

Brought to you by



CITY BIBLE FORUM
Ask the bigger questions

citybibleforum.org

Consider carefully the cost involved

A cost benefit analysis of following Jesus:

What does Jesus require of me? Is it worth it?

- Session 5

Understanding that the requirements of discipleship require careful consideration – because the nature of discipleship is to give up everything and put Jesus first – right to the end - from Luke 12:35-48

In Luke chapter 9 Jesus heads towards Jerusalem where he knows he's going to die. In Luke chapter 23 he is executed. A vast crowd is following him and interestingly, Jesus isn't pushing people to sign up to his cause.

The words of Jesus

Luke 14:25-35

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

28 "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? 29 For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, 30 saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.'

31 "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he 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, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.

34 "Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? 35 It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out.

"Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

Notice that Jesus says three (3) times "cannot be my disciple" (verses 26, 27, 33).

Q1. Does Jesus literally mean to be a follower requires you to hate your family? (verse 26)

Jesus doesn't literally mean "hate" because he wouldn't for example go against the fifth commandment, which is to honour parents. So what he means here is that Jesus needs to be a follower's first love – and what the follower feels for his family needs to be a lesser thing – it is a comparative term. Why Jesus mentions family rather than for example neighbour or boss is because family members – those nearest and dearest to us – often have the greatest influence on us. Generally it's harder to stand up to a family member than a boss. So to make Jesus your first love is going to be costly, because it will mean spoken or unspoken criticism of what the family holds dear.

Q2. What does it mean to "carry your cross"? (verse 27)

The cross in Jesus' day was an instrument of torture or death. So carrying your cross is the idea of putting to death everything about you which conflicts with Jesus being number one in your life. This needs to be the practice of every disciple. Everything from our ambitions and dreams to how we treat people needs to have Jesus at the centre. Life is now not all about me but how Jesus wants me to live.

Q3. What is the building of the tower parable all about? (verses 28-30)

Jesus is talking about the nature of discipleship rather than sound building practice! So with discipleship, he's saying don't start unless your intention is to finish. It's a life of discipleship you're signing yourself up for.

Q4. What is the king going to war parable all about? (verses 31-32)

This parable has a slightly different point to the one above. The reality is that the king is coming with an army of 20000. The wise king with an army of 10000 will sue for peace. If Jesus is the king with 20000 then the wise response is to submit to his kingship. So the point of the parable is to say consider very carefully the cost of rejecting Jesus. The wise person will give up everything he has.

Q5. "If Jesus isn't Lord of all then he isn't Lord at all". In light of verse 33, do you think Jesus would agree with this statement about himself?

Yes, based on verse 33! With Jesus, a follower can't just make him king only in some areas ("I'm prepared to listen to what Jesus has to say and live his way in these areas of my life, but not this area"). Either he is king of every area, or he isn't king at all. This is a huge demand, made easier if we are convinced that Jesus' kingship is a good kingship – that the way Jesus wants us to live is the best way for us (if Jesus the king was prepared to die for us, then there's the evidence that his kingship is a good one).

Q6. What point about discipleship is Jesus making when he talks about salt?

It would be easy to think that only those considering becoming disciples need to hate their family, carry their cross, give up everything. In using the salt image, Jesus is saying that the nature of discipleship, from start to finish, is to do these things – whether you have been a follower for 5 minutes, 5 years or 5 decades.

(And in case you are wondering, pure salt (sodium chloride) can't lose its saltiness because it's a stable compound, so Jesus must be talking about salt in an impure form.)

Published 21 October 2014
Copyright, City Bible Forum¹

¹ COPYRIGHT City Bible Forum (citybibleforum.org) is a ministry of Evangelising Commerce Inc (NSW), 2013. This material may be reproduced free-of-charge for non-profit use only as long as this copyright notice appears, and the content is not modified in any way. For any other use, or to modify the material, please contact us to arrange copyright permission, which may involve a small fee to help finance the production of such resources by the staff of City Bible Forum. Contact info@citybibleforum.org or tel: (02) 9251 1166 or GPO Box 3266, Sydney NSW 2001