

One Small Step Part 6

In His Steps

1 Peter 2:21

Memory Verses: 1 Peter 2:21

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle):

When Neil Armstrong stepped down the Lunar lander and put a foot on the moon and said, “one small step for man” he knew that his contribution, no matter how great, was a small one in the grander scheme of all that it took to get to that monumental moment. That’s why he called his part a small step. But he also knew that it was “one giant leap for mankind.” Why? Because before 1896 no one in their right mind, except for maybe Jules Verne, could have imagined that we could ever sustain flight, leave our atmosphere, enter into outer space, travel 239,000 miles to the moon, and land on it. But in 1896 after flying kites for 7 years Wilbur and Orville Wright discovered sustained human flight, which led to Robert Hutchings Goddard in 1926 launching the first liquid fueled rocket into space, which led to Yuri Gargarin in 1957 being the first man to be launched into space and orbit the Earth, which led to JFK declaring in 1960 that by 1970 the United States would put a man on the moon, which led to July 21st, 1969 when Neil finally finished the journey with one small step.

One small step matters, whether you are beginning the journey or finishing it. Let’s look again at our main passage for this series; **Psalm 37:23-24**. “the steps of a man are established by the Lord, when he delights in his way; though he fall, he shall no be cast headlong, for the Lord upholds his hand.” God celebrates the small steps, he helps us make each small step, and though we may fall back down a step or two he will catch us and help us back up. This verse is extremely encouraging to those of us trying to make each step towards Christ count. Over the course of this series we’ve learned what it means to take that next step. And, this morning as we close this series, we will try to bring everything together that we’ve learned so far and make it as practical as we can for you to take the next small step in your own life.

So what is the most practical thing we can do to take the next step? Well for the philosopher it might be to meditate on the words of the great philosophers of the past. For the professor it might be to read a book or watch a lecture. For the builder it might be to pick up a hammer and get to work. But for those of us who are Christians we simply start by following Christ. I want you to look at a few key verses for our time this morning. Let’s look at **1 Peter 2:21** which says we must follow in the steps of Christ. Christ has left us an example to follow so follow him in

his steps. Don’t make your own steps... just step where he has already stepped. If you see a Jesus sized foot print... step there! Then, in **Matthew 4:19** we see Jesus calling the disciples, and he says: “follow me and I’ll make you fishers of men.” Thats it... come after me, follow me, and I’ll show you what to do. How do I know what step Christ wants me to make? It’s pretty simple... follow in his steps. In fact that is exactly what “disciple” means... someone who follows in their masters steps. **1 Chronicles 16:11** says that our chief purpose is to seek after the Lord and his presence continually. Our whole life is to be defined by how we follow the Lord, and if our lives are defined by how we follow in the steps of Christ we must understand that **Following In Christ’s Steps Often Means Leaving The Easy Path** Today I want us to see 2 ways you can Step where Christ stepped and 10 ways that Christ lived his life and left us an example to follow. Be assured none of these 10 are easy. It would be much easier to do nothing. But Christ has called us to follow him on the narrow path... and if you want to follow Christ, then this is how you do it.

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we need to do when following Christ is... **Pick Up The Pace So You Can Stay In Step With Christ**. Sometimes as believers our walk with Christ can feel more like we are simply being drug behind. Sometimes it can feel like we are getting left behind. Have you ever been running with a friend before and they are in way better shape than you and before you know it you are so far behind them that you can’t even see them. That’s me every time I have ever gone running with a friend. Who am I kidding.. i’ve never gone running. And I don’t have any friends. But, you get the point right. Our walk with Christ can feel like that and we need to catch up a little.

Why? Cause if we can’t see him stepping how are we going to know where he stepped? It’s easier to mimic Christ’s steps when you are close enough to see him step. It’s the difference between playing tag and hide and seek. Okay, who in here has ever played tag? Who has played Hide-n-go-seek? There is a difference in these games correct? One involves a lot of running and one involves hiding in a closet. I bet you can’t guess which one I’d rather play with my kids? In tag you see the person and you just try to reach them. I encourage you to go on youtube and search professional tag. It’s insane. They do a lot of parkour moves, jumping and running all over the place. It’s exhausting just watching. But in hide and seek you don’t just run around, you have to become a tracker, looking for evidence like a swing thats still moving or a foot print leading behind the barn. In our house, Lisa is the hide-n-seek champion... she has yet to be found.

When it comes to seeing and catching someone... tag is easier. Because we can see them moving, we can follow where they go, we can see their steps. I don’t know about you but I’d rather see where Jesus is

going and try to catch him, than trying to find the clues as to what he might have done and take a best guess. Look again at **1 Peter 2:21**, Christ has left us an example to follow... so stay close enough to mimic his example. The point is this... **staying closer to Christ helps you step where he steps**. So do everything you can to stay close to Christ! How can you stay close to Christ? Make day to day decisions like reading the word and prayer that keep you close. By leaving your past in the past and not getting stuck or stalling out. By not trying to make it to the road in one sprint but by trying to make it just a couple of steps. Pace yourself and you will keep a close distance. It won't be easy, but it will be worth it.

Following In Christ's Steps Often Means Leaving The Easy Path

The second thing when following Christ is simple; **Just Do What Jesus Did**. When I was in high school all the rage, at least in the Christian world, was WWJD bracelets. WWJD stands for What Would Jesus Do. It comes from a book called, "In His Steps" by Charles Shelton where the pastor of a small town challenges his congregation to ask one question before they make any decision; what would Jesus do? It's a great question, but before we can answer it, we obviously need to know what Jesus did. So I asked you guys on Facebook what you thought the top 10 things were that Jesus did that we should also do. I compiled the answers and here they are.

First, **Jesus Loved & Ministered To Everyone**. Jesus didn't just love those who were easy to love. The smart, the beautiful, the prosperous, the powerful. No, Jesus loved everyone, especially those who no one else would love. One quick look through the Bible and you will see verses like **John 3:16** where we see that God loved the whole world so much that he gave us his son. Or **John 13:34-35** and **Romans 8:37-39**. Nothing can separate us from his never ending love.

This love was shown to the woman at the well in **John 4**. Even though she had had 5 husbands and the man she was with wasn't even her husband, Jesus didn't reject her. He made it a point to meet her, show her love and forgive her of her sins. This love was shown to the unclean woman in **Matthew 9:20-22**. Because of her illness she was declared unclean and rejected by society, but Jesus didn't reject her. He healed her and called her his daughter. This love was shown to the lepers in **Mark 1:45**, and **Luke 17:19**. Though they were unclean, thrown outside the camp, and left to die. Even though they weren't to be touched by anyone, less they too become unclean, Jesus touched them, loved them, and healed them. This love was shown to Judas in **Matthew 26:50** where, even though Judas comes to betray his master, Jesus still calls him friend. The unfailing love of Christ was so great that he even loved his enemies.

Secondly, **Jesus Befriended & Ministered With Outcasts**. Get this.

He didn't just love the unlovely. He befriended them and then made them his disciples and ministers. Look at **John 15:13-15**. He calls us friends. He chooses us. That doesn't make any sense. Let's be honest. If we were to pick our friends and those we wanted to do church with we probably wouldn't pick who Jesus picked. In **Luke 5:27** He picked Levi the tax collector. Hated by even his own people, but chosen by Christ. In **Mark 1:16-20** He chose men like Andrew, Peter, James & John. Simple fisherman; poor, smelly, insignificant, the dregs of society, yet Jesus wanted these guys as his disciples. Or what about Mary Magdalene in **Luke 8:1-3**. A crazy demon possessed woman of questionable moral character. No one would want her... no one except Jesus. These were his best friends. These were his disciples. And it was through these outcasts that the world was changed.

Thirdly, **Jesus Forgave Those Who Others Condemned**. Look to verses like **Luke 5:20**, and **1 John 1:9** where he forgave the crippled and needy of their sins. The pharisees were astounded. They asked, who but God alone can forgive sins. Who did Jesus forgive? How about the soldiers who crucified him where in **Luke 23:24** he asks his Father to forgive them for they don't know what they do. Or what about the woman who was caught in adultery in **John 8:3-11**. As the pharisees all pick up stones to kill her, Jesus says, you without sin cast the first stone. While the pharisees all drop their rocks and leave, Jesus picks her up off the ground and tells her she is forgiven.

Number 4, **Jesus Led His Followers By Serving Them**. Many, if not all men, would lead by demanding their subjects to serve them. But not Jesus. In fact, Jesus did the opposite. He served his followers. He fed them with fish and bread, he healed their wounds and sickness, he played with their children, and in **John 13** he washed their feet. He was not a dictator or a harsh boss. He served those he meant to lead.

Number 5, **Jesus Preached A Gospel of Salvation & Repentance**. Although he was loving, caring, gentle, and kind... he did not shy away from the sins of people. His message was consistent; repent if you want to see the kingdom of God. He called people to turn away from their sinful rebellion to God and turn to his salvation through the death of his son. Some verses to study here would be **Matthew 4:17** and **Luke 13:3**.

6, **Jesus Prayed (A Lot)**. Jesus knew that prayer was important. So many times the disciples would be looking for Jesus and couldn't find him. Why? Cause he was away in a solitary place praying. There's just too many references to hit them all. Here's a handful; **Matthew 14:23**, **Mark 1:35**, **6:46**, **14:32**, **Luke 5:16**, **6:12**, **John 17**. The point is simple. If prayer was important to Jesus, God in the flesh, then it should be important to us.

7, **Jesus Obeyed His Father**. Jesus made it a point to find out what his father's will was, and to do it. He didn't want to do anything that was outside of God's plan for his life. Look at **John 5:19**. Some other verses would include **John 6:38**, **14:28**, and **Matthew 26:39**.

8, **Jesus Humbled Himself**. He was God who became a man. Look at **Philippians 2:5-8**. Could there be a bigger discrepancy between God and a man... and yet Jesus became like us. But not only did he become like us... he subjected himself to the people. Look at **2 Corinthians 8:9**. Some other examples of his humility. In **John 11:35** he wept, and in **Matthew 18** he prioritized the children and gave his time to them.

9, **Jesus Gave Sacrificially**. In **Matthew 17:24-27** we see a story of Jesus taking a coin out of a fish's mouth so he can give it to Peter to pay his taxes. But this is a rare occasion. Jesus actually didn't have money to give so instead of giving money he healed people and cast out their demons. At a wedding they ran out of wine. Jesus didn't have any money to buy them more wine... so he turned water into wine. The point is Jesus gave sacrificially in any opportunity he had to give. Some passages for study; **Matthew 4:23, 8:16, Mark 2:5-7**.

Which brings us to our 10th and last thing that Jesus did that we should also do. **Jesus Suffered**. Everything Jesus did culminates in the fact that he gave his life for us by being beaten, tortured, and killed on a cross. We see this in some of our most memorized verses like **John 3:16** and **Romans 5:8**. While we were sinner, still Jesus died for us. So what does that mean for us? Well look at **1 Peter 2:21** again. If he suffered for us... we will also suffer for him. We are called to follow in his steps by not only doing all the things that Jesus did while he lived, but also by doing the things he did while he died. And it certainly isn't easy.

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Application

So the application today is pretty clear. Do you want to take one small step towards Christ today? Then pick up the pace. Make sure you stay in step with Christ through the word and prayer. Make sure you don't let you past stop you from following Jesus. Make sure you don't try to get to the road in one sprint, but just make it to the bush a few feet in front of you. Pace yourself and keep Jesus in your sights.

Do you want to make one small step towards Christ today? Then simply see what Jesus did, determine what he would do, and then do that! He loved, cared for, befriended, and ministered with outcasts. He forgave, served, gave, and prayed. He preached repentance, obeyed God's commands, and eventually humbled himself to suffer for us by dying on the cross. So... do that! It won't be easy... but it will change the world. **Following In Christ's Steps Often Means Leaving The Easy Path.**

Conclusion

Charles Shelton says this in "In His Steps." "The greatest

question in all of human life is summed up when we ask, 'What would Jesus do?' if, as we ask it, we also try to answer it from a growth in knowledge of Jesus himself. We must know Jesus before we can imitate Him." "But if our definition of being a Christian is simply to enjoy the privileges of worship, be generous at no expense to ourselves, have a good, easy time surrounded by pleasant friends and by comfortable things, live respectably and at the same time avoid the world's great stress of sin and trouble because it is too much pain to bear it—if this is our definition of Christianity, surely we are a long way from following the steps of Him who trod the way with groans and tears and sobs of anguish for a lost humanity; who sweat, as it were, great drops of blood, who cried out on the upreared cross, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'"

What step are you willing to take for Jesus Christ today?