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Daily devotions written by Pastor Thomas Smith

“And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me. And he left all, rose up, and followed him.”

Luke 5:27, 28

We are not saved because we follow Jesus Christ. We are saved because we trust Him as our Savior, placing our faith for salvation completely in His sacrificial death on the cross. Following Him does not make us Christians. There are many misguided souls who feel that there is salvation and forgiveness of sins found in striving to obey the teachings of Jesus. The Bible does not teach this. Following Him is not a means of winning Heaven. Following Him is the life of the disciple and the duty of every Christian. We seek to follow Him because we are saved, not in order to be saved.

As the children of God, it is our responsibility to follow Him. Every true Christian should be a follower of the Savior. Following Him requires obedience. To follow Jesus, we must take His Word and His will seriously. We must choose to do what He directs us to do. There must be a surrender of our will and an allegiance to His will. We must value His plan above our personal desires or interests. When Jesus called Levi to follow Him, Levi “left all, rose up, and followed him.” This obedient disciple immediately turned his back on his occupation and plans and set out to do the Lord’s will.

Levi’s response to the call of Jesus serves as a great example to our lives. Not only does it require obedience to follow Him, it also requires faith. We can never be completely

certain where the path of obedience and submission will ultimately lead. Levi, or Matthew, became one of the apostles of Jesus Christ and gave us the wonderful Gospel of Matthew. Legend has it that he eventually died a martyr's death. Wherever God's will directs us, we are to be willing to follow Him.

Not only is it our responsibility to follow Him, it is indeed our privilege to follow Him. The greatest purpose in life can be found and enjoyed in following Jesus Christ. Every true believer should follow Him and can follow Him. Levi was a publican, or a tax collector. As such, he was very much despised by the people. Publicans were hated for their occupation; yet after salvation, Levi was given a responsible place of service to Jesus. Regardless of our past lives, we should all be followers of Jesus.