

The Cost Of Discipleship

Dr. Patrick Vossen / General

Luke 14:25–33

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The New Revised Standard Version **The Cost of Discipleship**

25 Now large crowds were traveling with him; and he turned and said to them, 26 “Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. 27 Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, 30 saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’ 31 Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. 33 So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

Life Application Bible Commentary, Luke Jesus Teaches About the Cost of Being a Disciple / 14:25–35 / 158

CASUAL DISCIPLESHIP

Is your interest in living for God halfhearted? The time may come for you to make hard choices because God doesn't take fourth priority for long. If you make career your idol, or sports or wealth, perhaps you should reevaluate. You will have to decide: to what are you really devoted? to whom are you really loyal? Following Jesus must be your first priority.

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Besides being willing to love Jesus more than any others and more than life itself, the true disciple must be ready to carry the cross and follow (see also 9:23 and commentary there). Jesus' audience was well aware of what it meant to "carry the cross." When the Romans led a criminal to his execution site, the criminal would be forced to carry the cross on which he would die. This showed submission to Rome and warned observers that they had better submit too. Jesus gave this teaching to get the crowds to think through their enthusiasm for him. He encouraged those who were superficial either to go deeper or to turn back. Following Christ means total submission to him—perhaps even to the point of death.

What things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. —
Philippians 3:7

Years ago when Romania was under the control of Communism, Bela Karolyi coached gymnastics. He skillfully developed the talents of stars such as gold-medalist Nadia Comaneci. For his success in training athletes who were bringing fame to his Iron Curtain country, he was rewarded with an expensive car and many other favors. But Bela

hungered for freedom. So one day, carrying only a small suitcase, he resolutely walked out of Romania into penniless liberty.

There's also a cost in following Jesus and experiencing the freedom He gives. When fishermen Peter and Andrew heard Jesus call, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men," they "immediately left their nets and followed Him" (Matt. 4:19-20). Similarly, James and John left their father and their livelihood to embark on a precarious life of discipleship. They knew the cost and chose to follow Jesus, leaving everything behind (vv.21-22).

What an example for all of us who claim to be disciples of Jesus! He said, "Whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:27). Are we willing to make sacrifices—major and minor—for our Lord? Let's respond to the Savior's invitation, "Follow Me," not merely in word but in action.

The cost of discipleship is not cheap. It takes sacrifice, it takes dedication to the cause of Christ, and an absolute devotion to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

No shortcuts here when it comes to Discipleship. In our quest to become disciples like Christ, we are choosing to imitate His lifestyle, as we embrace and extol His message of hope to a needy world.

Sometimes it will take substantial sacrifice, sometimes just a word fitly spoken here or there. However, no matter what the cost or the sacrifice given, it is a lifestyle of giving that best emphasizes the very unselfish life of Christ. Who lowered himself to servanthood, that he might

become the ultimate expression of God-Like living mankind has ever seen.

The life of Christ was God's Love Personified. A love that reached out throughout creation to redeem and heal humanity, and draw us into the Father's loving arms. Declaring His Father's love for humanity and their need of a saviour, Christ our Lord.

Philemon 1-12

The New Revised Standard Version *Salutation*

1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,
To Philemon our dear friend and co-worker, 2 to Apphia our sister, to
Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:
3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus
Christ.

Philemon's Love and Faith

4 When I remember you in my prayers, I always thank my God
5 because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith toward the
Lord Jesus. 6 I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective
when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ. 7 I have
indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because
the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother.

Paul's Plea for Onesimus

8 For this reason, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you
to do your duty, 9 yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of
love—and I, Paul, do this as an old man, and now also as a prisoner of

Christ Jesus. 10 I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment. 11 Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful both to you and to me. 12 I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you. 13 I wanted to keep him with me, so that he might be of service to me in your place during my imprisonment for the gospel; 14 but I preferred to do nothing without your consent, in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced. 15 Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back forever, 16 no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother—especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

17 So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. 18 If he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. 19 I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it. I say nothing about your owing me even your own self. 20 Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ. 21 Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

Philemon was a dedicated believer and household leader in the early church. He was highly esteemed by Paul and his example was no doubt known of many in the early church (verses 4-7)

Philemon would be called upon by Paul to do an extraordinary thing in the customary order of the day. However, his confidence in the Christ-like lifestyle of Philemon, gave him confidence that something wonderful would happen that would be an example of Christ's love personified in a real way.

Paul would ask him to receive Onesimus as a brother. A former slave gone rogue, who had fled Philemon's home. Philemon had every right legally to punish him, but would instead embrace him and ultimately direct him in his Christian walk.

What would happen with this young man Onesimus? Tradition tells us Onesimus would eventually become the Bishop of the church in Ephesus. A leader in the early church. Wow! A slave turned believer, becoming a leader. He went from being a rebellious slave to a restored brother in Christ.

**Ultimate Discipleship Might Cost You Something.
Nevertheless, The Rewards Are Out Of This World.**