Prologue: You go on. I'll catch up.

Watching my son take his first steps was one of the greatest joys of my life.

It was so exciting.

There's just something beautiful and exhilarating about watching your child begin to walk.

Every time he attempted a step, we celebrated and clapped and cheered. And with a huge smile on his face he would stumble, get up, take a step, smile, stumble, get up again, and repeat the process over and over again.

Those few steps are now a daily marathon.

It's funny how you can encourage a child to do something so often, and then when they finally do it, wish they would stop for a second.

Let's just say he definitely helps Nicole and I stay in shape.

Now he grabs my index finger and leads me wherever he wants to go. All through the yard. To check the mail. To go find Momma down the hall.

Walking is all he wants to do. And I love it.

Honestly, I've always loved to walk.

On the beach with the sea breeze. In the woods with the trees swaying. Walking is healing to my soul.

So often after a long day, me, Nicole, and Leo head out for a walk. And it seems with each step we take, with each breath of fresh air, we feel our souls come alive again. It's in the walking we receive peace, fresh perspective, and rest.

Philosopher Henry David Thoreau had it right when he said:

> *"An early-morning walk is a blessing for the whole day."*[1]

There's just something revitalizing about a walk.

And there are massive health benefits associated with walking.

- Improved sleep
- Better endurance
- Stress relief
- Improvement in mood
- Increased energy and stamina
- Reduced tiredness that can increase mental alertness
- Weight loss
- Reduced cholesterol and improved cardiovascular (heart) health[2]

But walking is not only beneficial to our bodies. It's healing to our minds.

> *"Walking provides the best of both worlds. It offers the physical benefits of exercise while also boosting your emotional well-being. In fact, walking regularly can help ease symptoms related to chronic mental health conditions like anxiety and depression."*[3]

Putting one foot in front of the other, day after day, is a game-changer mentally and physically.

And I don't think it's any coincidence that Scripture describes our relationship with God as a walk.

*"This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he **walked** faithfully with God." (Genesis 6:9 NIV)*

*"For you have delivered me from death and my feet from stumbling, that I may **walk** before God in the light of life." (Psalm 56:13 NIV)*

*"Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will **walk** in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name." (Psalm 86:11 NKJV)*

*"But if we **walk** in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin." (1 John 1:7 NIV)*
*"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. **Walk** as children of the light." (Ephesians 5:8 NKJV)*

These are just a few of the verses we find in Scripture that speak to walking with God.

Put simply, to know God is to walk with Him.

To be a follower of Jesus is to walk with Jesus.
And this was the invitation from Jesus to His disciples from the very beginning.

Follow Me. Walk with Me. Learn from Me.

This wasn't just a figure of speech. Everywhere Jesus went, He walked. There were no Ubers or taxis or planes. If you wanted to go somewhere, most likely you had to walk.

So Jesus' invitation to follow Him was a literal invitation to walk with Him on the roads between towns and villages.

And it was on the roads, along the path, where the disciples learned who Jesus was. It was along the way, walking with

Jesus, that the disciples learned what it meant to forgive, to heal, to love, and to restore. It was as they walked that the disciples found rest, healing, and rejuvenation for their souls.

And Jesus, along with His disciples, did a lot of walking.

> *"Strictly based upon the accounts in the Gospel, it is estimated that Jesus walked at least 3,000 miles or more during the three years of his earthly ministry. The total number of miles he walked in his lifetime probably exceeded 21,000 miles if you estimate from the time of His birth to His death."*[4]

It was in the miles the disciples walked with Jesus where they began to understand who God was and who they were in Him.

Walking with Jesus was the key to knowing Jesus and becoming like Him.

Following Jesus wasn't a metaphor. It was a reality.

See, to follow Jesus is a lifelong endeavor. A daily decision. A moment by moment, hour by hour, day after day, communion with the One who knows you best because He formed you by hand.

And Jesus' invitation still stands for us today: Follow Me.

But, for many of us, myself included, following Jesus seems less like a daily walk with Him, and more like a "you go on, I'll catch up."

Jesus is an ingredient to the recipe of our life. A vital part of our existence. But a part, nonetheless.

To follow Jesus is less about today and more about one day.

So, Jesus is reduced to merely an add-on. An add-on to our day, our week, our life. With no real impact on the orientation of our life, we settle for a one-day-in-heaven kind of faith.

And this is why I'm writing this: *I believe we need to rediscover what it means to follow Jesus.*

Because that was the invitation from Jesus, right?

> *"Come, follow Me." (Matthew 4:19 NIV)*

So simple. But over time, we seem to have either made it too complex or reduced it to a box we check under the heading "faith."

As time moves on, it seems we have superimposed our own definitions and ideas on what it means and what it looks like to follow Jesus. Which is easy to do, as we are so far away from that moment in time when Jesus invited the first disciple to follow Him.

So, I'm convinced it's time for a rediscovery of what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

Merriam-Webster defines the word "rediscover" like this: *to discover (something lost or forgotten) again.*[5]

To rediscover something implies that it was once discovered. What is now lost was once found.

From my perspective, we've lost or forgotten what it means to follow Jesus.

And I think it's time to discover it again.

OUT THE DOOR

Brennan Manning states:

> *"The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians who acknowledge Jesus with their lips and walk out the door and deny Him by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable."*[6]

One of the main reasons I've heard for why someone doesn't follow Jesus, attend church gatherings, or ascribe to the Christian faith is hypocrisy.

Hypocrisy is defined as *"the practice of claiming to have moral standards or beliefs to which one's own behavior does not conform; pretense."*[7]

It's when transformation is on your lips but not in your life.

It's when we attempt to talk like Jesus, but we don't walk like Jesus.

It's when we attempt to see how close we can get to sin and still be saved.

And I think hypocrisy takes place in our lives whenever we lose sight of, or forget, what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

Mahatma Ghandi framed it like this:

> *"I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ."*[8]

Every time I read that statement it devastates me.

If hypocrisy is a barrier to people entering into a life-changing and life-giving relationship with God, then I believe it's time to address it.

If there is a gap between what we say and what we do as followers of Jesus, it's time we bridge it.

And the way we do that is by going on this journey of rediscovering what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

Because what our world needs is followers of Jesus to begin taking their faith out the door.

DUST OF HIS FEET

This book is divided into 3 sections.

In the first section, we will look at what I believe is our default setting when it comes to knowing Jesus and following Him.

In the second section, we will discuss God's design for following Jesus, what it meant to be a disciple in ancient Israel, and how that applies to our relationship to Jesus today.

To end, we will discover what it looks like practically to follow Jesus in our day-to-day lives.

The thread that runs through the heart of this book comes from an ancient blessing given to a disciple as they left to follow their rabbi.

"May you be covered with the dust of your Rabbi."[9]

That is the goal.

To follow Jesus so closely that we end up covered in the dust of His feet.
To follow Jesus so closely that we look like Him, talk like Him, and live like Him.

Because following Jesus is a lifelong journey of knowing Him, being known by Him, and becoming more like Him. Day after day after day.

If you're ready…here we go.