

Nov 2, 2025 – Questions to Discuss and Consider at Home or in Small Group

“Following Problems” – Mark 2:13-17

1. The sermon defined "Following Jesus" (*akolouthein*) as a definitive, costly, and exclusive act of faith. What is one area of your life (career, reputation, or social circle) where you have felt the call to follow Christ directly threaten your sense of security or identity?
2. The Princess in “The Princess and the Goblin” was commanded to follow an unseen thread that led to dark, dangerous places. Describe a time when following Christ felt counterintuitive or foolish based on the world's standards.
3. The Pharisees practiced "lunch theology," defining their holiness by who they excluded at the table. In the Northern Virginia/D.C. metro area, what are some of the modern "commandments" (e.g., "Thou shalt be respectable/responsible/successful") that lead Christians to exalt themselves and diminish or separate from others?
4. Resistance to following Jesus is many times rooted in the idols of reputation and idols of control and certainty. Which of these two idols most motivates you to avoid associating with people on the margins? What should we do when the Spirit reveals self-righteousness in ourselves? Do you try to explain it away to yourself as you're just serious and sensitive about holiness?
5. Many times the result of resisting Christ's call is often spiritual numbness ("comfortably numb"). Can you describe a season where your faith felt empty or purposeless because you prioritized self-protection over following Jesus' mission?
6. Jesus said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick." How does knowing that Jesus followed the Father's will perfectly, even unto death, change your approach to your own failures and shortcomings?
7. The sermon stated that our new identity means we are free from the anxiety of clinging to self-protective strategies. What does it look like in your daily life to find your holiness and value exclusively in Christ rather than in your job performance or social standing?
8. Where in wisdom are we called to protect ourselves from corrupting influences? Is it possible to claim wisdom in separation from outsiders so as not to have to follow Christ? Is it possible to claim to follow Christ but deceive yourself and pursue those on the margins because secretly we want to be like them and adopt their habits and practices?
9. The Spirit replaces the love of reputation with the love of Christ and His mission. What is one practical, specific action you could take this week to recline at the table (metaphorically or literally) with someone whose lifestyle, beliefs, or social status you would typically avoid?
10. The conclusion stated that the thread we follow leads not to isolation, but to a table of sinners gathered around Jesus. What is the difference between inviting someone to your table because you are motivated by duty versus inviting them because you are motivated by mercy (the mercy you received)?