

SEVEN ARROWS



What does this passage say?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What does this passage tell us about man?



What does this passage demand of me?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



What does this passage prompt me to pray to God?

MATTHEW 4:12-22



Little is known about Jesus' childhood. The stories of the Bible fast-forward to the time when He began His ministry around the age of thirty. His message was simple-the kingdom God promised is here, now turn from your sin and follow Me. Jesus pursued an assortment of men and invited them to follow Him in a special way. This group, known as the disciples, journeyed with Jesus over the next three years. They watched as Jesus preached about His kingdom and demonstrated His great power. They even had the privilege of representing Jesus by doing powerful acts as well. The first step for the disciples was a simple act of faith. God called them, and they responded by willingly leaving behind their old lives to follow Jesus. God continues to call men and women to give up their comfort, power, money, position, or anything else that might hinder them from wholeheartedly following after Him.

MARK 3:13-19















Mark listed the names of some of Jesus' earliest followers. Throughout God's story, there have always been an assortment of people He's chosen to be a part of His mission, and the disciples were no different. They weren't selected based on the fact that they were somehow superior or more holy than others. God simply called them as an act of grace. Mark mentioned two unique benefits these men experienced. First, they were called to be with God. Of all the people on the planet, these men got to walk and talk with the Son of God. They had a front row seat to the life and ministry the One who is the exact imprint of God's image. Second, they were sent to do the works of God. By virtue of the fact that they were with Jesus and filled with His power, they were sent to work on His behalf, and they represented God through their words and actions. These two things-being with God and doing what God desires-go hand and hand. The more we live in intimacy with God, the better we are able to represent Him through our lives.

MATTHEW 16:24-28















The disciples received some challenging words from Jesus as they followed Him. He made it clear that He is to be the most important part of people's lives. Nothing, not even burying a dead relative, is to be more important than Jesus. Everything else pales in comparison to loving Jesus and doing what He says. This is not simply true for the disciples, it's also true for anyone who wants to follow Jesus, including you and me. Jesus said that all those who want to follow Him must die to their selfish desires in order to follow Him. A cross is an appropriate picture for the life of those who love Jesus. Not only did Jesus die on the cross, but all those who follow Jesus in faith must also die to themselves in order to live the life God desires.

ROMANS 1:1-7



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Jesus didn't only call the twelve disciples to follow Him, there were hundreds of other followers with Him during His ministry. This included many of those He healed, a host of women, and a few prominent apostles. And a list of those who followed Jesus does not stop there. Paul wrote that the church was filled with those who followed Jesus. They began their journey of faith in much the same way as the first disciple-called by God. Those who live after Jesus' earthly ministry aren't called in exactly the same way-we don't see Jesus or hear His voice the way the first disciples did. Yet God still speaks to us through His Word and calls us to belong to Him. Those who respond to this call by faith are saved. Paul went further to say he was called in a unique way to take the message of the gospel to those who hadn't yet heard. Like Paul, Christians are called to faith in Jesus that we would share the good news of His work to a lost world.