



Life Lesson

COUNTING THE COST:

Deciding to Become a Disciple

PURPOSE: To clarify what God expects of us as Christians (Disciples)

PLAN: This study examines a list of 8 characteristics of a disciple. It uses the word disciple as an acronym for each of the points.

INTRODUCTION: What does the word "disciple" mean to you?

In the first century the word "disciple" referred to a follower of a movement or an individual. It often denoted personal devotion to the leader as well as to his teachings.

Disciple -- Acts 11:26

What two words in this verse are used to refer to the followers of Christ?
Disciples -- Christians

In the New Testament, the word "Christian" is used only three times while the term "disciple" is used 270 times.

If someone is a Christian, he is a disciple.

Imitate -- Luke 6:40 (I John 2:6; I Peter 2:21)

The word in this verse translated "student" is the very same word that is translated "disciple" in other verses.

Who are we to be like?
Emphasize that the goal of discipleship is to become more and more like Christ, our teacher.
In what area of your life are you best at imitating Jesus? The worst?

Service -- Mark 10:35-45

Why did Jesus come? Verse 45

How did He serve? Verse 45

Have you noticed areas in your life where your attitude toward serving others has changed?

In what areas would you like to see yourself serving in the future?

Cross -- Luke 9:23

If we "come after" (follow) Jesus, what two things must we do? *Deny self, take up your cross.*

What does it mean to "deny yourself"?

There are various aspects to this answer: **First, to refuse to identify with who you used to be. Second, to refuse to be self-centered, self-willed or conceited. Third, to refuse to give in to sinful, selfish desires, habits, or behaviors.**

Clarify that denying self involves much more than just restricting behavior or simply denying ourselves things.

Imagine you were standing on a street corner in Jerusalem in the first century observing a man carrying a cross with Roman soldiers on either side. What would you suppose was going to happen to this man?

What does it mean to "take up your cross"?

Taking up your cross is not putting up with some type of discomfort or bearing up under the load of some burden. It is agreeing with Christ that your old nature must be crucified. When you identify with Christ in His death, the power of sin in your life is broken and renewal can begin.

To take up your cross means that you have made a decision that nothing will come between you and your relationship to God--not even your own life.

What specific areas of your life will you have to "crucify" in order to be a disciple?

Instruction -- John 8:31-32

What do you have to do to really be a disciple of Jesus?

What are some practical steps for holding to the teachings of Jesus?

Hebrews 10:24-25

Note the benefits of regularly attending and participating in Bible study and worship.

Prayer -- Luke 11:1-4

Did the disciples need to be taught how to pray?
What did Jesus do to teach them?

Ask the student about his own prayer life and encourage him to pray regularly. Ask him if he needs any help learning how to pray.

Love -- John 13:34-35

How do others know we are Christ's disciples?

Explain that love in the New Testament is not a warm, mushy emotion but actions directed in another person's best interest.

Who is going to be the hardest person for you to love? To forgive?

Evangelism -- John 15:1-17; esp. 5, 8, 16

What does Jesus mean by "bearing fruit"? *Galatians 5:22-23 and Matthew 28:18-20*

CONCLUSION: Count the cost. Luke 14:25-33

What will you need to give up?
What will you need to begin to do?
What's your decision?

WORKSHEET

Counting the Cost:

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Disciple -- Acts 11:26

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Service -- Mark 10:35-45

Cross -- Luke 9:23

Instruction -- John 8:31, 32; Hebrews 10:24-25

Prayer -- Luke 11:1-4

Love -- John 13:34-35

Evangelism -- John 15:1-17, esp. 5, 8, 16

Galatians 5:22-23; Matthew 28:18-20

Conclusion: Luke 14:25-33

Baptism in the Bible

Almost everyone agrees that baptism is an important part of the Christian faith, but there is not much agreement on the "who, why, and how" of baptism. Baptism is not the center of the Christian faith. It has no meaning apart from the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, which it so aptly symbolizes. It has no significance apart from God's grace and our trust in Christ. This "take home" study sheet has been prepared in an effort to avoid having anyone feel pressured in regard to his/her baptism. As you read through these scriptures, write in your answers based on your own reading and reflection:

1. WHO? What do we know of the person(s) mentioned in the text? What was their religious background?
2. WHAT? What did these people know when they made their decision?
3. WHEN? How soon were they baptized?
4. RESULT? Is there a purpose stated for the baptism? What were the results?

SCRIPTURE

WHO

WHAT

WHEN

RESULT

Acts 22:22-47
esp. v. 38

Acts 8:26-40

Acts 9:1-19
Acts 22:12-16

Acts 16:11-15

Acts 16:16-34

Romans 6:1-11
