? Is it money, people's opinions, sexual thoughts? Remember the end of the Scripture Study? *For you are a slave to whatever controls you.*

DOUBLE-DOG DARE!

We dare you to try this next exercise. It might sound strange, but it will help you see the reality of what being a slave to sin looks like.

First, create an 'altar' to whatever you are most likely to become enslaved. For example, if you tend to be enslaved to alcohol, make an altar to it by setting a sixpack or wine bottle on a chair or low table. If it is sex, maybe set the laptop used to view pornography on the chair. If it's a certain person's opinion, you might put their picture on the altar. If it is yourself, you might place a mirror on the altar. (Be creative)

Now, Kneel before the 'altar' as if in worship. **Really. Try it.** How does it feel? What comes to your mind? What is it like to give yourself to this thing? Write your feelings and thoughts.

Try to remember this image the next time you are excited to give yourself to this idol.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Being *slaves to God* means that we are no longer free to live the way we want to live. Our actions are to reflect our Master. Possessions are no longer our own. Our time now belongs to God, to do with as he pleases. Our money is His, and we are simply responsible for taking care of it.

1. **Now, just before bed, get on your knees and pray.**
2. Offer...YOURSELF to Jesus. Give your allegiance to Him alone.
3. Confess your acts of disobedience (your sins) to God. Don't simply summarize. Be specific.

By giving it all away to him we no longer have to bear it. This is not a safety act to give us the excuse to disobey again. Rather, it is us completely surrendering ourselves to him.

4. Then, go to bed...CLEAN - FORGIVEN! End your day with Jesus sitting on the throne of your heart.

....And rest well!

DAY 5: Thur. Feb. 14

Like Eric in our drama, we've all had to say things we never thought we would have to say, such as: "She wants a divorce. I am addicted. I am sorry I hit you. I had an abortion. I was fired. You are not my first lover," and so on. Think of the hardest things you have had to say because you hadn't been following Jesus. They will be painful to write, but

"The pain of recall can protect you from the pain of repeat."

(That's a great line by Kyle Idlemen. Better yet, it's so true!)

Remembering your past likely dredges up painful thoughts & memories...burdens. Jesus doesn't want you to have to carry those things around anymore. Check out the Scripture Study below and hear Jesus draw you to His rest.

SCRIPTURE STUDY

²⁸ Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

²⁹ Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light." Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT)

To whom is Jesus offering rest? (v. 28)

Are you *weary*? Do you *carry heavy burdens*? Perhaps you are weighed down by stress, fear, worry, guilt, or even depression. If so, these burdens likely keep you from living life the way God wants you to.

Jesus offers his *yoke...easy to bear* (v.30). What's *that* all about?

Farmers put a yoke (a secure way of tying) on an ox or mule and then used their strength to cut open the soil to plant seed. In the New Testament *yoke* is an image representing bondage or submission to authority of some kind.⁴ The *yoke* of Jesus stands in stark contrast to the yoke that the religious leaders of the day, who had put heavy burdens on the peoples' shoulders (see Matt. 23:4). Carrying Jesus' *yoke* leads to *rest*, NOT a retirement from work, a calling to serve Him - a *delight*, not a painful drudgery.⁵

Your *heavy burdens* might be a direct result of not measuring up to someone's standard (i.e. scribes & Pharisees). Your *heavy burdens* might be the consequence of disobeying God. Your *heavy burdens* might even be due to someone treating you very badly. Regardless, Jesus offers these words: **Come to me.**

⁴ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 296.

⁵ Ibid., 298.

According to verse 29, what does this tell us about the character of Jesus. Why He can be trusted?

So, what is weighing you down? Is it the pain of a broken family? Has your past caused you to lose something precious to you? Perhaps you have lost loved ones and you do not know how to cope without them in your life.

In the video, we watched as two men's life decisions began to cost them relationships, money, and peace. Their selfish decisions were slowly pushing away those they cared about the most. Finally, it seems that Eric decided to choose differently. Evidently, he chose to respond to the words of Jesus: ***Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.*** Will you?

FEET TO FAITH

Think of some of the current burdens you bear. Consider writing out personal statements of how you will trust God in these areas and begin to allow him to take control with them.

If it is a marriage is rocky you might write, "God, I have allowed my marriage to weaken because I have been more concerned with work than spending time with my wife. Starting today, I need your help to demonstrate just how valuable my wife really is."

Take time to make it personal. Take time to give it completely to God and then be faithful to keep working the field with Him as the one in control.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Remember that **following Jesus is not about how you begin in life, but how you finish.**

Quit living in the past and start living for eternity!

DAY 6: Fri, Feb. 15

We have discovered that following Jesus requires sacrifice. Being a true FOLLOWER means being a slave. But do not confuse your service with repayment.

“Anyone can follow Jesus...Anyone who knows down deep that they’ve got really nothing to offer Jesus. Really, it’s what Jesus offers us that changes things.” - Kyle Idleman, NAF Study

This is not a loan we pay back over time. Instead, it is an acceptance of the free gift that we could never buy. We give ourselves as slaves to serve the Master because he has been so good to us. In the Jewish culture, a slave (someone working to pay back a debt) was to be set free every 7 years. But he didn’t *have* to leave. The slave could, by his own choosing, continue to serve the master. This likely only occurred when a slave had been treated with kindness by his master.⁶ In the Scripture Study, Paul calls FOLLOWERS of Jesus to offer their lives in the same way.

SCRIPTURE STUDY

¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:1-2

Write down some of the *mercies of God* that you are familiar with. How has He shown YOU mercy?

Sacrificial animals were killed before being offered on the altar to be burnt. What does it mean to *present your bodies as a living sacrifice*? How is that happening in your life?

According to verse 2, God not only wants our our *bodies*, but also our *minds*. Name some practical ways that your mind can be *transformed* & renewed to know God and His will. How are you applying this?

⁶ J. Julius Scott Jr., *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament*, (Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2000), 251.

FEET TO FAITH

As a final action for today, list below the things you want to offer up to God as a sacrifice. You may need to offer up your finances, your job, your time, or a hobby (be creative). Offer those things that could keep you from renewing your mind or offering your body as His vessel. Add as many as you feel you need to.

* You might consider writing this out in a letter to Jesus.

Jesus, today I offer up _____ ... and I want you to make it yours.

Jesus, today I offer up _____ ... and I want you to make it yours.

Jesus, today I offer up _____ ... and I want you to make it yours.

Jesus, today I offer up _____ ... and I want you to make it yours.

Jesus, today I offer up _____ ... and I want you to make it yours.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

As you lay down at the end of the day, consider how you have offered your body and mind to be used by Jesus today. **Have you offered Him your best?** If not, start tomorrow morning on your knees, a willing servant who offers body & mind.

“Morgan, you could never make a stain so big that it would keep us from loving you.”

– Kyle Idleman, NAF Study

You haven't gone too far for God's grace. And if you think of God as a cosmic cop, just waiting to bust you; if you see Him as a grumpy old man in the sky who gets joy out of hurting humanity...then you are greatly mistaken.

Look how the Psalmist paints a picture of Him, one that truly represents who God is. (This was written as a song, hence the poetic breaks in the sentence.)

SCRIPTURE STUDY

*⁸ The LORD is compassionate and merciful,
slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.*

*⁹ He will not constantly accuse us,
nor remain angry forever.*

*¹⁰ He does not punish us for all our sins;
he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve.*

*¹¹ For his unfailing love toward those who fear him
is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth.*

*¹² He has removed our sins as far from us
as the east is from the west.* Psalms 103:8-12 (NLT)

What stands out to you in the passage? What hope do you find in it and why? Does anything in there cause you to want to stand up and holler ‘Wooo-hooo!’? Write your thoughts below.

Based on Ps. 103:8-12, is that the kind of God who would be hard to trust? Or, does that describe a God who is worthy of giving your entire life as a sacrificial offering? Is God's love and forgiveness worth the price of leaving the bondage of sin and becoming a slave to God?

How does this find you at the end of the week? Have you been seeking after God in an earnest way? Are you ready to step away from a life of slavery to sin? **Are you a FAN or a FOLLOWER?** Answer below.

not a fan.

week 3: What Must I Do?

DAY 1: Sun, Feb. 17

* It is recommended that your Home Group go through **this session together** along with watching video.

DISCUSSION BEFORE VIDEO

What impacted you from Sunday's teaching? What did you find interesting or helpful during your use of last week's journal? (Look through your journal and see what stood out to you.)

VIDEO RECAP FROM WEEK 2

As Gary examines his own life in the wake of Eric's death, he remembers their long past of seeking pleasure and living in rebellion. Under the strain of a demanding job & an imploding marriage, Eric collapses in Gary's apartment from a non-fatal heart attack. Convinced that God is trying to get his attention, Eric responds in obedience to Jesus, and is never the same again. Now, devastated by the death of his friend, Gary must decide what path he will take.

WATCH WEEK 3 VIDEO - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Where does Darren get his map - his source of direction for life?
2. Why does he accept a life map from this source?
3. Why would Darren continue to follow this map even after the one who gave it to him - Eric - has decided this path leads not to life, but to destruction?
4. What does Darren tossing the heart back in the box & eventually passing it back to Kyle symbolize?

SCRIPTURE STUDY

¹⁶ Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?"

¹⁷ "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments."

¹⁸ "Which ones?" the man inquired.

Jesus replied, "'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, ¹⁹ honor your father and mother,' and 'love your neighbor as yourself.'"

²⁰ "All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?"

²¹ Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." ²² When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth." Matthew 19:16-22 (NIV84)

* Here are a couple of quick insights before we launch into the application. First, Jesus IS good. The Scripture teaches He never sinned - He was perfect. Jesus likely wants this guy to recognize that he is speaking to the only One who could truly be called 'good teacher'. Second, Jesus is not teaching that a person can gain eternal life by obeying the commandments. He died on the cross because people CAN'T be good enough to gain eternal life.

There is a reason why Jesus is using this tactic, however. This man thought he was doing pretty well. On the surface, he seemed to have a real desire to follow Jesus, but then *Jesus spotlights the real issue.*

Why did this man go away sad? _____

In this passage we see a man who seemed, at least on the surface, to have a desire to follow Jesus. That desire quickly faded when Jesus told him what it would cost - what he valued most. This man proved to be a FAN of Jesus, but not a FOLLOWER of Jesus.

How would a FOLLOWER have responded differently and why?

Do you think this a prescription for everybody - to sell all possessions and follow Jesus?
Why or why not?

The problem wasn't that this man had money, but that money had him.

When challenged to choose - Jesus or wealth...wealth won.

What **competes** with Jesus for 1st place in YOUR life? What might He ask YOU to give up to follow Him passionately? (This could be a sin habit, an ungodly relationship, stuff you own, prominent position at work, etc.)

Have you ever had to give something up to follow Jesus? What was the result?

*“Ultimately, what separates a fan from a follower is commitment.
Many consider themselves followers, but what happens when their commitment is tested?”*

-Kyle Idleman, NAF Study

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Is there anything that has kept you from truly focusing on following Jesus this past week? What is your plan to pursue Him passionately this week?

* Pray with your Home Group.

DAY 2: Mon. Feb. 18

Remember yesterday’s story of the FAN who left Jesus, choosing wealth instead? This passage picks up with Jesus speaking to His apostles...as this man is walking away.

SCRIPTURE STUDY

23 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

24 Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

25 When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, “Who then can be saved?”

26 Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

Matthew 19:23–26 (NIV84)

People in Jesus’ day thought wealth was a tangible sign of God’s blessings, but Jesus “saw wealth as a hindrance to spiritual progress.”⁷ With that in mind, the disciples are **astonished** and wonder how anyone can enter **the kingdom of God**. Jesus uses a humorous and impossible scenario to show how difficult it is for rich people to enter the kingdom.⁸

Why is it so difficult for wealthy people to enter the kingdom of God? With the rich man from earlier in mind (Matt. 19:16-22), what might keep them from truly following Jesus and why?

According to Jesus, it IS possible for rich people to enter the kingdom. In fact, some wealthy people helped provide for Jesus’ ministry (Mary Magdalene and other women - Luke 8:2-3) and His burial (i.e. Nicodemus & Joseph - John 19:38-40).⁹ So what’s the likely difference between them and this wealthy man who walked away sad?

⁷ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 493.

⁸ Contrary to some teaching, there is no evidence to support ‘the eye of the needle’ as a small gate that camels must bow to enter. This is a hyperbolic statement - an exaggeration to make a point. The disciples certainly understood this was not a a metaphor for a small gate as we see their response.

⁹ See how Lydia used her home for ministry (Acts Acts 16:14-15)

We all have 3 assets God has given us to give back to Him: **time, talent, & treasure**. They may exist in different areas and different quantities but we all still have them. The question is: how do you spend them? Do you spend them on yourself or on Jesus? **How are YOU using what God has given you to minister to others? Be specific.** Name some ways you use your time, talent, & treasure. (you might mention specific bills, hobbies, serving/giving to your church, etc.)

FEET TO FAITH

Truth be told, the people you most admire probably honor God with their **time, talent, & treasure**. Think of someone whose commitment to Jesus you admire.

If you were to write a personal note thanking him/her for their inspiration and dedication, what would it say? Jot a sample below. After completing it, consider sending the personal note to the one you are writing about. A little encouragement goes a long way!!

CLOSING THOUGHTS

What is the one thing that Jesus might ask you to give up, the one thing that you have a tendency to put in front of Him, the one thing that distracts you from following Him? Lay it before His feet in prayer. Tell Jesus you want Him more than anything.

Consider how to use your **time, talents, & treasure** to Honor Jesus and make an eternal difference.

Then ask the Lord to help use these gifts He has given you.

DAY 3: Tues. Feb. 19

Our culture has trained us to think that our possessions make us happy. If we make it to a certain life situation or get a certain job we think that we will be content. But the truth is that no amount of money, stuff, or people in our lives will make us truly content on their own.

Some of you know you can't find satisfaction in a box. You can't buy happiness off a rack or order it off the internet or drive it off a lot. – Kyle Idleman, NAF Study

Jesus is the one who truly gives life meaning and fulfillment. As we have seen over the last 2 journal studies, it is hard for wealthy people to trust Jesus fully. Our temporal toys & momentary moneys often compete with Jesus for 1st place in our lives.

Today's study picks up where we left off. The apostles of Jesus wouldn't hold anything back from him. But the question was, would their allegiance be worth it?

SCRIPTURE STUDY

²⁷ Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" ²⁸ Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹ And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. ³⁰ But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first. Matthew 19:27-30 (NIV84)

What was Peter concerned about and how do you think the response of Jesus encouraged him?

While we have no record of Jesus calling his disciples to abandon their families, Jesus warned that many in their families might abandon them, because they had decided to follow Him.

According to Jesus (v.29), what might His **followers** have to give up in order to fully follow Him?¹⁰ What is the reward for those who must leave their homes and families?

¹⁰ See 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 for instructions and how Christians should stay with their spouses. Paul was addressing what to do if the non-Christian spouse abandoned the believing spouse.

FEET TO FAITH

“At some point or another, in one way or another, all of us will have such a test of commitment where our devotion will be determined and our allegiance exposed. Jesus will not share you. He won’t share you any more than a wife will share her husband or a husband, his wife. He wants all of you.”

– Kyle Idleman, NAF Study

What if Jesus came to you today and tested your allegiance to him? What if, like the rich man, Jesus asked you to give up that one area that keeps you from being totally sold out to him? What if Jesus said “Quit your job and come follow Me” or “Sell your house and come follow Me” or even, “Your family will reject you, but I still want you to come follow Me”?

How do these questions make you feel? How would you respond if Jesus asked you to do any or all of these things?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

While much of what we are studying is likely tough to digest, your first day on the other side of eternity will be worth many years of sacrifice on the earthly side of eternity.

Before you lay down to go to rest, repeat this verse (below) five times out loud. Consider reading it as you brush your teeth. Let your last waking thoughts be of chewing on what this means for your life.

***³⁵ If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it.
But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it.***
Mark 8:35 (NLT)

DAY 4: Wed. Feb. 20

“Fans want to follow Jesus, but not in a way that interferes with their lives. According to some recent research I came across, 65% of American adults between the ages of 18 and 42, would agree with this statement: ‘I have made a personal commitment to Jesus that is still important.’ Now on the surface, that seems pretty good. 65% is impressive, but according to that same research, these committed Christians lived a life-style that was quote ‘Statistically equivalent to that of non-Christians.’

So when asked about their activities from the previous thirty days, Christians were just as likely as non-Christians to have gambled, to have visited a pornographic website, to have taken something that didn’t belong to them. They were just as likely to have gotten drunk and been involved with physical abuse. They were just as likely to have lied and talked badly behind someone’s back. See, they were committed, but they weren’t completely committed. Fans try to compartmentalize their life.”

-Kyle Idleman, NAF Study

Circle your honest viewpoint to these scenarios:			
Getting high is...	ok	not ok	it depends
Sex outside of marriage is...	ok	not ok	it depends
Lying to protect myself is...	ok	not ok	it depends
Getting back at someone I don’t like is...	ok	not ok	it depends
Viewing porn occasionally is...	ok	not ok	it depends
Stealing from the government is...	ok	not ok	it depends
Leaving my marriage if I’m unhappy is...	ok	not ok	it depends
Doing whatever feels good is...	ok	not ok	it depends

Again, be honest & answer this: **Would Jesus Agree with your responses? Give your reasoning.**

SCRIPTURE STUDY

“⁹For the commandments say, “You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not covet.” These—and other such commandments—are summed up in this one commandment: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰Love does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God’s law.¹¹This is all the more urgent, for you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. ¹²The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living. ¹³Because we belong to the day, we must live decent lives for all to see. Don’t participate in the darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity and immoral living, or in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don’t let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.”

Romans 13:9-14 (NLT)

In this passage, Paul is clarifying a couple of things. First, although it is well & good for believers to follow the commandments, being a believer goes beyond the fact that you have never physically killed someone, or stolen anyone’s property. Jesus packages those commandments in one precise, clarifying statement: **Love your neighbor as yourself**. This is WHAT believers are to do. Secondly, Paul reminds those reading of WHY we should be diligent to obey Him in our daily decisions.

What does it mean that *our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed*? Why should that encourage you and me to live pure?

What are we to **remove** and what are we to **put on**? According to verse 13, what are some of the specifics we are to remove?

Thinking back to scenarios that you answered on the previous page, how do you think that they should be answered, in light of this Scripture?

What does it mean to *clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ*?

FEET TO FAITH

The Old Testament was pointing to the coming of the Christ, the Messiah of the world!! The New Testament points to the imminent return of Jesus. It is His return, of which no one (including the Mayans) knows the date or time, that empowers & encourages the follower of Jesus to live like He is returning today.

With that in mind, try this exercise today: Everywhere you go today, everything that you do today; act as if Jesus is physically standing right next to you. Start your day with a simple prayer:

“Jesus, help me speak in a way that honors You today. Remind me to act like You would act. Help me treat others like You would treat them. Convict me when my idea of how I should act is different than Yours.”

Throughout the day, ask God to show you where your thoughts and actions differ from how He wants you to think and act.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

At the end of the day answer these questions:

Is there a habit in my life that I need to change? (if so, be brave and write it down...okay, maybe use a code-word)

Was there something I said today that could have confused people who think that I am a “follower of Christ?” What was it?

Did you involve yourself in gossip, bad jokes, backbiting, etc. today? If so, how did you feel knowing that Jesus was standing there with you?

SCRIPTURE STUDY

¹³ The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus. ¹⁴ But since they could see the man who had been healed standing right there among them, there was nothing the council could say. ¹⁵ So they ordered Peter and John out of the council chamber and conferred among themselves.

¹⁶ "What should we do with these men?" they asked each other. "We can't deny that they have performed a miraculous sign, and everybody in Jerusalem knows about it. ¹⁷ But to keep them from spreading their propaganda any further, we must warn them not to speak to anyone in Jesus' name again." ¹⁸ So they called the apostles back in and commanded them never again to speak or teach in the name of Jesus.

¹⁹ But Peter and John replied, "Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him? ²⁰ We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard." Acts 4: 13-19 (NLT)

What was it about Peter and John that attracted attention to them?

This passage is a wonderful example of total trust in Jesus. Peter and John were ministering to people in Jerusalem after Jesus had ascended to Heaven. These 2 apostles were arrested after healing a paralyzed man in the name of the risen Jesus. When commanded to stop talking about the resurrection of Jesus...or else, Peter confronts the very men responsible for their Master's crucifixion. Rather than back down, Peter stresses that salvation comes through Jesus alone.

How did Peter and John respond when commanded not to speak about Jesus again? Why do you think they are so bold and what could this have cost them?

Peter and John made it clear that their trust was in Jesus and not in people. The religious leaders had the authority to put them to death (just as they did to Jesus), but these apostles demonstrated that obedience to God was more important than obedience to men.

FEET TO FAITH

“Jesus made it clear. There is no such thing as ‘selective allegiance’. When we decide to follow Him, He calls for a complete commitment and total surrender.” – Kyle, Not A Fan Study

Take a few minutes and define the phrases “complete commitment” and “total surrender”.

We talked about the calling of Matthew last week. Scriptures tell us that Jesus said “Follow me”. We then read that Matthew followed, apparently no questions asked. If Jesus were to approach you today, right now, where you are, and say “Follow Me”, what would your reaction be?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

We all have people in our life that we go to for advice. It may be a parent, friend, spouse, or teacher, etc. Whoever it is, they have proven trustworthy in your life. Many times, we fail to take our problems to God and ask his advice. It doesn't even cross our minds that we could find our answers through prayer and studying the Bible.

Let's take that one step further. If we get honest with ourselves, we will admit that many times we don't ask God for advice because we don't want his answer. Perhaps we already know his answer and don't want to hear it. Whatever the reason, we push away the greatest source of knowledge and wisdom in favor of another person.

Below is a checklist of areas of our life that we seek advice over. Put a check next to who you would go to for advice in that area. If you put a check under "Person's Name" make sure you write their name down as well. Remember that the goal is to be honest, so don't put a 'Church' answer.

<u>Area</u>	<u>Person's Name</u>	<u>Jesus</u>
Relationships	_____	_____
Money	_____	_____
Sex	_____	_____
Career	_____	_____
Parenting	_____	_____

As you look over that list, ask yourself why you chose that person. What about them made them more trustworthy than anyone else? How would that issue be different in your life if you put total trust in Jesus?

Jesus wants all of us. He wants to have first place in our lives. He wants total commitment. If you are willing, take some time to pray and seek God in each of these areas.

The act of following assumes that someone is leading. As we conclude today's entry, ask yourself this question: **Who/what has the greatest influence in my life?** WHERE is he/she leading you?

SCRIPTURE STUDY

³⁴ *But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees with his reply, they met together to question him again.* ³⁵ *One of them, an expert in religious law, tried to trap him with this question:*

³⁶ *“Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?”*

³⁷ *Jesus replied, “You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.”* ³⁸ *This is the first and greatest commandment.* ³⁹ *A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’*

⁴⁰ *The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.”*

Matthew 22:34-40 (NLT)

Many times during his earthly ministry, the religious leaders tried to trap Jesus with riddles, questions, and scenarios. Every time Jesus baffled them and answered well. In this particular battle of wits, we see Jesus do something incredible: He narrows the entire **Law of Moses** down into 2 commands. They contained 613 laws, but the religious leaders developed extra laws to make sure the 613 wouldn't be broken. Because of this there were thousands of specific do's and don'ts considered laws by the time of Jesus - most that God never intended. Here, Jesus boils the 613 into **2 memorable commands**.

Take a moment and look at the 10 Commandments. **Read read Ex. 20:1-11. Explain how these commands relate to “You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.”**

Now read Ex. 20:12-17. Explain how they fit with “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

FEET TO FAITH

In his book Mere Christianity, C.S Lewis summarizes the call of Jesus this way:

Give me all. I don't want so much of your time and so much of your money and so much of your work: I want you...No half- measures are any good. I don't want to cut off a branch here and a branch there. I want to have the whole tree down. I don't want to drill the tooth, or crown it, or stop it, but to have it out. Hand over the whole natural self, all the desires which you think are innocent, as well as the ones you think are wicked- the whole outfit.

Briefly write down your reaction to that quote.

God wants all of us: all of our heart, all of our soul, and our entire mind. God doesn't want us to treat our relationship with him like a job that we clock in and clock out of. He wants us on duty full time, twenty four hours a day. He wants every aspect of our lives, not just a couple of hours every week.

We have used the metaphor of our lives being a house before; think of your life that way again. What "rooms" in your life are closed off to Jesus? What areas does he still not have full access to? What decisions and specific actions can you make today to give these areas over to God?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

"We are saved by God's grace when we believe in Jesus and put our faith in him, but biblical belief is more than something we confess with our mouths; it's something we confess with our lives."

- Kyle Idleman - Not a Fan

We have already learned that the word 'believe' in Greek (pisteúō) means "total trust". Total trust is what you put in a chair when you sit in it. It's what you put in the plane when you fly somewhere. It's what you put in the doctor when you go in for surgery. Total trust is more than just saying something, or knowing something... it is doing something.

As you **look back at your day today**, how did your belief (total trust) in Jesus with your words match up with your actions? Did you do the things you say you believe? Did you love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength? Or did you just say a prayer and put God back in his box?

Before you go to sleep tonight, what do you need to change so that you have placed total trust in Jesus?

SCRIPTURE STUDY

⁵⁷ As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." ⁵⁸ And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." ⁵⁹ To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." ⁶⁰ And Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

⁶¹ Yet another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home."

⁶² Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

Luke 9:57-62 (ESV)

Why do you think Jesus seems to be so harsh with these potential Followers? What do you think Jesus is trying to say to them...and to US?

There is no doubt this is a confusing passage. The people that Jesus asks to follow him seem to have valid reasons for not being totally devoted at the current time. The **first person** even seems to be completely committed! Jesus, however, knew his heart and that this person did not truly understand what following would cost him. Homeless? How might he respond? (To quote a well-known YouTube clip, "I ain't got time for *THAT!*") Following Jesus will NOT be a comfortable journey.

The **second person** wants to go home and bury his father. Whether the father has died or not is a scholarly debate. In cultural context, the son's highest responsibility is to take care of his parents. The man might be saying, "I'll follow You...as soon as my Dad dies." An Old Testament prophet, Elisha, was allowed to return home to say farewell to his parents before following Elijah (1 Ki. 19:20).¹¹ One thing is for sure, following Jesus is MORE costly than following Elijah. Jesus demands allegiance that is greater than allegiance to one's own parents!

The **third** merely wants to go back and tell say farewell to his family. Again, this is a reasonable request on the surface. But Jesus knows the hearts of people. Maybe this is just big talk and he doesn't intend to return. Or maybe this man will be distracted by his family. 'Family first' is a great motto...until family comes before Jesus.

Finally, Jesus uses a farming illustration (since many of his followers would have been farmers) to show that to be a true follower of Jesus you have to be totally committed and not distracted: **No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.** Following Jesus is all or nothing.

¹¹ I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978), 411.

FEET TO FAITH

To be sure, this is not the “Come to Jesus and He will make you physically well and financially wealthy” televangelist propaganda often heard in our day. **Jesus makes it clear. Following Him is costly.**

*If you're unsure if you're a fan or a follower, then ask yourself this:
'When was the last time my relationship with Jesus cost me something?'*

- Kyle Idleman, NAF Study

Take a moment to honestly answer that question and write it out below.
(Write WHEN & WHAT following Jesus cost you something.)

How satisfied are you with what you wrote? How does your level of commitment match up with what Jesus asks of his followers?

It is interesting to **compare Matthew and these potential disciples** we read about earlier. When Jesus asked Matthew to follow, he asked no questions, he gave no excuses. Matthew simply left everything and followed. These people, on the other hand, presented Jesus with excuses and circumstances to defend why they could not follow.

Which of these are you? Are you like Matthew, willing to follow Jesus with total trust OR are you the one who presents excuses?

Fans want to follow Jesus closely enough to get all the benefits, but not so close that he calls them to sacrifice or surrender things that are important. - Kyle Idelman, NAF Study

What do you need to change so that you are totally committed to Jesus?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Our culture is all about comfort. We want to lose weight by taking a magic pill. We pay others to cook for us and we sit on our couches letting others entertain us. We are only concerned about what we get out of a deal. We want to follow Jesus, as long as it is easy. We don't want to be uncomfortable or to give up anything important. Jesus obviously wasn't concerned with good looks or large bank accounts. He calls us to follow Him and never look back! **Consider singing to Him tonight, before bed** - something like "I surrender all" or another favorite song of surrender.

not a fan.

week 4: Carry the Cross

DAY 1: Sun, Feb. 24

* It is recommended that your Home Group go through **this session together** along with watching video.

DISCUSSION BEFORE VIDEO

What did you find interesting or helpful during your use of last week's journal?

(Look through your journal and see what stood out to you.)

What impacted you from Sunday's teaching?

How did this impact your understanding of what it means to 'take up your cross daily' (Luke 9:23-24)?

VIDEO RECAP FROM WEEK 3

From his high-rise office, Darren reflects on Eric's transformation from cutthroat businessman to compassionate Christ-follower. Darren's Christian convictions are initially rattled by Eric's business ethic, but, as Eric coldly explains, "This isn't church. It's business." By the time Eric has a change of heart, Darren has learned to compartmentalize his faith and to view conscience as an obstacle to prosperity. When both men are asked to skirt their Christian convictions for the sake of keeping their jobs, Eric courageously follows the way of Christ and Darren walks away sad.

WATCH WEEK 4 VIDEO, THEN ANSWER DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. At first Anna seems thrilled that Eric was changing and following Jesus. But over time she grows resentful. **What held Anna back from joining her husband and his deep desire to follow of Jesus?**
2. How do you feel about the way Eric tried to lead Anna and his family to follow Jesus?
3. What conclusions does Anna seem to be coming to by the end of the episode?

SCRIPTURE STUDY

If you participated in this past week's Journal you will remember that the rich man wouldn't leave the comfort of his riches (Matt. 19:21-22), another man wouldn't leave his comfort of his home (Luke 9:57-58), and still others wouldn't leave their families (Luke 9:59-61). But another story shows that these weren't just blanket statements meant for everyone.

Look what happens after Jesus healed a wild man who had many demons.

³⁵ People rushed out to see what had happened. A crowd soon gathered around Jesus, and they saw the man who had been freed from the demons. He was sitting at Jesus' feet, fully clothed and perfectly sane, and they were all afraid. ³⁶ Then those who had seen what happened told the others how the demon-possessed man had been healed. ³⁷ And all the people in the region of the Gerasenes begged Jesus to go away and leave them alone, for a great wave of fear swept over them. So Jesus returned to the boat and left, crossing back to the other side of the lake.

³⁸ The man who had been freed from the demons begged to go with him. But Jesus sent him home, saying, ³⁹ "No, go back to your family, and tell them everything God has done for you."

So he went all through the town proclaiming the great things Jesus had done for him. Luke 8:26-39 (NLT)

What did the changed man want to do and how did Jesus respond?

How did the man respond to the command of Jesus?

Why do you think Jesus asked some people to leave everything (e.g. Luke 9:57-61) while telling this man to go home? What was the result of the man's obedience?

(see the answer on the next page...but ONLY AFTER wrestling with the question first)

* **Obedience** was the difference between the man formerly known as 'legion' and the other men. Based on his immediate obedience, it is likely that this man would have sold all he had, if Jesus would have commanded. If he were told not to return home, but to follow Jesus (which was his desire in the first place), he would have. Yet he denied his own desire - to leave with Jesus - & OBEYED what Jesus said.

The difference was obedience. Whatever Jesus said is what this man did. This man would no doubt respond in obedience to Jesus' call to 'deny yourself, take up your cross daily, & follow me.' (Luke 9:23)

Would you say most Christians you know are sold out (denying self, carrying cross daily, & obeying Jesus)?
Give your reasoning.

How did YOU come to Jesus? Was it more by way of a sales pitch or by a 'take up your cross' call to commitment? What was the effect of coming to Jesus that way?

Have you ever been around someone who transformed like Eric does in the video story?
What happened and how did that person's transformation impact you?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

THIS is what Jesus demands from those who would follow Him. To take up a cross is to start the death march, a one-way journey from which we will never return. To carry a cross means...Death to Me, LIFE in Him.

- Jackie Watts

Share a time when you most experienced life in Jesus as you died to self.
What is Jesus showing you it's time to 'die' to (e.g. specific sin, selfishness)?

* **Pray with your Home Group** (consider splitting men from women and pray for each person).

DAY 2: Mon. Feb. 25

Today's Scripture Study begins with Sunday's primary teaching passage at Fellowship. (Check it out ONLINE at fellowshipofmadison.com) Let's look at the passage again & dive deeper into the implications for our lives.

SCRIPTURE STUDY

²³ ...*"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.*

²⁴ *For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.* Luke 9:23-24

After coming to better understand verse 23, what does verse 24 really mean? How can a person who *loses his life* for Jesus *save it*?

The first disciples of Jesus certainly understood this concept better than we do. Jesus warned that persecution was coming to them. In fact, the book of Acts records that it was one of the closest 3 to Jesus, James (brother of John), who is the first apostle to literally lose his life for Jesus' sake (Acts 12:2).

And although Jesus told Peter & the apostles they would receive "a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields)," Jesus also promised "persecutions." (Mk. 10:29-30) The earthly reward wasn't the driving factor, ETERNAL LIFE was (v. 30).

¹⁰ *Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

¹¹ *"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.* Matthew 5:10-12 (NIV84)

Why is there a tendency to wonder if God has abandoned those who are persecuted? Based on what we have seen thus far, how might persecution actually demonstrate God IS with us? Where is the believer's focus (based on Matt. 5:10-12) to be?

FEET TO FAITH

Following Jesus is a call to die. Here are the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer (quoted on Sunday). Circle or highlight the parts of this quote that stand out to you most. Explain why you chose this in space below.

“The cross is laid on every Christian. The first Christ-suffering which every man must experience is the call to abandon the attachments of this world. It is that dying of the old man which is the result of his encounter with Christ. As we embark upon discipleship we surrender ourselves to Christ in union with His death—we give over our lives to death. Thus it begins; the cross is not the terrible end to an otherwise god-fearing and happy life, but it meets us at the beginning of our communion with Christ.

When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die. It may be a death like that of the first disciples who had to leave home and work to follow Him, or it may be a death like Luther’s, who had to leave the monastery and go out into the world. But it is the same death every time—death in Jesus Christ, the death of the old man at his call.”¹²

Isn't it amazing that the people we respect the most, the people who seem to have the most intimate relationship with God, have often experienced the toughest of circumstances. It's during the tough times that 2 facts are found to be true. Regardless of the circumstances, 1) God is faithful to His people 2) God's people are faithful to Him.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Consider the words to this old hymn:

*I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold;
I'd rather be his than have riches untold;
I'd rather have Jesus than houses or lands;
I'd rather be led by his nail-pierced hand*

Those who can sing/say this with passion & sincerity have an eternal focus that eclipses earthly circumstances. **Is this true of YOU?**

Will you humble yourself today, get on your knees and ask God for help?

“God, please help me develop an eternal focus that eclipses earthly circumstances. I desire to please YOU more than I desire to please me.”

¹² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (London: SCM Press, 1948/2001), 44.

DAY 3: Tues. Feb. 26

American culture is now drifting further and further from Biblical standards; a culture that idealizes comfort over truth, a culture in which many Christians have become lazy. The ancient writings of Scripture still stir the contemporary church to set apart Jesus as Lord, and be prepared for persecution.

SCRIPTURE STUDY

¹⁹ The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you. ²⁰ Do you remember what I told you? 'A slave is not greater than the master.' Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you. And if they had listened to me, they would listen to you. ²¹ They will do all this to you because of me, for they have rejected the one who sent me. John 15:19-21 (NLT)

According to Jesus, why should His followers expect to be persecuted?

If there is no sacrifice involved, if you're not at least a little uncomfortable, then there is a good chance that you aren't carrying a cross.¹³

Should a Christian who experiences NO persecution from others be concerned? Explain your answer.

Just as Jesus promised, the early Christians DID face persecution. Read through Acts and you'll see at least 2 men killed, along with many imprisoned, because of their faith in Jesus. Many of the same people who persecuted Jesus persecuted His followers (e.g. Annas & Caiphas - see John 18:12-14 & Acts 4:6; see Acts 4-5).

"And I don't care how you position it, carrying a cross just isn't comfortable."
- Kyle Idleman, NAF Study

¹³ Kyle Idleman, *Not a Fan*, 161.

FEET TO FAITH

*Here's the question that is keeping me awake these days:
Am I really carrying a cross if there is no suffering and sacrifice?*¹⁴

When is the last time that following Jesus cost you something - a relationship, a promotion, a vacation? "When is the last time you were mocked for your faith? Forget about having our lives threatened... When is the last time you went without a meal for the sake of the gospel? Can you really say you are carrying your cross if it hasn't cost you anything? Take a second and answer that question in your mind. Has it cost you anything?"¹⁵

This is the point where an apology is an order. If you were told following Jesus was easy, that just simply isn't true. Many pastors and teachers have proclaimed an easy way to Heaven and a faith that will cost you very little. But Jesus did not teach that. It is easy to see that Jesus calls his followers to sacrifice, discomfort, persecutions, trials, and death. It is a rough and narrow path that is difficult - yet it is this narrow path that leads to life.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

"A belief, no matter how sincere, if not reflected in reality isn't a belief, it's a delusion."

- Kyle Idleman - Not a Fan

It is hard to realize that many Christians are delusional. They think that they are followers but their belief is not reflected in reality. They say they believe in Jesus but their lives do not show it. They say they are followers but there is no evidence that they are on the narrow path.

As you finish today and reflect on your life, what evidence shows that you are on the narrow path? If you were put on trial for following Jesus would you be found guilty? Explain your answer.

¹⁴ Kyle Idleman, *Not a Fan*, 161.

¹⁵ Ibid.

DAY 4: Wed. Feb. 27

Up until this point, although Jesus had commanded His disciples to take up a cross metaphorically, He had not yet gone to the cross. As the time drew closer for Him to take on the sins of the world, He began to alert His followers to what lay ahead. This is one of those moments.

SCRIPTURE STUDY

21 From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. 22 And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." 23 But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man." Matthew 16:21-23 (ESV)

Good ole Peter. Jesus had just told his disciples that the time of His death and resurrection was near. And Peter, being the loving friend and follower he was, replied, "No way Jesus. We are never going to let that happen to you."

This didn't fit what He had been taught growing up. Like many of our well intentioned teachers of the past, the tendency is to major on the ideas we like the best and leave the ones we don't like to rust in the shadows. The Jews in Jesus' day overlooked the Scripture pointing to the Messiah as a suffering servant (see Ps. 22 & Is. 53) and majored on the Messiah as a conquering king. So all this talk of Jesus being killed was met with Peter's passionate rebuke, ***This shall never happen to you.***

Based on verse 23, who was Peter sounding like? How was Peter being a ***hindrance*** - an obstacle to Jesus & His obedience to the Father's plan?

Satan is borrowed from the Hebrew and Aramaic meaning literally 'adversary'¹⁶, enemy, or opponent. So, here was Peter, one of Jesus' closest 3 apostles, who was speaking like Jesus' greatest enemy - ***Satan***.

What was Peter's mind set on and what was the preferred mindset (v.23)? What does that mean? If Peter had his way, what would he have kept Jesus from doing?

¹⁶ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, vol. 1, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 829.

Thankfully Jesus didn't listen to Peter's short-sighted council. If He did, we would be in BIG trouble, still guilty of our sin with no hope of eternal life. Instead, Jesus was "obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." (Philippians 2:8)

We all have a tendency to choose the quick fix, the easy way, the path of least resistance. When God's plans lead us down the difficult path, we also have a tendency to question Him, to - like Peter - pull Him aside and explain how this 'life-thing' is supposed to work. It's those 'I'd like some abundant life in Christ - go large on the prosperity...hold the cross...aaaaand go light on the persecution moments.

This isn't the only time Peter was questioning God's plan. **Read John 21:18-23** and see how Peter wanted to make sure he wasn't the only one facing difficult days ahead.

No one likes the idea of tough times coming to our lives. But think about it for a moment. When have you experienced times of your deepest intimacy with God & His people - when everything was good or during the difficult days? **Share how God has used the difficult days to strengthen your faith, sharpen your perspective, & deepen your relationships.**

FEET TO FAITH

Reread Jesus' response to Peter: "***Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.***" Matthew 16:23

Is there anything in your life that is causing you to act like the enemy of God? Any attitude or action that is a **hindrance** to His plan? Any temporary decisions that are limiting your eternal influence? What are they? Get real. Name them below (use a code word if you need to).

Bring these hindrances to Jesus, lay them at His feet, and confess your pride. Ask Him to help you set your mind on the things of God today.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

***In my closet where I get on my knees each morning and surrender to Jesus I have three words spray-painted on the wall. They are Paul's words found in 1 Corinthians 15:31. Paul says: "I die daily."
That's the hardest part of carrying your cross ... it's so daily.¹⁷***

As you put your head on the pillow tonight, marinate (like a good steak soaking) on this thought, "I die daily." Then get up tomorrow...and live it out, one decision at a time.

¹⁷ Kyle Idleman, *Not a Fan*, 169-170.

DAY 5: Thurs. Feb. 28

In Day 2 we read this: *Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.* Matthew 5:12 (NIV84)

Let's take a closer look at that. The writer of Hebrews gives us a quick synopsis of how that worked out. In what has been called 'the Faith Hall of Fame' (Hebrews 11), he gives us examples of God honoring faith showing up in powerful ways (see verses 32-35). But then the storyline changes.

As you read through this passage, circle how the people of God have suffered in the past.

SCRIPTURE STUDY

³⁵...But others were tortured, refusing to turn from God in order to be set free. They placed their hope in a better life after the resurrection. ³⁶ Some were jeered at, and their backs were cut open with whips. Others were chained in prisons. ³⁷ Some died by stoning, some were sawed in half, and others were killed with the sword. Some went about wearing skins of sheep and goats, destitute and oppressed and mistreated. ³⁸ They were too good for this world, wandering over deserts and mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground. ³⁹ All these people earned a good reputation because of their faith, yet none of them received all that God had promised. ⁴⁰ For God had something better in mind for us, so that they would not reach perfection without us.
Hebrews 11:35-40 (NLT)

Wait a second. This is how others were persecuted? Where was God *then*? He hadn't left them alone, yet they went through tough times. So might you.

According to verse 35, **WHY** would they be willing to go through this suffering?

If you are serious about following Jesus you can be assured of 2 realities.¹⁸ You will experience:

1. **Suffering** and
2. **Strength.**

Why does God allow Suffering?

Moses suffered, he was made fun of, he faced people who wanted to kill him. His own inabilities forced him to seek God's face with desperation & openness. So too, failure and rejection have a way of stripping us from depending on our own abilities. The apostle Paul, who wrote much of the New Testament, faced many difficult days. When He asked God to take away his suffering, here was the response:

⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 (ESV)

¹⁸ Some of this material is based on writings from: David Nasser, *A Call to Die* (Baxter Press, 2000), pp. 127-129.

How could suffering keep Paul humble and seeking God?¹⁹

How does God provide Strength?

Look how King David answers this during some of his difficult days.

*When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles.
The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.* Psalm 34:17-18 (ESV)

David was writing out of his own experience. **What encouragement can we take from this?** What might you say to the person who follows God but, do to difficult days, feels like He doesn't care.

FEET TO FAITH

Do you know a follower who is going through difficult days, someone that needs to be encouraged right now? Pick up the phone or make a face-to-face visit. **Below, write down who needs encouraging words like that of Ps. 34:17-18.** Then schedule a time to remind them that God is still near. You might point them to Heb. 11 or 2 Cor. 12, **but make sure to let them know...GOD sent you!**

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Memorize and meditate on this verse (use your favorite translation). Then, with this on your mind, repeat it to yourself throughout the day.

*When I am afraid, I will trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid.
What can mortal man do to me?* Psalm 56:3-4 (NIV84)

¹⁹ Check out Acts 9:16. This suffering was part of God's plan.

Day 6: Fri, Mar. 1

“Jesus calls us to take up a cross and die. Not someday when we take our last physical breath, but to die to ourselves today...Bruce Thielemann is an author, he wrote these words, ‘Please don’t say anything to me about tomorrow. Tomorrow is a word the Bible does not know. The Holy Spirit’s word is “today.” The Bible says, ‘Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts’ (Hebrews 3:15). Today is the day of salvation. Don’t say tomorrow. The word is ‘today.’”

-Kyle Idleman, NAF Study

SCRIPTURE STUDY

²⁸ “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” Matthew 6:28-34

If you search the Scriptures you will find this passage is what preachers may call a “sub-point” in a sermon. Jesus is talking to a crowd on what could be a Galilean hillside some where. He unloads Heavenly wisdom about divorce, adultery, murder, loving your enemies, and not serving two masters. In the midst of this sermon, Jesus tells the crowd that they should not worry about their provisions, what they will eat, drink, wear, etc. Which makes perfect sense! We should trust God to provide our needs! That certainly sounds like a good “Christian” thing to do.

However, in verse 34 he tells us to “not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.” See, we are not promised tomorrow, so why spend so much time worrying about. When we do that, we miss what God has directly in front of us today. **Hebrews 3:13** says, “But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.” It seems that Jesus wants us to focus on what He is doing in our lives daily.

To further the point of the importance, **read Acts 1:1-7**. Look specifically at the question that the disciples ask in verse 6. What did they ask Jesus about?

How did Jesus respond to the disciples question?

What do you think that Jesus wants them to focus on?

FEET TO FAITH

(If you are doing this at the beginning of your day)

What will you do & what will you be...TODAY? (what are your plans for today)

CLOSING THOUGHTS

(At the end of your day, answer these questions)

Was there anything that you put-off until tomorrow that you could have taken care of today? Any relationship you need to make right? If so, write it here, as well as *why* you put it off:

Is there anything that you wish you would have done, been, or said today? I wish I had...
(i.e. did you love your kids or your mate, told someone about Jesus, etc).

Today is over, never to return. But God is not stuck in today. "***His compassions never fail. They are new every morning***" (Lamentations 3:22-23). Go to sleep looking forward to starting a fresh journey with Jesus in the morning.

Day 7: Sat. Mar. 2

“When we try to follow Jesus without dying, we find ourselves frustrated with our failure and tired of trying. Following Jesus doesn’t mean that you keep trying, it means that you keep dying.”

-Kyle Idleman, NAF Study

Did you make a New Year’s resolution this year? What was it? How are you doing with it right now?

One of the most popular resolutions is to “lose weight.” People make that resolution with great intentions in mind. They begin search diet plans, exercise routines, even putting money towards various products and machinery in order to reach their goals and fulfill their resolution. Unfortunately, many people fail in their attempt to lose weight. Why? It is not so much that the diet plans, exercise routines, products, and machinery do not work; rather it seems to be our dedication to reaching our goals.

Physical training that happens only once a week won’t get you to your goal. So too, spiritual training must be consistent in order to become spiritually fit. Eventually, your body will wear out. The question is, what about your spirit? **Are you dedicated to spiritual growth?**

SCRIPTURE STUDY

¹⁶ That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. ¹⁷ For our present troubles are small and won’t last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! ¹⁸ So we don’t look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever. 2 Corinthians 4:16–18 (NLT)

Based on v. 16, what is the difference between what is going on with our bodies (especially after age 40), compared to what should be happening with *our spirits*?

Based on this passage, what is the most spiritually healthy way to view our *present troubles*? What should we *fix our gaze on* and what does that mean?

FEET TO FAITH

How would you portray this last week for you, as “trying” or “dying”? Explain your response.

How has this study helped you to focus on what is eternal rather than what is only temporary (earthly)? What *present troubles* are keeping you from focusing on what is eternal? How might your TV, internet, & music choices be influencing you in this way? What friends are influencing you & in which direction? What can you do about that?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Imagine attending a wedding. During the ceremony the pastor has led the loving couple to their vows and this is what they say:

Bride: “Can we skip over the ‘for richer or for poorer’ section; I’m not ready to sign up for that.”

Groom: “And can we cut the ‘forsaking all others’ bit? I don’t want to tie myself down.
I want to keep my options open.”

Do you think that relationship will last?

How would you respond if your husband/wife said to you what this groom said?

Write a brief note to Jesus to reaffirm your long-term commitment to Jesus, in good times & bad times, forsaking all others and following Him as your one-and-only King.

not a fan.

week 5: WHY do You do WHAT You do?

DAY 1: Sun, Mar 3

* Your Home Group go through **this session together** including watching the video.

DISCUSSION BEFORE VIDEO

What did you find interesting or helpful during your use of last week's journal?

(Look through your journal and see what stood out to you.)

What impacted you from Sunday's teaching?

VIDEO RECAP FROM WEEK 4

Anna remembers life after Eric recommitted to their marriage and began to take his faith seriously. She quickly finds herself disturbed at *how seriously* - and stubbornly resists his attempt to scale back their extravagant lifestyle for the sake of helping the less fortunate. After Eric's ethical stand results and his firing, luxurious living is no longer an option, all her worldly comforts are stripped away, and she experiences first-hand the tremendous cost of following Jesus Christ.

WATCH WEEK 5 VIDEO, THEN ANSWER DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can someone end up like Bill, knowing a lot about the Bible, yet so little of God's grace & love?
2. How can someone like Bill believe they are right to be so hard and judgmental?
3. What is the best way to reach out to someone like Bill?
4. Bill quoted some verses from the Bible accurately. "If anyone doesn't provide for his own family he is worse than an unbeliever" comes from 1 Timothy 5:8; "To whom much is given, much is required" - Luke 12:48; "Bad company corrupts good character" - 1 Corinthians 15:33. **Yet something seems wrong with the way he uses these passages. What is it?**

SCRIPTURE STUDY

¹ Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: ² “The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. ³ So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. Matthew 23:1–3 (NIV84)

These men *sit in Moses’ seat*, that is, they were the official interpreters of the law of Moses.²⁰ They made up many rules that the Scripture doesn’t address. **So what problem did Jesus have with them?**

Which tells you more about a person - what they preach or what they practice? Explain.

⁴ They tie up heavy loads and put them on men’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. Matthew 23:4 (NIV84)

Although they tied *heavy loads and put them on men’s shoulders*, what were THEY unwilling to do & why was this a problem?

Jesus later calls these men ‘hypocrites’ (v 13-15). But they weren’t just hypocrites; they were hypocrites without compassion, doing NOTHING to help other people carry the load. (Place your hands in your lap and consider how much strain it takes to *lift a finger*. This is a *hyperbole*, an exaggeration to make a point.)

In contrast, followers of Jesus are to “*Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*” (Galatians 6:2 NIV84) Give an example of when another believer helped you carry a *heavy load* or burden in your life. How did that impact you and deepen your relationship with God & people?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

* **Pray with your Home Group** (consider splitting men from women and pray for each person).
What burdens can we help you carry this week?

²⁰ as translated by the NLT

SCRIPTURE STUDY

⁵ *“Everything they do [the teachers of the Law and Pharisees] is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; ⁶ they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; ⁷ they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them ‘Rabbi.’ ⁸ “But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi,’ for you have only one Master and you are all brothers.*

Matthew 23:5–8 (NIV84, brackets added for contextual clarity)

What is the ultimate point of this passage? What was Jesus condemning?

These men were so caught up in the way other people saw them that they lost their concern for how God viewed them. Concern had shifted from honoring the Law of Moses to give glory to God to now bring glory to themselves.

The religious elite had taken the Law of Moses (with 613 laws) and expanded it with hundreds of man-made rules, and taught the people to follow in order to be in good standing with God. Exodus 13 commanded Jewish men to wear **phylacteries** (or small boxes with scriptures written on small scrolls placed in them and then tied to leather straps) either on their foreheads or their arms.

While many Jewish men wore them, the Pharisees and other religious leaders took this practice to an extreme - by making the boxes large and the straps wide so that everyone could see and take note of how pious and holy they were. They did a similar thing concerning the tassels on their clothing (this rule is taken from Numbers 15). Rather to obey to honor God, this became a prideful parade.

In contrast, the followers of Jesus weren't to build an egotistical hierarchy. Rather than calling one another **Rabbi**, an elite leader, **they were to view themselves as what? (see v.8) Why does this say to how believers are to value one another?**

Take some time to consider how you live your own life. **Do you follow the commands of God because you want to please him or because you want others to be pleased with you?** Or like Eric's father, do you think that by doing good things and obeying the 'rules' that you will be in a good standing with God? Write your thoughts about these questions below:

FEET TO FAITH

“Fans are very much caught up in an outward appearance. They think that somehow God is going to be impressed with their religious rule keeping or rituals or traditions. There’s nothing wrong with those things, in and of themselves. The problem comes when we do those things and it’s not out of a pursuit of Jesus or a relationship with Him, but as a way to prove or measure our own spirituality.” – Kyle Idelman, NAF Study

What are some of the “Christian” things you do? Prayer? Worship attendance? Morning quiet time? Going to Home Group? Maybe even working on this journal? Below is a chart that will help you track your Christian actions and the reason why you do them.

In the left column, write down some specific “Christian” things you do. Then list your motivation or reason for doing each of those things in the right column. Are you doing it because you should? To be a good example to others? To avoid guilt? To become a better person? Because others expect it? To avoid Hell? Get honest.

“Christian” Things I Do

My Motivation

CLOSING THOUGHTS

It is very easy to get caught up doing a good thing for the wrong reason. Exercise and healthy living are wonderful things that can lead a person to pursue a certain body image and/or acceptance by culture. Being a good employee is a great practice but it can lead to visions of wealth and power. The same thing is true with following Christ. If we aren’t careful our actions can go from an attitude of humility to pride. We can do good things for the wrong reason.

On visiting a Church gathering one time I saw two men whom I knew to be wealthy seated on the same row. When the plate was passed to collect money donations one man took a large wad of \$20 bills and allowed them to cascade into the plate for all to see. Another man used an envelope to contain his check and keep it out of the sight of others. The same action was done, but the heart intent was vastly different.

As you go throughout your day today, keep track of the “Christian” things you do. Write down what they were and why you chose to do them. Then take time before you go to sleep tonight to think over your actions and your motivation. If there is anything that needs to change, make it right. Remember that we don’t make God love us by our actions and we don’t earn Heaven (see Eph. 2:8-9)

SCRIPTURE STUDY

⁹ And do not call anyone on earth ‘father,’ for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. ¹⁰ Nor are you to be called ‘teacher,’ for you have one Teacher, the Christ. ¹¹ The greatest among you will be your servant. ¹² For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Matthew 23:9-12 (NIV84)

Jesus is not saying a child can't call his own Father by that precious term, as the New Testament tells us to 'honor Father and Mother' (see Eph. 6:1-4). Instead, Jesus is contrasting how His followers are to live compared to many of the prideful leaders took delight in titles and status.

According to Jesus, who deserves the highest place of honor in the Follower's life? (v.9-10)

In the Kingdom of Jesus, who is the greatest? Explain what this means. (v.11-12)

Our culture has trained us to seek fulfillment in wealth, power, education, and high position. Once again, this is at odds with the teaching of Jesus. Jesus taught his followers to serve one another. Rather than wait to have his own feet washed Jesus washed his disciples' feet (See John 13). The religious leaders wanted to be honored by others but Jesus calls his followers to give honor away to others.

We live in an age of education and many people have fallen in love with the letters that they can place behind their name. Other people work hard and take great pride in the titles they can place before their name. Hard work and solid education are great things in themselves, but when we place our self-worth in these things then our value comes from our actions and not from God. This is simply not how God's economy functions. Value does not come from action but from God's ownership of us. God created us and so he loves us. It is as simple as that. Our actions and our earnings do nothing to make us better than anyone else.

FEET TO FAITH

There is **an old proverb** shared across many Eastern cultures that explains how people eat in Heaven. The story goes that a man was given a chance to view both Heaven and Hell. When asked which he wanted to see first he asked to see Hell so he could save Heaven for last. In Hell, people sat at a long dining table with bowls and spoons in front of them and a large pot of sumptuous soup in the middle. The problem was that their spoons are the size of brooms and no matter how hard they try they cannot get the soup to their mouths and so they spend eternity starving.

When the man could take no more of the torture he asked to go to see Heaven. Much to his surprise it looked the same: the same table, the same bowls, the same soup in the middle, and the same broom size spoons. Yet, unlike in Hell the people were well fed and satisfied. As the man watched he noticed the key difference; one by one each person dipped their large spoons into the soup and reached it across the table to feed their neighbor. **You see, the secret to how they eat in Heaven is that they feed each other.**

How does this match up to your own life? **What are some practical ways that you can serve others this week, in an effort to honor your humble King - who served others?**

CLOSING THOUGHTS

"It doesn't matter how accurate you are if you are aiming at the wrong goal."

- Kyle Idleman, NAF Study

Matt Emmons lost the Olympic 50 meter rifle event all because he aimed his last shot at the wrong goal. He hit a target, but it was not the right one. His shot went where he thought it should have, but it caused him to lose what he was really seeking after.

Is it possible that you have aimed at the wrong target, building ourselves up instead of serving others? This week, aim at a different target. **Make it your goal: find simple ways to serve.**

SCRIPTURE STUDY

¹³ *“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men’s faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.”* ¹⁵ *“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.”* Matthew 23:13–15 (NIV84)

*note: verse 14 is not found in many ancient Greek manuscripts

This section of Scripture is tough. Notice the tone that Jesus takes here. He starts off with **woe**, which literally means ‘great sorrow’ or ‘distress’. So Jesus is saying, “You religious leaders deserve great sorrow for what you have done.” Further, **woe** “is an expression of both compassion and regret,” as Jesus uses it to make clear that the fate of the **hypocrites** in question is a terrible one.²¹

Jesus calls these men **hypocrites** throughout this passage. What does it mean to be a hypocrite?

What had they done that was so wicked?

Rather than leading these people to heaven, rather than unlocking the door & holding it open, these leaders had shut the door of heaven in peoples’ faces.

According to the back end of verse 13, what are these men personally in danger of?

The **proselyte** was a Gentile (non-Jewish) convert to Judaism. These proselytes were not easy to make, and “when one of them converted he was considered something of a prize.”²² Problem was, he was receiving poor instruction on how to rightly interpret & apply Scripture from these hypocritical leaders. Instead of opening the door for proselytes to have a more complete knowledge of the true God, these Gentiles were indoctrinated with errors that would doom them to **hell**.²³

What do you think these hypocritical teachers (who didn’t believe Jesus) teach others regarding Jesus?

²¹ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 578.

²² John F. MacArthur, Jr., *Matthew*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985).

²³ Leon Morris, 580.

FEET TO FAITH

Name an area that you practice something different than you preach (hypocritical). Who could you share this with? - someone who is trustworthy to pray for you and hold you accountable to live it out. Make it your goal to get honest with this friend this week.

Maybe it's time YOU - in an attitude of prayerful humility - need to approach another brother or sister who is living hypocritically and help that friend out of their sin (see Gal. 6:1).

CLOSING THOUGHTS

We are called to make disciples...to pour our lives into someone else and help them grow to love & serve Jesus. **Are you becoming a disciple of Jesus that another should follow?** Marinate on this question all day, asking God to help you become an example to follow.

DAY 5: Thur. Mar 7

Remember the story of The Good Samaritan? Three religious leaders passed by a beaten, bloody man left on the side of a road. Because the Old Testament Law said says contact with a dead body would make a person unclean for a period of time. These men chose to be ceremonially clean and continue their religious duties rather than check the condition & show compassion to the person in need.

In today's study Jesus continues to denounce the religious leaders who, like those in the previously mentioned story, practice the letter of the law (with their many additions)...but have forgotten the spirit (or intent) of the law: Today we see Jesus put legalistic leaders on trial.

SCRIPTURE STUDY

²³ *“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.”* ²⁴ *You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.* Matthew 23:23–24 (NIV84)

Think about this: Jesus didn't come to destroy the law but to fulfill it (Matt. 5:17). In fact, as Jesus is God the Son, He inspired the writing of the Law! In other words, if Jesus designed and inspired the Old Testament Laws, He is the ONE who can give us the ultimate understanding of its intent.

These men had given *a tenth*²⁴ of these small herbs (a command not specifically mentioned in Scripture), but had *neglected the more important matters of the law* that the Scripture addressed VERY CLEARLY.²⁵ What were those *more important matters*? Name them and explain them.

In verse 24, Jesus gets to the heart of the matter. The Jews had a tradition of straining their wine, vinegar, and really any potable liquids to make sure that even the smallest insect (the *gnat*), would not get in their drink. They went to great lengths to do this.

Jesus uses this metaphor to demonstrate how the Pharisees majored on the minors. They had rules for about every minute of the day, yet they forgot about the important things. So Jesus shows them a contradiction in that they worried about a small *gnat*, but would swallow a *camel* - the largest animal known to the Jews at the time. They were worried about their rules and regulations.

²⁴ These men were still living in the Old Covenant (or Testament) as God had not yet established his New Covenant through the death of Jesus. The 'tithe' was an Old Covenant command that really amounted to over 20% of a person's income. Jesus doesn't discourage this, but points to what matters more.

²⁵ "These more important duties were made much more plain in Scripture than the minutiae on which the Pharisees concentrated their attention." Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 582-83.

Think about a time when you swallowed a real *gnat*. Be honest, we have all done it. That small little bug, so small we call them “no see ‘ums”. Yet when we get one in your throat we carry on like we are going to die. Gnats may feel big when they are in your throat, but they are inconsequential when you have a camel lodged in your throat. Do you see the humorous word picture Jesus is using?

What is the ironic twist of Jesus calling these men *blind guides*?

FEET TO FAITH

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you **SEE** the gnats which you tend to strain – things which feel important to you but actually make very little difference in how well you know and love Jesus – in each of the areas below.

At church...

With my kids...

In my devotions...

When it comes to food, drink and clothes...

With my friends...

Take a moment and imagine a life without ‘gnats’, a life not straining over “flea-sized matters in a world of elephant-sized issues.”²⁶ In a sentence, what would it be like for you?

How might that affect how others see you and your faith in Jesus?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

DECIDE: From now on, I will treat the following as gnats rather than camels...

²⁶ Not a Fan Followers Journal, 119.

Day 6: Fri, Mar. 8

"I walked away from God because I thought He was like you!"

-Eric, NAF Study

If there was one statement from this week's video that was very poignant, it would be this one. To be honest, this journal entry may not be your favorite. It may dig up painful memories of a parent, relative, or friend that did more harm with their "Christianity," than good. Maybe, if you were to be truly honest, this statement hurts because it is true of you. So as you delve in deeper today, make it your desire to answer some hard questions about yourself. I think about what a doctor says before setting a bone back into place, "This may hurt a little bit." The fact is, when we are broken, it hurts. However, just like setting a broken bone to heal & grow correctly, sometimes we have to hurt to heal.

Answer the following questions:

If People thought Jesus was like you, what would they like about Jesus?

What wouldn't they like?

Would they want to follow Jesus? Why or why not?

Has anyone ever walked away from Jesus because they thought He would look like you? If you can think of a specific person, write it here.

SCRIPTURE STUDY

²⁵ “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶ Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean. ²⁷ “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean. ²⁸ In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness. Matthew 23:25–28 (NIV84)

These leaders were so concerned about looking good on the outside, but what was on the inside was filthy, and **full of dead men’s bones**. Have you ever met someone like that? They kept the laws and traditions of Christianity, but the grace and mercy of God was never on their lips? Have you ever met someone that is so concerned about doing stuff for God, that they never seem to do anything *with* God? Jesus would call that a whitewashed tomb!

FEET TO FAITH

Make a list of the things that you do ‘for God.’ (i.e. listen to Christian music, go to church, bake brownies?)

Be honest with this question. What is your TRUE motivation for doing those things?

How do you feel when other Christians do not do these same things as you?

Pray and ask God to reveal what your true motives. Ask Him to show you areas that you need to spend less time worrying about (or cleaning the outside), and more time working on what is filling the cup.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Taking an introspective look is never easy. Sometimes you find things in their that you do not like, and even tougher to swallow, that God doesn’t like. As you go to sleep think about this verse, and ask God to help you live a life demonstrates what Jesus should really look like:

“I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.” John 17:26

“Come After” = a passionate pursuit

SCRIPTURE STUDY

¹⁰ I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. ¹² Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³ Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:10–14 (NIV84)

You are hereby officially **CHALLENGED** to read the entirety of **Philippians 3**, but for the sake of space, let's look at what Paul is trying to communicate here. Paul has just recited a list of worldly accomplishments, more specifically, religious accomplishments. You could not get any more seminary trained than this man. However, Paul had learned that his confidence needed to be placed in Jesus. As he passionately pursued Jesus, he even longed to experience suffering for His glory.

But what Paul was not saying was, “I’m gonna just try to hold on in this ole’ world, til Jesus calls me home.” In verse 12, Paul states that he has not “attained the resurrection from the dead,” in other words, He isn’t finished yet. So he presses on!! That word **press** means **to strain**. He will not quit, he will not give up! Paul has a deep desire and passion to follow Christ, even if it takes his life.

Many of us will never face persecution like we saw in the first century. But **answer these questions:**
(Circle one, Be careful how you answer)

Are you willing to lose friends for the sake of Christ?

Yes No

Are you willing to lose your job for the sake of Christ?

Yes No

Are you willing to move away from your family for the sake of Christ?

Yes No

Are you willing to die for the sake of Christ?

Yes No

