

The Costs of Discipleship

Franklin Church of Christ
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PM Worship

Introduction:

I despise commercials that tell you all the benefits of the product and assure you their store has the lowest prices in town, but then do not tell you how much it costs. Or driving by a car for sale on the side of the road and without the asking price listed. I realize these are marketing ploys. They have a better chance of selling something if they get me to call them, but I want to know the cost up front. The same applies to discipleship. Before becoming a disciple, it is important to count the cost. Jesus stressed this in **Luke 14:27-32**. Just as the builder and the king need to count the cost, so does the would-be disciple. With that in mind, let's look at what discipleship will cost you and determine if it is worth it. I am going to warn you up front, true discipleship exacts a heavy cost.

Discussion:

- I. Discipleship will cost you your sins and your guilt.
 - A. Ananias demonstrated the first cost of discipleship when he told Paul how to become a disciple in **Acts 22:16**. When Paul became a disciple, his sins would be washed away. They would all be gone. As Peter had earlier preached in **Acts 2:38**, when you are made a disciple through baptism (cf. **Matthew 28:19**) your sins are remitted, that is, paid for and removed.
 - B. Along with the sins, the overbearing amount of guilt you carry will also be removed. As **Romans 3:23-24** explains, when you become Christ's disciples you are justified, that is, declared not guilty before God, even though you had formerly sinned and fallen short of God's glory.
 - C. Before becoming a disciple, you have to ask, do you really want to lose all your sin and guilt?
- II. Discipleship will cost you your stresses and anxieties.
 - A. As you grow in your discipleship, devoting yourself to Christ's teaching and becoming more and more like Him, the costs continue to mount. As you learn to pray, to control what you think about and your behavior, your stresses and anxieties will be taken away from you. **Philippians 4:4-9** explains that through these means your anxieties will be cast on God. **1 Peter 5:7** explains that God cares for you and doesn't want you dealing with all of that stress. He will take care of it.
 - B. Keep in mind the ancillary costs that will be exacted along with this. You will no longer have your precious sleepless nights. Stress induced ulcers will be removed. Jumpiness, jitters and edginess will be taken away. This, in and of itself, will also cost you many of the stress-related fights and arguments you could look forward to if you don't grow in your discipleship.
 - C. Before becoming a disciple, you have to ask, do you really want to lose all of your anxieties?
- III. Discipleship will cost you your insecurities about the future.
 - A. Before becoming a disciple, you are absolutely convinced that you make your own way in the world. You know that based on your own willpower and work, you will provide for yourself and your future. However, what if you lose your job? What if someone steals your identity and wipes out your savings? What if you become paralyzed and can't work? What if the stock market crashes and destroys your retirement? What if the government suddenly decides it can no longer make good on its Social Security promises? Where will you live? What will you eat? How will you take care of your family? Face it, you have a lot of insecurity about the future.
 - B. Herein lays another casualty in the disciple's life. According to **Matthew 6:33-34**, as you become a stronger and stronger disciple, seeking first God's kingdom and righteousness, God insures you will be cared for. Instead of days and nights of worrying about what might happen tomorrow, next week or next year, all you will do is consider how to serve God today. Your insecurities will be taken away and replaced with confidence in God.
 - C. Before becoming a disciple, you have to ask, do you really want to lose all of your insecurities?
- IV. Discipleship will cost you your misery.
 - A. As you grow in your discipleship and your guilt, stress, anxiety and insecurity are taken away, your misery will also be taken away. You know that feeling you have because nothing in life is fair, that will be removed. The feelings that you have not been given enough and are constantly dissatisfied, unhappy and miserable will be removed.

- B. In **Philippians 4:11-12**, Paul said he had learned to be content in whatever circumstance, whether he had prosperity or scarcity, he was happy. This was not mere resignation; this was happiness and blessed contentment. Note carefully, this cost is not exacted immediately. Rather, it is something you learn. It is exacted over time as you learn to have the mind of Christ.
 - C. Before becoming a disciple, you have to ask, do you really want to lose all of your misery?
- V. Discipleship will cost you your weaknesses.
- A. Before becoming a disciple of Christ, you are weak and unable to do anything of eternal significance. In this situation, you don't have many responsibilities, being able to hide behind your inability. However, once you are growing in Christ your weaknesses will be removed one by one.
 - B. In **Philippians 4:13**, Paul said you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you. In **Ephesians 3:20**, he explained that God can do far more abundantly beyond what we can even think by the power working in us. Because we are no longer relying on ourselves, our weaknesses are taken away.
 - C. Before becoming a disciple, you have to ask, do you really want to lose all of your weaknesses?
- VI. Discipleship will cost you your fears.
- A. In **Luke 12:4-7**, Jesus explained that as you grow in your discipleship your fears become useless and removed. You will no longer even need to fear those who could kill you. First, God cares about you and will care for you. Secondly, if He does allow you to die, so what? That is your one way ticket out of this world into the paradise of God.
 - B. While it is true that in one sense you will always maintain your fear of God, in order to maintain your growth as a disciple, it is also true that the stronger you grow as a disciple the more your fears of God's wrath and punishment will be removed. **I John 4:18** says that as you grow in love as a disciple, the fear of punishment from God will be taken away.
 - C. Before becoming a disciple, you have to ask, do you really want to lose your fears?
- VII. Discipleship will cost you your eternity in hell.
- A. Before becoming a disciple you had worked hard and earned spiritual death (**Romans 6:23**). In that spiritually dead state, you are on the broad way to eternal destruction (**Matthew 7:13; II Thessalonians 1:7-9**). **Matthew 10:28** demonstrates that in this situation you have earned an eternity in hell. However, once you become a disciple, that hard-earned fate is removed. Instead you are given an inheritance in heaven as demonstrated by **I Peter 1:4**.
 - B. Before becoming a disciple, you have to ask, do you really want to lose your eternity in hell?
- VIII. Discipleship will cost you your personal control.
- A. Usually up to this point in the sale, the customer is eating out of my hand. However this final cost is too often the deal breaker. Discipleship costs you your control over your life. According to **I Corinthians 6:19-20**, when you became a disciple, you are bought with a price. You are no longer your own. You no longer get to do whatever you want. You no longer get to bank on what you believe are your rights. You no longer get to do whatever provides you with pleasure. You no longer get to live in the pursuit of your personal happiness. When you become Christ's disciple, you become God's bond-servant just like the New Testament writers (**Romans 1:1; James 1:1; II Peter 1:1; Jude 1:1**).
 - B. From the moment you become a disciple, you are to be a living sacrifice, offering yourself up to serve God (**Romans 12:1-2**). You are to crucify yourself with Christ and allow Christ to live through you (**Galatians 2:20**). No longer do you get to decide what you are going to do based on your personal desires and goals. Rather, you must realign your desires and goals based upon the word of Christ.
 - C. If you become a disciple, you agree to allow God's word to govern your life. You agree to be quick to hear God's word, slow to speak against God's word and slow to be angry with God (**James 1:19-20**). You agree to give up everything God's word demands you give up. You agree to pursue everything God's word demands you pursue. Since we all have different backgrounds and different struggles, this is going to mean different things for each person considering becoming a disciple. Some of you have to give up friends. Some have to give up an unlawful spouse. Some have to give up certain movies, magazines, television shows and songs. Some

have to give up alcohol. Some have to give up the covetousness of gambling. Some have to give up wandering eyes and lust. The list could go on. Here is the crux of this, there is no choice in the matter. You have no right to any of these things and no option to follow after any of them.

- D. The context of the passage we read at the beginning of this lesson demonstrates this cost of discipleship (**Luke 14:25-35**). But here is what makes this somewhat difficult. When you become a disciple, God does not come into your heart and take over. He leaves you to voluntarily submit to Him. Thus, **II Peter 1:5-8** says you must grow in self-control. However, you must learn to control yourself according to God's guidance through the faith, knowledge and virtue you learn from His word. This is why so many only bounce along, half-committed to discipleship.
- E. This is very open ended. The great cost of discipleship is personal control. When you become a disciple you are agreeing to let someone else tell you how you can work, how you can speak, how you can dress, how you can be entertained, what your goals are; in short, how you will live.
- F. Finally, all of those other costs of discipleship are dependent on meeting this one. As you daily pay this price, your sins and guilt will be removed, your stresses and anxieties will be taken away, your insecurities, fears and miseries will vanish. Your weaknesses and fears will be overcome. Hell will be vanquished from your future.
- G. Before becoming a disciple, you have to ask, are you really willing to give up control of your life?

Conclusion:

I hope you realize the cost is worth it. **Matthew 13:44** says that the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field. The treasure is so great, it is worth selling everything you have to get it. The treasures of discipleship are worth the cost. If you are willing to pay that cost, become a disciple today and start enjoying the treasures.