

Love Does, Session 5: FOLLOW ME

Jesus says let's go and do stuff and we'll find out who I am and who you are along the way.

Further explore the challenge of Love Does by engaging in any or all of the following activities between sessions. This part of Love Does is not about following rules or doing your homework. The following activities are designed to give you the opportunity to jump into the risk of God's kingdom with both feet.

DO: PULL OFF YOUR CAPER

The “Do” challenge for this week is to follow up on the “next step” you envisioned with your group during Session 5. This is part of the grand adventure we are invited into when we follow Jesus. Let's not pay our discipleship lip service only. Get out there this week and take that next step.

If you already have taken that next step, send some of your group members or group facilitators an email to let them know how it went. Then, start scheming for where God might be leading you to go next!

REFLECT: HEAR AND DO

Read this concluding section of the Sermon on the Mount from Matthew 7:24-27(NRSV):

24 *“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. **25** The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. **26** And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. **27** The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!”*

As we have explored in this study, Jesus' "kingdom manifesto," the Sermon on the Mount, has a flow. It's not a collection of disconnected proverbs but a train that's headed somewhere. That destination is found in the passage you just read.

Jesus has been inviting His hearers to fully entrust themselves to God and His way of living. The kind of life Jesus describes is how humans were created to live and where they will find life, hope, justice, and peace. However, He warns that this way of life is not always easy.

Sometimes we get the impression (or are explicitly taught) that if we just keep close enough to Jesus on the narrow path, everything will work out okay: we'll be immune from suffering and get a pass on tragedy. Sadly, nothing could be further from the truth. Storms, as Jesus points out, will come. They are unavoidable. They are the stuff of life. Everyone will encounter them. The difference is where you "build your house."

But Jesus says that if we put His teachings into practice (in other words, become His followers), we will be like a house built on the rock. When life's storms batter us, we'll have the inner strength to stand firm against the wind and the rain. And when the sun comes out again, we'll still be standing--because we trust the Son. Do you believe it?

Reflection Questions:

- When you consider Jesus' call to follow Him, do you think about the storms?
- Do you think there are any storms that are more than you and God could handle?
- What do you think a "house built on sand" looks like? Why doesn't it hold up in a storm?

READ: “JUST SAY YES”

Read Chapter 30, “Palms Up,” in the *Love Does* book.

Reflection Questions:

- Do you tend to have a hot or cool temper?
- Bob says, “It was Jesus who taught me there was nothing I could really lose if I had Him” (p.205). How does this quote resonate with you? Do you find it to be true in your life?
- Think about a situation in your life about which you are tempted to feel defensive or lose your cool. Sit in a chair, put your palms up, and recall that very situation. Use the posture of sitting with your palms up as a prayer: a prayer that God will make you strong enough to not be afraid of being vulnerable, a prayer that you will follow Jesus in keeping your palms up. Write about how this prayer experience impacted you.