



CHRIST ENCOUNTERS

A Man I Could Follow

COMPANION STUDY
GUIDE



BY DONNA WOOLAM

Study Guide: Christ Encounters

Episode 4: A Man I Could Follow

This guide is designed to deepen your understanding of the biblical teachings presented in the "Christ Encounters" study. It focuses on the calling of the first disciples as detailed in the gospels of Luke and John, emphasizing personal encounters with Jesus and the concept of "friendship evangelism." It includes a short-answer quiz to test comprehension, an answer key, a series of essay questions for deeper reflection, and a glossary of key terms.

Instructions: Answer the following questions in 2-3 complete sentences, drawing exclusively from the livestream and video recorded on Tuesday, September 23, 2025.

1. What specific event prompted the creation of this "Christ Encounters" study series?
2. According to Donna, why do the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) present similar stories with different details?
3. Describe the first encounter Andrew had with Jesus and what his immediate reaction was.
4. What is the concept of "friendship evangelism" as explained in the study?

5. What was Simon Peter's response when Jesus instructed him to let down the nets after a fruitless night of fishing?

6. How did Simon Peter, James, and John react to the miraculous, net-breaking catch of fish?

7. What financial or practical provision did Donna suggest the miraculous catch of fish may have provided for the disciples?

8. What was Nathanael's initial skeptical reaction to hearing that the Messiah was from Nazareth, and what convinced him otherwise?

9. How does Donna use the example of the fishermen to illustrate how Jesus can use a person's life experience for the kingdom?

10. What specific advice is given to a person struggling with temptation or doubt in their faith?

Answer Key

- The study series was inspired by Donna's book titled "His Hostage Heart", and is about encountering the unrelenting love of God, which aligns with the study's theme of personal encounters with Christ.
- Donna explains that the variations exist because God used the individual personalities, perspectives, and observational styles of the human authors who wrote the scriptures. These nuances are presented not as contradictions but as evidence of the Bible's authenticity, as a manufactured story would have all details match perfectly.
- Andrew, who was a disciple of John the Baptist, heard John identify Jesus as the "Lamb of God" and immediately followed Jesus. Afterward, the first thing he did was find his own brother, Simon, to tell him, "We have found the Messiah."
- Friendship evangelism is described as the simple act of telling the people you love about your own personal encounter with Jesus. It doesn't require deep biblical knowledge but is based on sharing what has happened to you, much like Andrew told Peter and Philip told Nathanael.
- Simon Peter initially expressed doubt, informing Jesus that he was a professional fisherman who had toiled all night and caught nothing. However, out of respect for Jesus' authority, he stated, "nevertheless at your word I will let down the net."

- They were all astonished by the sheer volume of fish. Simon Peter fell at Jesus' knees, declared himself a sinful man, and asked Jesus to depart from him. After this, they brought their boats to land, forsook all, and followed him.
- Donna theorizes that the "overabundant, super abundant" catch of fish provided the money to take care of any debts or family responsibilities the fishermen had. This provision would have freed them to leave their business and livelihood behind to follow Jesus.
- Nathanael's first response was, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" He was convinced that Jesus was the Son of God only after Jesus revealed that He had seen Nathanael under a fig tree before Philip had even called him, demonstrating supernatural knowledge.
- Donna notes that fishermen like Simon, Andrew, James, and John could have felt unqualified to follow a Rabbi. However, Jesus spoke directly to their identity by telling them, "I will make you fishers of men," showing that He would take all their existing experience and skills and repurpose them for His kingdom.
- The first piece of advice is to go directly to the Lord and tell Him about the struggle. If more help is needed, Donna strongly advises seeking counsel from a trusted Christian brother or sister who is wise in the Word of God, not from a friend who is in the same struggle.

Digging Deeper

Instructions: The following questions are designed for deeper reflection and longer-form answers. Use the video material to construct a thorough and thoughtful response.

1. Analyze the encounter between Jesus and Simon Peter in Luke chapter 5, from the request to use the boat to the miraculous catch of fish. What does this event reveal about Peter's initial mindset, Jesus' teaching methods, and the profound impact of a divine encounter?

Discuss the concept of "friendship evangelism" as presented in the study. Using the specific examples of Andrew and Philip, explain how this method works and why Donna believes it is an effective and accessible way for anyone to share their faith.

3. Donna emphasizes that Jesus "comes to us where we are" and doesn't require us to be "cleaned up" first. Using examples from the text (such as the fishermen at work or Nathanael under the fig tree), explain this principle and its implications for modern believers who may feel unworthy or unprepared.

4. Explain Donna's perspective on the differences found within the Synoptic Gospels. How does she argue that these narrative variations actually strengthen the historical credibility of the Bible?

5. Summarize Donna's points regarding Judas Iscariot, temptation, and free will. What counsel does she offer to those struggling with their belief, and how does she connect this to John the Baptist's example of seeking direct confirmation from Jesus?

Glossary of Key Terms

Apostles: The 12 disciples whom Jesus specifically chose from his larger group of followers. The list provided in Luke 6 includes Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alpheus, Simon the Zealot, Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot.

Andrew: Simon Peter's brother and one of the first disciples. He was originally a follower of John the Baptist and, upon hearing Jesus identified as the "Lamb of God," followed Him and then brought his brother Simon to meet the Messiah.

Christ: The Greek translation for the Hebrew word "Messiah."

Christ Encounters: The title of the study series, focusing on personal encounters with Jesus as described in the Bible and as experienced by believers today.

Disciples: Followers of Jesus. The 12 apostles were chosen from among this larger group.

Friendship Evangelism: The act of sharing one's personal encounter with Jesus with the people one loves, such as friends and family. It is presented as a primary way believers can share their faith.

His Hostage Heart: The title of the book authored by Donna. The book's theme is encountering the unrelenting love of God. Learn more at <https://DonnaWoolam.com/Order>

Holy Spirit: The Godhead person who teaches believers "all the things of God," providing wisdom, understanding, and knowledge. The Holy Spirit dwells within believers to guide and speak to them.

James and John: Brothers, sons of Zebedee, and fishing partners with Simon Peter. They were called by Jesus at the same time as Peter, after the miraculous catch of fish, and they left everything to follow Him.

John the Baptist: A prophet who had his own disciples, including Andrew. He publicly identified Jesus by saying, "Behold the Lamb of God," which prompted his disciples to follow Jesus.

Glossary of Key Terms

John the Baptist: A prophet who had his own disciples, including Andrew. He publicly identified Jesus by saying, "Behold the Lamb of God," which prompted his disciples to follow Jesus.

Judas Iscariot: One of the 12 apostles who ultimately "became a traitor." The speaker notes that Jesus called him just like the others and that he had many opportunities to turn away from his path.

Messiah: A title for Jesus, meaning the prophesied savior. Andrew announced to Simon, "We have found the Messiah," which is translated as "the Christ."

Nathanael: A man brought to Jesus by his friend Philip. Initially skeptical that the Messiah could come from Nazareth, he was convinced after Jesus displayed supernatural knowledge by stating He saw Nathanael under a fig tree before Philip's arrival.

Philip: A disciple from Bethsaida called by Jesus. He immediately found his friend Nathanael to tell him that they had found the one written about by Moses and the prophets.

Rabbi: A title used for Jesus by His followers, which translates to "Teacher."

Simon Peter: A fisherman and the brother of Andrew. Jesus gave him the name Cephas, which is translated as "a stone." His encounter with the miraculous catch of fish was a pivotal moment in his decision to leave his profession and follow Jesus.

Synoptic Gospels: A term for the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. They are called this because they often narrate many of the same stories, each from the unique point of view of the author.

The Chosen: A television series mentioned as an example of a "fictional narrative" about Jesus and the disciples. The speaker uses it to caution that while enjoyable, such depictions are not scripture and that believers must be biblically literate.