

THE ANATOMY OF A CHRISTIAN STEWARD

XI. Feet That Follow

Matthew 4:19 and Matthew 16:24-26

On a tombstone some years ago the following was written,
Remember man, who passes by,
As you are now, so once was I.
As I am now, so must you be.
Prepare yourself to follow me.

Beneath the epitaph, some one scribbled:
To follow you, I'm not content,
Until I learn which way you went.

We smile at the humor in this. The truth, however, is we need to know who we are following and where he is leading us.

Jesus said, "Follow me!" (Matthew 4:19) In two words He gave a simple description of the Christian life and an explanation of what it involves. Note how Jesus enlarged on this as He said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matthew 16: 24)

First, He says we must "deny self." This is no trivial "self denial" as we usually think of it. It is to say "no" to self, and "yes" to God as sovereign of one's life. It is to take self off the throne and make Christ Lord of all of your life. It is the first step as a steward. The Macedonians, "first gave themselves to God."

Next Jesus says one must "take up His cross" to "follow" Him. This is to completely identify our self with Christ and His life. Our "cross is to live a life of sacrifice. As a steward we will not simply say, "I give myself"; we take action, "take up the cross"; "Follow Him"; "be about His business."

With these two issues settled we are ready to "follow" Christ. To follow Christ is to do what Jesus would do.

1. We must Witness!

He said, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." (Matthew 4:19ff) He said, "Let your light so shine before men that they see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

2. We must love!

We who follow must love as He loved. Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another as I have loved you." This is evidence to the world of our salvation for He said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples." (John 13:34-35)

Paul said that we prove our love for Him by our giving. (II Corinthians 8:8, 24; 9:13) Can we truly say we love Christ and not give offerings to meet the needs of His church? Can we claim to love the one who gave Himself in love for us, and not give as He gave?

3. We must surrender unconditionally!

Someone has said that there are only three responses to unconditional surrender to Christ.

- 1.) No, I'll not put you first in my life (Denial)
- 2.) Maybe, I'll put you first if ... (Conditional)
- 3.) Yes, I'll put you first regardless. (Unconditional)

What is your response?

3. We must sacrifice!

His entire life was one of giving and sacrifice! Jesus said, "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45) Ultimately He made the supreme sacrifice of His life on the cross.

Jesus said if we would follow Him we must deny self and take up our cross. We cannot hold onto the cross and the world's goods at the same time.

We who "follow" Him must give and sacrifice our time, our talents, and our treasure. Jesus said, "Freely you have received, freely give." (Matthew 10:8)

In a few days we'll have the privilege of making a sacrificial commitment through our **STEWARDSHIP ENRICHMENT** program. Let's remember the words of the one we follow – "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

*Lord, help me to walk in the path of sacrifice and service.
Enable me to bring praise to Your name.*