A Fan Or A Follower? Sun Am 7/14/24 KZ Lesson

# Memory Verse: Mark 8:34 NKJV

# 34When He had called the people to *Himself,* with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

Target Thought: Are we a follower or a fan?

Have you ever been a member of a fan club? Some of you may not even know what a fan club is. A fan club is a group of enthusiastic supporters of a well-known person, music group, or a sports team. If you are a fan of a particular sports team, you might wear a t-shirt with the team name and a picture of their mascot on it. If you are a fan of a singer or a musical group, you might have their posters decorating the walls in your room.

One thing I have noticed about fan clubs is that the number of members in the club usually depends on how popular or successful the person or team is. If a sports team wins a lot of games, they will probably have a lot of fans. But if they start to lose, the fans usually fall away. (A few years ago the fans of one sports team went to the games with a brown paper bag over their head to hide their identity!) If a singer or music group has a lot of big hits, they will have a lot of fans, but if the hits stop coming, the fans will go away.

When Jesus was on earth, he had a lot of fans. As he traveled around performing miracles like feeding 4,000 people with seven loaves of bread or healing a blind, there were huge crowds of fans everywhere he went. Some of these people really loved Jesus but some of them only loved what Jesus for them. But do you know what? Jesus wasn't interested in having fans, He wanted followers. One day he said to a crowd of people, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it." Jesus was trying to them that that they could not save themselves, they could only be truly saved if they followed Him.

To be a follower of Jesus means much more than being a member of his fan club. It means more than wearing an "I Love Jesus" t-shirt, a WWJD\* bracelet, or a necklace with a cross on it. It means to follow the teachings of Jesus every day, even if it is not fun, popular or easy.

It means to reach out to the poor, to feed the hungry, to be a friend of the friendless, to love the unlovely, to pray for people, to try to help them, to encourage them, to be a friend when they need one. In other words, it means to show the love that Jesus showed to everyone we meet. That is what separates a fan from a follower. If we are really a follower of Jesus we will do what He needs for us to do, easy or not, it means that we will love, trust, and obey no matter what the circumstances are.

Do you want to be a follower, or are you satisfied with just being a fan?

Father, help us to be more than fans — help us to be true believers and followers of Jesus. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

1 Does Jesus want fans or followers?

2 Can people save themselves? Why not?

3 Are we supposed to follow Jesus even when it not easy, fun or popular?

4 Name a few examples of how we follow Jesus?

5 Do you want to be a fan or a follower of Jesus?