

Follow the Lamb! (Selections)

by Horatius Bonar

A Christian's life is a continuous following of the Lord, looking to Jesus daily for rest and spiritual health, and living a life that is written under the eye of God.

Scripture: Leviticus 11:45, Psalm 52:2, Proverbs 23:23, John 10:27, Romans 15:3, Galatians 5:24, 1 Timothy 6:10, 2 Peter 1:9, 1 John 4:1, Revelation 3:4

Topics: "Following Christ", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Horatius Bonar emphasizes the continuous journey of following Christ, urging believers to keep their focus on Jesus and His cross for spiritual health and growth. He warns against distractions from the world and the dangers of complacency in prayer and spiritual practices. Bonar encourages Christians to live a life of integrity, humility, and discernment, avoiding the pitfalls of self-indulgence and covetousness. He reminds the faithful that their lives are a book being written for eternity, and they must strive for holiness and righteousness in all aspects. Ultimately, Bonar calls for a deep, intimate relationship with God, urging believers to act in love and service, reflecting Christ's character in their daily lives.

Transcript

"My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me." John 10:27

Christian, your whole life is to be one continuous following of the Lord.

You began with turning your back upon the world, and 'looking to Jesus'; keep ever thus. Looking to Him brought rest to you at first, and healed your soul; so, looking to Him daily will maintain your rest and perfect your spiritual health.

Christian, should your eye ever be withdrawn from the cross, you will be sure to go backwards, to grow cold, and to forget that you were purged from your old sins (2 Peter 1:9). That cross is life, health, holiness, consolation, strength, joy; let nothing come between it and you.

Christian, your life is a book; it may be a volume of larger or smaller size. Conversion is but the title-page or the preface. The book itself remains to be written; and your years and weeks and days are its chapters and pages and lines. It is a book written for eternity; see that it be written well. It is a book for the inspection of enemies as well as friends; be careful of every word. It is a book written under the eye of God; let it be done reverently; without levity, yet without constraint or terror.

The grace of God is your strength, as it is your joy; and it is only by abiding in it that you can really live the life of the redeemed. Be strong, then, in this grace; draw your joy out of it; and beware how you turn to anything else for refreshment, or comfort, or holiness. Though a believing man, you are still a sinner; a sinner to the last; and, as such, nothing can suit you but the free love of God. Draw continually on Christ and His fullness for this grace. This abounding grace, rightly understood, will not make you sin; it will not relax morality or make inconsistency a trifle. It will magnify sin and enhance its evil in your eyes.

Let the righteousness of the Righteous One be your daily covering.

Don't dally with error, and don't tamper with truth. 'Buy the truth' (Prov 23:23) at any price; but 'sell it not' for all the gold and silver on earth.

But the love of controversy is pernicious, even when it takes the side of truth. The man who likes better to be fighting about his food than eating it, is likely to remain lean enough. Disputes, like offences, must sometimes come; but, like David's 'sharp razor' (Psalm 52:2), they 'work deceitfully,' and are difficult to handle safely. They often eat out love, even when they do not destroy faith.

We deal with a slack hand in things pertaining to our own sins, and let things go unproved and uncondemned in ourselves which we are sharp enough to discover and rebuke in others. Deal honestly with every part of your daily life; in regard to duty, or trial, or sacrifice, or self-denial, or forbearance with others.

Strange that in spiritual things we should try to cheat ourselves as well as others! Yet so it is. We are loath to take the worst view of our own case; to think evil of ourselves; to act the stern censor in regard to our own omissions and commissions. We have few excuses for others, many for ourselves; evils that seem monstrous in others are trifles in us. When looking at others, we use a microscope; at ourselves, we either shut our eyes or put on a veil. This dishonest dealing is very pernicious; this 'covering of sin' is destructive both of peace and progress.

If you are one given to the divine companionship, you will be saved from much idle and wasteful society and conversation. You will not feel at home with worldly men, nor they with you.

Do not conform to the world in order to please men or to save yourself from their taunt or jest.

Go where you please, if you can take Jesus with you; go nowhere if He cannot be admitted, or if you are obliged for the time to conceal or disguise your divine discipleship.

Beware of going through prayer in a careless or perfunctory way, like a hireling doing his work in order to get done with it. 'Pray in the Holy Spirit' (Jude 20). Pray with honest fervor and simple faith, as men who really want what they ask for, and expect to get it all. Few things tend more to deaden the soul, to harden the heart, to drive out spirituality, than cold, formal prayer. It will eat as does a canker. Dread it and shun it. Do not mock God by asking what you don't want, or by pretending to desire what you don't care for.

Be much alone with God. Do not put Him off with a quarter of an hour morning and evening. Take time to get thoroughly acquainted. Converse over everything with Him. Unbosom yourself wholly- every thought, feeling, wish, plan, doubt- to Him. He wants converse with His creatures; shall His creatures not want converse with Him? He wants, not merely to be on 'good terms' with you, if one may use man's phrase, but to be intimate; shall you decline the intimacy, and be satisfied with mere acquaintance? What! intimate with the world, with friends, with neighbors; but not with God! That would look ill indeed. Folly, to prefer the

clay to the potter, the marble to the sculptor, this little earth and its lesser creatures to the mighty Maker of the universe, the great 'All and in all!'

You must go straight to Jesus with that cold heart, and warm it at His cross; then your work for Him will be at once a necessity, a delight, and a success.

The Christian has discovered one book truer, more precious, and more poetical than all the rest together. All truth is precious, though not all divine. Let the Bible be to us the book of books, the one book in all the world, whose every wisdom is truth, and whose every verse is wisdom. In studying it, be sure to take it for what it really is, the revelation of the thoughts of God given us in the words of God. Knowing that we have divine thoughts embodied in divine words, through the inspiration of an unerring translator, we sit down to the study of the heavenly volume, assured that we shall find in all its teachings the perfection of wisdom, and in its language the most accurate expression of that wisdom that the finite speech of man can utter.

Every word of God is as perfect as it is pure (Psalm 19:7; 12:6). Let us read and re-read the Scriptures, meditating on them day and night. They never grow old, they never lose their sap, they never run dry. Though it is right and profitable, as I have said, to read other books, if they are true and good, yet beware of reading too many. Do not let man's book thrust God's book into a corner. Do not let commentaries smother the text; nor let the true and the good shut out the truer and the better.

TAKE HEED TO YOUR STEPS

Beware, not merely of falling, but of stumbling. 'Walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise'; like men in an enemy's country, or like travelers climbing a hill, slippery with ice, and terrible with precipices, where every step may be a fall, and every fall a plunge into a chasm. Beware of little slips, slight inconsistencies, as they are called; they are the beginning of all backsliding, and they are in themselves evil, as well as hateful to God. Keep your garments undefiled (Rev 3:4); beware of small spots as well as larger stains or rents; and the moment you discover any speck, however small, go wash in the fountain, that your 'garments may be always white,' and so pleasing in the eyes of Him, whose you are, and whom you serve. 'Crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts' (Gal 5:24). 'Mortify your members which are upon the earth'

Stand aloof from the world's gaiety, and be jealous of what are called 'harmless amusements.' I do not condemn all amusements, but I ask that they should be useful and profitable, not merely harmless. Dancing and card-playing are the world's devices for killing time. They are bits of the world and the world's ways which will ensnare your feet and lead you away from the cross. Let them alone. Keep away from the ball-room, the opera, the oratorio, the theater. Dress, finery, and display, are deadly snares. Put away levity and frivolity.

Be you a Christian in little things as well as great. Dread little sins, little errors, little omissions of duty. Remember the Master's words about denying self- every part of self; be not a servant of self, or a worshiper of self, or a 'lover of self' (2 Tim 3:1,2) in any form. Take up your cross, and follow your Lord (Matt 16:24); as it is written, 'Even Christ pleased not Himself' (Rom 15:3).

God's aim in all His doings of grace is to 'hide pride from man'; to hinder boasting; to keep the sinner humble. All 'confidence in the flesh' (Phil 3:1,3), all trust in self, all reliance on the creature, are set aside by that great work of the Divine Substitute, who did all for us, and left us nothing to do, out of which it would be possible to extract a boast (2 Cor 12:9; Gal 6:14; Isa 41:16; 45:25). Let us fling away self-esteem and high-mindedness, for it is the very essence of unbelief. Be meek, be poor in spirit, be humble; be

teachable, be gentle, and easy to be entreated; putting away all high thoughts and lofty imaginations, either about what we are or what we can do; content to take the obscurest corner and the lowest seat; and this, not to indulge in a false lowliness, or in 'the pride that apes humility,' feeding our vanity with the thought that we are martyrs, and puffing up our fleshly mind with the idea of our wonderful condescension, or by brooding over our supposed wrongs and trials. Let us be truly humble, as was the Son of God: content to live unknown, and to do our work unnoticed, as a work not for the eye of man, but of God.

Keep self in the background, and don't say or do anything that looks like baiting your hook for a little praise.

True spiritual discernment is much lost sight of as a real Christian grace; discernment between the evil and the good, the false and the true. 'Beloved, believe not every spirit; but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world' (1 John 4:1). This 'discernment,' which belongs to every one who is taught of God, is the very opposite of that which is called in our day by the boastful name of 'liberality.' Spiritual discernment and 'liberal thought' have little in common with each other. Truth is a mighty thing in the eyes of God, whatever it may be in those of men. All error is, more or less, whether directly or indirectly, a misrepresentation of God's character, and a subversion of His revelation.

Satan is the consummate deceiver! It is Satan who gives to the ballroom, and the dance, and the theater, and the voluptuous music their special power to harm; for these are Satan's baits and nets, by means of which he allures the unwary, and leads back the believer to unbelieving ground, disarming our watchfulness, dazzling our vision, reviving our worldliness, and perhaps, for a season, lulling us wholly asleep. We know that the last days are to be like the days of Noah and Lot (Luke 17:26-32), days of reveling, and banqueting, and luxury. Let us be wary, lest, standing as we do on the edge of these days, we be drawn away into the sins of an age led captive by Satan at his will.

DO SOMETHING FOR GOD

You were neither born nor re-born for yourselves alone. You may not be able to do much, but do something; work while it is day. You may not be able to give much, but give something; according to your ability, remembering that the Lord loves a cheerful giver. Take heed, and beware of covetousness; for the love of money is the root of all evil. Whenever worldliness comes in, in any shape, whether it be love of money or love of pleasure, you cease to be faithful to Christ, and are trying to serve both God and mammon.

'I am the Lord that brings you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God: you shall therefore be holy, for I am holy' (Lev 11:45).

God calls us to be holy. He becomes our God to make us like Himself. 'He calls us to be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.' He expects that we should represent Him among our fellow-men by our resemblance to Himself.

God calls us to be holy. He expects us to grow in unlikeness to this world, and in likeness to that world which is to come. He expects us to follow Him who did no sin, even though the attainment of perfection should not be in a day or a year, but the growth of a lifetime. It is for lack of daily growth, not for lack of complete and constant sinlessness, that God so often challenges His own.

Let us grow. Let us bring forth fruit. Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof.

Self in all its forms is a hindrance to our spiritual growth (Rom 14:7). Self-will, self-sufficiency, self-indulgence, self-importance, self-glory, self-seeking, self-brooding, -all these mar fruitfulness. Denying self is the beginning, the middle, and the end of our course here, as followers of Christ. Selfishness takes the form of covetousness, or love of money; of luxury, or love of foods and drinks, and the good things of this life. How can a man grow when he is pampering self instead of crucifying the flesh; when he is indulging and fondling the old man instead of nailing him to the cross; when he is enjoying all softness and ease and worldly comfort, instead of enduring hardness, and taking up his cross and mortifying his members which are upon the earth (Rom 8:13; Gal 5:24; Col 3:5)?

Covetousness

'The love of money is the root of all evil' (1 Tim 6:10). Few things are more hateful in a Christian man than this; few things more completely destroy his influence; and few things more sadly or more justly make him the scorn of the world than eagerness for money, or niggardliness in parting with it. The covetous man cannot grow spiritually. He must ever remain a stunted Christian. 'Filthy lucre' is poison to the soul. If we do not 'make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness' by laying out our substance for God, it will become the blight of spirituality, the destruction of our religious life (Prov 30:8; 1 Tim 6:6-10). Be generous, be large-hearted, be open-handed, be loving, be free in giving, if you would grow.

Pride

Self-satisfaction in any shape, or self-admiration of any kind, in regard to person, or property, or accomplishments, or position; these are immensely hurtful to spiritual life. True godliness prospers only in the lowly heart; the heart which, in proportion as it becomes more and more satisfied with Christ, becomes more and more dissatisfied with itself. If the Master was meek and lowly, shall the disciple be anything else?

The good-natured formality of thousands is just the hateful lukewarmness of Laodicea.

Do you say that you are in Christ, and that you are abiding in Him? Then you ought to walk as He walked. You are bound to follow His footsteps.

We seek henceforth conformity to Him who has set us free, and who bids us follow Him in the path of conformity to the Father's will.

Love Him who has brought our souls out of prison by going into prison for us.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/horatius-bonar/follow-the-lamb-selections/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net