

# Life Group Leader Guide

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For the week of October 23, 2016

## Quick Review

This week Mark discussed the familiar issue of procrastination. What stood out to you from this sermon?

Mark shared 3 questions that we need to ask ourselves: 1) what are you doing for God's kingdom. 2) What does God have to do to get your full attention? 3) What are you waiting for? Dealing with procrastination always starts with self-awareness. Encourage your group to carefully reflect on these questions in order to begin to deal with procrastination.

## My Story

1. Have you ever had a delay in travel? If so, what happened?
2. What have been the results when you have procrastinated? How has someone else's procrastination affected you?

## Digging Deeper

One of the greatest challenges we face in Christianity is obedience. This week to dig deeper, we want to look into the importance of obediently following Jesus.

- Read Matthew 9:9-13 and Matthew 19:16-24.
  - In both passages, Jesus says, "follow me." What stands out to you about Jesus here? What stands out about the response of Matthew and the rich man?
  - Why did the rich man choose not to follow Jesus? Why didn't Matthew procrastinate in following Jesus?
  - What do these passages teach us about following Jesus?

In the Matthew 19:16-24 passage, Jesus encounters a rich man who asks Jesus "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?" The rich man has done right in his relationship to other people, but Jesus exposes the man's sin: idolatry. The man's wealth had replaced the need for God. The man quickly counts the cost of becoming a follower of Christ and he walks away.

In the Matthew 9:9-13 passage, Matthew is prompted by Jesus to "follow me!" Immediately, Matthew gets up and follows Jesus. Matthew was a tax collector and therefore viewed by society as an equal to sinners, prostitutes, and sinners. He was rejected and alone despite the wealth he had. He too counted the cost and found love and redemption a priceless trade-off.

- Read John 14:23-25.
  - In John 14, Jesus says “If anyone loves Me, he will keep my word.” What is Jesus saying here?
  - What is the connection between loving Jesus and our willingness to obey Him?
  - What are some ways we can keep His word? (cf. Matthew 5:43-48, 22:36-40, 28:19-20)

Jesus is not telling the disciples that to love Jesus or God they had to be perfect. It's impossible to be perfectly obedient. Nor does obedience cause salvation, “because by the words of the Law no flesh will be justified in God’s sight” (Romans 3:20). Instead, our union with and the love of Christ produces both the desire and ability to obey Jesus.

- Read Luke 14:25-35.
  - Reflecting on Jesus’ words, what grabs your attention? Why?
  - What activities or attitudes are necessary to following Christ?
  - What is the cost of following Jesus without reservation? (cf. Luke 9:22-27, 61-62, 14:33; 2 Timothy 3:12; Romans 6:6)
  - Why should we follow Jesus without hesitation?

Jesus words in Luke 14 can seem cruel to us today. Jesus said, “If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children...he cannot be My disciple.” Jesus did not mean we are to be opposed to or reject our family, rather we are to prefer God over anyone else and even ourselves and desires (v26).

We all need to carefully count the cost of following Jesus. Salvation is a free gift (Ephesians 2:8-9). However, we have to be prepared that persecution, suffering, and releasing our earthly treasures may be necessary if we want to be His disciples. The apostle Paul understood all earthly accomplishments and treasure was worth giving up in comparison to what we have in Christ (Phil. 3:7-11).

Why should we follow Jesus without hesitation? Because He is worth it all!

## Taking it Home

1. What prevents you from following Jesus whole-heartedly and with a sense of urgency? What can you do this week to remove those obstacles?
2. How can you as a group help each other remove the obstacles that hinder your daily obedience to Jesus?

Some suggestions for this week’s prayer:

- Pray for your love of Christ to increase so obedience can occur naturally.
- Pray for by name those who don’t know Christ as savior.
- Regarding the election, pray for the Christian’s in America that their attitudes, words, and actions would be pleasing to God.