



Life Guide

applying God's Word to life

Following Jesus on His Terms September 14th, 2019

Luke 14:25-33

²⁵ Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: ²⁶ "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

²⁸ "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? ²⁹ For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, ³⁰ saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'

³¹ Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? ³² If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. ³³ In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple."

1. What is the best deal you've ever gotten on a purchase?

—OR—

What's the worst you've ever been ripped off?

Answers will vary. Make sure everyone gets a chance to break the ice. This should get everyone prepared to discuss the costs and the benefits of following Jesus.

2. Read through the passage and underline words which help you understand what it costs to be a disciple of Jesus.

The ones Pastor noticed are underlined above.

3. Read Genesis 29:30-31. The term for Leah in v. 31 is translated into Greek with the same word as Jesus uses for "hating" your family. How does this passage help you understand what Jesus meant by "hate" your family?

Genesis 29:30-31 (English Standard Version) ³⁰ "So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah, and served Laban for another seven years. ³¹ When the Lord saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb. (This language occurs in Deuteronomy 21:15-17 and in Exodus 32:27-29 too.) Jacob didn't hurt Leah or nurse resentful feelings toward her. He stayed married and cared for her. He loved Rachel more. Jesus using the same kind of language to describe a disciple's relationship with his/her family. We must not nurse resentment and anger toward our family. We must love Jesus more.

4. It's unwise to re-define any words in the Bible that we don't like. We don't seek a new meaning for "hate" because it makes us uncomfortable. What Bible passages can you think of that prompt us to look for a different meaning for "hate" in this passage?

Exodus 20:12 (The 4th Commandment) "Honor your father and your mother."

Ephesians 6:1-4 ¹ "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), ³ "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." ⁴ Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

John 13:34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

Many more could be added! Jesus wants us to love others, but never more than we love him.

5. Complete these statements. One dead give-away that I'm loving my family more than Jesus is...
(This one could have positive and negative answers) When I love Jesus first and my family second, then...

There are lots of right answers to these questions! Dead giveaways that I love my family more: I'm obsessed with their

happiness. I don't want to make them upset. I avoid awkwardness like the plague. I'm more concerned with keeping the peace at home than with confronting sin. When I love Jesus first, then: (POSITIVE) I take his word seriously. I have peace knowing that I've glorified God (NEGATIVE) it can get awkward. The might feel slighted. I might have to confront them.

6. Disciples don't get to choose their own crosses; Jesus does. How do you see this in your own life?
Answers will vary. When responding to every answer, emphasize that each cross is *CUSTOM MADE BY JESUS FOR YOU* (personally.) He customizes your struggle to keep you humble, keep you reliant on him, and keep you yearning for heaven in heaven (not heaven on earth). He also customizes your encouragement to keep you strong and brave to pick up your cross each day.
7. The large crowds in v. 25 were not yet disciples of Jesus. What are some ways that "counting the cost" of discipleship is different for us who already follow Jesus?"
 - 1- Don't be surprised if this is hard. 1 Peter 4:12 "Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you."
 - 2- Resolve daily to pick up your cross (face your trials) once again, even after you know how heavy they are.
 - 3- Don't attempt to get rid of the suffering by downplaying your attachment to Jesus. There's no such thing as a cross-less Christian. Dealing with the awkwardness of being a disciple is part of life.
Many more answers are possible.
8. We can count the costs *and the benefits* of following Jesus. Make a list the top three ways following Jesus can benefit you. The specific ways and the order of their ranking may vary. Here are a few ideas.

- 1- Jesus is always with you helping you bear your cross. Matthew 28:20 "Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
- 2- Jesus has relieved your guilt by taking away all your sins. Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."
- 3- Jesus has guaranteed us a place in heaven. Romans 8:18 "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."

9. If you were talking to someone in the crowd following Jesus, how would you explain to them the cost and the benefit of being a Christian? Include at least one analogy.
There are infinite ways of explaining it, but here are a few guiding principles. 1) Don't make it seem like the cost *EARNs* salvation. That's not Jesus point. Heaven given not earned. The cost is just another way of saying, "Being a disciple isn't easy." 2) Make sure the benefits include the eternal benefit of heaven and the spiritual benefit of forgiveness. Jesus gives us many good things but he never promises we'll have perfect earthly lives. For analogies consider using the ones Jesus used! A builder who is making a tower or a king going to war. The main point: you should know what you're getting into! Discipleship is challenging!
10. Say a short prayer asking for strength for your specific challenges and thanking him for his benefits.
Here's a sample: Dear Jesus following you is not easy. Give me the courage to be faithful to you even when it would be easier to please others. Thank you for your precious promises to forgive our sins, to take us to heaven, and to accompany us through all our hardships. Keep your promises, and bring me peace and strength until I reach my heavenly home. Amen.