

08-03-2025

Next Gen Sunday: Game On 2025

Bruce Nielson

Luke 9:18-26 (NIV): Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say I am?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "God's Messiah." Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. And he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life." Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels."

A **Follower** of Jesus displays a life of complete submission to the will of God and obedience to how God wants to place them and use them – their whole life (time, resources, gifts, relationships).

A **Fan** of Jesus displays a life of submission to the will of God and obedience when it is convenient or suits their needs and life situations. Another way to look at being a fan would be to say it's more about having an acquaintanceship with Jesus over having a deep relationship with Him.

Psalms 139:23-24 (NIV): Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Luke 9:23 (NIV): The he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."

Three Steps in Luke 9:23

- Deny Themselves
- Take Up Their Cross
- Follow Me

Three Steps for Moving From Fan to Follower

- Deny Ourselves
 - We should put God's will and plan for us ahead of our ambitions and comfort.
 - We should see that all we have is from God to be used as He leads us.
 - We should live not to be seen but for Jesus Christ to be seen in us.
- Take Up Our Cross
 - We must choose to die to self.
 - Whatever circumstance we face in life we must be willing to sacrifice everything and face it with faith so that the glory and power and love and majesty of God can be seen through us.
- Follow Jesus
 - In the Gospels are over 20 different conversations in which Jesus says to follow Him. The Greek word for follow is (*akoloutheó*), a verb – to follow one who precedes, join, accompany, to be in the same way with, to become His disciple.
 - Following Him means we pattern our life after Jesus. He is our example, our model, our ultimate mentor.
 - Jesus embodied the greatest commandment of loving God and loving others and being obedient to the will of God.

Luke 9:24-26 (NIV): "For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels."

Three Questions to Ask to Assess my Level of Commitment to Jesus

- Am I too busy trying to save my life? Am I just protecting my level of comfort, trying to fly under the radar and not rock the boat so I can just live a good life, love Jesus in my own way, and try to get by until I go to heaven?
- Am I willing to risk my soul for eternity to maintain a lifestyle where the things of this world matter more than the heart of God?
- Am I more concerned about what others think of me at the risk of offending God?

Three Things that Keep Us Stuck in the Fan Zone

- Fear
- Apathy
- Distractions
 - Distractions take the focus off of God and place it on us.
 - Distractions stir up worry, fear, and doubt.
 - Distractions keep us from living out God's purpose for our lives.

Luke 9:18-20 (NIV): Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say I am?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "God's Messiah."

DTR = Define the Relationship