

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. - 1 Peter 2:2

THE SINCERE MILK OF GOD'S WORD

The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword... - Hebrews 4:12

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The *Value* of Discipleship

In **Luke 14:26-33**, Jesus spoke of the “cost” of being His disciple, emphasizing that following Him must not be taken lightly.

Jesus doesn't want us to be delusional about the commitment of true discipleship. Following Christ demands forsaking whatever we must in order to please our Lord. It's a lifestyle that may involve losing earthly possessions (cf. **Matt. 19:21**), or close friendships (**Luke 14:26**). It may even involve facing physical persecution, as many of the 1st century Christians did (cf. **Rev. 2:10**).

Those whose minds are focused only on temporal things may wonder why someone would choose such a life. What could be worth forsaking so much?

God's answer to this question gets to the *value* of discipleship. The commitment Christ demands is great, but the value of belonging to Him far outweighs the cost.

Consider **Matthew 13:44-46**: *Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found, and hid. In his joy, he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who is a merchant seeking fine pearls, who having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.*

If we see the Lord's kingdom as the treasure it is, whatever we must give up to be a part of it will seem light comparatively.

Consider also the example of the apostle Paul. The “cost of discipleship” was steep for him. He was shipwrecked, beaten, and stoned (cf. **2 Cor. 11:24-27**). Yet, as he suffered in service to Christ, he said, “*our light affliction, which is for the moment, works for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we don't look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal*” (**2 Cor. 4:17-18**).

Why would Paul call severe hardships “*light affliction*?” It's evident from **verse 18** that he was *spiritually-minded*. He lived for the purpose of pleasing God (**2 Cor. 5:9**). Paul experienced blessings in Christ that were much deeper than anything the world could offer. This made hardships seem relatively light in his eyes.

Walking with Christ brings an inner peace that surpasses understanding (**Phil. 4:6-7**), a joy that is unspeakable (**1 Pet. 1:8**), and a hope that is a steadfast and sure anchor of the soul (**Heb. 6:19**).

This hope has as its object the ultimate comfort provided to those who follow Christ: eternal life in heaven.

If we set our affection on things above, like Paul did, we will realize that while the cost of discipleship is high, the value far outweighs the cost. May we choose to do whatever we must to submit to Christ. Being His disciple is more than worth it.

Love Like Jesus

Ephesians 5:2 commands, “*walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling fragrance.*”

By denying His own comforts and perfectly submitting to the Father’s will, Jesus exemplified love for the Father (cf. **1 John 5:3**).

Like Our Savior, we must deny ourselves in order to obey the Father’s commands (**Luke 9:23**).

Obedying God includes showing love to *others* by denying our comforts and pleasures as needed to do what is beneficial for them.

Philippians 2:4 commands “*Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*” The very next verse says, “*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus*” (**verse 5**).

While on earth, Jesus time and again made decisions based on the Father’s will and the needs of others, instead of only considering what was comfortable for Himself.

This shows the depth of His command in **John 13:34**: *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also love one another.*

May we heed this command, and love like our Savior.

The One Who Sees All

Hebrews 4:13 teaches, “*There is no creature that is hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account.*”

God has the ability to see everyone everywhere at *all* times. He knows our every action, word, and thought. As **Proverbs 15:3** says, “*The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.*”

This serves as a motivation for fleeing unrighteousness. Though others may not be aware of an evil done, spoken, or thought, God always is (cf. **Luke 16:15**). No one can flee from His sight.

While God’s all-seeing nature is a discomfort to the unrighteous, it is a *comfort* to the righteous. God “*sees in secret*” (**Matt. 6:6**) the good deeds that often go unnoticed by others. One who is sincerely striving to do right can find joy in the fact that God is fully aware of all that we do.

Like much of God’s character, His all-seeing nature can be a fright or a comfort, depending on our choices.

-Michael Hickox (all articles)

“Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”

– 1 Timothy 1:17

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