

Series: Follow

Scripture and Background Information for September 18-24.

To prepare for your group discussion each week, group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scripture below.

Basically, everyone has assumptions about Jesus and Christianity. What does it mean to be a Christian? What did Jesus invite people to do? What Jesus invited people to do is to follow him. The goal is people take the next step to follow Jesus. Which category are you in and what step is he asking of you:

- 1) Uninformed
- 2) Interested
- 3) Ready
- 4) Committed
- 5) Growing

Background for Mark 2:13-17:

Last week we saw Jesus' initial call to His first disciples. Here we see Jesus engage with another of his disciples, Levi (Matthew). Levi was a tax-collector during that time, which would have made him despised by the traditional Jews living during that time. More than likely Jesus and His disciples had interacted with Levi before, but in v.14 the same type of simple call He had made before, He makes to Levi who responds by following. The very next verse the scene has shifted as Levi is hosting a party for his friends, fellow tax-collectors and sinners and uses it as a time to introduce them to Jesus. At this party we see three groups of people; tax-collectors and sinners, Pharisees, and Jesus' disciples. Jesus makes the point to His disciples that to follow Him means pursuing all people, and the place of greatest need is the place He will be and the place His followers are to be as well.

Insights and questions to engage with the text:

1. What is most inspiring to you about Levi and the way he responds to Jesus' invitation? Who are the people in your life right now that you would initially invite to meet Jesus?
2. Sometimes a challenge to reading the gospels can be identifying with the culture of the time. Take some time to re-tell the story, changing the tax-collectors and Pharisees to people or roles that would make sense in our day and time.
3. As you look at the different groups of people (Pharisees, tax-collectors, disciples), where would you say you are currently? Where have you been at different seasons of your life? What are some of the challenges you face currently to following Jesus?
4. Jesus mentions, "It is not the healthy that need a doctor, but the sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners." We see that clearly in the parable, but what does that mean for the believer whose been walking with Jesus for years? How does this parable apply to them and the way it looks to follow Jesus now?

Note: One great resource that focuses on this idea of following Jesus is the book, "Master Plan of Evangelism". Coleman goes into the details of what that initial call looked like, but also the process Jesus implemented to invest in these first followers so that they could be sent out to change the world.