

Counting the Cost

“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, and yes even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a 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.”
Luke 14:26-30

“So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.” - Luke 14:33

Jesus paid for the sins of the world on the cross and restored the relationship between the Father and mankind. However, the Gospel is not only about embracing Jesus as Savior but also about submitting to his Lordship over our lives. Jesus wasn't literally saying that we are to "hate" members of our own family. There are many other scriptures that talk about loving one another and honoring our parents. The word "hate" literally means to regard with less affection. The point that he wanted to get across to the crowd was that if we are going to follow him then we must give him first place over every earthly relationship and prefer him over everything.

When we talk about counting the cost, we're really talking about the cost of discipleship and choosing to follow Jesus.

What does it mean to be a disciple?

Being a disciple is about becoming a whole-hearted follower of Jesus. Discipleship is the process by which we grow in maturity and begin to look more like Jesus in thought, word,

and action. It is dying to our old self (sin nature) and through God's grace, taking on the life of Christ daily.

To be a Disciple we must be willing to:

- Learn from Jesus (Matthew 11:29-30)
- Bear our crosses daily (Luke 14:27)
- Be hated by the world (John 15:18-19)
- Suffer persecution (2 Timothy 3:12)

Counting the cost denotes a real choice to be made. Choosing God's way or our own. Choosing between following Christ or following our fleshly desires. Counting the cost is about choosing through God's grace to build our lives on the foundation of Christ himself and living for him.

"I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing." - 2 Samuel 24:24

"Choose this day whom you will serve." - Joshua 24:15

How do we count the cost?

"So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are unseen are eternal." - 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

The cost of “temporary comfort” is nothing in comparison to the joy that we will experience when we see Jesus face to face and the eternal rewards that we will receive in him.

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” - Philippians 1:21

We count the cost when we value Jesus as our supreme treasure and align our lives to walking with him and being well pleasing to him. Counting the cost is ultimately about what we gain rather than what we “lose.” Gaining Christ and being well-pleasing to him is truly worth it.

“I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.” - Philippians 3:8

We count the cost and embrace discipleship by living with an eternal mindset

“Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.” - Colossians 3:2-4

Counting the cost is about giving up our lives in exchange for his life. It is about God transforming our minds and hearts to view life from his perspective and not our own. When we count the cost and respond to the grace of God to follow Jesus, we will discover who God is in us and who we are in him.

Counting the cost means we respond in obedience to the leading of the Holy Spirit

“And your ears shall hear a word behind you saying, “This is the way, walk in it,” when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left.” - Isaiah 30:21

“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.” - Romans 8:14

We count the cost and embrace discipleship when we refuse to “save ourselves” and embrace Christ-likeness

*They called out to him (Jesus), “If you are the King of the Jews, “save yourself.”
Luke 23:37*

“For to this you have been called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.” - 1 Peter 2:21

Our flesh will always try to get us to refuse God’s way to “save ourselves” and be comfortable. However, counting the cost and embracing discipleship means we embrace the cross of Christ and choose to follow his way rather than our own. This will often offend our natural minds, but we must continually walk by faith and trust that his way is ultimately better.

We count the cost and embrace discipleship by renouncing ownership and accepting stewardship

“Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.” - 1 Corinthians 4:2

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” - 1 Peter 4:10

We count the cost and embrace discipleship when we keep our eyes on Jesus and recognize that God is teaching us endurance/perseverance

“For you have need of endurance (perseverance), so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.” - Hebrews 10:36

“Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured (persevered) the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.” - Hebrews 12:2-4

How do we count the cost every day?

- Pray that God would keep us and walk in humility (Jude 24-25)
- Remember that present & future difficult circumstances are temporal and continually release them over to God (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)
- Remember that his way is always better and trust God. (Proverbs 3:5-6)
- Walk in close relationship with brothers and sisters in Christ and mutually encourage one another. (1 Thessalonians 5:11)