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FOLLOWED HIM AT A DISTANCE

(MARK 14:54)

Taken from **FIVE WORDS EXPLORED** By Jim Chapman

SCRIPTURAL CONTEXT: MARK 14:53-54

"There's probably only one thing worse than following Jesus at a distance, and that's getting out in front of him and trying to lead. How presumptuous! It's often been heard in Christian circles that "if Jesus is your co-pilot; you better change seats." As a matter of fact, you're not even a copilot, you're a passenger.

After Jesus was arrested and taken to the high priest, Peter followed at a distance. He probably wanted to know what might happen to his Master and Friend, but he himself didn't want to be known, He wanted to see but not be seen. Despite his earlier bravado---"...though they all fall away because of you I will never fall away" (Matthew 26:33) ---Peter apparently was hesitant to be viewed as an associate of the arrested Christ. He had good reason. Three different people identified him with Jesus and called him out on it. He vehemently denied it each time.

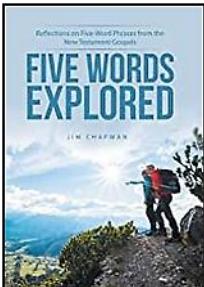
How prone are we to following Christ at a distance? If afforded the option, would we choose a secular Ivy League university over a reputable Christian college because we don't want to be belittled for a Bible-based curriculum? Would we embrace theistic evolution over creationism because we fear the disdain of our academic peers? For similar reasons, are we willing to concur with liberal theological "scholarship" that the first eleven chapters of Genesis are mythological and not to be understood as credible historical records? These might be contemporary examples of "following Christ at a distance" because we fear the consequences of professional or academic ridicule.

Do we attend church services but not truly engage in worship? Do we read the Bible but not meditate on its content? Do we pray in a superficial, hurried, or perfunctory manner, but without any passion? These, too, could signal our following Christ at a distance. May we not follow those who are said to have tasted "the goodness of the word of God" but who apparently did not ingest and digest it and were in danger of falling away. (Hebrews 6:4-6).

Let us not be disciples who are ashamed or afraid to follow Christ closely and who hang back at a distance. Worse yet, may we not desert our Lord as the disciples did following his arrest and betrayal. "Distance learning" has no place in the school of Christ's devoted followers.

PRAYER

Lord, you can easily track me on your heavenly radar.
Please draw me closer if I'm following from afar.

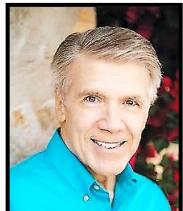


Five Words Explored examines five-word phrases from the Gospels and parlays them into 125 short reflections on life and eternity.

Jim Chapman, a devoted Christian for more than sixty years, seeks to exalt the Creator and Savior, Jesus Christ; to increase the reader's biblical literacy; and to encourage others to grow in their faith by touching on a variety of subjects and principles from the Bible.

Some of the phrases he expounds on include:

- “Do You Begrudge My Generosity?” (Matthew 20:15).
- “Ask, and You Will Receive” (John 16:24).
- “From Heaven or from Man?” (Matthew 21:25).
- “Do You Have Any Fish?” (John 21:5).
- “Send Us to the Pigs” (Mark 5:12)
- “Father, Hallowed be Your Name” (Luke 11:2)
- “Neither Do I Condemn You” (John 8:11).



Jim Chapman draws on 60 years of experience as a Christian and his personal study of the scriptures to share insights on God’s Word. He has earned degrees from Wheaton College, the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business, and Phoenix Seminary. He has made a living working with numbers but a life working with words—especially the written and living Word.

His previously published work is a delightful, creative story called *The Night After Christmas* [WinePress, 2009], an illustrated hardback book that brings the reader back to the original meaning of the holiday.

Because *The Night After Christmas* is no longer in print, in order to obtain a signed copy (new book, not used), please e-mail Jim Chapman for more details at: je_chapman2249@comcast.net



Jim and Laurie Chapman and their children have been close friends of our family for 37 years. We often celebrated Gene’s birthday together on July 4th (this photo was taken in 2004). What a blessing the Chapman’s were to Gene and me and continue to be in my life today! Jim is a gifted communicator and writer. He wrote a beautiful poem which he shared at Jonathan and Myriam’s rehearsal dinner. For my surprise 60th birthday party he wrote a unique, fun-filled poem which I and my 60+ friends all enjoyed!

I was thrilled when Jim sent me his newest book: ***Five Words Explored***. I expected it would be a blessing, and I was not disappointed! I appreciate that it’s broken up into 125 short reflections, each ending with a prayer. You will be challenged in your faith through the Scriptures and Jim’s thought-provoking, encouraging insights, including some much-needed conviction at times! Jim is down to earth as he shares experiences from his own life and often includes questions to stimulate further pondering.

This book can be used as a devotional, a Bible Study and/or also as a great resource to further expand one’s understanding and clarification on each of the verses and topics discussed. Thank you, Jim, for the time you invested in this project. It will be a blessing to the body of Christ!

I invite you to visit Jim’s website at www.fivewordsbyjchapman.com. You can order a copy through the website, the publisher [<https://www.westbowpress.com/en/bookstore>], or from your favorite online bookseller. E-book versions are also available for those of you who prefer the digital option.

*Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful
May the fire of our devotion light their way
May the footprints that we leave
Lead them to believe
And the lives we live inspire them to obey
Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful*
Words and Music by Jon Mohr



What will your family, co-workers, and acquaintances say about you when you pass away?

Justin followed Jesus closely! This is a beautiful tribute written by Justin's co-workers upon his passing. I have recently had the joy of getting to know his mother, Missy. What a blessing she is in my life!



On July 15th **D2 Surveying** tragically lost the youngest member of their team. Sadly, Justin Linkletter who was only 20 years young, passed away in a car accident. Justin was an unbelievable young man with endless potential, and we were fortunate to work with him for 4 months. Justin had spent his time with us singing songs, taking pictures of sunrises (and sunsets if we worked a long day), talking about Donald Trump, telling us about girls that he is interested in, and occasionally we would survey a little too. **With all his time spent developing these great relationships with his coworkers we would be doing a disservice to not mention the one thing that meant the most to Justin, his relationship with his Savior Jesus Christ. Justin was a passionate man of God and for that we are most thankful. He was an open book, and he was unashamed of all that he believed in.**



Justin Paul Linkletter - October 28, 1996 - July 15, 2017 – “Child of God, disguised as a Land Surveyor”

“When I was little . . .

my nurse Dibby’s cousin had a dog, just a mutt, and the dog was pregnant. I don’t know how long dogs are pregnant, but she was due to have her puppies in about a week. She was out in the yard one day and got in the way of the lawn mower, and her two hind legs got cut off. They rushed her to the vet, and he said, “I can sew her up, or you can put her to sleep if you want, but the puppies are okay. She’ll be able to deliver the puppies. Dibby’s cousin said, “Keep her alive.”

*So, the vet sewed up her backside, and over the next week the dog learned to walk. She didn’t spend any time worrying, she just learned to walk by taking two steps in the front and flipping up her backside, and then taking two steps and flipping up her backside again. She gave birth to six little puppies, all in perfect health. She nursed them and then weaned them. And when they learned to walk, they all walked like her.” -- **It’s Always Something** by the late Gilda Radner*

What an amazing story of the power of an example! **May our walk with the Lord Jesus cause others to also desire to follow Him more closely.**

Is the path you’re on causing you to follow Jesus more closely or are you following Him at a distance?

If you are following Jesus at a distance, I hope this story passed onto James MacDonald by his mom, **Choosing to Change in Five Days** will encourage you to choose the right path. With your commitment and God’s help, you can choose the right path. Don’t let sin keep you from following Jesus closely.

Day 1: I went for a walk down a street. I fell into a hole. I didn’t see it. It took me a long time to get out. It’s not my fault.

Day 2: I went for a walk down the same street. I fell in the same hole. It took me a long time to get out. Why did I do that?

Day 3: I went for a walk down the same street. I fell in the same hole. I got out quickly. It is my fault.

Day 4: I went for a walk down the same street. I saw the hole. I walked around it.

Day 5: I went for a walk down a different street. I can’t handle it when I go down that street. Every time I go down that street, I feel something sucking me down that hole! I’m not going down that street anymore! I don’t like what happens on that street. And when I get there, I can’t handle it. I don’t want sin to reign in my body so I’m not going down that street anymore.

Upcoming Fall Speaking Engagements

I am humbled by the opportunities the Lord continues to give me to serve Him. I would covet your prayers as I prepare for these speaking engagements. May everything I say and do always bring honor and glory to my Precious Savior!



ARISE AZ - September 30 - October 1 - Arise AZ Women's Conference in Sedona, AZ.

Southwest Christian Center - October 7-9 – Women's Retreat in Buckhorn, New Mexico

Shiloh Community Church – November 12 - Women's Christmas Luncheon in Phoenix, AZ



When Jesus returns, may He find us faithful, and may our hearts and lives be so wrapped up in Him and His precious Word that when we see Him we'll be able to say . . .

I was just thinking about YOU!

Sara