



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V27 N39 September 28, 2025

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Single-Mindedness
I focus on God and His
priorities for my life.

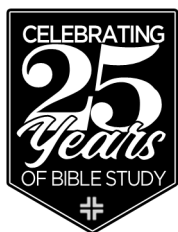
*"But seek first His kingdom
and His righteousness, and
all these things will be given
to you as well."*

Matthew 6:33



Q?

How do you
keep from
turning back?



CROSSWALK

"Follow Me"

Luke 9:57-62

Single-mindedness can be especially challenging when we are faced with anxiety, loss or peer pressure. When we are challenged with a shortage of resources our minds can race and rage for solutions. When we are ridiculed or belittled by family or peers we can fly into image repair and one-upmanship. When we are far from home and things that are familiar we can long for a return to our comfort zone. Keeping our minds and our hearts on our Savior and his will for our lives is not for the fainthearted. Making Jesus, his kingdom and his righteousness first in our minds and hearts can help us remain steadfast and prevent us from "turning back" to old ways.

Perhaps what is most distressing is the phenomenon of serving God, sacrificing for him, and then feeling like you still miss old ways and old habits. Leaving all for Christ does not guarantee that our hearts are not still wrestling with a desire for things that used to be. Or we can be having a really good day and out of the blue a jealousy, a temptation or some anger can bubble up in our hearts. We know we should be over such things, but we are forever human even if we are children of God. The best of God's servants can struggle with half-heartedness and double-mindedness.

Following Christ does not guarantee success or prosperity. We may at times be low on resources, low on favor or low on good will from friends and family. At times we may even feel that our Christian brothers and sisters can may be against us. When others fail us we may be tempted to give up or act rashly. Focusing on God and his priorities for our lives can help us navigate times of leanness, sorrow or uncertainty.

"One missionary described the dense fog that descended to darken her soul when she

left her home in America to serve God in Eastern Europe. 'I have been trying to maintain contentment,' she wrote in a newsletter to friends back home, but 'I don't quite fit. Life lacks the homey familiarity of the States and this new culture persists in its multi-faceted strangeness. Where is my home? With my heart in a quandary, I have continued seeking to be a stable mom and wife, yet feeling anything but steady in the ongoing wrestling match with the unfamiliar.' As she wrestled with these issues, the missionary came to a radical redefinition of what it meant for her to be at home. Here is how she explained it:

Then today the Lord brought transcending comfort through a special, wise friend who had experienced this same sense 16 years ago when the Lord moved her family to Europe. With resonant empathy, she breathed words of encouragement straight from the Word of God into my heart: 'Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations' (Ps. 90:1). She reminded me that the Lord Himself is my dwelling place, the Place that never changes, my Home; a sense of stability began to infuse me and the fog began to burn away.

"When God is our dwelling place, we can leave everything to follow Jesus, and still be at home" (Philip Graham Ryken, *Luke*, vol. 1, Reformed Expository Commentary, 503).

Making God our home, our peace, and our joy can help us move closer to single-mindedness in Christ. Keeping Jesus first in our desires can help us avoid the many excuses we can easily make for not serving him. Christian maturity is not achieved by making better promises or by trying harder. Trusting God for provisions, encouragement and results keeps us focused and persevering.

Read Luke 9:57-62

57 As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go."

58 Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

59 He said to another man, "Follow me."

But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

61 Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family."

62 Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God." [NIV]

Read another translation

57 As they were traveling on the road someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go."

58 Jesus told him, "Foxes have dens, and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." 59 Then he said to another, "Follow me."

"Lord," he said, "first let me go bury my father."

60 But he told him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and spread the news of the kingdom of God."

61 Another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but first let me go and say good-bye to those at my house."

62 But Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." [CSB]

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Above the word "road" in v. 57 write "Lk 9:51."
- Draw lines connecting each occurrence of "follow" in the passage.
- Above the word "follow" in v. 59 write "Lk 9:23."
- Draw a line from the phrase "Son of Man" in v. 58 to the person identified with this title.
- Underline the words "no place" in v. 58.
- Circle each occurrence of the word "first" in vv. 59-61.
- Double underline the phrase "kingdom of God" in vv. 60-62.
- Place a box around each occurrence of the word "back" in vv. 61-62.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Where was Jesus going (Lk 9:51) and what had he just experienced before “walking along the road”?
2. What was a potential weakness in the man’s proclamation in v. 57?
3. What was Jesus implying with his response in v. 58?
4. How would you restate Jesus’ words in v. 58 as a warning to modern day disciples?
5. What was involved in the task of “burying a father” (v. 59)?
6. Was Jesus subverting the 5th commandment (Ex 20:12; Eph 6:2) in v. 60? Explain your answer.
7. How would you restate Jesus’ words in v. 60 as a warning to modern day disciples?
8. Did the charge of v. 60 and the services of v. 62 have any urgency connected to them (consider Lk 10:1-17) or were these general calls to service of the kingdom of God? Explain your answer.
9. What did Jesus anticipate in his response to the one who wanted to say “goodbye” to his family?
10. How would you restate Jesus’ words in v. 62 as a warning to modern day disciples?

Students of the Gospel of Luke understand the climactic and pivotal nature of Luke chapter 9. In this chapter, the Gospel reaches its Galilean climax with Jesus feeding the 5,000 (9:10-17), Peter makes his declaration on the identity of Jesus (9:18-20) and Jesus predicts his suffering twice (9:21-27, 43-45). The capstone of the chapter is Jesus' Transfiguration (9:28-36). Jesus performs his final Galilean miracle (9:37-43) and then begins in earnest his journey to Jerusalem (9:51). Many label Luke 9:51-19:44 as "The Journey to Jerusalem." "Jesus' visit to a Samaritan village in Luke 9:51-56 begins Luke's lengthiest section [9:51-19:44], comprising almost 37 percent of the Gospel (424 of 1,151 verses). Most of this section is unique to Luke, containing many pericopes [literary units] and parables that are found only in his Gospel" (Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: 9:51-24:53*, vol. 2, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the NT, 958).

Just before Luke records the sending out of the 72 disciples who are charged with proclaiming the kingdom (Lk 10:1-16), Luke records the Samaritans' rejection of Jesus (9:52-56) and his charge to three individuals who consider becoming his disciple (9:57-62). "These three conversations are thus about discipleship rather than the call of three specific disciples. The graphic exchanges between Jesus and the three aspirants translate the metaphoric language of discipleship in 9:23 – self-denial, taking up one's cross 'daily,' and following Jesus – into real conditions of discipleship. This is, moreover, the first pericope in Luke 9 that does not involve the Twelve. These three unnamed seekers form a bridge to the call and sending of the seventy(-two) in the subsequent pericope (10:1-20)" (James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Luke*, The Pillar NT Commentary, 299).

The first of these prospective disciples promised to follow Jesus "wherever" Jesus would go (9:57). This claim was bold and perhaps naïve. The statement sounds much like Peter's own brash and failed claim of following Christ (22:33). This claim also emphasized a desire to be where Jesus resided. At face value this was a noble request of wanting to be close to Jesus. Jesus' response to such a request suggests some of the potentially illicit motives of such an ambitious follower. Jesus countered the disciple's "wherever" with the truth of the Son of Man having "no place" to even lay his head (9:58). The disciple may have thought accompanying Jesus would include time in palaces, wealthy homes, prime seats in synagogues and temple privileges. Jesus made it very clear that he had less than wild scavengers and fluttering fowl. Jesus was looking for disciples who would go out and away from his presence to share the Good News (9:52; 10:1-4). Those who follow Jesus thinking they will gain wealth or esteem as a result of discipleship do not understand the poverty and humility that comes with following Jesus.

Jesus initiated the calling of the second disciple (Lk 9:59). Jesus called many disciples to himself (5:10-11; 5:27-28; 6:13; 14:25-27; 18:22; 19:1-10). Jesus' call to "follow him" indicates that discipleship is not just us

chasing Jesus. The Lord pursues us and wants us to follow him. This second disciple requested that "first" he needed to bury his father (9:59). "In reference to honoring parents in death, the rabbis had created a mass of protective measures. Burial of the dead was considered a religious duty that took precedence over all others, including the study of the Law. They wrote: 'He who is confronted by a dead relative is freed from reciting the *Shema*, from the Eighteen Benedictions, and from all the commandments stated in the Torah' (*b. Ber. 31a.*). To assist in the burial of a non-relative was a work that received great reward from God, and the burial of a father was a religious duty" (R. Kent Hughes, *Luke: That You May Know the Truth*, Preaching the Word, 372).

Burial practices were "short" and "long" in a world with no embalming. If the disciple's father had recently died, the disciple would most likely would have been at his father's graveside. Tombs often housed corpses on slabs for up to a year until all that was left of the decaying body was a collection of bones. These bones would be gathered and placed in an ossuary, also called a bone box. Another formal funeral would be held when these bones were placed in an ossuary. It is very possible that when the disciple said that "first" he needed to bury his father, he could have been referring to staying with his ailing father until his death and then remaining with his family for up to 12 months until the final ossuary ceremony. The honorable service may have prevented him from following Jesus for up to a year or more.

Jesus reply to this disciple's request was pointed and direct. "Let the dead bury their own dead" (9:60). Jesus needed laborers for the harvest immediately (10:2). Those who were not followers of Jesus ("spiritually dead") could be entrusted to take on the bulk of family burial practices. Disciples of Jesus and even Jesus himself did attend funerals to honor the dead (John 11:38). Jesus was not calling people to dishonor parents. Instead he was calling for loyalty and allegiance as the Son of Man over and above family traditions. Disciples today often are faced with challenges of placing Jesus as a priority over traditions.

The final potential disciple expressed a desire to follow Jesus, but requested to say goodbye to his family first. Like the funeral request, this may have been an excuse to delay following Jesus. Jesus' reference to one who "looks back" (9:62) may indicate that a goodbye to family may prevent ever leaving that family to follow Jesus. Reference to a "plow" and turning back to family may be an allusion to 1 Kings 19:20 where Elisha requests from Elijah permission to say goodbye to his family before following Elijah. Elijah permits Elisha to do so, but does so reluctantly. Elisha perceives the disappointment of Elijah at such a request, and sacrifices his oxen and follows Elijah straight away. Jesus is greater than Elijah (9:8, 19, 30, 33) and thus deserves greater allegiance than Elijah.

To follow Jesus requires a surrender of possessions (9:68), traditions (9:60) and a commitment to perseverance (9:62). Following Jesus is not easy (9:33) but it is ultimately worth it (10:17-21).

Word Studies/Notes

v. 57 **road** “This expression, although seemingly banal, is decisively important for Luke. It refers not only to the Messiah’s historical itinerary leading up to the passion (19:36; 24:32) but also to the Way that leads to life (Acts 2:28), the Christian life in its fullness, involving obedience and suffering, the Christian message in its concrete expression of truth (Acts 9:2)” (François Bovon, *Luke 2: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 9:51–19:27*, Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible, 12).

v. 57 **wherever** “The man is willing to follow Jesus literally where he goes (22:33). The thought is of belonging to the close group of disciples who accompanied Jesus on his travels rather than to the wider group who were not called to be with him in this way” (I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary, 410). The follower wanting to go wherever Jesus goes stands in stark contrast to the 72 who were sent out away from Jesus (Lk 10:1-17).

v. 58 **foxes** “Following Jesus means that one follows an ‘itinerant teacher, not part of an established community.’ Jesus has nothing to offer those who seek from him material blessings and security. He does not have what even the beasts of the field and birds of the air possess. But this imagery may have a political edge. Manson points out that ‘foxes’ refer to Israel’s political enemies, the Ammonites, in 1 En. 89, and Jesus identifies Herod as a ‘fox’ (13:32)” (David E. Garland, *Luke*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the NT, 415).

v. 60 **bury** “Do not neglect burial’ (Sir 38:16–23) was for all ancients, Jews and Greeks, a virtually inviolable duty. Jesus’ shocking reversal of a universally acknowledged moral duty is an important example of ‘implicit Christology.’ ‘There is hardly one logion of Jesus which more sharply runs counter to law, piety, and custom than does ... Lk 9:60,’ writes Martin Hengel. To be sure, Jesus’ reply, ‘Let the dead bury their own dead’ (v. 60), employs ‘the dead’ in a figurative rather than literal sense (also 15:24, 32), meaning ‘spiritually dead,’ those who have not responded to the gospel. Nevertheless, v. 60 is a powerful testimony to Jesus’ self-understanding over against all forms of prior revelation, including Torah. The kingdom of God that Jesus proclaims, indeed that is uniquely present in him, takes precedence over the Mosaic authority received at Sinai” (Edwards, 300).

v. 61 **goodbye** “The third man simply wanted to go home and say good-bye to his family. Elijah had allowed Elisha to do this very thing when Elisha was plowing (1 Kings 19:19–20). Jesus’ words underscore the fact that His message of the kingdom of God was more important than anything else—even family members. The message and

the Messiah cannot wait. Jesus’ message was more important than Elijah’s message and demanded total allegiance. Jesus’ servants should not have divided interests, like a farmer who begins plowing and looks back. Since Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem, the man had to make up his mind right then as to what he was going to do” (John A. Martin, “Luke,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, vol. 2, 232).

v. 62 **plow** “It was proverbial in ancient culture that one could not look back while plowing and drive a straight furrow (Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 443). Those who pine after what they left behind, who are always remembering the comforts of home and hearth, who dream about how life might have been if they had not stepped onto the road with Jesus, who keep looking in the rearview mirror, will not do well on Jesus’ road” (R. Kent Hughes, *Luke: That You May Know the Truth*, Preaching the Word, 374).

v. 62 **looks back** “Any disciple who would follow Jesus needs to understand that this choice will require total commitment. In this passage, three would-be disciples clearly receive this message from Jesus. Since disciples will suffer rejection from the world, just as Jesus did, they need to place top priority on following Jesus. They cannot look back once they ally themselves to him, for the opportunity to look back will be frequent and the dangers of doing so are great. The individuals who converse with Jesus are not a focal point in the account, for there is no indication of their response. The point resides solely in Jesus’ responses, which are given for the reader’s reflection” (Bock, 974).

v. 62 **fit** “There is a ‘fitness’ requirement for following and working with Jesus: one must know one’s ‘place’ (the ‘fit’ term [εὐθετος, *euthetos*] literally means ‘well-placed/put’ [cf. 14:35]) and be able to stay the course in God’s realm, walking in Jesus’s footsteps. At this juncture Jesus fits, rather than breaks, Elijah’s mold, when he curtly brushed off Elisha’s request to kiss his father good-bye before following Elijah’s prophetic path: ‘Then [Elijah] said [to Elisha]: “Go back, for I am done with you”’ (1 Kgs 19:20). But Elisha is not done with Elijah. The summoned prophet-disciple abruptly shifts plans from kissing his father to killing his oxen (with which he had been plowing when Elijah passed by), cooking them for his people with the kindling from the animals’ wooden yokes, and leaving it all (burnt and consumed) to follow Elijah (19:21). Henceforth, Elisha would only plow, as it were, behind Elijah in God’s field. A similar challenge faces Jesus’ would-be disciple, but in this case, we’re not told how he responds. Readers are left to fill in the gap not only in the story but also in their own discipleship experience” (F. Scott Spencer, *Luke*, The Two Horizons NT Commentary, 272).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Following Jesus may cost you loss of property, family favor, familiarity or ease.

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CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?
2. What does this passage teach me about myself?
3. What does this passage lead me to do?



PARENT CONNECTION

Kids don't understand that everything has a cost. When they're little, they think a diamond costs as much as a piece of gum. As they get older, they think money grows on trees and parents are sitting around waiting to pay for everything their heart desires. When my middle son was about 10, he asked if we could have pizza for dinner. I explained that our earlier run to McDonald's left no money in the family budget for eating out. His rebuttal had me laughing and just a little scared, "Can't you just whip out that little red plastic thing and make a pizza magically happen?" Yikes! Helping our kids understand the cost of things when they're young helps them understand the cost of following Jesus. How does this translate? If they can learn to be willing to give up dining out for a month or two so your family can afford Six Flags tickets, they begin to understand the cost assigned to something and get a grasp on and appreciate the value of another. We can help our kids understand the cost of following Jesus by walking them through simple family decisions. Following Jesus means we give up Saturday evening sleepovers so we can worship on Sunday morning. It means we give up extracurricular activities that interfere with midweek programming. Following Jesus means we live counterculturally: we sacrifice our time to serve others, we put aside our desire for worldly things to support friends on mission, and we live in full obedience and under the authority of God's Word. Our family looks a little different and that's ok. Following Jesus is worth it!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Luke 9:57-62

1. What did the first man want and what was Jesus' response?
2. Jesus asked the second man to follow Him. What was this man's response?
3. The third man wanted to follow Jesus. What was his obstacle and how did Jesus answer him?

What Do You Think?

What are the three obstacles that made these men unable to follow Jesus?

What Do You Do?

Draw a comic strip that shows each scenario. Add a fourth scenario that includes you. What would your obstacle be?

CORE COMPETENCY: Single-Mindedness

I pay attention to what God thinks is important for my life.

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 103:8

"The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love."

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- ☐ I completed my Bible Study
- ☐ I memorized this week's verse
- ☐ I brought my Bible to church
- ☐ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)
I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have five children: Elijah, Levi, Bo, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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**CENTRAL
BIBLE CHURCH**

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OUR MISSION
Making God known by making disciples who are changed by God to change their world.