



# TAKE UP THY SWORD



A newsletter with hope and encouragement from the Holy Bible

*For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword... (Hebrews 4:16)*

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## Follow the Father

*They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel and Ephraim is my firstborn (Jeremiah 31:9).*

I'm sure many of us are familiar with the children's game called 'follow the leader'; and if memory serves, there was only one person leading at a time. So how can we say that we want to follow the Father if we're still trying to be in total control of our lives? Follow is the opposite of lead, so we have to decide in which part of the line we're going to stand. Yes, we have free will; but we're supposed to seek God's will to be done in every aspect of our lives. Consider these two examples in the book of Luke of how to completely surrender to the Lord:

*... Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net (5:5).*

*... Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done (22:42).*

When we're walking by faith as opposed to sight (2 Cor 5:7), then we must allow the Father to lead us: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom 8:14)! And we also learned in Galatians 5:16 that if we walk in the Spirit, we will not give in to the lust of the flesh. We're not only longing for God's presence, we're trying to ascertain His character; so like Moses, we can know His ways and not just His acts:

*For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another (Rom 14:17-19).*

Jesus described Himself as "the good shepherd" in John 10:11, and it's the shepherd's main job to lead the sheep. And David stated in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm that because the Lord was his shepherd, he would have certain privileges such as provision, rest, courage, and victory. I know now that it was God who led me from the west coast to the east coast, then from the north to the south. However at the time, I assumed in my carnal mind that I was steering my own ship! Because "all we like sheep have gone astray" (Isa 53:6), I'm so thankful for this particular promise:

*I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick... (Eze 34:15-16).*

Like most things in life that we desire, there are costs as well as benefits for following the Father. Jesus plainly warned us: "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke 12:48). So while we're taking up our own cross each day, let's not lose focus on the blessings which are laid up for doers of the Word:

*... Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine INHERITANCE, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God (Josh 14:9).*

*For he clave to the Lord, and departed not from following Him... And the Lord was with him; and he PROSPERED whithersoever he went forth... (2 Kings 18:6-7).*

*... He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the LIGHT of life (John 8:12).*

Sometimes the Lord has to lead us into a trial of maturity just as Jesus "was led by the Spirit into the wilderness" (Luke 4:1). Our faith, wisdom, and trust in God must be tested before a season of promotion and increase can begin. The children of Israel had the same experience:

*Yet Thou in Thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to shew them light, and the way wherein they should go (Neh 9:19).*

When the Lord delivered the Israelites from bondage in Egypt, they knew their final destination but not how to get there. They only moved "at the commandment of the Lord" (Num 9:18) and did not attempt to figure out or map out their own path! Although this 40-year journey was meant to humble/instruct, they also "lacked nothing" (Deut 2:7). And Jeremiah 2:6 describes what God led them through in order for His covenant to be fulfilled.

For direction, the only GPS system we can truly rely on is this: "if the Lord be God, follow Him" (1 Kings 18:21)!

**THUS SAITH THE LORD: "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us..." (Eph 5:1-2).**

**PRAYER:** *Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness (Ps 143:10).*

**"Be encouraged in the law of the Lord" (2 Chron 31:4):**

Deuteronomy 1:36; 1 Samuel 12:20; Psalm 25:5, 32:8; Isaiah 48:17, 49:10, 58:11; Ezekiel 13:3; John 10:27, 12:26, 16:13; 2 Timothy 2:22; 2 Peter 1:16; 3 John 1:11

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