

not a fan.

completely. committed. **follower.**

Twenty times in the New Testament, Jesus issued a compelling and challenging invitation to follow him. He's not interested in mere fans. He doesn't want enthusiastic admirers. He wants completely committed followers.

Based on the engaging approach of Kyle Idleman this cinematic 6 week small group study examines what it means to deny one's self and truly follow Jesus.

Define your relationship with Jesus: Enthusiastic Admirer or Completely Committed Follower?

Follow the journey of Eric Nelson, a man leading a compartmentalised triple life as a pleasure-seeking rebel, a cutthroat corporate executive, and a nominal Christian. When confronted with a near death experience, Eric embarks on a spiritual journey that transforms his commitment to Jesus and tests the faith of his friends and family.

The full playlist can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL1B7A6B4C4BA89F88>

Week One: FAN OR FOLLOWER?

Open in Prayer

Introductions:

If this is a new group or an existing group with new member (s) be sure to allow some time for everyone to introduce themselves.

Opening Questions:

- What do you hope to get out of this study?
- What does the phrase "not a fan" mean to you?
- What does God want from you?

Watch Episode One: Fan or Follower?

<https://youtu.be/sxkohge4TBQ?list=PL1B7A6B4C4BA89F88>

Story Content:

Just curious, how do you feel after watching this first episode?

This is a pretty tough first lesson in the series. No paddy-caking around. So we won't go light in our discussion either. Often times in Bible studies we ask theoretical questions, like "what do you think v.3 means?" Or, "what is the most important thing a person should do?" There will be some hypothetical questions like that. But since fans typically like the theoretical questions because they keep the issues (and Jesus) at a comfortable distance, we will also ask questions of the personal, challenging kind. Like, "what is this verse saying about your life?" or "What is the most important thing for you to do next?" These are questions followers love, because answering helps them become better followers, and that is what true follower's desire.

But let me add, no one has to answer any question. We don't want to force anything on anyone. Following Jesus is voluntary, so surely responding to the question must be as well.

One other thing: this is a challenging study, but we also don't want this to be a place where we end up judging who is a follower and who is not.

The quickest way to shut down the authenticity in this group is for us to start judging each other's lives.

This study is not about making others to be better followers but about each of us individually challenging ourselves. So let's avoid any hint of judgment. Agreed? OK, good. Now before we ask some pointed questions, let's explore the story we've just watched.

Kyle is at a football game having a good time when he receives news of a friend's heart attack. At the hospital, he and the family receive word from the doctor that Eric Nelson has suffered irreversible brain damage. Everyone is shaken. If you have been in a situation like that, what was it like for everything to be normal one moment, then drastically different the next?

Kyle visits the grieving family and friends: Eric's wife Anna; and briefly, Eric's daughter Natalie and son Tony; his father Bill, and couple of Eric's friends, Darren and Gary. How do you see the various characters reacting to death? How are these reactions like or different from what you have observed in similar situations?

Going Deeper:

Let's turn to Luke 9:18-25. (Would someone be willing to read?)

Oftentimes in these studies, the leaders guide asks the questions, but what questions come to your mind about this passage?

Q: What stands out to you from this section of Scripture? Notice the progression in the passage:

First, in vv. 18-21, Jesus is recognized as the Christ or Messiah of God. In another Gospel, Peter's confession includes the title, "Son of God."

Next, in v.22, Jesus reveals that even though He is the Christ, or actually because He is the Christ, He will suffer, die, and then rise again. If He is the anointed of God, why must He die?

Finally, in vv.23-25, He tells his followers that they must die as well, die to themselves. But if they do, they too will be raised, their lives will be saved. Jesus adds, "If anyone tries to save his life, he will lose it." Why is this so? How does trying to save one's life lead to losing one's life?

Personal Challenge:

Q: When have you been most alive? Can you describe it?

Q: Were you dead to yourself at the time or alive to yourself?

Think of a time when you were alive, and it was all about you- basically satisfying your own desires. (Give them some time to come up with one) And a time when you were alive and it wasn't about you, but about others. (Again give them a moment to come up with one)

Q: Compare or contrast the two - how are they alike? How are they different? Which do you prefer?

Now some tougher questions. So, "Define the relationship."

Q: How would you define what happens between you and Jesus? Q: What terms would you use? Fan, or follower, something else? Q: How do you feel about your answer?

To define the relationship implies you have a real relationship with Jesus. How does a person have a relationship with Jesus, someone he can't see or touch? What is that like? How does it work for you?

Q: What has following Jesus cost you?

Do you feel like Jesus has tested your relationship with him? If so, how? In what area(s)? If he were to test your relationship to Him these days, what might be a likely area? Something at work, home, in relationships, with money, What? Q: Are there any areas of your life that are off-limits to Jesus?

If so, why? What is your reason for keeping him out? What has been the effect of keeping him out?

Q: If you suddenly died, and family and friends were asked for one thing about you, what do you believe they would say?

How do you feel about that? When you do actually die (at some, hopefully distant, point) what would you like people to say then?

What kind of life, what kind of changes or decisions, would it take in your life for people to actually make those kinds of comments about you at the time of your death?

That was a heavy lesson and some tough questions. Thanks for hanging in there.

Prayer to Close:

What do you really hope for this group/study?