



# Following Jesus

Daily Devotional

CHRISTOPHER D. HUDSON

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Christopher D. Hudson



Peabody, Massachusetts

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This book is given to

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on this day

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Not so long ago, “following” wasn’t much of a thing. But then—in a sort of digital Big Bang moment—the Internet exploded into existence. Soon some really young, really bright minds started inventing new, creative ways for people to connect and keep up with each other. In a flash, modern life became all about “following.” Suddenly we’re a race of followers—who have followers with followers!

Today you can go online and “follow” an acquaintance’s romance on Facebook, her career on LinkedIn, and her vacation on Instagram. You can “follow” the work of an innovative nonprofit via its website and weekly blog. With Twitter you can “follow” almost anyone—from the Pope to a big-name movie star to rank strangers. And if people you’re “following” on social media say or do things you don’t like, you can hit the “unfollow” button and instantly remove them from your “feed”—and your life.

Is all this what Jesus had in mind when he said, “Follow me”? A casual, distant relationship in which we check in with him once or twice a week? Adding his words to the thousands of other voices we’re following in our lives? Or did he mean something much, much deeper?

This little book explores what it looks like to follow Jesus in life-changing ways—while we live in a culture and during an age in which being a “follower” seems to mean less and less.

May God bless your efforts to get to know him better,  
Christopher D. Hudson

*Christopher D. Hudson’s mission is to help people read, understand, and apply the Bible. He has authored or contributed to more than fifty Bible projects, sixty-six Bible study guides, and more than a hundred books. He’s a graduate of Wheaton College in Illinois, and has been an active teacher in his church for more than twenty years. He lives outside of Chicago with his wife and three children.*

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# Contents

## Part 1: Strengthening Your Faith: God Loves and Saves Us

1. <b>Following Jesus:</b> The Power to Become.....	8
2. <b>Discipleship:</b> Being a Student-Follower.....	10
3. <b>Jesus:</b> Who Is He?.....	12
4. <b>God:</b> If You Want to Know God, Look to Jesus.....	14
5. <b>Sin:</b> It's More Than an "Oops Moment.".....	16
6. <b>Forgiveness:</b> "Good" People Need It Too. ....	18
7. <b>Original Sin:</b> We Turned Away.....	20
8. <b>Jesus' Death:</b> The Strange Message of the Cross.....	22
9. <b>Jesus' Resurrection:</b> An Empty Tomb = A Risen Savior.....	24
10. <b>Salvation:</b> Why It's a Big, Big Deal. ....	26
11. <b>Faith:</b> What Does It Mean to Believe?.....	28
12. <b>Repentance:</b> Going a Different Direction.....	30
13. <b>Trust:</b> It's about Jesus, Not Religion.....	32
14. <b>New Life:</b> Becoming a New Creation.....	34
15. <b>Born Again:</b> Becoming a Child of God.....	36
16. <b>The Holy Spirit:</b> Our Live-in Counselor.....	38
17. <b>The Trinity:</b> One God—or Three?.....	40
18. <b>Sinful Nature:</b> Why Do I Keep Doing Old Things?.....	42
19. <b>Assurance of Salvation:</b> Don't Let Your Feelings Fake You Out!.....	44
20. <b>The Good Shepherd:</b> When You're Feeling Sheep-ish.....	46

## Part 2: Growing in Faith: Prayer, Bible Study, and Church

21. <b>Spiritual Growth:</b> What Does It Mean?.....	48
22. <b>Spiritual Training:</b> How Do I Grow?.....	50
23. <b>Core Workout:</b> Guarding Your Heart.....	52
24. <b>Prayer:</b> Conversing with the Almighty.....	54
25. <b>Types of Prayer:</b> What Can I Talk to God About?.....	56
26. <b>A Life of Prayer:</b> When and Where Should I Pray?.....	58
27. <b>The Power of Prayer:</b> Does Prayer Change Things?.....	60
28. <b>Grocery List Prayers:</b> What Hinders Prayer?.....	62
29. <b>The Bible:</b> God's Message to Us.....	64
30. <b>The Goal of Bible Reading:</b> Big Heads or Transformed Hearts?.....	66
31. <b>How to Read the Bible:</b> A Cross-Training Approach.....	68
32. <b>Memorization:</b> Getting God's Word On Your Heart.....	70

33. <b>Biblical Meditation:</b> Nutrition for Your Soul.....	72
34. <b>Interpretation:</b> Correctly Handling God's Word.....	74
35. <b>Application:</b> Putting Eternal Truths to Work.....	76
36. <b>Community:</b> Faith Is Personal, Not Private.....	78
37. <b>The Church:</b> Jesus' Building Project.....	80
38. <b>The Mission of the Church:</b> Discipleship.....	82
39. <b>The Body of Christ:</b> Do I Need to Attend Church?.....	84
40. <b>Church Wounds:</b> When Other Christians Hurt You.....	86

**Part 3: Sharing Your Faith: Spiritual Gifts, Giving, and Evangelism**

41. <b>Ministry:</b> Doing <i>For</i> and Being <i>With</i> .....	88
42. <b>Service:</b> Rolling up Your Sleeves.....	90
43. <b>Opposition:</b> The Dark Side of Serving.....	92
44. <b>Servanthood:</b> A Good Kind of Tired.....	94
45. <b>Spiritual Gifts:</b> What Are They?.....	96
46. <b>The Common Good:</b> What's the Point of Spiritual Gifts?.....	98
47. <b>The Big Lie:</b> "My Gift Doesn't Matter.".....	100
48. <b>Stewardship:</b> Dispensing Grace.....	102
49. <b>Giving:</b> What to Give the God Who Has Everything.....	104
50. <b>Tithing:</b> How Much Should I Give?.....	106
51. <b>Giving Near and Far:</b> Where Should I Give?.....	108
52. <b>Joyful Giving:</b> Laughing All the Way to the Offering Plate.....	110
53. <b>Generosity:</b> Giving with No Strings Attached.....	112
54. <b>Witnessing:</b> Telling Your Story.....	114
55. <b>The Gospel:</b> Good News Is for Sharing.....	116
56. <b>Living Like Jesus:</b> Lights in a Dark World.....	118
57. <b>Sharing Your Faith:</b> Time to Speak Up.....	120
58. <b>Evangelism:</b> God's Work in It.....	122
59. <b>Humble Witnessing:</b> Stay Above the Fray.....	124
60. <b>Successful Witnessing:</b> What Is It Really?.....	126

**Part 4: Standing Strong in Faith: Doubt, Fears, and Trust**

61. <b>Doubt:</b> Let's Be Honest about It.....	128
62. <b>The Upside of Doubt:</b> Wrestling with Questions.....	130
63. <b>God's Presence:</b> A Gentle Whisper.....	132
64. <b>Vibrant Faith:</b> You Can't Rush It.....	134
65. <b>Fear or Faith:</b> It's Your Choice.....	136
66. <b>Epic Changes:</b> Why Did Life Get Harder?.....	138

67. <b>Our Struggles:</b> Does God Care? .....	140
68. <b>Times of Trouble:</b> Will God Come through for Me?.....	142
69. <b>The Bad News:</b> The World Is a Mess. ....	144
70. <b>The Good News:</b> Jesus Has Overcome the World.....	146
71. <b>Grace:</b> When Your Life is a Mess .....	148
72. <b>The Problem of Evil:</b> Why Does God Allow Tragedy? .....	150
73. <b>Biblical Hope:</b> Not a “Wish” .....	152
74. <b>Finding Meaning:</b> What’s My Purpose?.....	154
75. <b>Finding Your Calling:</b> What’s God Plan for Me?.....	156
76. <b>God’s Guidance:</b> How Can I Be Sure?.....	158
77. <b>Hard Hearts:</b> What about Those Who Don’t Know Christ?.....	160
78. <b>Helping Those Who Struggle:</b> Serve, Don’t Save.....	162
79. <b>Growing Faith:</b> Take Some Holy Risks. ....	164
<b>Part 5: The Goal of Faith: Christlikeness and Eternal Impact</b>	
80. <b>Being Ready:</b> Earmarked for Christ .....	166
81. <b>Walking by the Spirit:</b> Going the Distance .....	168
82. <b>Love:</b> The Great Commandment.....	170
83. <b>Joy:</b> The Serious Business of Heaven .....	172
84. <b>Peace:</b> Life as God Intended .....	174
85. <b>Patience:</b> Hurry Up and Wait.....	176
86. <b>Kindness:</b> A Brand-New Wardrobe.....	178
87. <b>Goodness:</b> Light in the Lord .....	180
88. <b>Faithfulness:</b> Like a Rock.....	182
89. <b>Gentleness:</b> Strength Under Control .....	184
90. <b>Self-Control:</b> Undisciplined Disciples?.....	186
91. <b>Humility:</b> How to Experience Grace.....	188
92. <b>Spiritual Slumber:</b> Wake Up! .....	190
93. <b>Idolatry:</b> God-Substitutes .....	192
94. <b>The World:</b> One Thing Not to Love .....	194
95. <b>An Eternal Perspective:</b> Having Eyes of Faith .....	196
96. <b>Spiritual Forgetfulness:</b> Why We Need Reminders.....	198
97. <b>Work:</b> Drudgery or Opportunity?.....	200
98. <b>Spiritual Warfare:</b> Gearing Up for a Fight.....	202
99. <b>Discipling Others:</b> Passing On What You Know.....	204
100. <b>Worship:</b> A 24/7 Experience .....	206

## Following Jesus: The Power to Become

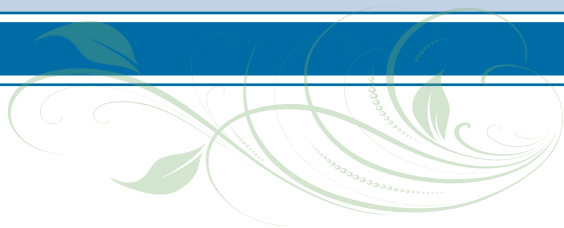
“ ‘Come, follow me,’ Jesus said.”

—MARK 1:17

Why do we love TV shows that feature makeovers (of people, houses, etc.) or those that track unknown people becoming national singing sensations? Surely it’s because such stories remind us that change is possible; and deeper than that, they hint at the most miraculous transformation of all.

When Jesus began gathering followers, he essentially said: Follow me, and I will transform you into something you’re not. If you’ll come to me and remain *with* me, your life will never be the same. In the end, you’ll actually become *like* me.

This is why we come to Jesus. We come to him not only for forgiveness and the promise of eternal life—as amazing as those things are—but in order to *become like him*. Following Jesus isn’t about acquiring theological information. It’s embarking on a journey of personal transformation. It isn’t only about heaven one day; it’s about holiness right now.



## Reflection Question

What are some changes (transformations) that you would like to see in yourself as you embark on this journey of following Jesus?

## Prayer

Lord Jesus, teach me new ways today to open my heart to your transforming presence. Amen.

## For Further Reading

Mark 1:16–20

The story of how Jesus called his first disciples.



# 2

## Discipleship: Being a Student-Follower

*“A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.”*

—LUKE 6:40 ESV

**D**isciple is a churchy-sounding word. What does it actually mean?

In simplest terms, a disciple is a student. First-century Jews would approach a respected rabbi (a religious teacher) and essentially say: “I want to follow you and learn to think and act like you. I want to be your protégé. Will you mentor me?” If the rabbi saw spiritual potential in the applicant, he would take that new student under his wing.

Jesus flipped this custom. He approached some young men and challenged them to follow him—to become his students. They jumped at the opportunity.

To most onlookers, Jesus’ new disciples probably didn’t seem like “the cream of the crop.” Yet Jesus saw undeveloped potential in them. Sure enough, after three years of training, everyone could tell that Peter, John, and the rest were Jesus’ students because they bore a striking resemblance to him: “When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they



were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13).

## Reflection Question

What is the most exciting thing for you about being a student of Jesus? And what concerns (or worries) you about being Jesus’ protégé?

## Prayer

Lord Jesus, I want to be your student today—learning from you, emulating you, taking on your character. Amen.

## For Further Reading

Matthew 11:28–30

Jesus’ surprisingly light “yoke” for his student-followers.

# 3

## Jesus: Who Is He?

*“Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth.”*

—COLOSSIANS 1:15–16 NLT

Jesus was a Jew, the oldest son (“illegitimate,” as some were quick to whisper) of a poor couple in the town of Nazareth of Galilee. Around the age of thirty, he left the family carpentry business, became a religious teacher, and began traveling about Israel. For three years he said shocking things, performed astounding miracles, and generally stirred up the masses. He called people to follow him and learn from him.

When the civil and religious authorities decided they’d had enough of this self-proclaimed *Messiah*—a Hebrew title for Israel’s unique, God-promised Savior-King—they brutally executed him.

But before his friends could even complete the elaborate Jewish burial process, Jesus was back from the dead! One skeptic, upon seeing him, fell on his face and cried, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28).



The crucified and resurrected Jesus is Lord, God-become-man. Jesus is the image of the invisible God. He “came to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10).

## Reflection Question

What kinds of descriptive words come to mind when you think about Jesus’ character, his actions, and his mission?

## Prayer

Jesus, I want to know you, follow you, and love you with all my heart. Amen.

## For Further Reading

Luke 2:8–15

What the coming of Jesus Christ means for the world.



# 4

## God: If You Want to Know God, Look to Jesus.

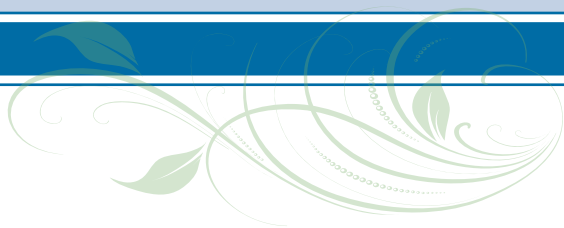
*“No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.”*

—JOHN 1:18

Some think of God as a vague, mystical force, or a universal Mind/Spirit. Others refer to him almost irreverently as “the man upstairs.” In recent years, a growing number of people label all talk of God as ridiculous, on par with discussions about dragons and leprechauns.

Meanwhile the Bible unashamedly declares God’s existence. It describes him as Creator, Lord, Sustainer, King, Savior, loving Father, and Judge. It says his nature is loving, holy, gracious, all-powerful, wise, patient, unchanging, and good. These are great lists. But a few finite words fall woefully short in attempting to explain infinite realities.

Who is God? He is the One Jesus came to reveal to the world. Jesus said it himself: “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). We know who God is by watching Jesus.



## Reflection Question

What do you think of when you hear the name *God*?

## Prayer

Jesus, reveal yourself to me. As you do, help me see that the all-powerful, all-knowing God of the universe is not too busy to care about me. Amen.

## For Further Reading

John 1:1–18

Jesus is the Son of God, the Word who became flesh.