

CHAPTER 05 SUMMARY: “FOLLOW JESUS”

Seek First: How the Kingdom of God Changes Everything, by Jeremy Treat

- “Many forget that the call to follow Jesus comes within the context of the kingdom of God. This is evident in Mark’s Gospel where Jesus’s initial proclamation—‘The kingdom of God is at hand’ (1:15)—is immediately accompanied with an invitation: ‘follow me’ (1:17). To heed the call of Christ is to follow him as king and to live in light of his kingdom” (p. 86).

THE CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

- “In the New Testament, followers of Jesus are called ‘Christians’ three times, ‘believers’ fifteen times, and ‘disciples’ two hundred thirty-five times. Since the call of Christ is to be a disciples, let’s make sure we understand what it means.... At its most basic level, a disciples follows someone in order to be with them, learn from them and become like them” (pp. 86-87).

1. Be with Jesus

- “The greatest thing about following Jesus is...Jesus! While there are many benefits that come from Christ, nothing compares with knowing Christ” (p. 87).
- “To follow Jesus means to give him the lead. He sets the agenda. He’s in control. He gets the final say. Christ is king, and to accept the kingship of Christ requires a simultaneous dethroning of self. To say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ is also to say, ‘I am not Lord.’ To say, ‘his way’ means ‘not mine’” (p. 88).

2. Learn from Jesus

- “Learning from Jesus is not about learning information in order to pass a test; it’s about learning to love” (p. 88).
- “To be a disciple is to learn constantly from Jesus. We learn from Christ through the Scriptures about who God is, how to grow in character, how to apply our faith to our work, and how to seek justice in a world of injustice. Jesus is our teacher, and he teaches us through his Word by the Spirit in the context of community” (p. 89).

3. Become like Jesus

- “If we are with Jesus and learning from Jesus, we’ll become like him. To be a disciple of Jesus means to become more like Jesus every day and in every way” (p. 89).

THE CENTRALITY OF THE GOSPEL

- “You never graduate from the gospel. The good news of Jesus is what saves *and* sustains. The gospel is an endless well of power that we are to draw from for the rest of our lives” (p. 90).
- Tim Keller: “We never ‘get beyond the gospel’ in our Christian life to something more ‘advanced.’ ...The gospel is not just the A-B-C’s but the A to Z of Christianity. The gospel is not just the minimum required doctrine necessary to enter the kingdom, but the way we make progress in the kingdom” (p. 90).
- “Because of the gospel, we’re motivated not by guilt but by gratitude. When I fix my eyes on Jesus and remember what he has done for me, I rejoice of his perfect life credited to me, his sacrificial death that removes my guilt and shame, and his victorious resurrection that gives me the power to overcome sin. As

my gratitude for the gospel grows, I can walk in a manner worthy of my calling. I don't need to be enslaved to sin because I've been set free. I can say no to weaker desires because I'm saying yes to a greater desire. This doesn't rule out the need to strive for holiness; it just means that we are to strive with a grace-driven effort (Phil. 2:12-13). We do not work *for* grace but *from* grace" (p. 92).

- "The good news of Jesus is not only the entry point in the kingdom of God; it is the foundation for a lifetime of following the king" (p. 93).

THE HEART OF CHANGE

- "The gospel is the power for transformation. But unless the gospel grips your heart, you'll settle for the typical way that many Christians seek change: behavior modification.... The behavior-modification approach focuses on external obedience apart from heart transformation. The method is simple: stop doing bad, start doing good—all driven by trying harder. Inevitably this ends up in the spin cycle of failure, guilt, trying harder, and then more failure and deeper guilt, until we reach despair or settle for duplicity" (p. 93).
- "God's way of change is not behavior modification; it is inside out transformation.... When the good news of Jesus penetrates our hearts, it transforms us from the inside out. The truths of the gospel rewritten and recalibrate us, forming new habits, rhythms, and patterns. We want differently and think differently, so we begin to act differently.... Remember, the heart, in the biblical sense, is the steering wheel for all of your life. As the good news of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection changes your heart, your life is transformed as an overflow of what you believe and desire" (pp. 93-94).

THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

- "What God commands in obedience, he provides for with his power. After Jesus rose from the grave, he ascended into heaven to the right hand of the Father and sent the Holy Spirit to empower his disciples for the life and mission he called them to" (p. 95).
- "...it's the Holy Spirit who applies the gospel to our hearts and produces fruit in our lives" (p. 95).

THE RHYTHMS OF GRACE

- "The disciplines and practices of the Christian life are less like boxes to be checked and more like a river that slowly carves a path in your soul. These channels in our heart guide the flow of our loves and our desires, producing contentment and gratitude for all that God has done for us in Christ. Spiritual discipline is not only about resisting temptation but also about reordering our joys" (p. 99).

SOMETHING BETTER THAN SELF-HELP

- "This is a key first step: admitting you need someone on the outside who can step in and bring real transformation. Jesus is the one you need. Don't try to reinvent yourself. Instead, Jesus calls you to die to yourself, to agree with the truth that you do not have spiritual life in yourself and need something radical to save you. You need spiritual resurrection. You need Christ the king to make you a whole new creation (P. 100).