

Dig Deeper Devotional



Are You a Fan? From Admiring Jesus to Making Disciples

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Give me courage to speak naturally about what Jesus has done in my life. Remove the fear that makes spiritual conversations seem more complicated than they need to be, and teach me to recognize the opportunities You place before me. May my words and actions point beyond myself and toward the Savior who alone can transform a life. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Scripture Foundation

NIV — Matthew 28:19–20

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

KJV — Matthew 28:19–20

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”

Teaching & Insight

Sports fans are fascinating people. They wear jerseys bearing someone else's name, memorize statistics, travel great distances to attend events, spend significant money on tickets and merchandise, and enthusiastically tell complete strangers about their team. Soccer supporters may stand and sing throughout an entire match, while fans of other sports arrange vacations, traditions, and sometimes entire rooms of their homes around the teams they love.

The word fan is associated with *fanatic*, although modern usage usually carries the simpler idea of an enthusiastic admirer or devotee. Either description raises an interesting question for believers: If someone observed what excites us, occupies our conversations, receives our resources, and shapes our behavior, would Jesus appear anywhere near the top of the list?

There is nothing inherently wrong with enjoying sports, entertainment, hobbies, or accomplished people. The problem begins when admiration becomes misplaced devotion. Human heroes inevitably have limitations. Athletes age, celebrities disappoint, leaders fail, and even respected Christian teachers remain imperfect people who need the same grace as everyone else. Jesus belongs in an entirely different category. He is not simply someone Christians admire. He is Savior and Lord.

Increasing numbers of people publicly identify with Christianity through crosses, clothing, Scripture displayed on social media, or other visible expressions of faith. These things can be meaningful, and they can occasionally create opportunities for conversation. A cross around someone's neck or a Scripture printed on a shirt may prompt a question that otherwise would never have been asked. And a Christian identity must reach deeper than what is displayed. Wearing a player's jersey does not put someone on the team. In the same way, Christian symbols cannot substitute for knowing and following Christ.

A disciple learns from Jesus, increasingly obeys His teaching, depends upon His grace, and allows the Holy Spirit to transform how life is lived. That transformation should eventually become visible in our relationships, priorities, speech, integrity, compassion, forgiveness, generosity, and willingness to speak about the One we follow.

Can You Talk About the One You Love?

Fans rarely struggle to discuss what they love. Mention someone's favorite team and conversation becomes effortless. Enthusiasm usually supplies all the words they need to speak on their subject. How is it then with Jesus? Why can it be challenging or uncomfortable when the conversation turns toward Jesus.

Sometimes the hesitation comes from fear of rejection. Others worry they will be asked a theological question they cannot answer. Some believe evangelism requires a carefully memorized presentation or an unusually outgoing personality. Because they do not feel prepared for a formal religious discussion, they say nothing. Sharing Christ can be as easy as a question. A simple sentence such as “Do you have a church you attend?”, “Has faith been part of your life?”, or “Can I tell you something God has taught me through this?” can open a meaningful conversation without becoming aggressive or artificial. The objective is not to pressure someone into agreement. Our responsibility is to faithfully point toward Christ while trusting the Holy Spirit to work within another person's heart. We are witnesses, not salespeople. We do not manufacture conversion. We testify to what we know about Jesus, explain the gospel faithfully, answer what we can, admit what we do not know, and allow God to work through the conversation.

One of the most natural ways to speak about Jesus is through your own testimony. You may not be able to answer every theological question, but you can explain what Christ has done in your life. Your story does not need dramatic details to be meaningful. Perhaps you came to Christ as a child and cannot remember a season of rebellion. Perhaps you encountered Him later after years of wandering. Maybe the most significant part of your testimony is not how dramatically you were rescued from your past but how faithfully Christ continues changing you in the present. The essential focus is Jesus.

A testimony is not primarily the story of how bad we were or how good we have become. It is the story of God's grace: our need for a Savior, what Christ accomplished through His death and resurrection, how we came to trust Him, and what He continues doing within us. The person listening may recognize something familiar in that story. A struggle you once considered embarrassing may become the very place where someone else realizes that God's grace could reach them too.

Matthew 28:19 records Jesus' instruction: “Go and make disciples of all nations.”

The destination after sharing is discipleship. We certainly hope people become interested in Jesus. Curiosity can open the door to conversation, admiration can encourage someone to investigate His claims, and hearing a believer's testimony may awaken a desire to know more. Yet Jesus calls people beyond enthusiasm into a life of faith and following.

DEED / ACTION

This week, complete a simple SHARE Challenge designed to make conversations about Jesus more natural and intentional.

Step 1: Prepare Your Story

Write your testimony in three short parts: what your life was like without fully trusting Christ, how you came to faith in Him, and what Jesus is doing in your life today.

Step 2: Prepare One Question

Choose a simple, non-threatening question that could naturally open a spiritual conversation, such as, “Has faith always been part of your life?” or “Has church been a part of your life?”

Step 3: Identify One Person

Ask God to bring one person to mind who may need encouragement, prayer, or an opportunity to hear about Christ.

Step 4: Watch for the Opening

Do not force the conversation. Pray, remain attentive, and when an appropriate opportunity appears, have the courage to walk through it.

Pause & Reflect

- What subjects do I discuss most enthusiastically?
- Would people who know me recognize that following Jesus matters deeply to me?
- Have Christian symbols ever become easier for me than Christian obedience?
- What prevents me from talking naturally about Jesus?
- Could I explain my testimony clearly in two or three minutes?
- Do I believe I must have every theological answer before sharing my faith?
- Who has God already placed in my life that may be open to a spiritual conversation?
- Am I interested only in people believing in Jesus, or am I willing to help them grow as disciples?

One final question:

If Jesus has changed my life and secured my eternity, why would I want to keep that story to myself?

Hebrew Insight

תלמיד (*Talmid*) — “Student, pupil, learner”

Talmid is a Hebrew term associated with a student or learner. The concept helps illuminate the biblical picture of discipleship: a learner does more than collect information from a teacher; the goal is to learn the teacher's instruction and increasingly live according to it.

Following Jesus therefore involves more than admiration. We place ourselves under His teaching so that His truth increasingly shapes our thinking, decisions, relationships, and conduct. A disciple does not merely know about the Teacher; a disciple learns to live according to what the Teacher teaches.

Greek Insight

μαθητής (*Mathētēs*) — “Disciple, learner, pupil”

Mathētēs is the Greek word translated “disciple” throughout the New Testament and is the word behind Jesus' command to “make disciples” in Matthew 28:19.

A *mathētēs* is more than an enthusiastic admirer. The word describes someone who learns from and follows a teacher. Jesus' Great Commission therefore calls believers beyond generating interest in Christianity. We are to help people encounter Christ, believe the gospel, learn His teaching, and grow in obedience to Him.

Closing Prayer

Father,

You have called me not merely to admire Your Son but to follow Him. Help me go into the ordinary places You have already placed me and recognize the opportunities You provide to speak about Jesus. When someone is searching, help me point them faithfully toward Christ. May those who come to Christ be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, openly identifying themselves with the Savior who gave Himself for them. Help me also take seriously the responsibility to teach and model obedience to everything Jesus commanded. Most of all, make my own life consistent with the message I share. Let me follow Jesus closely enough that my words about Him are supported by a life increasingly shaped by Him.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Final Charge

There is nothing unusual about talking enthusiastically about someone or something we love. Followers of Jesus should be able to speak about Him with the same natural sincerity—not through pressure or performance, but because we know what He has done for us.

Know Jesus, follow Jesus, talk about Jesus and then help others learn to follow Him too.

Sow. Grow. Go.

That is how admiration becomes discipleship and how ordinary believers participate in the Great Commission.

Sources

- The Holy Bible
- Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible
- Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon
- Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament
- **Mondays With Mark Video Series — LifeMark Ministries**