

## Pay the Price

### *Consider the Cost of the Cross*

People love a good bargain! Growing up, I spent quite a few Black Friday mornings camping out in line for hours with my mom, rushing through the crowds to grab that discounted item, shopping until I almost literally dropped. But what if stores raised their prices the day after Thanksgiving, rather than lowering them? Would those die-hard shoppers still be willing to pay the price?

Let's continue our [Cross Training](#) journey. We started with faith, and today we'll move on to dedication, which involves counting the cost, wholeheartedness, establishing priorities, and making ourselves available to others. So what is the cost of discipleship?

### **What You Need to Know**

Rather than hyping up crowds, Jesus turned them away with sticker-shock at the sky-high price of following him (Luke 14:25ff; John 6:66-69). He said, *"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children ... yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple"* (Luke 14:26). Surely "hate" exaggerates his point (cf. Matt. 10:37), but the point is undeniable: no love can come before our love for him!

He sounds several jarring warnings to anyone unwilling to give everything (Luke 14:27, 33). Jesus compares our decision to a building financier who starts a project without checking that he has the resources to finish it. He wants us to do some soul-searching before accepting his offer, committing to him with open eyes. *"So,"* Jesus concludes, *"any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple"* (Luke 14:33).

There's a paradox in how Jesus describes the disciple's life. He invites us to take up his yoke and find rest, describing his burden as light and easy (Matt. 11:29-30). Yet he also describes his way as narrow and hard (Matt. 7:13-14). So which is it?

Well, it's hard because we give up our life to gain it (Matt. 10:39). Yet we get so much in return, in both the present life and the life to come (Mark 10:29-31, 1 Tim. 4:8). Paul gave up a lot to follow the Lord, but he said, *"\*whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him"* (Phil. 3:7-9).

### **What You Need to Do**

Pour yourself out in God's service (Phil. 2:17) and *"present your body as a living sacrifice"* each day (Rom. 12:1) to *"glorify God in your body"* (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Rather than hoarding "me-time," steward and redeem the time (Eph. 5:15-17). Your choices, goals, and relationships now serve Christ — your life and your death are now for him (Rom. 14:7-8).

You can't be a new person while living your old life. So out with the old, in with the new (Rom. 6:1-6). Throw off anything that slows you down (Heb. 12:1).

Steel yourself for difficulty ahead. You *will* suffer (2 Tim. 3:12). Find the strength to continue, knowing "*that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God*" (Acts 14:22).

### Through the Week

- **Read** — Luke 14:25-33; Matt. 16:24-25; 19:16-22; 1 Tim. 3:12-13; 2 Sam. 24:18-24
- **Reflect** — Ask yourself, "*What do I still lack?*" (cf. Matt. 19:20)
- **Request** — Pray, "*Fill me, oh Lord, as I empty myself before you.*"
- **Respond** — Let go of something you've been unwilling to in the past.
- **Reach Out** — Ask someone, "*What sacrifice are you glad you made for the Lord?*"