



## Gospel Community Notes & Questions

**Title:** The Paradigm of Following Jesus

**Text:** Matthew 5:1-16

**Theme:** Following Jesus is a lifelong, communal journey of living in the reality of your new, received identity.

**Teaching Notes:** We are all always being disciplined by someone or something. If we are not deliberately following Jesus, we will follow someone else by default. We must choose: what framework, what ways of thinking, what paradigm, will I build my life upon? Jesus and the apostles said the Way of a true follower is a communal/shared lifestyle in which we are learning to live in the reality of our new identity in Christ.

### Outline:

#### 1. Identity, not information.

- In Jesus, we receive a new identity, not merely facts and information to believe. We are – and we are becoming – new people in him. Because he defines who we are, our true sense of self and our validation come from God alone.

#### 2. Lifestyle, not event.

- Following Jesus is not a checklist to complete and cross off. It's a countercultural way to live the entirety of our lives.

#### 3. Community, not solo.

- Though there are personal, individual components of following Jesus, we are called into a community of people doing this life together. Most of the New Testament metaphors for the church are corporate/communal pictures of many people living on a shared mission together.

### Gospel Applications:

1. Discover who God says you are.

2. Find your people.

3. Keep going.



**Questions to explore individually and with your group:**

1. In your own words, what is the illustration of the trellis about? What are some ways the right trellis benefits you?
2. A paradigm is “a framework containing basic assumptions, ways of thinking, and methodology that are commonly accepted by members of a community” (dictionary.com). What are some of these basic assumptions, ways of thinking, and methodologies that are commonplace in our culture?
3. What do you think about the statement, “You are all always being disciplined by someone (or something)”? Who (or what ideologies) have you allowed to discipline you in the past?
4. Read the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) and jot down everything Jesus says about the identity of his disciples. What stands out to you?
5. Why do you think Jesus wants his disciples to know *who they are* and not just know *what they're supposed to do*? Why this emphasis on identity?
6. Religious people tend to have an event-centered view of morality, and they turn life into a checklist of habits and behaviors. Where/how have you seen this? What more holistic alternative does Jesus call his disciples to?
7. Make a short list of personal/individual practices that are a part of following Jesus (e.g. reading your Bible). How do you balance these with your calling to a corporate/communal identity and life in the church?
8. What are some reasons why following Jesus is a community project? What do you need from others – and what do they need from you?
9. Imagine your life 5-10 years from now. You've deliberately grown your life, faith, and character on the “Identity/Lifestyle/Community Trellis.” What does your life look like as a result? How have you grown? What's changed?
10. What's one practical, specific thing you'll do with the message this week?