

Home Group Leaders Discussion Guide

Luke 14:25-35

(Discussion questions are at the end.)

This discussion guide is going to be shorter on commentary than usual—the passage is pretty straight forward, so I only will attempt to clarify a couple items; and the sermon on Sunday covered it super-well...if you weren't there Sunday I HIGHLY recommend you listen to it.

The whole point of this passage is Jesus clarifying the cost of following Him. What does it cost? In short, everything!

Let's stop for a moment and consider what and/or who is most dear to us. Whatever or whoever you identified, what would your life be like without them/that? Now Jesus comes along and says that He is more important than whoever/whatever you identified. Now we have something to measure. What has higher value to me, what is worth more to me, what do I have a higher degree of affection for and attachment to: Jesus or whatever I identified?

This is no easy question. It is meant to stop us in our tracks. That's really Jesus' whole point: "Stop and think about this!" This is the process of counting the cost.

In verse 26 Jesus call us to "*hate*"...which, let's face it, seems a bit strong and out of character for Jesus. So we need to understand that Jesus was not using this term in an absolute sense, because that would contradict all the calls to LOVE that He commands us. Rather, He uses "hate" in a relative or comparative sense (and somewhat hyperbolic). In comparison to whoever/whatever we would attach our deepest love and affection to (Jesus offers up family members as examples), that should pale in comparison to our love for Him. Our deepest affections and attachments are something we can get our minds around. So Jesus says, to paraphrase, "Take those identifiable affections/attachments, and compare those to how you feel about Me."

In verse 33 Jesus says, "*any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be My disciple.*" How literally does Jesus intend for us to take this? That depends on how we understand the call to "*give up everything*"...what does that mean and look like? If this means that we are to liquefy all assets, donate everything, quit our jobs, and live off the benevolence/generosity of others, well then, I'm afraid there aren't too many Christians in the world...and you and I probably don't qualify. But as was well articulated in the sermon, this is probably best understood as relinquishing all/any CLAIM on anything and everything in our possession and control. That is still a considerable cost, but probably more manageable and sustainable...and more in line with what Jesus meant. This is a change of mindset and heart set that is still revolutionary if followed consistently. Let's consider what following this consistently would entail.

First, it would be realizing (as well as functioning consistently from a place) that any material possessions are not MINE but HIS. They have been entrusted to me, and are at my disposal, to be used as HE desires. (So the desire or goal to acquire “more” doesn’t really make any sense.)

Secondly, goals and ambitions (which includes such things as school and career path; strived for achievements and accomplishments, lifestyle) also need to be rethought. He guides and directs those things, not me. One example of this that I’ve thought about: you know how we ask kids, “what do you want to be when you grow up?”? To be consistent with the idea that everything is Jesus’, then wouldn’t the better question be, “What does God want you to be?” Even the claim on such a choice needs to be given up. The only question we get to truly hold claim to is, “Am I going to consistently follow Jesus as He asked me to, or not?”

What about relationships? Jesus certainly calls us to be in relationships with people. But the role and function of those relationships change if I look at them from the angle of “what fulfillment do these relationships bring ME?” vs. “What responsibilities do I have in these relationship Jesus has given me, and how do these relationships advance His Kingdom?”

Even our own identity and all that is included in that (self-image, sense of security, sexuality, sense of belonging, wants/desires, emotions and will)...it’s all His and we offer up ourselves as “*living sacrifices*” as Paul says in Romans 12:1.

Do we truly and consistently function from a place of: Nothing is MINE, all is YOURS; I am nothing, YOU are everything. Use me for your glory and purposes, regardless of the cost. Do we even want to function from such a place? Jesus is very clear; this is the place we must function from to be disciples of His. This, in fact is why we were created in the first place, and what we were created for. (The salt losing its saltiness illustration is about this: fulfilling created purpose or not.)

It’s one thing to “consider the cost”, it’s another thing entirely to “pay the cost”. Also, as we grow and develop/mature our understanding (i.e. ongoing considering) uncovers more areas or more specific ways in which we need to relinquish control and offer it to Jesus.

- Q. If you had to articulate to someone what it means to follow Jesus, how would you describe it?**
- Q. What has it cost you, thus far, to follow Jesus? Is there anything you feel/think He may be asking you to give up presently? (Keep in mind that one of the major benefits of being in a Home Group is the opportunity to discern and discuss the costs of following Jesus with other people.)**
- Q. How have you found Jesus to be “worth it”? Or, what makes Jesus “worth it” to you?**
- Q. What can you identify as competing with Jesus for the supreme place in your life?**

- Q. The choices we make don't happen in a vacuum. They effect those around us. How has following Christ, and the cost associated with that, effected those around you?**
- Q. Is there a cost to following Jesus you are currently weighing? Explain. Is it a habit/practice of yours to ask Jesus regularly what He wants of you? Explain.**
- Q. As you look back over your life, and especially your relationship with Jesus, what were some early "costs" you identified and paid; what were some "costs" you came to identify/understand later; and what "potential costs" are you just now beginning to start to identify/understand?**