

The Cost Of Discipleship - From Carnal to Christian

You are here: [Following Jesus](#) >> [The Cost Of Discipleship](#)

The Cost of Discipleship - "Sit Down First and Count the Cost"

What is the cost of discipleship? Jesus said, "For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it - lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:28-33). "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:25-26)

The Cost of Discipleship - Paul Knew the Cost

The Apostle Paul understood the cost of discipleship! He was a man who enjoyed great prominence among the Jewish elite, but forsook all for the love of Christ! Paul declared, "What things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith." (Philippians 3:7-9)

The Cost of Discipleship - From Carnal to Christian

The cost of discipleship is this: We must each give up our old selves in order to embrace and become the person Christ has created us to be. Therefore "put off the old man with his deeds" (Colossians 3:9-10), for "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

"The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2:14), rather, "the carnal mind is enmity against God" (Romans 8:7). But even though "we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3), "...you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight" (Colossians 1:21-22). Thus, having been "reconciled to God through the death of His Son" (Romans 5:10), you have received "exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:4). Therefore, "do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world -- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life -- is not of the Father but is of the world" (1 John 2:15-16). "Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4). "He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor" (John 12:25-26).

The Cost of Discipleship - A Final Word

The cost of discipleship is totally reasonable in light of the gift we've been given! "You were

not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:18-19). Simply put, you were "bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:20). "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works" (Titus 2:11-14).

[Go Deeper Now!](#)

Disciple of Christ - Test Your Heart!

A disciple of Christ should constantly check his heart. The Bible warns us, "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know it?*" (Jeremiah 17:9) We are warned about false conversion. How can we be certain we have accepted salvation and surrendered our lives to the Lord? The Bible tells us, "*Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? -- unless indeed you are disqualified*" (2 Corinthians 13:5).

There are signs -- warning signs to look for -- to determine whether or not we've done what ultimately every born-again Christian has done: surrendered our will to God... not only in our head but also in our heart. Think of it this way, "What is my driving purpose?" Everybody has a driving purpose in life. It's that thing that is tied to how we spend our most valuable commodity -- time. It's that area in our life where, when we're successful we're the most exhilarated, and when we have a set back, we're the most frustrated, even depressed. Take inventory of your life and examine the areas that trigger these highs and lows. You'll discover that these areas are closely tied to your driving purpose. True born-again Christians recognize that Jesus Christ needs to be our driving purpose. While false Christians proclaim Jesus is Lord with their mouths, true Christians proclaim Jesus is Lord with their lives.

As disciples of Christ, we need to surrender all of our lives to Him so that He is central, not just one of many fancies competing for our attention. Once we make the decision to put Christ first, and once we begin making the necessary adjustments to our routine to accommodate this decision, He is faithful to bring about the heart changes. Don't be discouraged immediately when the wicked imaginations of your heart continue to manifest themselves in your mind. Don't think that somehow you're going to change your heart overnight. That's what God does - over time. We can't do it for ourselves. We just submit to Him and ask Him to do that for us. It's called the process of "sanctification," and it continues throughout our entire lives. It becomes a source of great joy in our life as we witness the tremendous changes God makes in our heart. The way we see people and situations will change as God gives us "*the mind of Christ.*" (1 Corinthians 2:16)

Romans 7:18 -- 8:14 tells us that while we can't change our hearts ourselves, we can and should ignore our carnal lusts, choosing instead to live for the things of God. "*Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit*" (Galatians 5:19-25). "*If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: ...put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ...put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness*" (Ephesians 4:21-24).

Disciple of Christ - The Fruit of the Spirit

For the disciple of Christ, there is a huge difference between just knowing God, and actually submitting

ourselves to God for the saving of our souls and the renewing of our minds. The Bible says, *"But someone will say, 'You have faith, and I have works. Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.' You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?"* (James 2:18-20) Does this mean we are saved by our works and not by grace of Jesus Christ? Absolutely not. *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast"* (Ephesians 2:8-9). No, James is saying that there is a difference between knowing about God and submitting to God. The demons know of God, but they won't willingly submit to Him. On the other hand, Christians both know and willingly submit to God. The good works -- the fruit of the Spirit -- manifests itself in the life of a true believer. If we read the rest of the Ephesians passage about grace we see, *"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them"* (Ephesians 2:10).

Disciple of Christ - How Do I Know That I Am Truly Saved?

"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). *"We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death"* (1 John 3:14). *"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome"* (1 John 5:2-3).

What are God's commandments for His disciples? In a nutshell - Love!

"And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:30-31). *"On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets"* (Matthew 22:40).

"Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,' 'You shall not covet,' and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law" (Romans 13:8-10).

Choose God by believing in His Son, Jesus Christ; love God by putting Him first in your life; and love your neighbor by placing his needs over your own. This is the fulfillment of God's Law.

Disciple of Christ - A Warning to All of Us!

Dear disciples of Christ, *"Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. And some seed fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. But other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.' And He said to them, 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear!'"* (Mark 4:3-9)

Jesus spoke this parable to the crowd that had gathered. He explains the idioms to His disciples in private: *"And He said to them, 'Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the word. And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble. Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold,*

some sixty, and some a hundred" (Mark 4:13-20).

The Devil is intent upon steering you away from faith in God. He wants very much to cause you to doubt your salvation and limit any type of growth in your Christian life. He does this in four obvious ways:

- Propose teachings and philosophies to deny God even exists (ex. evolutionary theory).
- Make Christianity look hypocritical and divisive.
- Supply plenty of false religions and vain philosophies to fill the apparent voids.
- Distract you with the "lust of the flesh," "the lust of the eyes," and "the pride of life." (1 John 2:16)

We are warned, "*Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ*" (Colossians 2:8). "*For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God*" (1 Corinthians 1:18). "*Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.' But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the son;*" (Hebrews 10:38-39).

The Bible was written to lead the sinner to repentance and to give the believer encouragement. READ YOUR BIBLE OFTEN! "*These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God*" (1 John 5:13). Never doubt in darkness what God has shown you in the light!

Disciple of Christ - Remember the Unique Claims of the Lord

A disciple of Christ sometimes needs to remind himself of Who his Lord really is. C.S. Lewis and other great Christian thinkers have summed it up well. Jesus Christ made unique and outrageous claims...

Jesus claimed the right to receive worship from men and angels (Matthew 2:2, 2:8, 2:11, 8:2, 9:18, 14:33, 15:25, 28:9, Mark 5:6, Luke 24:52, John 9:38, and Hebrews 1:6); while the Word of God commands us not to worship man or angel, but God alone (Matthew 4:10, Luke 4:6-8, Acts 10:25-26, 12:20-23, 14:11-16, and Revelation 19:10, 22:8-9).

Jesus claimed to be sinless (John 8:46); while the Word of God tells us that no mere man is without sin (Psalm 14:1-3; 53:1-3; Romans 3:10,23).

Jesus claimed the power to forgive sins (Mark 2:5-12; Luke 7:46-50); but the Word of God tells us that only God can forgive sins (Mark 2:7).

Jesus claimed to be higher than all other ties, including family ties -- He claimed the right to a greater allegiance (Matthew 10:37; Luke 14:26).

Jesus claimed that He would judge the world (John 5:17-23; Matthew 7:21-23; 25:31-32).

Jesus claimed to give eternal life (John 6:47-51,58).

Jesus claimed to be Almighty God, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End (John 8:58, 14:8-9; 20:26-29; Also compare, Revelation 1:8,13-18, 21:4-7; 22:6-7,12-16,20).

These claims do not prove that Jesus Christ is God. That's only one of three legitimate options:

- Jesus was a LIAR (He wanted people to think He was God though He really wasn't); or
- Jesus was a LUNATIC (He honestly thought He was God though He really wasn't); or
- Jesus was, and is, sovereign LORD (He was who He claimed to be, God the Son -- God Almighty).

These claims logically rule out the following options:

- Jesus was a good man but not God (if He wasn't God, He was either crazy or a relentless liar).
- Jesus was a great teacher but not God (if He wasn't teaching the truth, He was either crazy or a relentless liar).
- Jesus was a profound prophet but not God (if His claims weren't true, and He was merely a lunatic or a liar, He was certainly nothing more than a false prophet).

Disciple of Christ - Remember the Power of Your Decision for Christ!

Disciples of Christ: If you decide Jesus is worth anything, then you must decide Jesus is worth everything! Being worth everything, Jesus is worthy of being first in your life! As such, be very careful whose authority you submit to. Be very careful about which "Bible teachers" you listen to. The Bible warns us, *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit"* (Matthew 7:15-17). Further, we read, *"Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves"* (Acts 20:28-30).

Disciples of Christ: How can you tell right from wrong? **READ YOUR BIBLE!** *"To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them"* (Isaiah 8:20).