



# Followers of Christ Where Are You Following Him?



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## PART ONE

I've noticed that for me to understand something, I need to *hear it, see it and experience it* over and over again before it fully lands in my heart. I can literally map out the past decade with specific words or phrases that God heavily pressed into me for a year or two at a time. The previous two years were like a chisel and sandpaper to my heart, apparently, there is a lot of unwanted bark and knots that needed to be chipped away or smoothed out. Some of you may remember a few of these themes because whether or not you wanted to hear it, I was bound to share my heart with those around me (ps. thanks for listening). 2015 was a year of being wrecked and renewed. God was clearly showing me some massive blind spots in my life [you can read about it [here](#)]. Then last year, there was an emphasis on where I was finding value and significance, it was one of the hardest and most helpful years of my life [read more about that amazing revelation [here](#)]. Well, this year has followed suit...

At the beginning of the year, I found myself part of a loving community that knew next to nothing about my history. Nothing of my studying years, the trialling and experimenting of kingdom life, my failures, my regrets, and the things I have learnt only by crawling down the long, twisting road of experience. Though the feelings I had were most likely not true at all, I still felt as though every idea or decision I made was looked upon with cautious and guarded eyes. It wasn't mere coincidence that God was massaging my heart with the oil and lotion of value and significance only found in being His child and being part of His body. Though, I was nowhere near to getting my head around those truths. Because I began the year slightly on the back foot, feeling the desire to prove myself, to let my new family know I was credible, legitimate, to show them my resume of experiences. However, the Spirit knew the way forwards was found elsewhere, not me proving myself, but Him pressing deeper into my inner being. He needed to work on the soil of my heart and He made that clear to me by planted this thought in my head.

*"You are a follower of Christ, yes, well where exactly are you following him to?  
Where am I taking you?"*



Interesting thought, but what on earth did this have to do with where my heart was? Why would the Spirit bring that to mind? Surely that is a separate direction from working the soil of my heart?

The more I thought about it, the more I realized that I didn't have a good answer to that question. Where was I following Jesus? Was the destination, a place where I am a good moral, virtuous Christian? Was the destination heaven? Is the destination where my character is now one with Christ? If I am following Jesus, where was he heading?

This launched my head and heart into a robust debate. One which I am still in the midst of piecing together. Not that my head was saying one thing and my heart the opposite, not at all, in fact, they are possibly saying something quite similar but from very different angles. Have you ever had an "argument" with a friend, where you both know you are making the same point, you are somewhat agreeing with each other, yet for some reason neither wanted to back down from the premise of their argument? Well, this was happening within me. But I'm sure this adds nothing to the point I'm making here, so I will leave that image and continue on.

The question started me on a road that was less of a hill climb, and more of a slow walk on the beach at sunset. I am currently breathing in the gentle sea breeze and admiring the amazing colours painted throughout the skies of God's truth. This walk is one that is refreshing me, even though it is a long walk, I am more energized because of it. And it is what the Spirit has lead me to and is leading me to, that I want to share with you. But before I share with my very small understanding, I would ask you to consider your answer to that question. *If you are a follower of Christ, where are you following him?* I believe that is something that could help clarify direction, identity and purpose for us all.

It is amazing how the Lord teaches in a "just in time" sort of a way instead of a "just in case" sort of a way. He shows me what I need, just as I need it. Isn't that how Jesus disciplined his disciples too? We could learn a lot from that one thing alone as we disciple others. Instead of trying to answer every possible question they may (or may never) have, wouldn't it be great if we walked along side a smaller amount of people and made hand-crafted disciples, speaking into their lives as they are asking the questions. But anyway, just as I needed it, the Spirit let me open up to 1 John 4 and started to gently clear the fog of cliché, *I-grew-up-as-a-christian* 'isms that had slowly enveloped up my glasses.

## A Beautiful Truth:

1 John 4:7 says God is Love. It is up there with some of the most quoted statements from the bible (though most might not know where it was found). I have always thought of this as God is Love, as in He is a God of Love therefore God must love. Yet, love is not simply a thing that God does or doesn't do. It is not an action that he puts into play when needed. Love is not something God does, but *it is who God is*. See, I am an Aussie. I don't do Australian, I am Australian. That impacts every area of my life, how I think and operate, my natural bend to being sarcastic (not saying that is a good thing), being lay-back, playing things down and joking around. It impacts my world view, not wanting to lift myself up to high, happy to work alongside others... and so on. It is part of who I am, not some feeling or action I switch on and off. Though that is not a perfect example, in some way it shows me what it means for God to be love.



To my knowledge, love needs another or others to be completed, therefore someone can not be love if that person was by themselves as one person. But God is not one person. He is a loving community in and of himself. And it is in that trinity that he says in in Genesis *"Let us make mankind in our image."* The father, the Son and the Holy Spirit's love for each other was so great that they wanted others to be involved in their family. So He decided to create. God spoke and with his Word, everything was made. The Stars, the Earth, the trees, the animals, the flowers... Everything was created to show what God was like. God's Word brought life, and the universe was formed.

You see, we (humanity) were created in the crossfire of love between the Trinity. We were drawn into the middle of their loving relationships. As a follower of Christ, my Identity, or "how I see myself", is formed in their love for one another. I believe we are created to be in the father's love.

But obviously, we don't stay there, do we? Most of us know the next part of the story. We regularly reject God and try to create our own way of being like God. I find myself seeking affirmation, love and acceptance in things and in others, instead of finding it in my father. Talk about a reality check! This was a big one for me this year. The Spirit lead me to books, passages and messages that all highlighted the fact that when we seek love/acceptance/affirmation (the list goes on) from anything other than our father, we become like Orphans and Slaves.

1. Unaware of who our father is, feeling the need to survive on our own and fend for ourselves, wandering from place to place with no family, no awareness of unconditional love and no home.
2. Competing with others, fighting to find value/worth, feeling like love needs to be deserved, having a fear of failure and punishment, and desiring someone else to be held responsible for our actions.

The bible is story after story, of God, pursuing people who didn't know how to receive His love. That is my story! Daily I swing back and forth from acting like a son to acting like a slave or orphan. The Spirit was making that clear to me. This truth that I am loved, that I was created from the love of the trinity, for the love of the trinity, was paradigm shifting. He brought me to another well known passage, though this time it was a story Jesus told, and He walked me through the most refreshing through. A reality that has drastically changed me this year.

Instead of writing one long article that 90% of you would not read, I thought we could break it up, let you take a breath and then read the conclusion when you actually want to. Click on the PART TWO link below...

## PART TWO

seth emery - 2017

