

## *True Fans*

Mark 1: 14-20 (January 21, 2018)

### ***Mark 1: 16-20***

<sup>16</sup>As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. <sup>17</sup>And Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.” <sup>18</sup>And immediately they left their nets and followed him. <sup>19</sup>As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. <sup>20</sup>Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

### ***Historical Context***

Fishing was an important part of the Galilean economy in the first century. But it was not the "free enterprise" which modern readers of the New Testament may imagine. Even fishers who may have owned their own boats were part of a state regulated, elite-profiting enterprise, and a complex web of economic relationships. These are symptoms of an "embedded economy." That is to say, economies in the ancient Mediterranean were not independent systems with "free markets," free trade, stock exchanges, monetization, and the like, as one finds in modern capitalist systems. Rather, only political and kinship systems were explicit social domains; economics and religion were conceptualized, controlled, and sustained either by the political hierarchy or kin-groups. Fishermen were enmeshed in the imperial culture and taxation system. The obvious implication here is that these first disciples are called out of a system or culture to create a new community.

### ***Theme: True Fans***

Not even Jesus can go it alone. World-changing work requires community. Even “building community” requires community. Whether you’re a church, a company, a school, service club, a family, or a not-for-profit whatever agency – the first thing you need (even before you need money!) is community engagement.

Back in 2008, Kevin Kelly (founding editor of Wired Magazine) wrote that a successful enterprise needs [1000 true fans](#). That’s a much larger endeavor than the vast majority of churches. So really, the number is probably much less than that. Jesus settled on 12.

12 is doable for most people. Start, like Jesus, with just four. You’ll get there. It’s not really about the number, it’s about the quality of the relationship, and the shared mission in which you’re engaged. 12 people (or just 4) who are highly engaged in capturing people’s hearts can go a long way. So, then again, if you’re really in the business of capturing people’s hearts, who’s to say 1000 fans is out of reach?

Every endeavor that sets out to change the world, or even a little rural village in upstate New York, or on the Kansas prairies, or a forgotten neighborhood in East LA, or an affluent suburb of Austin starts with three or four people, maybe 12, who have a vision and are ready to leave everything they have to make it happen.