Follow after Charity ---Returning to His Excellence , Overcoming the flesh, Silent Rebellion-Return with His Excellence-flesh profiteth nothing, not something that is going to devrlop in you but something God is going to put within you

1. To Follow after Charity is to be above all things.

1Cor. 14:1—**Follow after charity**, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

1. “**Follow after Charity”**
2. **Gifts** are to be desired, especially prophecy but not above your love for the Glory of God.
   1. But Love is to be pursued above all else in life. Gifts, abilities, and service are important; but they are insignificant in comparison with love to the Glory of God.
      1. Love is the greatest need and the supreme answer to all the needs of men.
      2. It is when we love a person that we meet the needs of a person.
      3. If we truly love a person, then we will do all we can to meet all the needs of that person to the Glory of God.
3. The word "follow" (*diōkete*) means to pursue, to persist, to continue on and on, never giving up until our love is to the praise of the Glory of God’s Grace.

Eph 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

1. **“Desire Spiritual Gifts”**
2. Spiritual gifts are to be desired. We are to pursue love first.
   1. But this does not mean we are not to seek the spiritual gifts of God.
      1. The more we love God and men, the more we covet gifts of God
      2. So we can minister and help the world of men more effectively.
3. The word "desire" (*zēloute*) means to covet earnestly; to be zealous and ambitious for.
4. **“But Rather that ye may Prophesy”**
5. Prophecy is not to be preferred above love or charity; but above spiritual gifts which prophecy is the most valuable.

1Co 13:2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

* 1. Prophecy is necessary above the gifts of tongues, not without them.

1. The word “prophesy <propheteuo> foretell events, divine, speak under inspiration, (forewarnings - foretelling more and more).

Christian Character

God’s love, God’s Grace for Christian Character

There has to be a new nature, reflective nature, illuminating life

Silent prayer by itself does not edify

Speaking in tongues by itself does not edify as far as does not communicate to us the truth by itself without another gift working with it.

Gifts that edify the church.

The believer's zeal is not to be limited even if he has been misinformed and emphasizes the wrong gift. He is to straighten out his emphasis, keep his zeal, and direct his energy to edifying the church.

Keep your zeal.

The important gifts are those that are needed the most right now that build up faith for Christ.

Spiritual Gifts

1Co 14:1 ¶ Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

1. Returning to Love
   1. “Follow after charity”
      1. Follow
         1. To pursue
         2. To press forward
         3. Keep your eyes on Jesus
   2. “Desire spiritual gifts “
      1. Desire
         1. To covet earnestly
         2. To have warmth of feeling for
         3. To be ambitious
         4. To be zealous
      2. The more we love God and men, the more we desire the gifts of God so that we can minister and help more effectively.
   3. “rather that ye may Prophesy”
      1. Prophesy
         1. foretell events
         2. Divine will revealed and spoken,
         3. Speak under inspiration,
         4. Exercise the prophetic office

Tongues

Tongues are a sign to warn unbelievers; prophecy is a gift to edify believers.

To Prophesy—The gift of speaking under the inspiration of God's Spirit both prediction and proclamation

1Co 14:22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

1Co 14:3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

* + 1. Edification
       1. Building
       2. Building by faith a great structure
    2. Exhortation
       1. Comfort- intreaty-standing close beside
       2. Plead
    3. Comfort
       1. Consolation-consoling until they are consoled

2Co 1:4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

2—For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

4—He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

14—For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

18—I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all:

19—Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.

1. The greatest of these is charity (Love to God’s Glory) *(1Cor.13:13)*
   1. *The Love of God is above faith and Hope.*
2. Thegreatest of all love, is love for Him and His Holiness
   1. Holiness *is before all, Love is before you with faith and Hope,*
      1. Love is *set before you as chief to Follow*
      2. Love is *set before you as principal to Follow*

We ought to **love Him**

We ought to **love His Holiness**

Our service is to be properly motivated if it is to be consistent. We must recognize our service to our fellow man is in reality service to Christ. A motivation to serve Christ will outlast a motivation to simply help people.

*Mal 2:11 Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god. {loved: or ought to love}*

**1Tim. 2:15** *“continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety”*

**1Tim. 6:11** *But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and* ***follow*** *after righteousness, godliness, faith****, love****, patience, meekness.*

**Faith and Love** working together produces the **Righteousness of God.**

1Thes. 5:8*—But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the* ***breastplate of faith and love****; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.*

Eph 6:14*—Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the* ***breastplate of righteousness****;*

Luke 1:75*—In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life*

Romans 6:19*—I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.*

Eph 4:24*—And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

* *No matter how weak spiritually one may be, all can follow after Love, but you must follow on to His perfect Holiness.*

2Cor. 13:11*—Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.*

1John 4:17*—Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.*  18*—There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.*

Num. 32:12*—Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed the LORD.*

De 1:36*—Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the LORD.*

Joshua 14:8—*Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God.*

9*—And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God.*

The Kind of Person Christ Calls to be His Disciples

Mat. 4:19—*And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men*

What kind of person does Christ call?

Christ calls ordinary people who will simply make themselves available to Him to make them faithful.

*Where* were they when Jesus called His first disciples. They were not in a learning center. Neither were they in a position of authority or power, nor did they possess wealth or financial security. They were out in the work-world. This is not to de-emphasize the importance of learning, but it does teach at least two things.

First, position and power, wealth and security, religion and ever learning and not coming to the knowledge of the truth, can hurt and keep a person away from God. Such things can make a person so self-confident with personal assurance that he becomes useless to God. God is unable to work His power through him. The man's own abilities and energy block God's gifts and power from flowing through him.

Second, God can use and call anyone who is really available, learned or unlearned, ordinary or extraordinary. The main ingredient is love, to be able, available and willing to respond together faithfully.

**I.** The first men called. Traits seen in the men, traits that show what kind of person is called by Christ.

1.  The men called by Christ were **brothers who worked together**.

* The disciples' brotherly and cooperative spirit should challenge us.

1. **A brotherly spirit**—the kind of spirit Christ desires of His followers. The kind of kingdom Christ is building is a kingdom of followers with a brotherly spirit.

Mat. 22:39—*And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

John 13:35*—By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

15:12*—This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.*

Romans 12:10*—Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;*

1Peter 1:22*—Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:*

b. **Togetherness**— cooperation—a nature and willingness to serve together to the Glory of God

2.  The men called by Christ were **industrious** and **frugal** **workers**

Peter, Andrew, James and John were busy at work when Christ called them. Too many believers are sitting and are inactive. Therefore, they miss out on the higher calling of God.

3.  The men called by Christ were called to follow Him and they were to ***immediately* follow Him**.

The disciple is called to follow Christ personally, to attach himself to Christ before he does anything else. Personal discipleship, that is, personal attachment, is essential A person must first **learn Christ by love, following Him, before he can serve Christ faithfully.**

**Mt 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in hea**rt: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

 The Lord's call is to a personal relationship, to become attached to Him, “Follow Me and I will make you”

The disciples, although unlearned, were given about three years of the best and most extensive training in the world. They were taught by Christ Himself, God's own Son. Every believer needs to get alone with Christ and to do it often, to study and meditate upon Him and His Word.

2Ti 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Jos 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

4.  The men called by Christ were called to another work. This was a call to a different kind of employment, to another work and profession. It was a drastic, traumatic change.

a.  The call to a personal relationship had already been issued. John tells us this (John 1:35-42). Personal relationship must always be stressed before service.

b.  This call to "fish for men," was a call to service. It was a call to care for men, to help and minister to them. No greater call can come to a man, for helping another human being is the greatest act in all of life. a person who gives himself to nothing but ministering and helping people. No greater call.

c.  The call was to *immediate and total detachment* from all else and to *immediate attachment* to Jesus and His mission

Mt 4:19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

Jude 1:22 And of some have compassion, making a difference:

23 And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Ac 9:15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

Isa 6:8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

 The Lord's call is twofold.

1)  To follow Him, the Messiah. Before doing anything else, a disciple must first learn Christ.

2)  To become a fisher of men.

 Christ adapts a person's call to the knowledge and experience of the person. These fishermen were called "to fish for men."

1)  This fact stirs some confidence and prevents some apprehension and fear in accepting the call of Christ. It means that Christ always considers a person's knowledge and experience when He calls him.

2)  This fact also enables a person to serve more efficiently and effectively—to accomplish much more for God.

5.  The men called by Christ were responsive. They responded immediately.

 A. The call of God is critical and demands a decision.

1)  The call of God is immediate—right now! A person is to get up now, not tomorrow Luke 9:57-62. (some put off the call.)

2)  The call of God demands a positive response—immediately. How tragic that many are called, but few are chosen.

Mt 20:16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

Lu 9:59 And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

(Mat.4:21-22) The second men called. Four traits are seen in these men, traits that also show what kind of person is called by Christ.

1.  They were obedient sons working with their father. They were from a closely knit family, and a closely knit family has an important influence upon the lives of its children. The point is that obedience is essential, both as a child and as a servant

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise)" (Ephes. 6:1-2).

"But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God" (1 Tim. 5:4).

"Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 19:3).

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock" (Matthew 7:24).

"For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matthew 12:50).

"Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23).

2.  They were industrious and frugal. Note how they were mending their nets, making use of what they had instead of running out to secure new nets. The point is that God does not care for wastefulness. The person God calls is frugal and thrifty, not wasteful.

"When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost" (John 6:12).

"The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious" (Proverbs 12:27).

"There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up" (Proverbs 21:20).

3.  They were simply called. There was nothing dramatic or spectacular about their call. A dramatic experience was not necessary to reach them.

 Some receive very simple calls, but they are as equally called as those who receive more dramatic and spectacular calls. God's call matches the nature and needs of a person. God's call considers a person's emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual needs. Some need more emotional calls than others. Some need more rational calls.

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isaiah 55:1).

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).

4.  They were responsive; they left their livelihood and family.

Some are called to leave more. Some leave not only businesses, but fathers and mothers. In some cases this involves persecution and even the threat of death.

"And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death" (Matthew 10:21).

"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26-27).

 God's call involves a drastic change. It involves both a change of life and a change of one's primary profession

Mr 10:28 Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

Lu 5:27 And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me.

28 And he left all, rose up, and followed him.

Lu 14:33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Lu 18:29 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake,

30 Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

Php 3:8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

Event 1—God Gave Various Laws to Help Govern His People:

Event 2—A Dangerous Rebellion by Korah and His Allies: God Judges All Grumbling and Unbelief, All Rebellion and Unauthorized Approaches

Event 3—The Budding of Aaron's Staff: The Test to Vindicate God's Priest and His Ministry (a Symbol of Christ or of the Minister)

Event 4—God spelled Out the Service of the Priests and Levites: The Duties, Support, and Tithing of God's Ministers,

Event 5—God Gave the Law to Govern the Offering of the Red Heifer and the Cleansing Water: A Symbol of Christ, His Sacrifice and Cleansing Power

Event 6—the Last Year of Israel in the Wilderness: Five Sad Events

[1.  The sad death of Miriam (v.1).](about:blank#link315)

2.  The sad, continued grumbling of the people over no food and no water (v.2-6).

3.  The sad, tragic failure and sin of Moses (v.7-13).

4.  The sad, arrogant resistance of Edom (v.14-22).

5.  The sad, touching death of Aaron (v.23-29).

**Event 7—the First Military Victories and the Bronze Snake: A Picture of Desperate Vows, of Christ the Savior, and of God's Protection and Victory,** 21:1-35

**Event 8—the Story of Balaam, His Donkey, and His Three Encounters with God (Part 1): A Picture of the Unseen, Unknown Attempts by the Powers of Darkness to Defeat God's People,** 22:1-41

**Event 9—the Story of Balaam and the Seven Startling Oracles or Prophecies Pronounced by Him: The Blessings of God and a Glimpse into the Future,** 23:1-24:25

1.  The 1st prophecy: the blessings of God's people (v.1-12).

2.  The 2nd prophecy: the source of the blessings, God Himself (v.13-26).

3.  The 3rd prophecy: a picture of how God blesses His people (23:27-24:13).

4.  The 4th prophecy: a picture of the coming Deliverer (v.14-19).

[5.  The 5th prophecy: a picture of victory over the greatest enemies (v.20).](about:blank#link344)

6.  The 6th prophecy: a picture of the greatest fortresses of the enemy being defeated (v.21-22).

7.  The 7th prophecy: a picture of God's judgment against all whose "cup is full of iniquity" (has reached the full measure that God allows) (v.23-25).

 Event 10: The Ultimate Rebellion of God's People and the End of the Forty Years of Wilderness