



“COUNT THE COST”

LUKE 14: 25-35

By: Pastor Samuel A.J. Williams M.Th.

Day 1: More Than Walking in His Direction

Devotional

Have you ever noticed the difference between someone who walks near you and someone who truly follows you? Jesus sees this distinction clearly among those who gather around Him. Many people enjoy being in His presence, receiving His blessings, and participating in church activities, but Jesus knows the difference between admiration and genuine commitment. When crowds followed Jesus, He didn't get caught up in the excitement of large numbers. Instead, He challenged them to consider what true discipleship actually requires. It's easy to walk in Jesus' general direction when life is comfortable, but what happens when following Him leads somewhere difficult? The beautiful truth is that Jesus isn't trying to trick anyone into following Him with false promises. He's honest about what discipleship costs because He loves us too much to let us start a journey we're not prepared to finish. His invitation isn't just to admire Him from a distance, but to truly belong to Him. Today, consider where you stand with Jesus. Are you walking near Him, enjoying the benefits of His presence, or are you genuinely following Him wherever He leads? There's no shame in honestly assessing your commitment – Jesus would rather have your authentic heart than your religious performance.

Bible Verse

‘Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: “If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.”’ – Luke 14:25-27

Reflection Question

What's the difference between admiring Jesus and truly following Him in your own life?

Quote

Jesus is not impressed merely because people are walking in his direction.



Prayer

Jesus, help me see the difference between walking near You and truly following You. Give me the courage to move from admiration to genuine discipleship.

Day 2: Love Above All Else

Devotional

Love is supposed to be beautiful, but Jesus presents us with a challenging truth: following Him requires a complete reordering of our affections. When He speaks of "hating" family members, He's not calling for emotional hatred, but establishing a hierarchy where Christ comes first, even above our most precious relationships. This feels uncomfortable because we naturally want to love our families, friends, and ourselves without any competing loyalties. Yet Jesus knows that divided hearts lead to compromised discipleship. When your family's expectations conflict with God's calling, who wins? When your personal desires clash with His will, which voice do you follow? The most challenging part isn't loving Jesus above others - it's loving Him above ourselves. Our culture celebrates self-love and personal fulfillment, making this aspect of discipleship particularly difficult. But Jesus isn't asking us to hate ourselves; He's asking us to love Him more than our own agenda. This supreme love isn't burdensome - it's liberating. When Christ holds the highest place in your heart, every other relationship finds its proper order. Your love for family actually becomes healthier when it flows from your love for Jesus rather than competing with it.

Bible Verse

'And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul' - Deuteronomy 10:12

Reflection Question

What relationships or desires in your life compete with your love for Jesus?

Quote

If you want to be a real follower of Christ, you got to love him more than all the rest.

Prayer

Lord, help me love You above all else, knowing that when You're first, every other relationship finds its proper place. Reorder my heart's affections.



Day 3: Picking Up Your Cross

Devotional

When Jesus spoke of carrying a cross, His audience understood exactly what He meant. The cross wasn't jewelry or inspirational art - it was an instrument of execution, a symbol of public humiliation and death. Yet Jesus calls every disciple to pick up their cross daily. This isn't about enduring minor inconveniences or life's normal hardships. Cross-bearing means dying to self-rule, surrendering your right to control your own life. It's about letting go of pride, comfort, and the throne of your heart where you've been sitting as king or queen. The cross represents the death of your personal agenda so that Christ's purposes can live through you. This feels scary because we're naturally wired for self-preservation. But here's the beautiful paradox: there is no resurrection without crucifixion, no glory without suffering, no crown without a cross. Jesus isn't asking you to do something He hasn't done Himself. He carried His own cross first, understanding completely the weight of what He asks from you. When you pick up your cross, you're not walking alone - you're following in the footsteps of the One who loves you most. Cross-bearing isn't punishment; it's the pathway to true life and freedom.

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Reflection Question

What areas of self-rule do you need to surrender to truly follow Jesus?

Quote

When Jesus calls for cross bearing, he isn't inviting us to a minor inconvenience. He is calling us to a death of our self rule.

Prayer

Jesus, give me courage to pick up my cross daily and die to my own agenda. Help me trust that Your way leads to true life.



Day 4: Counting the Cost

Devotional

Before starting any significant project, wise people count the cost. Jesus uses two illustrations - a builder constructing a tower and a king preparing for war - to emphasize the importance of understanding what discipleship requires before committing. This isn't Jesus trying to discourage people from following Him; it's His love ensuring that those who begin the journey are prepared to finish it. Half-hearted commitment leads to half-hearted results and eventual disappointment. Jesus would rather have fewer genuine disciples than many who quit when things get difficult. Counting the cost means honestly assessing what following Jesus might require: changes in relationships, career decisions, financial choices, or lifestyle adjustments. It means acknowledging that discipleship isn't just a Sunday morning activity but a complete life transformation. The encouraging truth is that while the cost is real, the reward is infinitely greater. You're not just building a tower or fighting a battle - you're investing in eternal life and joining God's kingdom work. The cost of discipleship is high, but the cost of not following Jesus is infinitely higher. Jesus isn't baiting people into the kingdom with shallow promises. He's offering authentic relationship with the God who created you, loves you, and has an incredible purpose for your life.

Bible Verse

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Reflection Question

Have you honestly counted the cost of following Jesus, and are you prepared to pay it?

Quote

No wise person, under the sound of my voice should ever start a project that you have not set your eyes on to make sure you are able to finish it.

Prayer

Lord, help me count the cost honestly and give me wisdom to see that following You is worth everything. Strengthen my commitment to finish what I start.



Day 5: Total Surrender

Devotional

The journey of discipleship culminates in total surrender - not just admiring Jesus, but yielding completely to His lordship. This means moving beyond half-hearted commitment to wholehearted devotion, beyond putting Jesus on the back burner to making Him the center of everything. Total surrender doesn't happen overnight; it's a daily choice to say "yes" to Jesus even when it's costly. You discover how much you truly love Jesus when loving Him requires sacrifice. It's easy to follow Him when it's convenient, but genuine love is revealed when obedience comes at a price. The beautiful reality is that Jesus has already demonstrated this kind of love for you. He didn't just ask you to carry a cross - He carried one Himself. He didn't demand surrender without first surrendering His own life for yours. His call to total surrender comes from a heart that has already given everything for you. Surrender isn't about losing your life; it's about finding it. When you yield to Jesus' lordship, you discover the life you were created to live. You find purpose, peace, and joy that can only come from being aligned with God's will. Today is the day to move from admiration to surrender, from the crowd to true discipleship. Jesus is calling you not just to come, but to come all the way.

Bible Verse

'Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."' - Luke 14:25-27

Reflection Question

What would total surrender to Jesus look like in your life right now?

Quote

Don't just admire him, follow Him. Don't just walk around crowd, belong to Him. Don't just say his name. Yield to his lordship.

Prayer

Jesus, I surrender completely to Your lordship. Help me move beyond admiration to total devotion, trusting that Your way is best.