

## JESUS MUST BE NUMBER ONE

It has often been pointed out that “Lord...me first” is a non sequitur. Calling Jesus “Lord” and “me first” don’t go together. Something has to give here.

### **Matthew 8:21 (NKJV)**

**21 Then another of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.”**

This indicates that both this man and the previous one (Matt. 8:19-20) were “disciples” in the loose sense of the word. The word disciple simply means “follower” or “learner”. In the gospels, there were general followers who showed interest in Jesus, but Jesus made a distinction between them and those who were “*disciples indeed*”. In other words, there are nominal disciples who may follow for a time outwardly but are not truly saved. In contrast are those who are truly committed disciples who are the real deal.

### **John 6:66 (NKJV)**

**66** From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.

### **John 8:31 (NKJV)**

**31** Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.”

“The teacher of the law (Matt. 8:19) and the man of verse 21 (“another disciple”) were disciples in the sense that they followed Jesus about and attended to His teaching, as distinct from those committed to His Lordship.”  
– *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*

The earlier scribe outwardly seemed willing to follow, but Jesus challenged him to count the cost. Now this outward disciple wants to be able to set the terms. But that doesn’t fit with the Lordship authority of Jesus. The authority of Jesus means that He is in charge, and He insists that He be the number one priority.

### **Matthew 8:22 (NKJV)**

**22** But Jesus said to him, “Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead.”

We don’t know if the man’s father had died yet or not. The Jews often buried a dead person on the same day they died, so if that was the case, what is this man doing here with Jesus?

Therefore, many think very possibly that what this man was saying is that he wanted to go home and wait for his father to die, get the inheritance, and then come and follow Jesus.

But Jesus, with Lordship authority, demands that He be the priority – even above family. In saying, “let the dead bury their own dead,” Jesus was saying, “**Let the spiritually dead bury their own physically dead,**” but this man’s priority was to follow Christ. The spiritually dead can handle these mundane affairs. In the parallel passage of Luke 9:50, Jesus told this man, “But you go and preach the kingdom of God.”

This was a very authoritative thing to say because the Jews considered it the highest of obligations to provide a proper burial for their parents (cf. Gen. 25:9; 35:29; 50:13; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 27:16). For Jesus to put Himself above family in this way made a MAJOR statement regarding His authority and importance.

### **Matthew 10:37 (NKJV)**

**37** He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

Jesus demands that He be number one. Allegiance to Him must be supreme. This is what it means to be a true follower – a disciple indeed. This is the level of importance and authority that Jesus attached to Himself.

“Neither man’s response is recorded, but the issue is clear – following Jesus supersedes all other commitments.”

– ***Evangelical Commentary on the Bible***

Etched in a stone are the words: “BY SIGNING THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, THE FIFTY-SIX AMERICANS PLEDGED THEIR LIVES, THEIR FORTUNES AND THEIR SACRED HONOR. IT WAS NO IDLE PLEDGE---- NO SIGNER DEFECTED – THEIR HONOR LIKE THEIR NATION, REMAINED IN TACT.

I think all would agree that was an honorable commitment, and we can thank them for it. But let me ask you – does Jesus require less? Is the value and importance of Jesus less? Or does the authority of Jesus call for an even greater commitment? I would say, “Yes, an even greater commitment that supersedes all other commitments!”

In Matthew 10, Jesus said He came to set family members one against another, in that they would have to choose Christ or family. In that context, He said, *“He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.”*

In Mark 10, Jesus told a rich young ruler that he had to give up the one thing he treasured above all else – namely, his materialistic god – and follow Him. Only then would he have treasure in heaven. (cf. Mark 10:17-22).

In these two examples, Christ emphasized that which tends to be most dear and idolized by people – namely, close family members and treasured earthly possessions. Jesus emphasized that He must be more important than any other person, more important than any other thing. This is the stuff of a true saving faith commitment. This is the stuff of true discipleship.

Jesus clearly demands to be number one above all else!

Other sacred pledges may be honorable, but for the true believer, recognition of the Lordship authority of Christ takes precedence above all other commitments. It’s the stuff of true faith!

This is what it means to call Jesus Lord and Savior! If Jesus isn’t your number one – you have yet to call Him “Lord” and mean it - and you don’t yet know Him as Savior!

### **Romans 10:13 (NKJV)**

**13** For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

You have to, from the heart, call on Him for Who He is as Lord! As Savior, He died for all our sins, as Lord over all, He rose again. Saving faith believes in Him as personal Savior and personal Lord.

### **Acts 16:31 (NKJV)**

...“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved...”