



FOLLOWER

LIVING AN AUTHENTIC FAITH

★ ★ ★ This Book Belongs To

★ ★ ★ Date



Follower: Living An Authentic Faith

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STARTING TO FOLLOW

What does it mean to follow? Over the course of the next few days, you'll learn the answer to this question, and how this answer could dramatically impact your life. But your time will only be meaningful if you want it to be. Here's what we mean . . .

HAVE YOU PREPARED YOUR HEART?

Ask yourself: Am I open to learn more about what a real follower looks like? Am I willing to learn? If you can't answer "yes" to these questions, your time spent learning about following might not be as impactful as it could be. If you need to, take a moment and silently talk to God in prayer. Ask Him to give you a heart that is open to His leading.

THIS BOOK WILL GUIDE YOUR JOURNEY

This book is the key to discovering what being a follower is really all about. It will help guide your experiences. Hold on to it. Write your name and the date in the front. If this journey turns out to be as meaningful as it could be, you'll want to look back and remember this time in your life.

MAKE AN IMPACT. BE IMPACTED.

As you start to discover more about living an authentic faith, keep your heart open for those moments where God reveals things to you. Also, don't miss the chance you have to impact your friends, and be impacted by them. God speaks through you and them, you know.

YOU'LL SOON LEARN EXACTLY WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A REAL CHRIST-FOLLOWER. ARE YOU READY?



Follower Session 1 Intro

What do you think when you hear the word “authentic”? If you think of words like *real*, *true*, or *original*, you’re headed in the right direction.

The word “authentic” has become something of a buzzword in our culture. But it’s a buzzword for a reason.

YOU SEE WE VALUE AUTHENTICITY.

We want the people we do life with to be *authentic*.

We want the brands and movements we support to be *authentic*.

We expect *authenticity* out of those who lead us.

We want the things that matter to us to be *real*. To be *true*. We want the experiences and encounters we have to be what they are supposed to be.

But what about when it comes to our faith? What then? Do we ask the same questions? Do we truly care what a real or true pursuit of our faith looks like?

What if we were willing to ask this same question about our relationship with God? What does an authentic relationship with Christ look like? How do we pursue a faith that’s real?

Over the next few sessions, you’ll have the opportunity to answer these questions. And what you discover might change the way you look at following Christ.

ARE YOU READY?

LARGE GROUP NOTES

SESSION 1

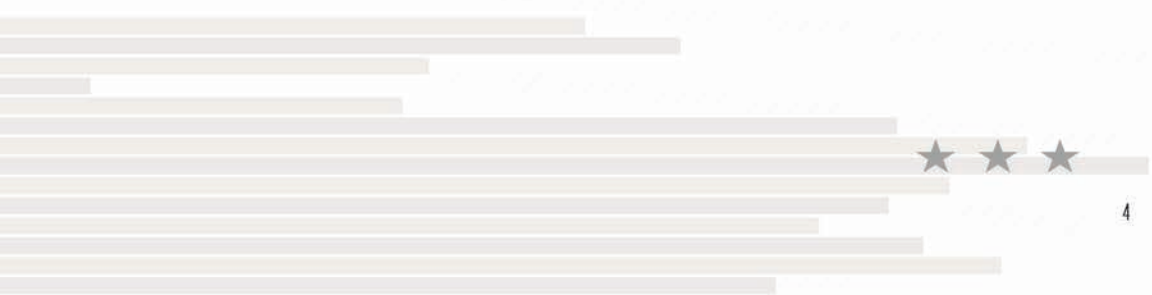
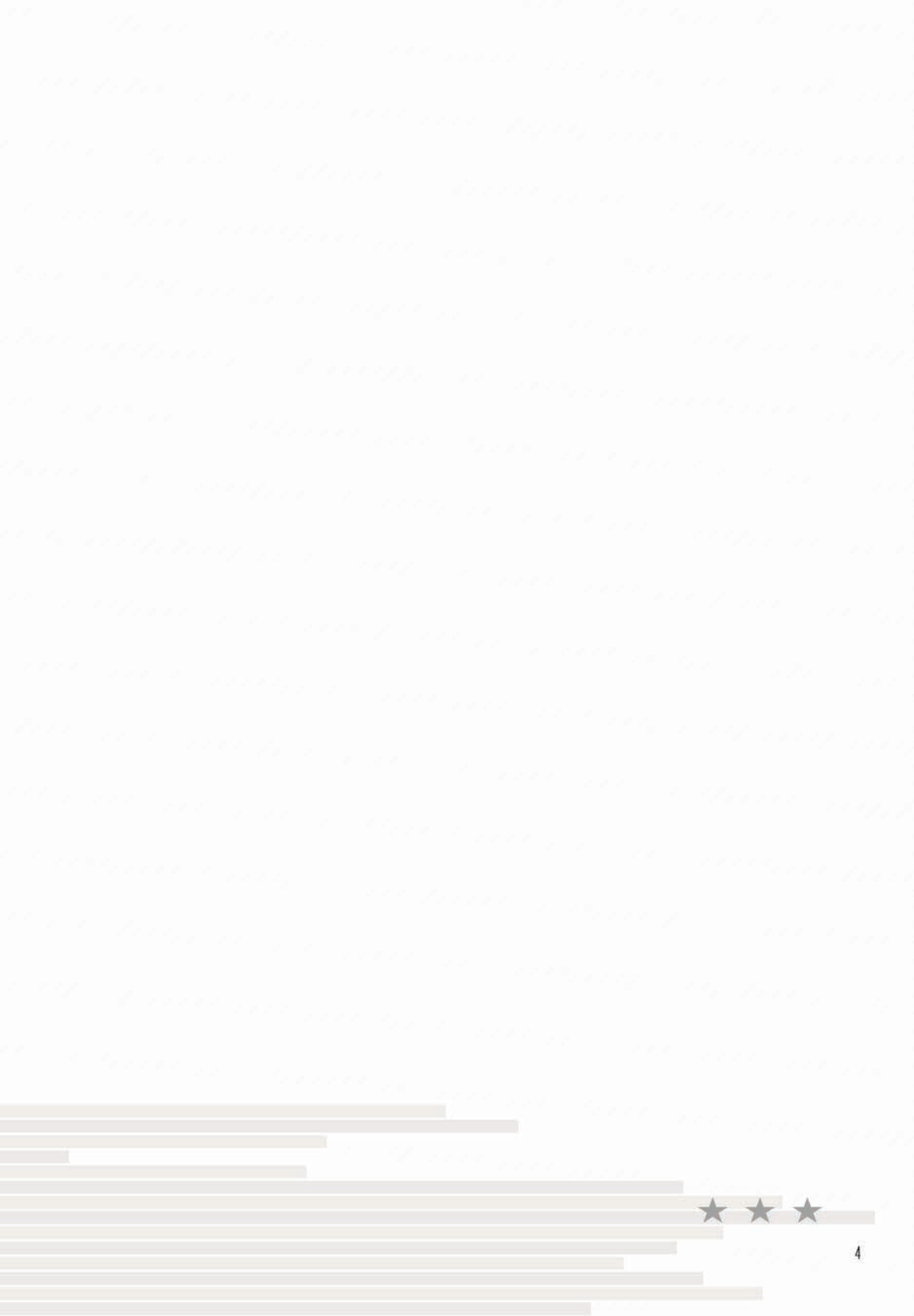
These two pages are designed for you to take notes on during Large Group Sessions. The stuff you're learning will really build on itself over the next few sessions. So even if you're not much of a note taker, you might want to at least jot down what you think is important.

Try writing down:

- Any specific teaching points
- Verse references for Scripture passages
- Quotes that make you think
- Anything you have a question about

The *Follower Student Book* comes with space to take notes for each Large Group Session.

These pages are intentionally left blank.



SMALL GROUP

SESSION 1 INTRO

Think about the last off-brand soda you drank. You know, one of the many knock-off drinks you buy at the big supermarkets. They taste pretty close to the “real thing.” But not close enough. There’s still a pretty big difference between the poser and the authentic soda.

Have you ever used a knock-off mp3 player? They may look like an iPod, but all it takes is a few minutes of trying to load songs to realize that looks can be deceiving.

HERE’S THE DEAL: IMPOSTER SODAS OR ELECTRONICS CAN COME CLOSE TO THE REAL BRANDS THEY TRY TO EMULATE. REALLY CLOSE. BUT EVEN IF THE DIFFERENCE IS RAZOR SLIM, IT CHANGES EVERYTHING.

The Bible paints a clear picture of what it means to be a real follower of Christ.

The problem, however, is that many people’s faith-lives don’t look like the picture the Bible paints. They aren’t living an authentic faith. Like the knock-off soda brand, they’re close. But being close only highlights just how badly they’ve missed.

The purpose of the next few sessions is to help you define what this authentic faith looks like. And to challenge you to embrace it.

In this first session, you’re going to learn that the definition of an authentic faith starts with a two word command.

The command?

“FOLLOW ME...”

Session 1 Getting Started

What's wrong with faking it? Follow your leader's instructions to work through this activity as a group.

ALL THE LIP-SYNC LADIES

In January of 2013, President Obama was inaugurated for his second term as President of the United States. As part of the traditionally elaborate inauguration ceremony, Beyonce sang the National Anthem to rave reviews. Or did she? Almost immediately, people began accusing her of lip-syncing the anthem to pre-recorded music, a fact that she admitted several weeks later. Worried that she was unprepared after missing a practice with the Marine Corps Band, who was to accompany her on the song, Beyonce decided to go with a pre-recorded track of her singing because, in her words, she is "a perfectionist."

LEAST VALUABLE PLAYER

Ryan Braun plays left field for the Milwaukee Brewers. In 2011 he won the National League Most Valuable Player award, confirming what most already knew: he was one of the best players in baseball. The problem is what happened next. In October 2011, Braun tested positive for performance enhancing drugs. He successfully won his appeal, thanks to a lawyer-driven campaign aimed at blaming the positive test on the man who tested him. Braun claimed he was innocent and many believed him. But in 2013, he was suspended again for 50 games for another accusation of using drugs.

NOTHING LIKE THE REAL THING

From models to actors, celebrities who appear in advertising routinely have their images digitally enhanced to appear flawless. Any imperfections in their skin are smoothed over using Photoshop and other software. Using post-production software, these images of their bodies are trimmed and clipped to make them slimmer. It doesn't take long to find a ton of before and after images online. The results are incredible. Stars go from looking like normal people to almost robot-looking images of themselves. Many stars such as Keira Knightley and Jennifer Lawrence have spoken out against the practice, while celebrities like Kim Kardashian embrace it.

Sources: http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/reliable-sources/post/beyonce-speaks-out-on-national-anthem-lip-sync-controversy-at-super-bowl-press-conference/2013/01/31/0c3dd2a-6bee-11e2-bd3e-cd1661a205f6_blog.html
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ryan_Braun#Performance-enhancing_drugs

SESSION 1 DIGGING IN

Work with your group to answer the question below.

WHAT MAKES A PERSON A CHRISTIAN?

1. How would you answer this question from the perspective of someone who doesn't believe in God?

2. How would you answer as someone who believes in God?

3. How does the world know a person is a Christian or not?

Get ready to talk it up. Read the following passages and discuss them with your group.

¹⁷ From that time on Jesus began to preach, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.' ¹⁸ As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ 'Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will make you fishers of men.' ²⁰ At once they left their nets and followed him. ²¹ Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, ²² and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him." — Matthew 4:17-22

"As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. 'Follow me,' he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him." — Matthew 9:9

"The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, 'Follow me.'" — John 1:43

IN YOUR OWN WORDS, DEFINE WHAT IT
MEANS FOR PEOPLE TO FOLLOW THEIR
LEADERSHIP AND NOT CHRIST'S.

SESSION 1 WRAPPING UP

Time for a little language lesson. Work with your leader to define the word you see below.

mathetes



1. How do we know where Jesus wants us to go? In other words, how do we know where He is leading?
2. Why is it impossible to follow someone on their journey if you're trying to plan your own journey?
3. Following is about trust as much as anything. Do you trust Jesus to lead you along the right path?

