

# F.O.L.L.O.W.E.R.S.

## VS

# Fans

(Obey)  
LIFE LESSON

The characteristic we're focusing on today is obedience to Jesus. And when it came to obedience, Jesus didn't mess around. For example, look at what Jesus said to His disciples about our obedience to Him, and what it personally means to both Him and the Father...

📖 **John 14:15, 21, 23-24 (NLT)** *"If you love me, obey my commandments. Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them. All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them. Anyone who doesn't love me will not obey me. And remember, my words are not my own. What I am telling you is from the Father who sent me."*

➔ **In your own words, describe what it makes you feel when your child, pet, or whatever, is obedient to you? Or how does it make you feel when you're disobeyed?**

Anyone who has been responsible for a child or for an animal of some sort, will always agree, that the more obedient that child or animal is, the more we feel like they love us or are committed to us. And Jesus is no different. And something Jesus wants us to obey is His teachings. For instance, last week saw how Jesus invited a large crowd to become followers, and then explained a key difference between fans and followers. Here again is what He said...


📖 **Matthew 7:24-27 (NLT)** *"Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won't collapse because it is built on bedrock. But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn't obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash."*

➔ **What is a modern day example of something that you've seen done foolishly by someone, or by you.**

➔ **What is a modern day example of something that you've seen done wisely by someone, or by you?**


According to Jesus, maybe the wisest or smartest thing we can ever do is commit to being followers, or commit to becoming proficient at obeying His teachings or

commands. And for those of us who have studied the New Testament, we know Jesus taught on a lot of things. For instance, in Matthew chapter five, Jesus famously teaches on subjects like evangelism, anger, adultery, revenge, and of course, love. For instance, here's a part of what Jesus taught...

 **Matthew 5:43-48 (NLT)** *"You have heard the law that says, 'Love your neighbor' and hate your enemy. But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect."*

➔ **What do we need to be doing if we're going to be considered a true child of GOD?**

Based on what Jesus stated in all of these passages, it's safe to say that our obedience to His teachings to love others, is what separates us as true followers from those who are just fans. And more importantly, it's our wisdom that leads us or propels us to be obedient to Jesus' teachings. So when it comes right down to it, wisdom is what we need to be obedient to Jesus' teachings. In fact, wisdom is the biggest difference between those who act like true followers of Jesus, and those who still act like fans. For example, when a person has been offended by someone they have a significant relationship with, like that of a spouse, or sibling, or whatever, there's a massive difference between what followers should do, and what most fans do. For instance, as followers, Reconciliation and forgiveness should always be the goal, or what **GOD** wants us to work on the most. One example of this teaching, was when Peter came to Jesus asking how many times we should forgive someone who has sinned against us. Here's what Jesus told him...

 **Matthew 18:21-35 (NLT)** *Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?" "No, not seven times," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven! "Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. He couldn't pay, so his master ordered that he be sold—along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned—to pay the debt. But the man fell down before his master and begged him, 'Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.' Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt. But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment. His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it,' he pleaded. But his creditor wouldn't wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full. When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him everything that had happened. Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, 'You evil*

*servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?' Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt. That's what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart."*

➔ **What's the point that you take away from this story? Or how would you explain it to others?**

Forgiving someone who has repeatedly offended us is incredibly hard, and anyone who has gone through something like this will tell you it takes great amounts of wisdom. But when we're just a fan of Jesus, reconciliation and forgiveness will rarely be our goal, and godly wisdom will rarely be something we seek after. However, as we grow in our faith and become more focused on being disciplined in obedience, we will begin to look to others for wisdom, as well as **GOD**. And like James said, **GOD** will be faithful to provide it...

📖 **James 1:5 (ESV)** *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.*

➔ **What are some examples of godly wisdom that GOD (or others) has provided to you?**

Our obedience to Jesus is a display of our wisdom and love for Him. And, our wisdom is the biggest difference between our actions as true followers, and the actions of those who are just fans. And something that Jesus wants us to know and obey is His teachings on things like evangelism, anger, adultery, revenge, and of course, love. Which means we should all be focused on reconciliation and forgiveness towards those who have hurt us. And to help us with that this week, let's all take the time to meditate and ruminate on what Paul said to Titus...

## **MEDITATION PASSAGE FOR THE WEEK**

*Once we, too, were foolish and disobedient. We were misled and became slaves to many lusts and pleasures. Our lives were full of evil and envy, and we hated each other. But—When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior. Because of his grace he made us right in his sight and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying, and I want you to insist on these teachings so that all who trust in God will devote themselves to doing good. These teachings are good and beneficial for everyone.*

**Titus 3:3-8 (NLT)**

# F.O.L.L.O.W.E.R.S vs FANS

**LESSON GOAL:** Talk to kids about why our obedience to all of Jesus' commands (even the hard ones) matters to Jesus

## **MEMORY VERSE:**

Anyone who has my commands and obeys them loves me. My Father will love the one who loves me. I too will love them. And I will show myself to them. |

**JOHN 14:21 NIRV**

## **OBEDIENCE MAKES US DIFFERENT**

Last week, we talked about how our faith in Jesus changes our hearts and makes us want to be his follower. And being a follower of Jesus means obeying his commands. Obeying Jesus shows the people around us that we're different - we love more, forgive more, show more generosity, patience and wisdom. We do all of this because Jesus shows us all of this and more and when we do these, we're showing how much we love him back. We also talked last week about Jesus wants us to "love our neighbor as ourself"; one big way we do that is showing grace and forgiveness to others...

"Peter came to Jesus. He asked, "Lord, how many times should I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but 77 times." | **MATTHEW 18:21-22 NIRV**

It's not easy to forgive others, especially when they don't apologize or confess what they've done, but loving others like Jesus means forgiving others like Jesus has forgiven us. We all are going to mess up sometimes,

and we're not always going to be quick to confess and ask for forgiveness. In fact, sometimes we're going to deny doing anything wrong. But because we love and follow Jesus, he still forgives us. He wants us to "share" that forgiveness with others because it helps shine His light into those situations and maybe even help someone else learn to love and follow Jesus!

## **MORE THAN FORGIVENESS?**

So, we forgive the people who hurt us...that's enough, right? We just move on? Not quite. Jesus actually asks even *more* of us when it comes to loving others. He wants us to love our **enemies**. This might be the hardest thing he asks of us. We're not just told to forgive, but also to love and pray for our enemies. Here's what he tells us in Matthew chapter 5:

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor. (*Leviticus 19:18*) Hate your enemy.' But here is what I tell you. Love your enemies. Pray for those who hurt you. Then you will be children of your Father who is in heaven. He causes his sun to shine on evil people and good people. He sends rain on those who do right and those who don't. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Even the tax collectors do that. If you greet only your own people, what more are you doing than others? Even people who are ungodly do that. So be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. | **MATTHEW 5:43-48 NIRV**

You might be thinking, "that's not fair" or "that's too much" but when we remember how much Jesus has forgiven us, and will continue to forgive throughout our lives, it doesn't seem quite as impossible. I mean, what someone thought of you as their enemy because of a mistake you made that really hurt them? Wouldn't you want them to forgive you? Wouldn't you want to know that they would still love and pray for you? Me too!

And our obedience matters to Jesus, so it's worth it for us to, well, "suck it up," and work hard at forgiving and loving those who hurt us.

Anyone who has my commands and obeys them loves me. My Father will love the one who loves me. I too will love them. And I will show myself to them."  
Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them. We will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. The words you hear me say are not my own. They belong to the Father who sent me. | **JOHN 14:21, 23-24 NIRV**

### **DISCUSSION | REVIEW:**

- Read the Parable "The Servant Who Had No Mercy" (Matthew 18:21-35) in a kid-friendly Bible (or recap from the grown-up Life Lesson).
  - Why do you think the King punished the man that he had forgiven before?
  - How can you show the same kind of mercy as the king to a sibling or friend who has done something against you?
    - Should it matter whether they did it on purpose or accidentally?
    - Should it matter whether they apologize?
- How would you explain to a friend why we should obey Jesus' commands?
- What is one thing you learned today that you can share with a friend?