

Follow *Andy Stanley*

Scripture: Matthew 9:9-12

Idea: The question is not, “How far along are you in the journey?” But, “Are you following?”

Introduction

1. As a believer, there have been times when I thought the Christian life could have been called, “Jesus Says.” Jesus says pray. Jesus says don’t look over there. Jesus says be nice. Jesus says to get up early and read your Bible.
2. I kept having to sit down. In fact, it was a relief to sit out of the game for a while . . . to take a break. Then I would hear a sermon about playing “Jesus Says” and back in I would go for another round.
3. The frustrating thing was that some people were so good at it. They could stay in the game forever . . . for a lifetime. I kept having to sit down.
4. I would meet people who had never played “Jesus Says,” and I would think, “Now *they* really need to play. But *I’m* so bad at it, I can’t imagine *asking* them to play.”
5. It is very easy to lose sight of the relational nature of the Christian faith—that the driving force behind the Christian faith is a relationship with a living Savior. When that happens, we find ourselves playing “Jesus Says.”

The tragedy is . . .

6. When we lose sight of the relational nature of Christianity . . . if we begin to pursue a list of things to do . . . we lose our joy, our victory over temptation and balance.
7. It would be like pursuing the rules and principles of marriage, rather than the person you are married to. You could be doing everything right . . . but have no real relationship.
8. How enjoyable would that be? How long would that charade go on?
9. That’s why so many of us bailed out after high school or college or even after a few years of marriage. Playing “Jesus Says” will wear you out.

The irony is . . .

I. The reason Jesus came was to lay the groundwork for a new kind of relationship with God.

- A. He came to change the spiritual paradigm.
 1. How to relate to him
 2. How to think about him
 3. How to approach him
- B. He gave us several word pictures to help us think correctly about spiritual reality.
 1. He compared it to a father and child. God is a father.
 2. He compared our relationship to him with a branch abiding in a vine.