



DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR NOVEMBER 11, 2011

FOLLOWERS UPON FOLLOWERS

Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. (Acts 17:34, NIV)

MARK WILSON, A TWO-TIME WINNER ON THE PGA TOUR THIS YEAR, lists Ben Hogan among his golfing heroes. While interviewing Wilson for the 2012 Links Player Magazine recently, I asked him about this. “What did you see in Hogan that made sense for you?” I wanted to know.

Wilson said two things were instrumental: First, he and Hogan possessed similar builds. Second, Wilson’s golf instructor as he grew into the game was a devotee of Hogan—every book, every idea, whatever he could get his hands on. When it came to admiring Hogan, Mark Wilson was simply following the lead of his own trusted teacher.

Christian maturity is meant to develop in this same way. Followers follow those who are not so much leading as following themselves. And, if it is done right, all this following holds closely to the one true focal point: Jesus.

In Acts 17, Paul famously addressed the gathered listeners at the Areopagus, defining for them “the unknown God” they had left room for in their pantheon. This unknown God, he told them, was the God of heaven. And the love of God was demonstrated through “the man he has appointed,” Jesus, whom He raised from the dead.

The idea of resurrection turned many people away; they would not allow themselves to believe in such “fantasies,” a dismissal that remains common in our own time. But some, we read, “became followers of Paul.” By itself, this would be an odd label, one that Paul himself would have rejected. He was not bent on drawing followers to himself. And thus, the second verb in that passage becomes critical: “[they] believed.” It was not Paul, of course, that they were believing; it was Jesus.

The door of salvation swings on Jesus hinges, so to speak. Eternal life comes only through belief in Him. But nearly all of us find our way through that door behind the lead of another. We follow. And nearly all of us, when we walk through that door, do so ahead of others who follow us.

Following and leading

Whom did you follow into belief in Jesus? What was it about their leadership that caused you to come along? When you look “behind” you, whom do you see following you, and whom else would you like to see?

Keeping Jesus central

How do we make sure others are ultimately following Jesus, rather than simply following us?

Following Jesus

Read Luke 4:14-21. In this passage, Jesus identified His calling. What aspects of this calling should we be following as well, so that the kingdom is enacted still through us, Jesus’ followers?
