

**Not a Fan: Fan or Follower?**  
**September 17, 2017**  
**Lynn Haven UMC**

**Introduction**

Then [Jesus] said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it." (Luke 9:23-24 NLT)

Have you ever thought about what it means to *follow* Jesus? Lots of people say they are following Him, but are they really? If Jesus set up a twitter account, He would undoubtedly acquire millions of "followers". They'd all love, like, virtually high five, etc. all of His inspirational tweets and messages. That's all well and good, but what He really wants to know is how many of those people would genuinely answer His call to love and serve others in His name? Our new sermon series, "Not a Fan", (based on the book of the same name by Kyle Idleman) will take us deeper into what it means to be more than just a fan of Jesus Christ. There are choices, commitments and courses of action we must take if we want to truly follow Him. This week we will talk about what being a real follower means.

**Digging Deeper**

**Being a follower of Jesus involves a...**

**CHOICE**

- It's a simple choice: Believe. Once we acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God, died for our sins and rose again on the third day, well by George, we've gotten it! Praise the Lord, we believe. But wait, there's more. Read Matthew 7:21-23 (NLT). The biggest question we should all be asking ourselves is, "Will God be able to say He knows me on judgement day?" Do the choices you make shout out your fandom or faith? Can you think of a time you resisted the call of God?
- In your opinion, what does the term "comfortable Christianity" mean? Have you ever considered the idea that true Christianity isn't supposed to feel comfortable?

**COMMITMENT**

- Fans look to Jesus for what they can get out of the relationship (i.e. all the benefits). Followers are well aware of what they're going to have to give up for Christ (i.e. the cost). We all know that if we want rock hard abs, we can't eat a large, cheesy pizza every day (deep sigh). In the same way, we can't just go to church most Sundays, read the Bible once in a while, do only what we feel like doing and expect to have a rock hard faith. It takes a daily commitment to evolve into the person He is calling us to be. And just as it is true of building rock hard abs, that transformation won't happen overnight. Are you aware of any habits or hang ups that might be preventing you from living in a committed relationship with Jesus Christ? Are you willing to make the sacrifices required to become more of a follower and less of a fan? What do you consider some of the risks to be in doing so?

**COURSE of action.**

- James 1:22 (NLT) says, “Don’t just listen to God’s Word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves” (NLT). God calls us to act on our beliefs. This requires our full obedience to His Word. Suppose you were standing before God and He asked, “Why should I let you into heaven?” What would you say? What part of your life are you not being obedient in?

**Conclusion**

Life is comprised of a series of choices that might lead us to make and break commitments and decide to travel along various paths. When we become followers of Jesus, we make a commitment to walk along His path, regardless of how rocky it is or how lonely it may sometimes feel. As we discussed a few months ago, early Christians were called “Followers of the Way”. What we believe is what helps to make us strong. What we choose to do with that God given strength determines our status as Followers of the Way.

Let’s pray that God will work so powerfully in us and among us that we will refuse to be a stadium of fans of Jesus who gather every week and instead, fulfill our destiny by being a sanctuary filled with authentic followers of Christ.