



Peter is a disciple with whom many Christians can identify –

- ✓ Zeal
- ✓ Boldness
- ✓ Overconfident
- ✓ Yet, he often got in his own way



Peter boldly proclaimed devotion (Matt. 26:31-35)

Yet when Jesus was arrested – he followed at a distance

- Matt. 26:58
- Mark 14:54
- Luke 22:54-55
- John 18:15-16

*Following at a Distance is just as much a danger for us as it was for Peter.*



Following  
at a  
Distance

# Following at a Distance



**I. The Reasons**

**II. The Dangers**

**III. The Signs**

**IV. The Justification**

# Following at a Distance

## I. The Reasons





# I. The Reasons



## A. Fear of a close connection

### 1. *For Peter:*

- a. Jesus was arrested (Mt. 26:57) – he might be too!
- b. Jesus was on trial (Mt. 26:57) – he could be too!
- c. Wanted to kill Jesus (Mt. 26:59) – might kill him too!

### 2. *For Us:*

- a. Expected to be involved
- b. Expected to give up (practice, relationship, etc.)
- c. Held to a higher standard – expected to follow it



# I. The Reasons



- A. Fear of a close connection
- B. Deceived self into thinking still following
  1. *Following – but don't want to be too close*
  2. *Following – but don't want to be too involved*
  3. *Was with John, but didn't go as far (John 18:15-16)*
  4. *Don't really think of self as "at a distance"*



# I. The Reasons



A. Fear of a close connection

B. Deceived self into thinking still following

C. Ignored the warnings

1. *Was told that his faith would fail (Luke 22:31-34)*

2. *Was warned that he would deny the Lord (Mt. 26:31-35)*

3. *When cock sounded the 1<sup>st</sup> time – should have shook him (Mark 14:68-72)*

a. Bowed his neck – denied again & again

b. Finally it hit him on second crow (v. 72), but it was too late!





# I. The Reasons



- A. Fear of a close connection
- B. Deceived self into thinking still following
- C. Ignored the warnings
- D. Forgot the commitment
  - 1. *Commitment was demanded of disciples (Matt. 16:24)*
  - 2. *Peter had boldly proclaimed his commitment to Jesus (Matt. 26:32-35)*
  - 3. *For the moment – he forgot all about it*
  - 4. *We make a commitment when we obey the gospel*
    - a. Rom. 6:17-18
    - b. Luke 6:46

# Following at a Distance



**I. The Reasons**  
**II. The Dangers**



## II. The Dangers



### A. Leads to other sins

1. *Lying (Matt 26:70)*
2. *Denial of the Lord (Matt. 26:70, 72, 74)*
3. *Faith failed (Luke 22:32)*
4. *Not surprising when one follows at a distance:*
  - a. Involved in worldliness
  - b. Do things they know to be wrong
  - c. Language is not becoming
  - d. Attitude turn sour
  - e. Likewise – not surprising – there is much they don't know!



## II. The Dangers



A. Leads to other sins

B. Easy to go even further

1. *Peter moved further away (Matt. 26:71; Mk. 14:68)*
2. *At a distance – makes it easy to put a wider gap between*
3. *Easy to lose faith altogether*
  - a. Heb. 3:12
  - b. Heb. 6:4-8
  - c. Heb. 10:26-ff
  - d. Reach the point of no return

# Following at a Distance

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- I. The Reasons**
  - II. The Dangers**
  - III. The Signs**



# III. The Signs



## A. Warm yourself by the devil's fire

1. *Peter warmed himself by the fire (Mk. 14:54; Lk. 22:55)*
  - a. Continued association (Lk. 22:59)
  - b. This was no brief association
  - c. Not bothered to be among the enemies
2. *Lot pitch his tent toward Sodom (Gen. 13:12)*
3. *When you are among / around a world of sin – you are following at a distance!*



# III. The Signs



- A. Warm yourself by the devil's fire
- B. Rather be comfortable with the world than uncomfortable with the Lord
  - 1. *Peter warmed himself by enemy's fire (John 18:18)*
    - a. To identify with the Lord would have been uncomfortable
    - b. It was cold – sought to be comfortable with the enemies
  - 2. *When we are just as close (or closer) to the world – than brethren – we are following at a distance!*



# III. The Signs



- A. Warm yourself by the devil's fire
- B. Rather be comfortable with the world than uncomfortable with the Lord
- C. Careless attitude
  1. *Peter sat among the enemies – not bothered*
  2. *Denial once – then twice – and sits among the enemies – not bothered!*
  3. *As if saying, "I'm Ok. I am not affected. I can handle this. No big deal!"*



# Following at a Distance



**I. The Reasons**

**II. The Dangers**

**III. The Signs**

**IV. The Justification**



## IV. The Justification



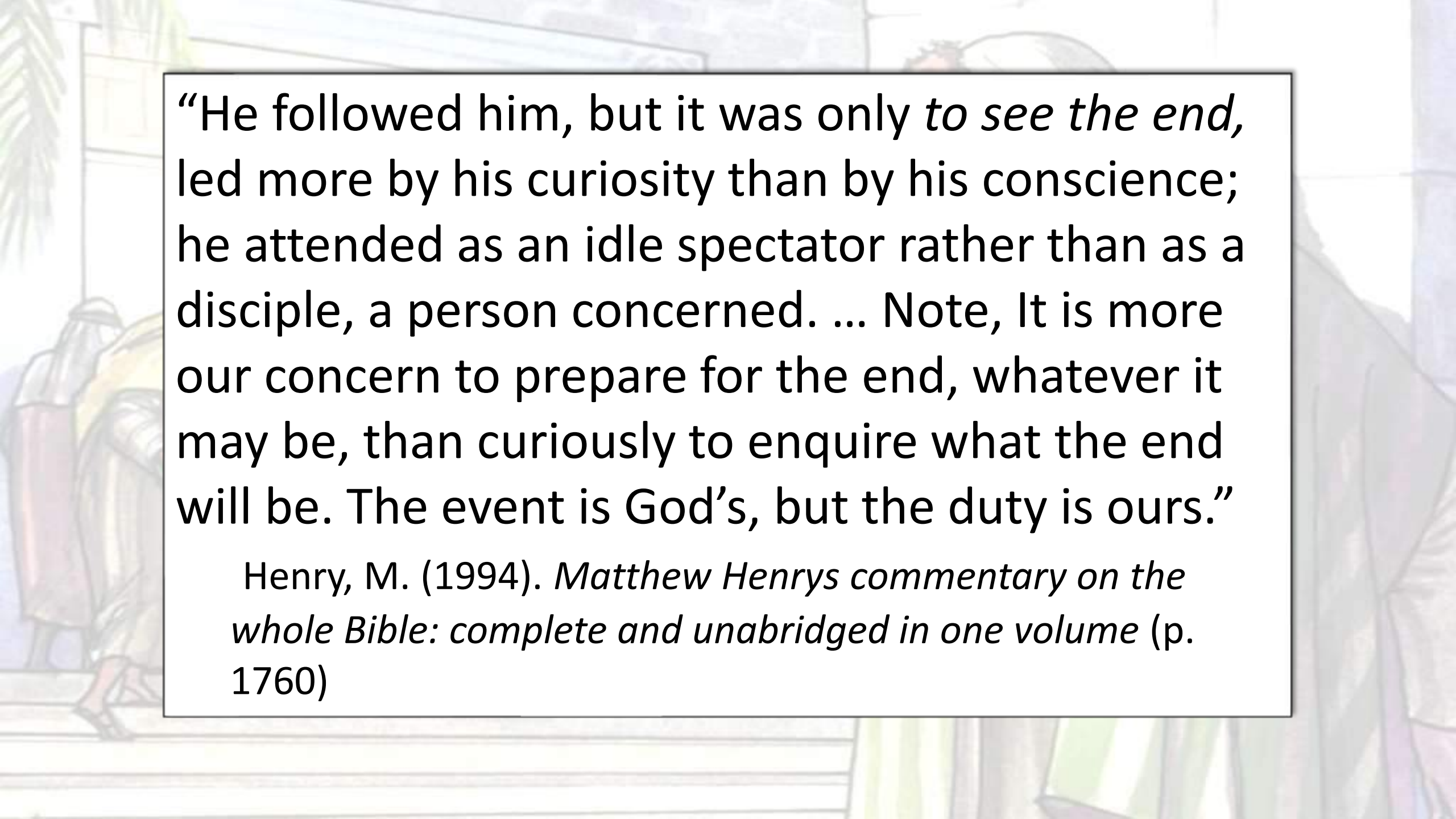
### A. Reason Peter gave – “to see end” (Mt. 26:58)

1. *To see the “outcome” (NASB; NIV)*
2. *Should have known – Jesus had told him (Matt. 16:21)*
3. *Lenski: “We always invent good reasons for doing what we ought not to do” (Matthew, 1057).*
4. *He wanted to know without being a part*

## IV. The Justification



- A. Reason Peter gave – to see end (Mt. 26:58)
- B. Often we are more spectators than disciples
  1. *Justification for following at distance: we want to know a little of what is going on*
  2. *Following out curiosity more than our conscience*



“He followed him, but it was only *to see the end*, led more by his curiosity than by his conscience; he attended as an idle spectator rather than as a disciple, a person concerned. ... Note, It is more our concern to prepare for the end, whatever it may be, than curiously to enquire what the end will be. The event is God’s, but the duty is ours.”

Henry, M. (1994). *Matthew Henrys commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume* (p. 1760)

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