

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, February 22, 2012 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

DANGEROUS FELLOWSHIP

Introduction – A Place to Begin

John 1:35-51

Genuine fellowship can be dangerous, risky and costly, but it is also impossible without genuine and dangerous “fellowship.” What do we mean by “fellowship?” What we mean is real, genuine discipleship... a genuine disciple or follower of Christ. The term discipleship is tossed about frequently these days, and we ought to know what it means, what is involved, and how it is to be carried out. What is meant by being a disciple or real “follower” of Christ needs to be clarified before we consider what is involved in genuine dangerous “fellowship” or the making of a disciple. Initially, it involves consecration, but a disciple is more than a mere believer... and no one can reproduce disciples who is not himself or herself a disciple. Like begets like; committed people developed committed people, and genuine disciple or follower of Christ breed genuine disciples or follower of Christ. AS you can see, the whole process begins with you. Keep that in mind as we step over the threshold of dangerous fellowship into dangerous fellowship. Our goal is that this study will stir up thought in you, leading to a deeper commitment to Christ yourself.. “dangerous fellowship”... so that you in turn build a life that breeds genuine and dangerous fellowship.

I. ESSENTIALS OF CHRISTIANITY

As we begin, we must remind ourselves of four basic elements related to the Christian faith:

4 Basic Elements of the Christian Faith:

1. **It's founder** – The living, resurrected Jesus Christ.
2. **His goals** – To change individuals and bring regeneration (not revolution) within their hearts and lives.
3. **His methods** – Salvation. This is not a political, educational, or religious philosophy that affects a person from without, but an act of divine redemption – made possible through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ – which affects each of the aforementioned areas of a man's life.
4. **His means** – “Fellowship” (or discipleship). He uses committed, consecrated, dedicated Christians to carry out the plan... committed practitioners of the faith.

A good definition of “Fellowship” – “The committed practice of ones faith.” - In other words living it out

II. ESSENTIALS OF FELLOWSHIP (Luke 9:23)

Christ's relationship to His group of twelve men provides us a model to imitate. In examining the text, we uncover the following general and specific details.

7 General Observations Concerning Dangerous "Followship":

1. **These are the words of Jesus** (*note Luke 9:18*)
2. **These words are addressed to those following Him**
3. **These words included everyone** (*note the use of "all" and "anyone"*)
4. **These words did not pertain to salvation** (except for Judas, all were believers)
5. **With these words He (Jesus) was asking for a decision... for an expression of their desire.**
6. **With these words He (Jesus) spoke to them about something specific... following after Him.**
7. **With these words He (Jesus) identified the essentials of dangerous followship.**

3 Specific Ingredients Dangerous "Followship":

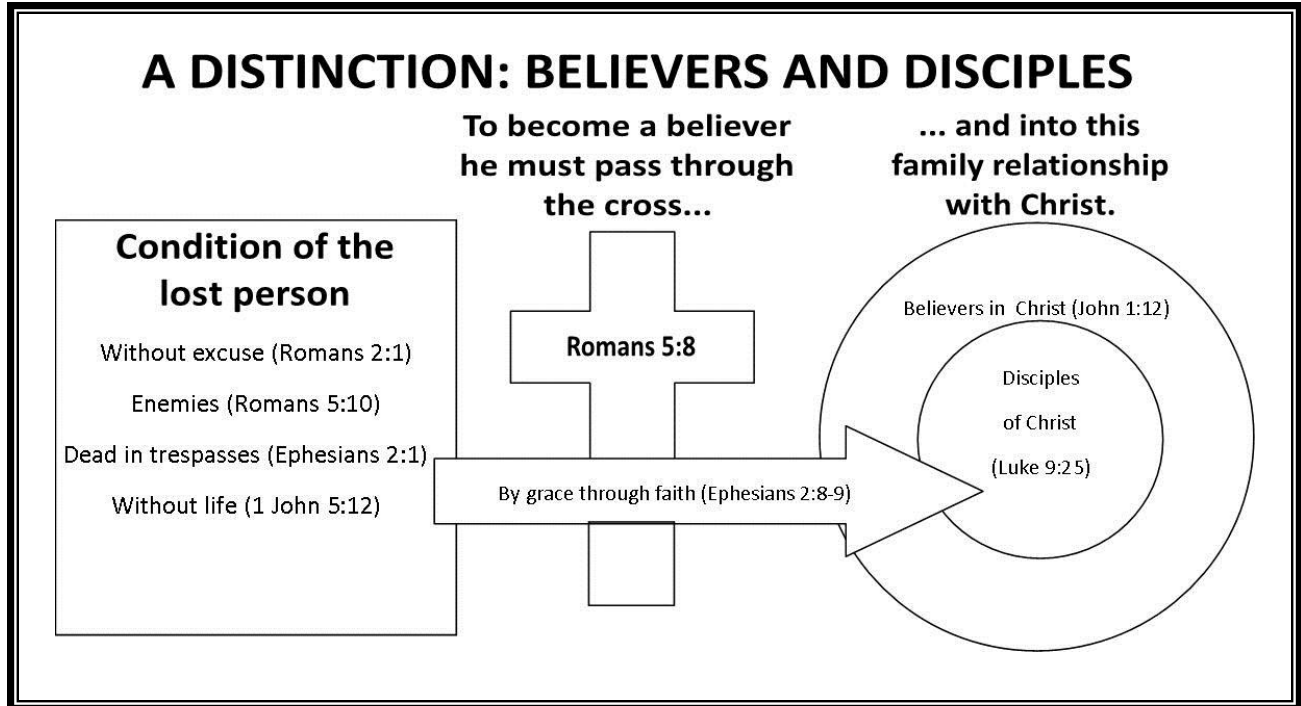
Before giving attention to the meaning of each element, let's look at the complete statement in Luke 9:23, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." Now let's see that that means specifically for dangerous followship:

1. **Self-denial... "Deny himself"** - This involves a decision that one makes at the deepest level of one's will. The term "deny" means "to say 'no' to something," and in some instances "to refuse someone." It is the word used to describe what Peter did to Christ in John 13:38. However, this is only a small part of its meaning. In a broader sense it means "in every moment of life to say 'no' to self and 'yes' to God... to dethrone self and enthrone God... to make Him the ruling passion and principle of that life," Constant self-denial is the life of constant assent to God, expressed by giving in and submitting to Him. *Is this dangerous? Why?*
2. **Cross-bearing... "Take up his cross daily"** – In the day that Jesus spoke these words, the cross was not unfamiliar to His hearers... for just outside of Jerusalem's wall was the infamous Place of the Skull (Golgotha or Calvary), where people were crucified for capital crimes. When the citizens witnessed a person dragging a timber (the horizontal cross beam) through the streets, they knew he was soon to die. It was in this context that Jesus spoke these words. Essentially, He was saying, "If you want to be My disciple (follower), spiritually you must die to self. You must prefer My will to your will and must give up what you want to do with your life, allowing Me to become your preeminent focus." We are talking about dangerous followship here. *Is this dangerous? Why? Do we do this?*
3. **Followship... "Follow me"** – At the heart of these two words is the thought of obedience... obeying Christ (the leader) and emulating His words and behavior. We give lip service to obedience to Christ, but do we really obey His Word to us?

A good definition of "Obedience" – "Doing exactly what God tells you to do, when He tell you to do, with the right heart attitude." *Is this dangerous? Why?*

III. FOLLOWSHIP ILLUSTRATED

As this series of studies on “Dangerous Followship” begins, you must understand where you are in relation to the Savior. Perhaps the following graphic will help you find your position:



Most of us engaged in this study fall somewhere within the large circle representing the family of Christ. Our concern is not with the larger circle, however, but the smaller one – representing genuine disciples of Christ. God’s desire from the beginning was that the outer and inner circles match. But in reality, the majority of Christians have not adjusted their lives to the specific ingredients of discipleship or dangerous followship as we are calling it: Self-denial, cross-bearing and followship. They are content to know that they are safe and secure in the arms of Christ, but the thought of saying “no” to themselves and to their rights is unpleasant to them.

1. **Disciples Chosen** – Twelve men were selected to comprise the circle of Jesus’ most intimate followers. These were not chosen carelessly or at random, but were called as He evaluated each individually. Jesus approached the man personally, and foremost in His thinking was the inner character of the would-be disciple. Education, family background, and career orientation were not important to the Savior. Instead, He focused His attention on their quality of life, observing their potential for growth.

What does that mean for us?

- (1) **Followship is intimate - Jesus know us**
- (2) **Followship is personal - Jesus deals with us personally**
- (3) **Followship is non-discriminatory – Jesus isn’t interested in what sex you are, the color of your skin is, your education level, your economic level or any other earthly standard of measure**

2. **Disciples Cultivated** – A general overview of the Gospels reveals Jesus’ manner of working with the twelve. Jesus concentrated on the few, not the masses. He did not hurry in that selection (nor later development) and He did not use spectacular motivational gimmicks to attract crowds or encourage a following. He did not suggest that they become involved in an overt, dynamic public ministry. He drew them about Himself to spend time with them.

What does that mean for us?

- (1) **Genuine fellowship means Jesus is interested in you and where you are in your walk with Him** - He concentrated on a few, not on the masses.
- (2) **Genuine fellowship means Jesus is patiently working on you. His grace is not soon exhausted** - He did not hurry in that selection (nor later development).
- (3) **Genuine fellowship means Jesus is not interested in great show, much fanfare, flash and flare, but depth of commitment** - He did not use spectacular motivational gimmicks to attract a crowd or encourage a following.
- (4) **Genuine fellowship means Jesus is desiring to draw you to Himself and spend time with you** - He did not suggest that they become involved in an overt, dynamic public ministry. He drew them about Himself to spend time with them

Why would all of this be so dangerous? *It will change who we are really!*

IV. FOLLOWSHIP APPLIED

What we have considered so far relates, for the most part, to His initial twelve. Now let’s talk about YOU. Here are 6 questions you must ask yourself:

6 Questions for Dangerous Fellowship:

1. **Are you a Christian?**
2. **Where are you in that “circle” we looked at earlier?**
3. **Do you really want to be a disciple?**
4. **Are you genuinely willing to say “no” to yourself and obediently do His will rather than please yourself?**
5. **If this means changing habits, or you whole life course, are you willing to do so?**

**If the answer to any of the above is “no,” you may belong in the outer circle, but you’re not a disciple.*

6. **Is there something that is keeping you from becoming Christ’s disciple right now?**