

Dig Deeper Devotional



Following Jesus: More Than a Label, Less Than Perfection

Opening Prayer

Father God,

In a world overflowing with opinions about faith, religion, and spirituality, grant me the wisdom to hear Your voice above every other. Let there be no voice in my head but yours. Today, draw my heart closer to Yours. Reveal any area where I have settled for convenience rather than commitment. Teach me to love You with greater devotion, obey You with greater faithfulness, and serve You with greater purpose. May my life increasingly reflect the One I claim to follow.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Scripture

NIV – Gospel of Mark 12:30–31

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

KJV – Mark 12:30–31

“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

Teaching & Insight

How do you follow Jesus?

Most believers can answer quickly. Attend church. Read Scripture. Pray regularly. Serve others. Each response contains an element of truth. Yet the Gospels reveal something far deeper than a collection of activities. Following Jesus is not about adopting religious habits; it is about surrendering one's entire life to Jesus.

A person may attend church faithfully without becoming a disciple. One may possess extensive biblical knowledge without cultivating spiritual maturity. Even admirable moral behavior, detached from a living relationship with Christ, falls short of authentic discipleship.

Jesus consistently invited people into something more comprehensive.

He called them to follow Him. Accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior and Go make disciples of all nations.

The devotional teaching from Mondays with Mark highlights five foundational themes drawn directly from Christ's own words. Together they form a compelling picture of what genuine discipleship looks like.

1. Love God Completely

When Jesus identified the greatest commandment, His words encompass the entirety of human existence. Faith was never intended to occupy a small corner of life. Rather, it is meant to shape every dimension of who we are. Heart, mind, soul . . . Our emotions, spiritual affections, intellectual pursuits, physical actions, ambitions, relationships, and priorities all fall under the lordship of Christ.

Discipleship begins with wholehearted devotion.

2. Obey What Christ Commands

Jesus stated plainly:

“If you love me, keep my commandments.”

Obedience has never been a means of earning salvation. Instead, it serves as evidence of love.

One could connect that obedience requires knowledge. It would be difficult if not impossible to play a game for which you do not know the rules or even how scores are calculated. And those are games! Here we are talking about your salvation.

This reality underscores the necessity of Scripture. The Bible is not merely a devotional accessory; it is the primary means through which believers learn the character, priorities, and teachings of Christ. Ever questioned silence from God when you asked for an answer? Remember that He gave you the answers to all questions already – in the Bible.

A disciple who neglects God's Word eventually loses spiritual direction.

3. Seek the Kingdom First

Modern culture relentlessly competes for attention. Our attention span has decreased significantly down to 15-second Tik Tok videos. Not to mention our own aspirations: Career

advancement, financial security, comfort, recognition and affirmations, achievements we put on Facebook and food we put on Instagram. No guilt is being presented here, rather a call to what can go wrong. Problems arise when they become ultimate priorities. How much screen time and how many times we pick up our devices compared to how many times you read your Bible today.

Jesus' instruction in Matthew 6:33 establishes a different framework. The Kingdom of God must occupy first place. Everything else finds proper alignment beneath that priority. We have priorities. Christ must sit at the top of them.

4. Embrace the Cost of Commitment

One of the most challenging statements Jesus ever made appears in Matthew 16:24:

“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”

Contemporary culture and even some churches often present faith as a path toward personal fulfillment. Jesus presented it as a path of surrender. Discipleship requires relinquishing self-rule. It involves choosing obedience over preference, conviction over convenience, and faithfulness over comfort. Such commitment is rarely easy. Nevertheless, it produces eternal fruit.

5. Help Others Follow Jesus

The Christian life was never intended to terminate with personal salvation. Christ's final commission directs believers outward. We are called to make disciples of all nations.

To teach. A healthy disciple naturally becomes involved in helping others grow closer to Christ.

The mission extends beyond ourselves. Following Jesus, therefore, cannot be reduced to church attendance, religious symbols, or cultural identity. Those things may add value; however, they are not the essence of discipleship. The essence is surrender, relationship, and service.

Perhaps most encouraging of all is the recognition that none of us possesses the strength to accomplish this alone. Jesus understood that reality fully, which explains why He sent the Holy Spirit. The Spirit teaches, convicts, guides and empowers.

Christianity is not merely an attempt to imitate Jesus through human effort. It is a supernatural partnership in which God transforms believers from within. While disciple's responsibility is not perfection, we are empowered to chase it.

DEED / ACTION

This week, evaluate your discipleship through Christ's five priorities.

Step 1: Examine Your Heart

Which of these areas is strongest?

Which requires greater attention?

- Loving God completely
- Obedience
- Kingdom focus
- Commitment
- Disciple-making

Step 2: Select One Area

Choose one area where growth is needed most.

Step 3: Create One Specific Action

For example:

- Begin a consistent Bible-reading plan
- Schedule intentional prayer time
- Share your faith story
- Mentor a younger believer
- Serve someone sacrificially

Growth occurs through intentional practice.

Pause & Reflect

- If Jesus evaluated my priorities today, what would He see?
- Am I following Christ, or merely identifying with Christianity?
- Where is the Holy Spirit prompting me toward deeper surrender?

Take time to listen carefully.

The Spirit often speaks most clearly when distractions become quiet.

Hebrew Insight

”Heart, inner person, will“ — (Lēvāv) לֵב

In Hebrew thought, the heart represented far more than emotion. It encompassed the center of decision-making, desire, affection, and commitment.

To love God with all one’s heart is to place Him at the center of every choice.

Greek Insight

ἀκολουθέω (Akolouthēō) — “To follow, accompany, walk behind”

Frequently used throughout the Gospels, this word describes more than casual association. It conveys the image of someone attaching himself to a leader, adopting his direction, values, and way of life.

A disciple does not merely admire Jesus.

A disciple follows Him.

Closing Prayer

Lord,

Thank You for calling me into a relationship rather than merely a religion. Teach me what it means to follow You more faithfully. Deepen my love, strengthen my obedience, refine my priorities, and increase my willingness to serve. Help me recognize the guidance of the Holy Spirit throughout each day. When I become distracted, redirect me. When I grow weary, strengthen me. When I hesitate, encourage me. May my life point others toward Christ through both word and example.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Final Charge

Following Jesus is neither a title to claim nor a box to check.

It is a lifelong journey of loving, obeying, surrendering, and serving under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Follow closely. Walk faithfully. Let Christ shape every part of who you are.

Sources

- The Holy Bible, NIV AND KJV
- Strong's Concordance
- Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon
- Thayer's Greek Lexicon
- Mondays with Mark