

Real Followers

Michael Slaughter with Warren Bird

Discussion Guide

In Real Followers (Abingdon Press, copyright © 1999) Michael Slaughter takes the reader on a radical quest to discover what it means to be a true follower of Jesus. Jesus' call for us to deny ourselves and "take up the cross" competes with the messages we get from our culture: i.e. that acquisition of money and possessions and power define one's success. Slaughter insists that being a true disciple of Jesus means becoming counter-cultural: one's focus becomes serving and self-giving rather than acquiring.

Permission is granted to reproduce this discussion guide.

Chapter 1

Invitation to a Journey: How God's Community Changed One Life

This chapter explores what it means to be a real follower of Jesus and the role of community in discipleship.

1. Share why you are reading this book and why you want to be part of a "God movement."
2. Share the ups and downs of your Christian journey so far.
3. In your own words, explain what it means to be a "real follower" of Jesus.
4. Why is community so crucial for being a real follower of Jesus?
5. Discuss what having community with God means to you.

Chapter 2

God Speaks Today—Are You Listening?

This chapter looks at how God speaks and what it takes to be a good listener.

1. In what ways would you like to strengthen your relationship with God?
2. List and discuss the ways that God speaks to us today.
3. What does it mean to really listen to what God is saying?
4. What does it mean to be “priest dependent”? How can you avoid this?
5. Discuss how Jesus was the perfect model for listening to and responding to God the Father. What is the essential attitude that we must also have in order to hear God’s voice?

Chapter 3

God—More Than a Preference

This chapter looks why people don’t take their faith seriously.

1. Why has God become just a preference for many people? List and discuss the kinds of “gods” we tend to look for.
2. Share a time when you discovered God in ordinary daily life. Why is it so important for us to be mindful of the continual presence of Jesus?
3. List and discuss the warning signs of counterfeit Christianity.
4. Discuss the sacrifices and rewards of being a real follower of Jesus.
5. Talk about how the Jesus road begins and ends in relationship rather than in keeping rules.

Chapter 4

God Created You For a Unique Mission

This chapter shows how to surrender to a God-focus and work for and with God.

1. Why do you believe God created you for a unique mission?
2. What happens when you surround yourself with people who have a passion for God?
3. Discuss what you should look for in a mentor.
4. List and discuss keys for learning to think God’s thoughts.

5. Discuss ways you can nurture God's dreams and visions.
-

Chapter 5

Experiencing the Power of Amazing Grace

This chapter explores God's grace and what it means that you were created in God's image.

1. Discuss the power you have as a real follower of Jesus.
 2. What does it mean that you have been created in God's image?
 3. Discuss how you can be a model of God's grace to others.
 4. How can you become a safe-space zone of forgiveness and grace for others?
 5. How does it feel to be judged by appearance? Speak from personal experience where you have judged or been judged.
-

Chapter 6

"God-Sizing" Your Visions and Dreams

This chapter examines the size of your dreams and learning about what God wants for you.

1. Discuss the difference between bringing Jesus into your dream and surrendering your own dreams to God's dreams/intentions.
2. List and discuss the flaws in human vision. What are the flaws in your vision?
3. What does it mean that your life mission is bigger than you?
4. How does God imagine you? How does this differ from how you imagine you?
5. Discuss how you learn about your mission in life. How do people tend to limit their mission?

Chapter 7

Take the Plunge Right Here, Right Now

This chapter encourages you to give complete control to God, right now.

1. “The Christian life is radical.” Explain the meaning of this statement.
2. Explain why you can’t become a real follower of Jesus without changing.
3. Discuss the statement: “To follow Jesus is to place yourself at the disposal of Jesus” (p. 121).
4. How is following Jesus the opposite of control? What does it feel like when you do not have complete control? Share ways that you have not relinquished control to God in your own lives.
5. Discuss how Christianity has become watered down and what you can do to change that.

Chapter 8

Bigger Barns and Other Obstacles to Really Following

This chapter shows how possessions can end up possessing you.

1. Explain how possessions can become rival gods. How can you prevent this from happening?
2. List some values that lead to simple, focused living.
3. Share a time when a possession ended up possessing you.
4. List and discuss some principles that you can practice that will help you shift your focus from self and possessions to your relationship with God. If you have tried either of these practices, share with the group your experiences.
5. What lessons did you learn from this chapter? What changes would you like to make to your life?

Chapter 9

Life Is Not About Getting What You Want

This chapter shows life isn't about safety and security; it's about following God's mission.

1. How was God speaking to you as you read this chapter?
2. Complete this sentence: Life is about
3. What needs to change in your life for you to become a more committed Christian?
4. This chapter suggests that true discipleship requires engagement with the world—something that moves us out of our own self-centeredness and out of our comfort zones. Share with the group a time when you risked becoming really engaged with the world and helped someone.
5. What's your greatest fear about becoming a more active Christian? What's holding you back?

Chapter 10

Do Not Try This Alone

This chapter discusses how crucial it is to “hang out” with a community of those who are passionate disciples of Jesus. They help remind us that we are not in control and offer us encouragement to live as real followers of Jesus.

1. Share a tough situation in your life that made you realize you are not in control.
2. List and discuss the lessons found in the story of Jesus and Jairus.
3. Why is it important to hang around Easter-thinking people? Name some of these people in your life and tell how they have inspired you.
4. What do people miss by living safe and calculated lives?
5. Share your story about a success in your life where you exceeded expectations or overcame a limitation. To what did you attribute your success?

Chapter 11

Spirit Led, Not Success Driven

Life isn't primarily about reaching our own goals or having material success, but rather about being open to the spirit of God and God's goals.

1. Share a time when your goal was right, but your motivation was wrong.
2. What changes should be evident when a person follows Jesus? What lifestyle changes should occur?
3. If you only had one year to live, what would you do?
4. What's the difference between being a believer and being a follower?
5. Discuss the statement: "You find life when you're moving where God's breath is blowing" (p.178).

Chapter 12

Are You Ready to Be Fully Honest with God?

This chapter shows how to avoid virtual Christianity and instead become a Real Follower.

1. Explain the meaning of virtual Christianity and give an example.
2. How do you move beyond the pretender in each of us?
3. Discuss the costs of becoming a Real Follower.
4. List and discuss the warning signs of living in virtual discipleship.
5. Share how this book has helped you become a Real Follower.