

FOLLOWING JESUS IN REAL LIFE

Leader Discussion Guide

A Companion Resource for Churches & College Ministries

How to Use This Guide (for Leaders)

This discussion guide is designed to help pastors, campus ministers, and small-group leaders walk college students and young adults through **Following Jesus in Real Life** in a structured, practical way.

Each session corresponds to one chapter in the book and is designed to fit a **60–75 minute group meeting**.

Suggested Weekly Flow

- **Opening Prayer** – 2 minutes
- **Icebreaker** – 5–10 minutes
- **Discussion** – 35–45 minutes
- **Application & Challenge** – 5–10 minutes
- **Closing Prayer** – 5 minutes

Encourage participants to read the assigned chapter **before** each session.

SESSION 1

What Does God Expect From Me?

Session Goal

Help students understand that following Jesus is about **direction, obedience, and relationship**, not perfection.

Icebreaker

What's one expectation you felt pressured to live up to growing up—at home, church, or school?

Discussion Questions

1. When you hear “God’s expectations,” what emotions come up—pressure, fear, motivation, confusion?
2. Why do you think so many people confuse faith with performance?

3. Which of God's expectations in this chapter challenged you the most?
4. What's the difference between *knowing* what God expects and *living it out* daily?

Application

What is **one area** where God may be asking you to take obedience more seriously right now?

Closing Prayer Prompt

Ask God to help each person walk forward with **direction**, not guilt—and to trust His grace in the process.

SESSION 2

Finding God's Will When You Don't Know What You're Doing

Session Goal

Relieve anxiety around “God's will” and replace it with trust and obedience.

Icebreaker

What's one decision right now that feels overwhelming or unclear?

Discussion Questions

1. Why do we tend to treat God's will like a hidden puzzle?
2. How does trusting God differ from trying to control outcomes?
3. What stood out to you about the idea that God cares more about who you're becoming than where you're going?
4. How does fear affect decision-making in your life?

Application

What step of obedience can you take *this week* instead of waiting for perfect clarity?

Closing Prayer Prompt

Pray for wisdom, trust, and peace in uncertain seasons.

SESSION 3

Dealing With Doubt Without Feeling Like a Failure

Session Goal

Normalize doubt while encouraging honest pursuit of truth.

Icebreaker

What's something you've questioned or wrestled with before—faith-related or not?

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Christians often feel ashamed of doubt?
2. How does bringing doubt into the light change its power?
3. What's the difference between doubt that seeks truth and doubt that avoids it?
4. How has doubt shaped your faith—positively or negatively?

Application

What question or doubt do you need to bring honestly to God or a trusted believer?

Closing Prayer Prompt

Ask God to meet doubts with truth, patience, and deeper faith.

SESSION 4

What Healthy Christian Community Really Looks Like

Session Goal

Redefine biblical community and challenge passive participation.

Icebreaker

What's the best—or worst—group experience you've ever had?

Discussion Questions

1. How does biblical community differ from social connection?
2. Why is consistency so important for real relationships?
3. What keeps people from being honest in Christian settings?
4. How can community both comfort and challenge us?

Application

What's one way you can engage more intentionally in community this week?

Closing Prayer Prompt

Pray for courage to be known, to support others, and to build real community.

SESSION 5

Handling Temptation & Private Battles

Session Goal

Address temptation honestly while emphasizing grace and accountability.

Icebreaker

Why do you think private struggles are so hard to talk about?

Discussion Questions

1. How does isolation fuel temptation?
2. Why are boundaries more effective than willpower?
3. What role does Scripture play in resisting temptation?
4. How does shame keep people stuck?

Application

What boundary do you need to set or strengthen right now?

Closing Prayer Prompt

Pray for strength, honesty, and accountability in private battles.

SESSION 6

Christian Dating & Sexual Integrity in a Modern World

Session Goal

Clarify God's design for relationships without shame or fear.

Icebreaker

What messages about dating or relationships are most common in today's culture?

Discussion Questions

1. How does culture define love and intimacy differently than Scripture?
2. Why do boundaries feel restrictive—but actually protect?

3. How can emotional integrity be compromised even without physical sin?
4. How does grace reshape our view of past mistakes?

Application

What boundary or mindset shift would protect your heart right now?

Closing Prayer Prompt

Pray for wisdom, purity, and grace in relationships.

SESSION 7

Mental Health, Anxiety, and the Christian Life

Session Goal

Affirm mental health struggles while pointing to hope and support.

Icebreaker

What's one thing that commonly causes stress or anxiety in your stage of life?

Discussion Questions

1. Why do some Christians feel ashamed of anxiety or depression?
2. How does isolation make mental health struggles worse?
3. Why is seeking help an act of wisdom, not weakness?
4. What does God's peace look like in real life—not theory?

Application

What step could you take this week to care for your mental or emotional health?

Closing Prayer Prompt

Pray for peace, healing, and courage to seek support.

SESSION 8

Money, Work, Calling, and Responsibility

Session Goal

Encourage responsibility, contentment, and trust in God's provision.

Icebreaker

What's one thing that stresses you about money or your future?

Discussion Questions

1. How does culture define success—and how does Scripture differ?
2. Why is contentment so difficult today?
3. How does faithfulness shape calling over time?
4. What habits build stability rather than stress?

Application

What financial or work habit could you improve starting this week?

Closing Prayer Prompt

Pray for wisdom, discipline, and trust in God's provision.

SESSION 9

How to Read the Bible Without Getting Lost

Session Goal

Build confidence and consistency in Scripture reading.

Icebreaker

What's your biggest struggle with reading the Bible regularly?

Discussion Questions

1. Why do people quit reading Scripture so easily?
2. How does reading slowly change understanding?
3. What reading approach has helped you most?
4. How does Scripture shape daily decisions?

Application

Commit to a simple reading plan this week.

Closing Prayer Prompt

Pray for hunger for God's Word and clarity through Scripture.

SESSION 10

Prayer That Actually Means Something

Session Goal

Reframe prayer as relationship, not performance.

Icebreaker

What makes prayer feel awkward or difficult for people?

Discussion Questions

1. Why do people feel pressure to “pray correctly”?
2. How does prayer change us before circumstances?
3. Why does consistency matter more than length?
4. What does listening look like in prayer?

Application

What prayer habit could you start or simplify?

Closing Prayer Prompt

Practice short, honest prayers together.

SESSION 11

Spiritual Gifts & Your Role in the Body of Christ

Session Goal

Help students see their value and role in the church.

Icebreaker

What strengths do others often notice in you?

Discussion Questions

1. Why do people underestimate their spiritual gifts?
2. How does serving strengthen faith?
3. What happens when gifts go unused?

4. Where could you step in and serve?

Application

Identify one way to serve in your church or ministry.

Closing Prayer Prompt

Pray for clarity, humility, and willingness to serve.

SESSION 12

Standing Firm in a Secular Culture

Session Goal

Encourage conviction without hostility.

Icebreaker

Where do you feel pressure to compromise your faith?

Discussion Questions

1. What does standing firm look like without being confrontational?
2. Why is approval so tempting?
3. How does character build credibility?
4. What small compromises weaken faith over time?

Application

What conviction do you need to reinforce this week?

Closing Prayer Prompt

Pray for courage, wisdom, and faithfulness.

SESSION 13

Why the Church Still Matters

Session Goal

Rebuild trust in the church and encourage commitment.

Icebreaker

What has shaped your view of church—positive or negative?

Discussion Questions

1. Why is community essential for growth?
2. How does church hurt affect faith?
3. What does commitment look like beyond attendance?
4. How can the church better support young adults?

Application

What step toward deeper church involvement can you take?

Closing Prayer Prompt

Pray for unity, healing, and commitment to the body of Christ.

Final Word to Leaders

This guide is not meant to rush transformation. It's meant to **walk with students** as they grow—honestly, patiently, and faithfully.

Faith grows best in safe spaces, honest conversations, and consistent community.