



**YOU: Connect. Grow. Serve. Go!**  
**Fall 2018 Leader Commentary**

**Unit 1: Authentic Discipleship**  
**Session 3: All In (see pp. 110-113)**

**The Question:** What does Jesus expect of His disciples?

**The Point:** Jesus' followers must commit to Him without hesitation or regret.

**Background Passage:** Luke 9:57–10:20

**Focal Passage:** Luke 9:57–10:3

This commentary is designed to help you think about the question, "What does Jesus expect of His disciples?" and drive home this one truth: Jesus' followers must commit to Him without hesitation or regret.

**Focus on These Points**

***Don't Look Back***  
***(Luke 9:57-62)***

Luke's account of Jesus has reached a climactic moment with this passage. Through the first eight chapters, Luke has presented people's responses to the question: What kind of man is this? Although people's answers varied, most were confused as to Jesus' identity.

Jesus told His followers He must suffer, be rejected and killed, and rise from the dead the third day. Shortly afterward Peter, James, and John saw Jesus' glory as He was transfigured (see Luke 9:28-29). Jesus then taught His followers that discipleship means being like their Master. He told them the least among them was the one who was truly great (Luke 9:48). As the Master journeyed toward Jerusalem for the final time prior to His death, His teaching on discipleship became a primary focus.

As Jesus and His followers traveled, they met three people who desired to become His disciples. Jesus' response to each of these individuals emphasized the stringent demands of discipleship. The first would-be disciple proclaimed his willingness to follow Jesus anywhere. The man, however, probably thought Jesus was moving toward some glorious destiny. He had no idea that Jesus had already set His face toward His crucifixion.

Jesus pointed out to this would-be disciple that He did not even have a place to lay His head. Christ did not enjoy the comforts of the wild animals and birds. Jesus' statement stresses that His disciples must be willing to sacrifice every comfort to follow Him. The primary emphasis in the words, however, may be on Jesus' rejection (see Luke 9:22,44). He was constantly rebuffed and as a result He moved from town to town (Luke 9:52-53). His followers must be willing to accept a lifestyle that involves both denial of physical comforts and rejection for their faith.

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Another man, when called to follow Jesus, replied that He must first bury His father. Because first-century Jews lacked embalming procedures, they generally buried their dead within 24 hours. Leaving the dead unburied was a scandalous proposition for the Jew, and if the father had died but remained unburied, it would have brought shame to the father because of the actions of his family. Other interpreters believe this man meant that he could not follow Jesus as long as his aged father continued to live. It was the duty of a pious Jew to care for his parents in their old age and then to provide them with a proper burial. In any case, this individual made plain that his duty to family took precedence over his devotion to Jesus.

Jesus told the man there were plenty of spiritually dead people who had no comprehension of what God was doing. With a play on words, he said, Let the [spiritually] dead bury their own [physically] dead. Those who refused to see the immediacy of the kingdom or the importance of Jesus' ministry could care for his father. The kingdom of God had priority over every other loyalty and duty, even that to family members.

Another aspiring disciple requested permission to first say good-bye to those at his house. While his request does not seem unreasonable, it evidently concealed some unstated reluctance to take the decisive step of discipleship as indicated by Jesus' response in the following verse. The same situation occurred in the life of Elijah, when a young man named Elisha made a similar request (1 Kings 19:19-21). Jesus replied with an illustration from farming. In order to plow a straight furrow, a farmer fixes his eyes on a point ahead of him and moves toward that point. Jesus said that no one could plow a straight line while looking backward instead of forward. In other words, this man did not have his eyes set on the kingdom of God. He was still looking back at all the things and people he was leaving behind. Such a person was not suitable to serve God's kingdom.

In each of these three cases, Jesus made shocking demands. Through these demands He pointed out the urgency of the coming kingdom and the stringent requirements of discipleship. Discipleship requires a radical shift in an individual's priorities.

### ***Go Forward (Luke 10:1-3)***

Luke recorded several events from Jesus' life that are not included in the other Gospels. The commissioning of the seventy is one of those events unique to Luke's Gospel.

Jesus commissioned seventy people other than the original twelve to preach in the towns to which He was headed. Jesus' sending out the seventy underscores that the twelve apostles were not the only ones with a responsibility to proclaim the coming of God's kingdom in Jesus Christ. The ancient texts present a challenge related to the number of persons Jesus sent out. Some ancient Greek manuscripts read 70, while others read 72. The textual evidence makes a choice between these two readings difficult. The older evidence stands slightly in favor of 72, while the volume of evidence favors 70.

Possibly the number of disciples sent out had symbolic meaning. The number seventy held deep meaning for the Jews. Moses had appointed seventy elders to assist him as he led Israel in the wilderness (see Num. 11:16-25). The Sanhedrin, the supreme council of the Jews, consisted of

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seventy members plus the presiding high priest. The number has also been viewed as suggestive of one disciple for each nation of the world (see Gen. 10). Possibly, the 70 messengers sent out ahead of Jesus were viewed as similar to Moses' 70 assistants. Likely the number also pointed to the future mission of the church to the Gentiles. Luke, a Gentile himself, had great interest in Jesus' openness to Gentiles.

Jesus focused on the potential harvest. The seventy should pray that God would send more workers into His harvest. This command of our Lord implies that not only were the Twelve and these seventy messengers called to proclaim the kingdom but also every disciple of Jesus is called to labor in harvesting God's field.

The harvest was plentiful, meaning that many were ready to accept the message of Jesus as Lord and Savior. How would a few disciples and seventy witnesses reach so many? Prayer was the key. Jesus told them to pray that God would send out more workers. The assumption was that all those who embraced the gospel would be sent out to their own world to preach the gospel.

Jesus warned the seventy that He was sending them on a dangerous mission. They would be like defenseless lambs among hungry wolves.