

FIELD-TESTED SERMON RESOURCES

SERMON SERIES

TRUSTED | BIBLICAL | FIELD-TESTED

Thank you for downloading this sample PDF from our Sermon Series line of resources.

When you stand up in front of students to proclaim the Word of God, you need trusted, creative, and biblically solid content. YM360's Sermon Series are exactly what you're looking for!

Field-tested, from-the-trenches of youth ministry, YM360 Sermon Series are complete detailed sermon outlines, discussion questions, and graphic packages designed to help you lead students closer to God through proclaiming His Word.

SERIES OVERVIEW FOR FOLLOW

We all have our own ideas of what Christianity is, or at least how people who call themselves Christian should look and act. Unfortunately, many see being a Christian as simply an invitation to be a better person or some form of a "get into Heaven free" card. Is this really what the men who gave up everything to become disciples or followers of Jesus thought He was inviting them into? Is this really all that Jesus is inviting us into today? And how do we know if we're actually living out Jesus' invitation to be His disciple and follow Him? In *Follow*, we spend four sessions digging into what following Jesus looked like for the disciples so that we can have a better understanding of what following Jesus should look like for us today.

"FOLLOW" COVERS THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES AND PASSAGES:

- **Session 1 – A Disciple Is Called (Matthew 4:18-22)** | Jesus invited the first disciples out of the boat, calling them to leave everything behind by simply saying, "Follow me." That's very few words to get someone to leave their whole life behind, but because Jesus does the inviting, it's worth accepting the invitation.

- **Session 2 – A Disciple Is Always Changing (Matthew 4:18-22; 26:69-75, John 21:15-19) |** When we look at the journey of a follower of Jesus named Peter, we begin to understand that change is not only possible but expected. Part of following Jesus means you are always changing and have never arrived. Even when we find ourselves stumbling or changing in ways that make us less Christ-like, His grace and mercy invite us to change directions and follow Him.
- **Session 3 – A Disciple Is Obedient (John 14:12-17) |** How does a disciple continue growing and changing? The answer is obedience. Obedience is not only the process of how a follower changes to look more like Jesus, but it also creates in us a deep affection for Him that changes us forever.
- **Session 4 – A Disciple Makes Disciples (Matthew 28:16-20) |** Being a Christian has a grand purpose to it and a good work. At the center of being a disciple is that we are making other disciples. It is not an option but rather an expectation of Jesus that those who follow Him are helping others know and follow Him.

"FOLLOW" IS PART OF YM360'S SERMON SERIES LINE OF RESOURCES AND IS IDEAL FOR:

- Any large group setting
- Mid-week youth service
- "Master teacher" format

EVERY SERMON SERIES FROM YM360 COMES WITH:

- **Detailed Sermon Outlines** – Every Sermon Series comes with detailed sermon outlines. Teach them "as is" or adapt them to suit your specific ministry context.
- **Discussion questions** – Questions are designed to foster conversations, help students think critically about the teaching, and wrestle with how these Biblical truths impact their complicated and ever-changing lives. You can use these discussion questions to facilitate small groups after your large group teaching or even create handouts for students to work through the message as you go.
- **Title and Background slides** – These are designed to be dropped into your favorite presentation software to help you build a creative environment around your sermon. Use them as a backdrop for song lyrics, Scripture passages, teaching points, and any illustrations you choose to display.
- **Artwork for promo and social media** – Social media images, web banners, and a printable poster file are included. Perfect for newsletters, websites, social media platforms, or print them off for posters and bulletin inserts.

BACKGROUND SLIDES, PROMOTIONAL ARTWORK, AND MORE . . .

Each YM360 Sermon Series comes with title and background slides, promotional art (including Instagram images), and logo treatments. Here is what to expect.

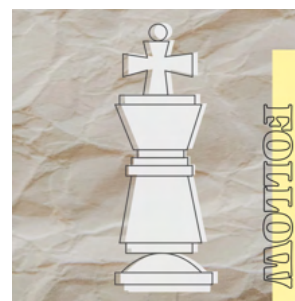
BACKGROUND AND TITLE SLIDES



PROMOTIONAL ARTWORK



INSTAGRAM IMAGES



LOGO TREATMENT



NOTE: Each YM360 Sermon Series also comes with the native files of the logo in case you want to replicate the design for other uses.

Follow Sermon Series | Session 1: A Disciple Is Called

How To Use A YM360 Sermon Series | YM360 Sermon Series are designed for use by a communicator in a large group setting. Each series download provides various elements such as a detailed sermon outline, suggestions on illustrations or images, Scripture passages, background information, and application points that you can use to craft a message that speaks to your students in your specific context.

This series download also includes discussion questions that can be used to facilitate small groups after your large group teaching or even create handouts for students to work through the message as you go. These questions are designed to foster conversations, help students think critically about the teaching, and wrestle with how these Biblical truths impact their complicated and ever-changing lives.

Make sure to leverage the series logo, title slide, background slides, and social media artwork this YM360 Sermon Series provides for promotion and message support. We've even included the native design files to allow you the freedom to use the logo in any way that meets your needs.

This YM360 Sermon Series was created to be suitable for all types of churches and ministry environments. It was intentionally designed to provide you with everything you need while also allowing you the freedom to make it fit your particular ministry context. Nobody knows your ministry like you do. Therefore, we encourage you to make any adjustments to this series you feel are necessary to best fit the needs of your students, church, or ministry context.

A Prayer Before You Prepare | Heavenly Father, all glory, honor, and praise belong to You alone! You are worthy of all of my adoration. You alone formed the world and called what You created "good." Thank You for being who You are. Thank You for creating me in Your likeness. Thank You for Your abundant mercy and grace. Every good gift, including Your Word, is a gift to me. Today, I want to worship You! Let my life be for You and Your glory. Lord, please give me Your wisdom and insight now as I approach Your Word. Help me to discern the truth of this text. Help me to not rely on my own understanding. Remove my ego, wants, and selfish desires. Guide and direct me as I prepare to teach the truth of Your Holy Scriptures to the students whom You love and have placed within my care for such a time as this. May the words I speak be those You want spoken, may the words they hear be those You want heard, and may Your name be glorified through it all. Amen!

Follow Teaching Guide | A One-Page Glimpse Of Everything You Need To Prepare

Series Snapshot | *Follow*, a four-session sermon series, will help your students understand that when they give their lives to Jesus, they aren't just making a decision about their life after death; they are making a decision about their present life and what it means to follow Jesus as His disciple.

Series Overview | We all have our own ideas of what Christianity is, or at least how people who call themselves Christian should look and act. Unfortunately, many see being a Christian as simply an invitation to be a better person or some form of a "get into Heaven free" card. Is this really what the men who gave up everything to become disciples or followers of Jesus thought He was inviting them into? Is this really all that Jesus is inviting us into today? And how do we know if we're actually living out Jesus' invitation to be His disciple and follow Him? In *Follow*, we spend four sessions digging into what following Jesus looked like for the disciples so that we can have a better understanding of what following Jesus should look like for us today.

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Follow Series | Session 1

Large Group Teaching Summary | Some of us said a prayer at camp, walked an aisle, talked to our parents at bedtime, or grew up in a home where we eventually came to know of a saving faith through Jesus Christ. But what if this Holy invitation into a relationship with our Savior Jesus is more significant than we ever thought? What if it's an invitation to become a lifelong disciple, to move from a believer in Jesus to a follower of Jesus? A disciple is called. Jesus invited the first disciples out of the boat and called them to leave everything behind by simply saying, "Follow me." That's very few words to get someone to leave their whole life behind, but because Jesus does the inviting, it's worth accepting the invitation.

Key Takeaway | Jesus is the initiator of the relationship, and that makes all the difference.

Scripture Focus | Matthew 4:18-22

What You May Need | *Optional Illustration: Being Loved First (Personal Story), Optional Illustration: Personal Testimony (Personal Story), Optional Illustration: Leaving It All Behind (Personal Story).*

I. Introduction:

- A. Tonight, we are starting a new series called "Follow."
 - 1. All of us in this room come from different backgrounds; even if we all grew up in the same town or even the same church, we all have our own ideas about God, Jesus, the church, and what it means to be a Christian or follow Jesus.
 - 2. As we enter the mess of all our ideas, we want to see what Jesus actually says, specifically what he says to his disciples (His followers). Not only do we want to see what he says, but we want to see what their interactions were like and the lives that they lived when walking with Jesus (literally following Him).
 - 3. It's possible that we'll see something completely different than what we thought we were getting into when we became a Christian. It's possible that through this, we may find that we're not Christians at all...At least not in the way that Jesus defined it.
- B. In all things, we hope that we grow closer to Jesus and that we might even learn to follow Him.
- C. ***Optional Illustration: Tell a story about what it meant for someone to choose you or to love you first. It could be as simple as being picked first to be on a pick-up sports team or what it meant when you found out your significant other chose you of all the others in the world. The goal is to communicate what it means for the initiation of the relationship to begin with someone else and how that changed everything.***
 - 1. Ex: I tell a story about when my now wife and I were friends and worked at different camps. She wrote me a letter, and it was through that letter when I realized she had a desire to have me in her life, and that changed everything. My great love and appreciation for letter writing come from the idea that there is someone on the other side of that letter who cared enough to write it.

II. Tension:

- A. TO BE WANTED CHANGES THE RELATIONSHIP
 - 1. When somebody else wants you and invites you into that relationship (whether it's a friend or romantic or whatever it may be), when somebody else wants you there, it changes things. You don't do things out of obligation anymore. You start to do things out of love and caring for the other person.
 - 2. We live in an overly connected world. We can talk through video or cell phone instantly to anyone living almost anywhere. We can play video games in real time with someone living in Japan. Thanks to social media, we know almost instantly what everyone is doing and eating. But study after study shows that we feel more isolated and distant than any other point in history. All of us want to be seen, noticed, or wanted. Just to know that there is someone who wants us to be around.
 - 3. Here's a secret; this isn't just a teenager thing. The desire to be desired is part of being human. We all want to be wanted, invited, and included. But there is something about this search to be significant to someone or a group of "someones" that feels even more intense during our middle school and high school years.
 - 4. In a time in of life where it seems like everything is changing and you are trying to navigate how to fit into certain social structures, where people are beginning

to have romantic relationships, where teams are starting to be made, and the race for more followers is always being run, it can be exhausting to find your place and wonder if anyone would choose you. Just you. Exactly how you are.

5. Some of us are full of talent, or we're incredibly smart; maybe guys or girls at school are incredibly interested in us. Some of us go home to parents who love us and are proud of us, and even still we can't help but feel the tension of being wanted.
 6. Others of us find ourselves with not much to be desired in our own eyes. Our life at home feels incredibly messy, our skillset feels incredibly average, and we wonder why anyone would desire us at all.
 7. And in all those things, maybe we become a person that would accept any love that comes our way. In our great desire to be wanted, we will accept any wanting that comes our way and so we take on unhealthy views of ourselves and we enter into relationships with people or things that will never be fulfilling and will most always be damaging.
- B. Then we take ALL of that, and we bring it into our relationship with God. We don't know much about God, but we know He often feels distant, full of rules, and incredibly impersonal. We feel like we can't or we don't connect with Him except maybe a few times a year, like a camp or a retreat, but that feeling of connection quickly starts to fade the moment we get back to our real lives. We begin to think, "I want to be with God, but I'm not sure He wants to be with me. How could He? I'm a hot mess. I just don't 'feel' like God actually wants me. I feel like I'm on this playground moment with God. I'm going to be the last one He picks because I bring nothing to the table."
- C. But we find something else in Scripture. We don't find a distant God but a God that is near and a God that is so near that He wants to be around us. He is initiating the relationship, and maybe that changes everything.

III. Truth:

- A. Scripture Background
1. What we are going to talk though took place at the very beginning of Jesus' ministry. He doesn't have His disciples (His followers) yet. In fact, we're actually going to see what that selection process looked like.
 2. What special characteristics did the disciples have? What made them worthy of being selected? How did they make the team? Why were they invited, and what were they invited into?
 3. It's important to note that very little is known about Jesus by these men at this time. The men who Jesus is about to interact with haven't seen any great miracles. They haven't heard Jesus' mind-blowing teachings or anything of the sort. They know less about Jesus than you do, having sat in here listening to me for the last ten minutes.
 4. At this point, all the known world, and in particular these men, have is the announcement from John the Baptist on who Jesus is, the baptism of Jesus, and a few small events in Galilee that a few men have been spectators of along with a few rumors that come with them. The resume of Jesus is very short at this point. All most people would know at the moment is that Jesus is a man who's

Follow Teaching Guide | A One-Page Glimpse Of Everything You Need To Prepare

5. walking around preaching, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
(Matthew 4:17)

B. MATTHEW 4:18-22

1. It’s okay to acknowledge that sometimes something you read in Scripture makes you pause and say, “Umm, what?!? That makes no sense.” And this might be one of those passages for you.
 - a) These verses tell us an account of how Jesus called (invited) his first disciples or followers. So, there was a man who we know is the Son of God (but none of these guys know this yet), and He is walking by the Sea of Galilee. This man (Jesus) walks up to some guys on a beach who were throwing nets out into the water to catch fish. Jesus approaches these fishermen, and He says these simple words, “Follow me. I will make you fishers of men,” which makes absolutely no sense. What does it even mean to be a fisher of men? You have to think that Andrew and his brother Simon (who is called Peter) had no idea either what Jesus was talking about. And yet, the brothers drop their nets and follow Him.
 - b) But it isn’t just a one-off by Jesus because He does it again seeing two other brothers, John and James, fishing in a boat with their father. Jesus called to them (maybe He said the same thing He did to Andrew and Peter), and it says, “Immediately they left the boat and their father and follow Him.” Both sets of brothers drop their nets to do just that; to follow Jesus.
 - c) They don’t have a lot of knowledge about Jesus. They aren’t scholars on the Old Testament. They aren’t religious leaders in their community. Those people existed, but those are not the people Jesus went out and called.
 - d) These first followers don’t know where they are going, and they don’t even know how long they will be gone.
 - e) And yet, they leave their financial security, their promised futures, their identity, and their families for the unknown with the unknown.
2. Why would they do this?
 - a) Obviously, there’s something special and compelling about this Jesus person and the invitation He offers.
 - b) Maybe these men had previously heard the announcements from John the Baptist and believed them or were, at the very least, intrigued by it in the tiniest bit. Maybe they’ve heard of the guy who’s been walking around saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” And they know enough about the kingdom they are hoping for that they want to be on the same team as the guy who is talking about bringing it.
 - c) But here’s what I think changed everything for these guys. Here’s what I think caused them to drop the nets and leave everything behind to follow. Jesus wanted them! JESUS IS THE ONE DOING THE CALLING AND OFFERING THE INVITATION
 - (1) If those words had come from anyone else, they would have shrugged it off and kept on fishing. But this was Jesus!

(2) Jesus had something FOR them. He tells them exactly what He wants for them; even if they don't know what that is, they leave it all behind and follow.

C. JESUS WANTED US FIRST. JESUS IS THE INITIATOR OF THE RELATIONSHIP, AND THAT MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE

1. In every other area of life, we are running around trying to earn favor, acceptance, and love. But Jesus wanted us first. Jesus wanted YOU first!
2. I know some of us just signed on to a Jesus that keeps us out of hell. Or we signed on to Jesus so we can be seen as "good Christian kids," but that's not what Jesus is inviting you into.
3. Being a Christian (aka a follower of Jesus, not just a believer in Jesus) isn't just about being a good person or going to Heaven one day. It's about an adventure of following Jesus day after day, for however long your life is, to wherever He takes you, with no certainty in front of you except that Jesus wanted you first.
4. Jesus is the one who called you and who invited you to follow, so you don't have to have it all figured out. Jesus is the one who called you, so you don't have to be exceptional or talented or wanted by the rest of the world. Jesus wants you. Jesus is calling you. Jesus invited you to follow, and that changes everything.
5. These first disciples didn't know how it was going to turn out. They didn't understand it all. As we talk more about these first followers of Jesus, we will learn that they also didn't get it all right. They tripped and stumbled as they followed. They were far from perfect. The only thing these first disciples (these first followers) know is that this guy Jesus asked them to follow.
6. The same call for the disciples is the same invitation Jesus offers for you and for me, "Follow me."
7. What if the God you see as distant is actually so near that He invites you to follow Him through the person and work of Jesus, which is going to mean spending intimate time with Him for the rest of your days. I can't imagine there's much more to being wanted than the invitation.
8. ARE YOU STAYING WHERE YOU ARE OR ARE YOU FOLLOWING?

IV. Gospel:

- A. No matter the depth of your sin, it was too deep for you to conquer. No matter how much or how little you think you've messed up, the cost is too great for you to pay. Jesus had to conquer it. Jesus had to pay the price for it with His life. Jesus had to make it right by taking your place (my place) on the cross. Now, this same Jesus is inviting (is calling) you and me into a relationship with Him and into a new life (a life to the full) of following Him as His disciple!
1. What more proof do you need of the Creator God noticing you, wanting you, desiring you, choosing you, considering you significant than Him sending His only Son, Jesus, to die in your place?
 2. What more proof do you need of Jesus being not distant but near, not uncaring but the very definition of love, not unaware of you but saying, "You, yes you! I know you. I love you. I died for you. And I'm inviting you to follow. I am inviting you just like I invited the fishermen on the beach and in the boat that day to drop everything and follow me.

3. This call (this invitation) of becoming a Christian isn't just saying a prayer, being nice to people, or ensuring that you go to Heaven when you die; it is a grand invitation to follow Jesus on the greatest adventure you could ever imagine.
4. Jesus is calling you (personally inviting you) to be more than just a believer IN Christ. He is calling you to be a follower OF Christ. Jesus is the initiator of the relationship, and that makes all the difference.

V. Application:

A. And so, we are faced with two tough questions that we need to answer honestly about ourselves:

1. AM I ANSWERING THIS INVITATION BY JESUS TO FOLLOW HIM?
 - a) Is your life changing day by day, month by month, year by year because you are growing in your relationship with Jesus? Or do you look and act the same way today as you did a year ago? Does your walk with Jesus amount to showing up here to listen to me teach from time to time? Or does your relationship with Jesus affect what you do in chemistry class, in the hallways at your school, on the basketball court, how you engage with social media, what you watch on your phone or on Netflix?
2. IF I CLAIM TO HAVE ANSWERED THE INVITATION TO FOLLOW JESUS, AM I GOING WHERE HE LEADS?
 - a) The call from Jesus is to leave your old life behind and walk into a new one where He wanted us first, and it makes all the difference.
 - b) The invitation from Jesus is to follow even if it costs me something or costs me everything.

VI. Conclusion:

A. ***Optional Illustration: Tell a story about your personal testimony in following Jesus, or you can tell a story about someone who left it all behind to follow Jesus.***

1. Ex: I have closed with a few different illustrations here. One is that when I realized in college that my salvation was not based on me but on the calling of Jesus through the cross, it changed my relationship with Him, and I was able to follow Him closer than I ever had before this realization.
2. Another is I closed with my own testimony of how at age seven, when I gave my life to Jesus, I had no clue what Jesus was going to call me to at different stages of my life, but I kept following even when I didn't realize that's what I was doing.
3. Lastly, I have closed with a story of a friend who left what the world defined as success to follow Jesus. He was accepted to an Ivy League school but instead chose to go to Howard Payne University to pursue youth ministry.

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Scripture Focus | Matthew 4:18-22

Follow | Session 1 Discussion Questions

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Get Them Talking | An Optional Opening Question To Get Students Talking

If you could be noticed and invited to be a part of something by anyone (living or dead), who would you want to notice you, and what would you want them to invite you to do? Examples: I would want to be noticed by Taylor Swift and invited to sing on stage with her. I would want to be noticed by Babe Ruth and invited to pitch/catch. I would want to be noticed by a social media influencer and get to run their channel for a week.

Discussion Questions

1. Read Matthew 4:18-22. What are some of your first observations?
2. What do you think of when you hear the word disciple? (How about outside of use in the Bible?)
3. How do the early disciples respond to Jesus' calling or invitation?
4. Why is it such a big deal that Jesus initiates the relationship and offers the invitation to follow?
5. Why do you think the disciples are attracted to this invitation to follow Jesus?
6. Based on the Scripture verses you read, what is the purpose of being a disciple?
7. Are there any differences between being a disciple (follower) of Jesus and being a believer in Jesus? What are the differences?
8. What does it look like for you to be a "Fisher of men?"

