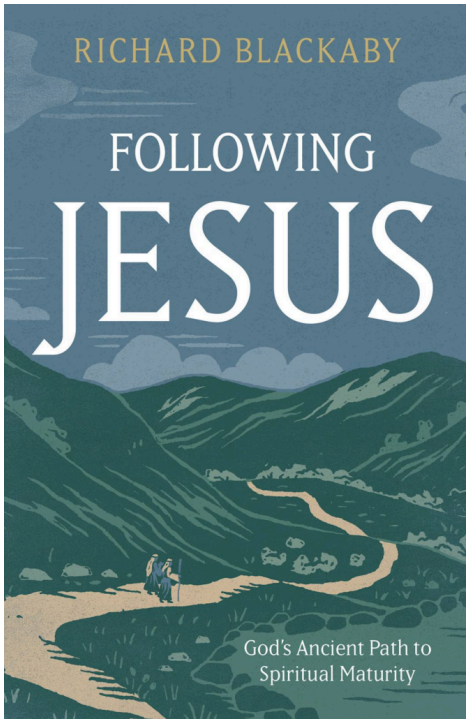
"Following Jesus" by Richard Blackaby
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Blacl⁄aby says discipleship isn't something you do; it's Someone you follow

'Following Jesus' is a practical, biblical guide for growing as a disciple



BRENTWOOD, Tenn., Aug. 7, 2026—The church in North America is facing a discipleship crisis. Many congregations are struggling to grow, younger generations are walking away and church leaders are constantly searching for the next strategy, program, or model that might turn things around.

But what if the answer isn't something new?

In "Following Jesus" (October 2026, B&H Publishing) author and ministry leader Dr. Richard Blackaby, son of famed Christian author Henry Blackaby, and co-author of the worldwide bestseller "Experiencing God," makes the case that the Church's greatest opportunity may be found by returning to something remarkably old: the way Jesus himself made disciples.

Today, discipleship is often associated with attending a Bible study, meeting with a mentor, completing a curriculum or simply participating in church. In this book, Blackaby argues that biblical discipleship is far more personal—and far more demanding. At its core, discipleship is a relationship with Jesus and a willingness to actually follow where he leads.

"I contend that a Christian disciple is a follower of Jesus. Most Christians would agree. Problems arise, however, when defining what it means to follow Jesus," Blackaby said. "Being a follower of Christ does not simply involve joining a church, having a daily quiet time, or practicing spiritual disciplines. It isn't about adopting a Christian lifestyle, embracing a Christian worldview, or asking, "What would Jesus do?" It's not even about trying to do what Jesus did. It means simply following Jesus."

According to Blackaby, Jesus has not changed his approach. Drawing from the way Christ trained his first twelve disciples, Blackaby explores the profound yet practical principles Jesus

used to transform ordinary people into men who would carry the gospel throughout the world. Those same principles remain available to Christians and churches today.

“It is a profound honor to work with Dr. Blackaby and to be part of carrying forward the spiritual legacy of ‘Experiencing God,’” said Devin Maddox, B&H Books Publisher. “Blackaby brings that same deeply rooted, relational vision of discipleship to a new generation with a fresh and compelling voice. We are grateful for the opportunity to help steward a message that stands within such a meaningful legacy while calling the Church once again to move beyond passive faith and into the daily adventure of truly following Jesus.”

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Richard Blackaby is the oldest child of Henry and Marilynn Blackaby. He's the president of Blackaby Ministries International. He has written more than forty books and speaks internationally on experiencing God, the Christian life, and spiritual leadership. His most recent releases are “Following Jesus” and “Experiencing God in Every Day Life,” written alongside his sons, Mike and Daniel. He and his wife Lisa enjoy eight grandkids and live in Atlanta.

To request an interview, please contact Jill Waggoner at jill.waggoner@lifeway.com

TALKING POINTS & INTERVIEW ANGLES

Why the Church Doesn't Need Another Discipleship Trend Churches have access to more programs, resources, conferences and content than ever before, yet many continue to struggle with spiritual formation. Blackaby can discuss why recovering Jesus' original model of discipleship may be more effective than searching for the next church-growth strategy.

When "Following Jesus" Became a Metaphor What does it actually mean to follow Jesus in everyday life? Blackaby challenges Christians to move beyond learning about Christ toward allowing Jesus to genuinely direct their decisions, priorities, relationships and calling.

What Jesus Understood About Mal′ing Disciples Jesus transformed twelve ordinary people without classrooms, elaborate programs, or modern ministry infrastructure. Blackaby explores the intentional methods Jesus used and what pastors, parents, mentors and Christian leaders can learn from them today.

How Church Leaders Can Confuse Vocation with Calling Many today believe that they have been called to pastor or preach, but those are an outflow of their call to follow Jesus. Blackaby can bring encouragement and clarity to both young and old church leaders as they navigate decision-making, take on new roles, or consider retirement.

Why Younger Generations Need More Than Church Attendance As churches and parents wrestle with younger generations disengaging from institutional Christianity, Blackaby can speak to the difference between raising young people who attend church and helping them develop a personal, active relationship with Jesus.

Getting Out of the Boat: The Cost and Adventure of Following Jesus
Peter and the other disciples had to leave something behind before they could discover what Jesus had for them. Blackaby discusses why genuine discipleship involves trust, obedience, risk and a willingness to follow Jesus beyond what feels comfortable or predictable.

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POSSIBLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- You argue that the Church may not need something new but something 2,000 years old. What have modern churches lost when it comes to discipleship?
- We use the phrase “follow Jesus” constantly in Christianity. What does it actually mean to follow him in everyday life?
- How has discipleship become confused with things like Bible studies, church attendance, mentoring, or completing a curriculum?
- You have said that the church has often been more focused on making decisions rather than making disciples. What do you mean by that?
- You have said that it is far easier to study about Jesus than to follow him. Why is that?
- You say that for many Christians, following Jesus has become more of a metaphor than a daily reality. How can someone recognize when that has happened in their own life?
- How can following Jesus free us from shame that many experience in the church when they feel like they don’t measure up to their mentors?
- What did Jesus do when training the original twelve disciples that churches and Christian leaders often overlook today?
- How have some church leaders confused their vocation with their call to follow Jesus?
- Many churches are deeply concerned about younger generations walking away from the faith. What role does genuine discipleship play in addressing that problem?
- Why isn't simply teaching people more biblical information enough to make them disciples?
- Peter, Andrew, James, and John had to leave their nets when Jesus called them. What are some of the modern-day “nets” Christians may have to leave behind in order to truly follow Jesus?
- What changes in a church when its primary goal shifts from attracting people to intentionally making disciples?
- For someone listening who realizes they have been attending church for years but aren't sure they are actively following Jesus, where should they begin?
- How can parents teach their children to follow Jesus? What might be holding them back?

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