Introduction:
My name is Gene Cagle. I’ve lived in Nacogdoches since 1980 when I brought our family here to set up a surgery practice. When we drove into the city limits of this town 32 years ago, we immediately experienced a peace that continues to this day. Since then we’ve been a part of the ministry of Grace Bible Church. My wife Nancy and I have 4 wonderful children who have all married people whom we love very much. One of the great benefits of these unions is that in the last two years they have given us four precious grandchildren.

Key Verse:
John 6:60 - “On hearing it, many of the disciples said, “This is hard teaching, who can accept it?”

Central Truth:
Being a fan of Jesus is different from being a follower.

Devotional:
This scripture caused me to stop and evaluate. Think with me about relationships, where sooner or later there comes a time to “define the relationship.” That usually leads to deepening the commitment, or drifting from it. Previously the disciples were confronted by who Jesus is and the demands and costs of following Him. On hearing His words, some of the disciples said, “This is hard teaching; who can accept it?” His followers are now at a point where they need to define their relationship with Him.

Beyond just focusing on the disciples here, I feel we need to look at our own hearts and define our own relationship with Christ. If we think we have any feelings for Jesus, then this devotional is for us. We need to ask ourselves, “Are we fans or followers of Jesus?” A fan could be described as an enthusiastic admirer. I think Jesus has a lot of fans today. As long as it is easy and self-serving rather than hard and self-sacrificing, we are “right there” with Him. Perhaps our churches have become stadiums where we come once a week for one hour, cheer for Him, and then go home and live our own self-centered lives. We want to be close enough to Him to get all of the benefits, but not so close as to require anything very hard from us. It’s not that fans don’t want a relationship with Jesus, it’s that we want the relationship with Him on our terms. The real question we must ask is what kind of relationship Jesus wants to have with us.

John shows us that Jesus was surrounded by a lot of fans. Verse 66 states, “From this time many of the disciples turned back and no longer followed Him.” Jesus had forced the issue. He then asked the twelve disciples, “Do you want to leave too?” Peter answered, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.” Thus, the twelve disciples and some others became the real followers of Jesus at this time.
A true follower of Jesus can only begin by accepting the truth of John 3:16 and being born again, but Luke 9:23 explains what life should start looking like after trusting Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins: “If anyone would come after me he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”

Salvation doesn’t come by taking up our crosses and following Jesus, only by trusting the Savior who died for us. His righteousness can’t be gained through human effort—only by trusting in His completed mission on the cross. But to grow in fellowship with Him we must lay down our own rights and devote ourselves to Him in love, wherever that takes us.

This scripture brings us all to a point of need in defining our relationship with Jesus. Are we His fans or true followers? Define your relationship!