



What Does Discipleship Cost?

Luke 14:26: (NASB) *If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.*



It is so easy to talk about following Jesus. After all, he came as our Savior, voluntarily sacrificed his life and opened up the way to heaven for us. Why would you not want to align yourself with someone who wipes away your sins and can give you eternity in the process? It is a no brainer, right? Not exactly! It turns out being a disciple of Jesus is hard work that requires thought, action and results. It is a conscious decision to be different, to be driven by a higher calling than you would naturally follow. Following Jesus in a selfie world is akin to a nerdy kid on a football team - you have plenty to offer but those around you just do not see your value. Can a Christian thrive in a world that rewards evil? How do we know what to think, do and become to be sure we are truly following Jesus? Now that is easy! Jesus himself told us.

Merriam-Webster

Disciple (noun)

1: one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another: such as

a: Christianity - one of the twelve in the inner circle of Christ's followers according to the Gospel accounts

b: a convinced adherent of a school or individual



Introduction - pick him up, *Create a Culture of Selflessness*, James Chapman, TEDx

- *Pick him up! Get over here. If any man on this team falls down, you just sprint, and you pick him up! The great coach Jason Gillespie. So, let me give you a bit of background before you think I'm crazy. My entire life, I've been playing basketball. Little league, middle school, high school, college, even some international. But the most influential coach I've ever had throughout the years was coach Jason Gillespie. See, I played at a school called Bluefield College, a little small school about 45 minutes outside of Virginia Tech. But even though we were a small school, we had a lot of nationally recognized accolades. We led the nation in scoring; we beat three Division I teams my senior year.*

The fact that any small school beats a Division I team is huge. The point he made was if anyone on the team falls down, "Pick him up!" What does this have to do with discipleship? Everything! We will follow this analogy throughout the podcast.

We will look at three parables of Jesus to identify three primary aspects of discipleship.

Before giving the three parables, Jesus spoke boldly about discipleship to get the crowd's attention and to show them what discipleship looked like.

Luke 14:25: (NASB) ²⁵Now large crowds were going along with him...

Jesus had a way with large crowds. He sometimes fed the crowds and performed miracles for them.



Other times Jesus challenged them and upset them.

John 6:53: (KJV) *Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.*

Perhaps he saw that this crowd needed to be thinned down to those who seriously wanted words from heaven?

Luke 14:25-26: (NASB) *...and he turned and said to them, ²⁶If anyone comes to me, and does not **hate** <3404> his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.*

Harsh language being spoken by one who is looking for followers! The word *hate* used here actually means to "love less."

Hate: Strong's #3404 to detest
(especially to persecute); by extension, to love less

While this word does carry varied shades of meaning, it is generally a harsh word. For example:

First Parable

Matthew 6:24: (KJV) *No man can serve two masters: for either he will **hate** <3404> the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

Matthew 24:9: (KJV) *Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted and shall kill you: and ye shall be **hated** <3404> of all nations for my name's sake.*

Jesus did not advocate literally hating parents. He always spoke about keeping the commandments and respecting family. When he was on the cross he showed love for his mother by appointing his disciple to take care of her.

He explained the same thought in different and more understandable words:

Matthew 10:37-39: (NASB) *³⁷He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. ³⁸And he who does not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. ³⁹He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for my sake will find it.*

Ephesians 6:1,2: (KJV) *Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother.*

He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. This shows he is speaking about the degrees of love. We are to love Jesus above anything else.

Jesus continued with the more extreme language of the cross, explaining that discipleship is hard and comes with a cost. He explained it so that only those who were truly interested would follow him.

The cross was the epitome of torture and shame for their time:

Luke 14:27: (NASB) *Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.*

Discipleship is blessed through trial. Jesus had drawn a line in the sand: The entrance fee to discipleship is willingness to carry a cross.

Discipleship is a result of being called by God for a specific purpose. However we cut it, it was not painted to be an easy road for anyone to take.



**With the harsh realities of following Jesus in place,
what was next for those who would follow him?**

To begin his description of discipleship, Jesus chose to use language that would sift out the crowd. He was NOT interested in gaining followers for the sake of creating an impressive looking group; rather, he was focused on gaining followers for the sake of the mission. Nothing else mattered.



If we are not willing to elevate his cause above all else, then discipleship is not for us.

 **Team problem, *Create a Culture of Selflessness*, James Chapman, TEDx**

- *But there was a problem with this team. We were more concerned about our individual success than the success of the team as a whole, so we started off losing, and losing pretty bad. So, coach said this, "Here's what I'll do: I will create a culture of selflessness. I'll make them play for each other. So, if any man falls down from a screen, any man lays the ball, but it falls out of bounds, any man hits the deck for any reason, no matter where you are, you run, and you pick him up." Like that (snaps), we got it. We realized that if we were going to maximize our potential, if we were going to win, which was the most important thing, we had to be selfless. We had to put the man next to us ahead of us.*

This is a beautiful lesson. If we are going to win, we have to be selfless. We have to put the person next to us ahead of us. "Pick him up." We will follow that theme throughout our conversation about discipleship. Discipleship is not just "me" following Jesus, it is "me" following Jesus alongside of "you," and "you" following Jesus alongside of "me."

"Pick him up!"

Our theme context and the first of three primary aspects of discipleship:



Luke 14:28: (NASB) ²⁸*For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it?*

Now that you have been warned of the difficulty discipleship can bring, you need to stop and think. This is something that so many churches seem to ignore.

Here is a potential reason counting the cost may be ignored or downplayed: Before his ascension, Jesus told all the disciples to stay in Jerusalem because something special would happen, which was the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Disciples were speaking but everyone heard in their own language. It was dramatic and there was a mass conversion. Some churches look at this and say, "We should be doing the same thing." But we should NOT be doing the same thing. What is the difference with what they were able to do then and what we do now?

Pentecost:

Acts 2:37-39,41-42: (NASB) ³⁷*Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?*

They were pierced to the heart - these were Jews who knew of Jesus already and had just been part of a communication miracle.

³⁸*Peter said to them, repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself...*

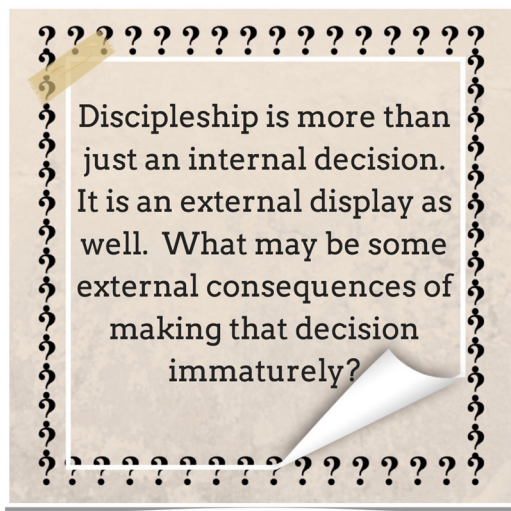
Each needed to repent and to be forgiven. Forgiveness was based on true repentance, not lip service. They also needed to be in line with the call of God.

...⁴¹*So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. (They received the word - they did not just hear it, they accepted it.) ⁴²They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. (They went on to live it!)*

There was a transformation at Pentecost, not just an acceptance.

True strength lies in submission which permits one to dedicate his life, through devotion, to something beyond himself. — Henry Miller

Luke 14:29-30: (NASB) ²⁹Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, ³⁰saying, this man began to build and was not able to finish.



We might start out zealous, but soon thereafter we may not have the fruit of the Spirit showing. Worldliness takes first place instead of following scriptural principles. We make decisions that feel right to us and are visible to others, and that is not good. Hopefully the Lord can awaken us to maturity through hard experiences. The consequences of immaturity are not just our own inability to follow but is also an external advertisement of somebody who followed and answered the call to Christ but did not follow it.

More "cost" factors to consider:

Romans 12:1: (NASB) *Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.*

1 Corinthians 6:19-20: (Lamsa) ¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit that dwells within you, which you have of God, and you are not your own? ²⁰For you have been bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, because they belong to God.

Discipleship is costly!



It is important not to rush the decision of discipleship. Discipleship is made up of living for God through Christ every day.

Based on these lessons, infant baptism is not appropriate. There needs to be maturity and an understanding of the cost, so you can choose to give it your all or to say it is not for me.

Once we know the level of cost for discipleship,
what is the next primary aspect of following Jesus?

It is fascinating to see Jesus build his picture of true discipleship. He began with words of discouragement to thin the crowd. He then told them to not be emotional regarding the call of God but instead be careful and thoughtful. His next parable goes beyond the decision stage and into the practical stage of living a discipleship-driven life, a lifelong dedication.

A life of total dedication to the truth also means a life of willingness to be personally challenged. — M. Scott Peck

A disciple is a follower. When you are discipling, you are following someone, looking at them, learning from them, absorbing their words and emulating their actions because you want to be like them.

The second primary aspect of discipleship:



Continuing with James Chapman, he decided to take the principles of teamwork he learned in college and bring them to the city of Chattanooga to help transform the city into a better place.

 **Fast or far Chattanooga, *Create a Culture of Selflessness*, James Chapman, TEDx**

- *What if we created a culture of selflessness? What if the city did that? How big would that be, right? Think about it. Anybody has ever seen that movie, Talladega Nights? Raise your hand if you've ever seen Talladega Nights. Ricky Bobby, "Shake and bake, wow!" I loved that movie. Right? Love it! Ricky Bobby had one main concept: if you're not the first... Exactly. If you're not first, you're the last. But, I believe when it comes to the city, it's the complete opposite. I think in order to be the first, you be last. You put the people who you work with, the people who you mentor, the people who are your friends, put them ahead of you. It's like that old saying goes: If you want to go fast, go alone. But if you want to go far, you take others with you.*

If you want to go far, it is a team effort. Be last and put those around you first. Jesus was our example.



Second Parable

Once you have counted the cost and moved forward you are now required to meet the challenges:

Luke 14:31: (NASB) ³¹*Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand?*

Jesus' story indicates a serious challenge to be met on the battlefield. Discipleship is a battle.

Here again we are not shown an emotionally flailing attitude; rather, a clear-minded and confident battle assessment:

Ephesians 6:10-13: (NASB) ¹⁰*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. (We are fighting Satan and his deceptions.) ¹³Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.*

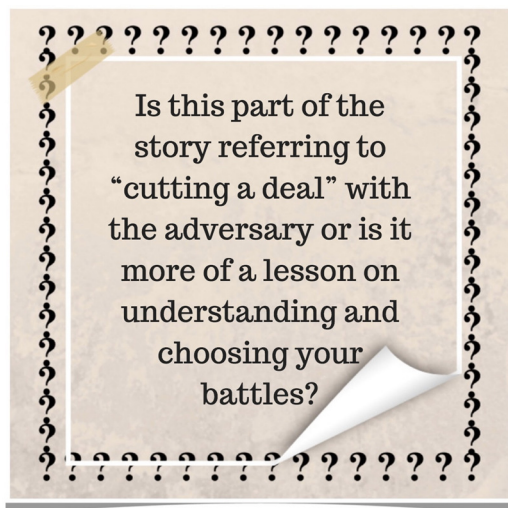
Our strength and confidence clearly come from above - following Jesus brings us to winnable battles, no matter what the odds may look like!

Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God. What does this armor look like?

Gird your loins with truth. Put on the breastplate of righteousness, shod your feet with the gospel of peace, take the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the spirit (which is God's word) and be sure to include prayer.

This shield is not that little round shield worn on the arm, which is actually a buckler. The shield is a big two-foot by three-foot, door size shield that is big enough to hide behind. If the shields of those fighting together are put down next to each other and over each other, they protect each other. We protect each other with our faith. Disciples need to work together.

Luke 14:32-33: (NASB) ³²*Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.*



It is not about cutting a deal with the adversary. This is a parable. We are not kings and we are not literally fighting. It is an example of knowing the challenge of discipleship and being prepared. The battle in Christ is with the world, the flesh and the devil. The armor of God will protect us if we keep it on. We must choose the kinds of battles we are capable of fighting within the context of discipleship. We need to know our capabilities and support each other as a team. We also need to choose our battles. Some we may need to avoid and some we must fight head on with our armor on.

³³*So then, none of you can be my disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.*



Our attachment must be to Jesus. When we give our life to the Lord, He gives us back everything to use in His cause.

 Starts with leadership, *Create a Culture of Selflessness*, James Chapman, TEDx

- *Well, first, it starts with leadership. Because if coach Gillespie weren't the most selfless person on the team and the organization, the players would have never bought in. It didn't work like that. He first had to be selfless. And I'm going to tell you something about our coach: he treated all of us equally. He treated the "star players" the same way he treated the guy sitting at the end of the bench who never got much playing time. All equally.*

They all played an important role.

Here Jesus seems to be summing up all that he has taught thus far: Discipleship will take over your life. The cost of discipleship needs careful consideration and the battles of discipleship cannot be taken lightly!

The next important discipleship lesson:

Romans 12:2: (NASB) *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

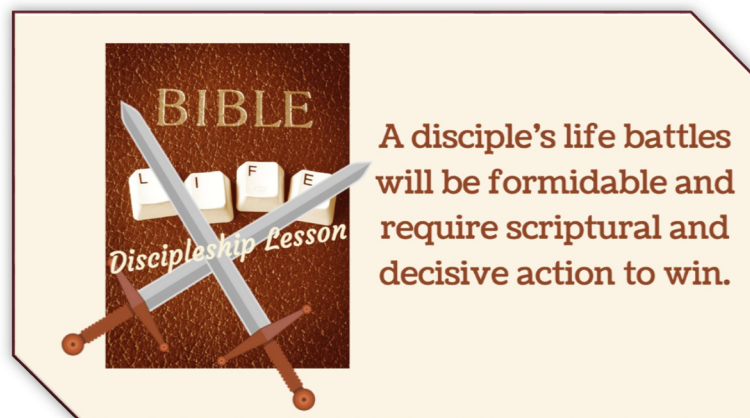
As a disciple, we must think, observe, learn and apply what Jesus teaches us.

Apostle Paul sums up some of his experiences:

Philippians 3:12-14: (NKJV) *¹²Not that I have already attained or am already perfected; but I **press <1377>** on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. ¹³Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴I **press <1377>** toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

This word for press is the same word used for "persecute" which means to pursue or follow after.

I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Paul was in hot pursuit of the goal.



It is not just making a decision. It is making a decision based on godliness, and our best example is Jesus. The Scriptures are our primary source for learning how to be a disciple of Jesus.

**Following Jesus is simple, but that does not mean it is easy!
What more must a disciple give?**

Jesus is telling us harsh realities in story form, making those realities easier to absorb. Clearly his focus in these parables is the thinking that begins and maintains a disciple's journey. Jesus is telling us that our minds must rise to new levels of spiritual maturity and spiritual reliance.

Most of us serve our ideals by fits and starts. The person who makes a success of living is the one who sees his goal steadily and aims for it unswervingly. That is dedication.

— Cecil B. DeMille

We discussed the first two aspects of discipleship which were counting the cost and knowing the challenges of discipleship.

Now, the third primary aspect of discipleship:



Third Parable Luke 14:34: (NASB) ³⁴Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned?

Therefore - because you now see the lessons regarding the training of your minds it helps you to become salty:

Matthew 5:13: (NASB) ¹³You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.

Salt is common and inexpensive. Salt has several functions. It enhances flavor and is therefore desired. It also preserves and is therefore a required commodity. Soldiers used to be paid in salt which was important for them to preserve their food while traveling.



Salt also was a necessary sacrificial commodity for some sacrifices:

Leviticus 2:13: (NASB) Every grain offering of yours, moreover, you shall season with salt, so that the salt of the covenant of your God shall not be lacking from your grain offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt. (Without salt, the sacrifice was unacceptable.)



Lead in assists, *Create a Culture of Selflessness, James Chapman, TEDx*

- *What else? See, I told you guys that we led the nation in scoring. And we also led the nation in points, rebounds, and steals, but I am not trying to brag. But what I didn't tell you guys is that we led the nation in assists. Nobody was ball-hogging. We shared the ball. We put each other in positions to score and to be successful, and everybody had that mindset, right? It has to work the same way for the city. We have to pass it on.*



I enjoy watching basketball because I love the teamwork! If the team is not teamwork oriented, I have no interest to watch. It is interesting to see how many people touch the ball before it gets shot. I am impressed by the selflessness of a team and how they move together which is a great example of discipleship. It requires sacrifice and an effort to work together. It is not just "me and Jesus."

Salt is also an agent of separation in the refining process. Without the salt, the ability to separate the gold from the other elements is dramatically hindered. Refiners want pure gold:

Mark 9:49-50: (NASB) *⁴⁹For everyone will be salted with fire. ⁵⁰Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another.*

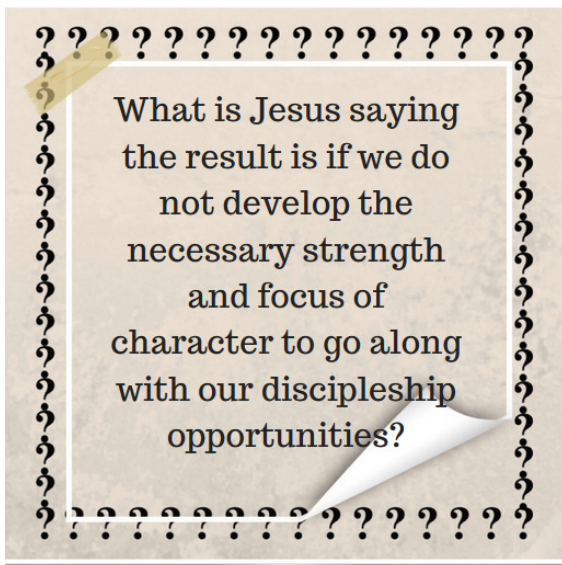
Salt directly refers to the strength and focus of our character. Submit ourselves to be in line with the pattern of Christ so that the Holy Spirit can accomplish its work in us. This submission requires strength and focus, for only then can the saltiness take effect.

James 2:18: (NASB) *But someone may well say, you have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.*

Do the work that is required. Do what the Lord puts before us.

What happens when salt is not salty?

Luke 14:35: (NASB) *It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.*

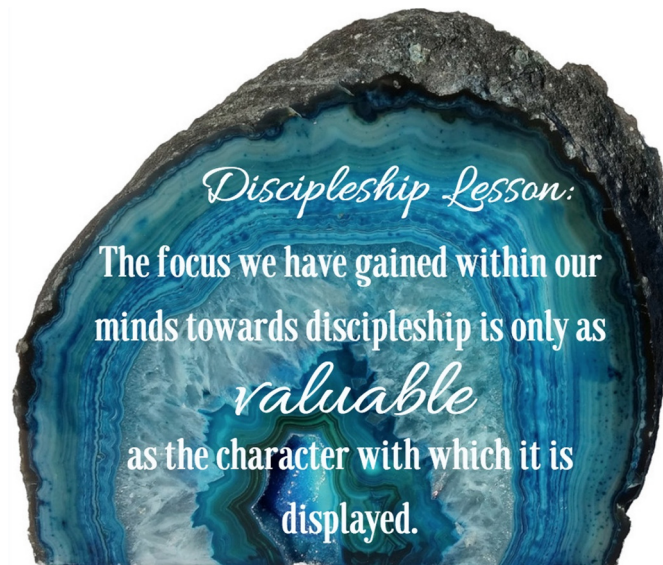


We will be thrown out from God's favor. We will be castaways versus having the preservative power to draw out the good qualities of those around us. It is not just about *feeling* blessed. It is about the work laid before you through Christ that you are doing for God's blessing.

Knowing the expected growth and results of discipleship:

Romans 12:3: (NASB) *For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.*

We need to keep ourselves humble. We have been given that *measure of faith* in order to execute the work of discipleship.



Salt is the character. Has our character revealed what we know in our heads and our hearts? If our character is not revealing it, we are not salty enough or changed enough so that others can observe we are different. We want our character to represent Jesus.

What is the most important thing we can learn and apply from this whole discipleship experience?

Let's remember that discipleship is a process in which those who follow are truly trying to become like he who leads. Because our relationship with Jesus is described as a unified body, we can qualify this whole undertaking as that body banding together for the purpose of accomplishing God's will. It is not just about "me and Jesus." What is important is the role that we play in the relationship with those around us who are walking the same walk.

Hebrews 10:25: (KJV) *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

We need to be together to find ways to co-labor together.

 **Pick up the underprivileged, *Create a Culture of Selflessness*, James Chapman, TEDx**

- *So what else? You have to pick them up! That's the whole point of this thing, right? Yeah, it starts with leadership and we put great programs into place; yeah, we start passing it on, and we're sharing knowledge and resources and we're coming together as a community, but what about those underprivileged neighborhoods? What about the homeless? What about the at-risk youth? See, it's real easy for us to just sweep them into little corners and pockets of the city, and hope the tourists don't see them when they come into town. It can be easy to do that. It's hard to pick them up, to uplift them out of those situations that they're in, so when the tourists come into town, we don't have to sweep them into little pockets of the city. You have to pick them up.*

Within the body of Christ, we do not all have the same level of talent or opportunities. We have the privilege on Christian Questions to discuss the Bible with our listeners. It does not just happen because we decide we want to



have a conversation. It happens because there are so many others behind the scenes doing all types of work that we (Jonathan and Rick) could never begin to do. We are pooling the talents and resources because that is what discipleship is.

Now we move from *discipleship lessons* to actual living and being. This is *Discipleship Applied!*

Romans 12:4-5: (NASB) *⁴For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, ⁵so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*

Discipleship applied within a body means that my following of Jesus will be different than yours!

We are all unique. Jonathan and Rick are different. Jonathan describes himself as a harmony man. He thinks of his role as trying to enhance, lift up and encourage Rick to bring out his strengths. The sum of Rick, Jonathan and this opportunity has its effort multiplied by the willingness to work together with the other 25-30 individuals who volunteer their time.

What is the common denominator if so much is different? A disciple must understand and accept suffering:



Suffering: Strong's #3958 apparently a primary verb; to experience a sensation or impression (usually painful)

Struggle ends where commitment begins. — Sumner Davenport

Suffering means to experience something. It does not necessarily mean there will be pain. Scripturally, suffering does not need to be painful.

Discipleship applied means observing and understanding how Jesus NEEDED to suffer.

Hebrews 5:8: (KJV) *Though he were a son yet learned he obedience by the things which he **suffered <3958>**.*

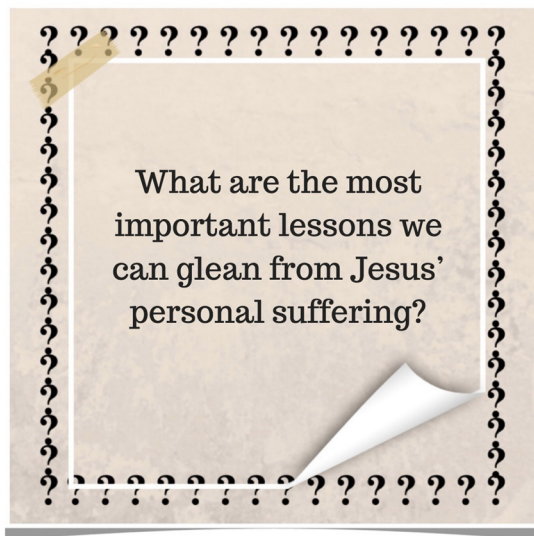
*Yet learned he obedience by the things which he **experienced**.*

Matthew 16:21: (KJV) *From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and **suffer <3958>** many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.*

Jesus was not "suffering" every day of his life - he was sacrificing his own will every day and, in many cases, it was a joyful experience - he was experiencing being offered up every day of his life.



Sacrifice does not need to be painful. It can be a joyful experience, which it is for us doing Christian Questions. It is sacrifice because it costs time, effort, preparation and dedication.



"God's will" was the most important thing to Jesus. He embodied love. His mission was totally misunderstood, but he was okay with that because all the world would understand in God's kingdom. Also, his suffering and experience are helping us to prepare for whatever the Lord requires for our Christian walk. We can learn by absorbing what Jesus did but then we can learn by applying what he did. We can apply his attitudes, his words and his actions.

Discipleship applied means that we must also suffer as we walk in Jesus' footsteps.

Philippians 1:29: (NASB) *For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in him, but also to **suffer** <3958> for his sake.*

In other words, to experience things for his sake or be hurt for things for his sake.

Learning to suffer means learning to share each other's suffering.

We can go through experiences with one another:

1 Corinthians 12:26: (NASB) *And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.*

Discipleship applied grants us the privilege of suffering for Christ - a family trait.

Romans 8:14-18: (NRSV) ¹⁴*For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, Abba! Father! ¹⁶it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. ¹⁸I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.*

Finally, discipleship applied is the transforming of our perspective to a heavenly one. Moments of self-sacrifice produce an eternity of a heavenly brotherhood.

Discipleship is about brotherhood. Discipleship is about many of us walking the walk and following in the footsteps of Jesus. It is not about "just me." Be a disciple and contribute to the body of Christ.



*So, what does discipleship cost?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on April 30, 2018:
Is Mercy Compatible with Justice?

Bonus Material!

The price of success is hard work, dedication to the job at hand, and the determination that whether we win or lose, we have applied the best of ourselves to the task at hand.

— *Vince Lombardi*

Find something you love and go for it with all your heart. No excuses, no plan B. Never settle for anything less than you know you can do. It will be hard, but I promise it will be worth it. — *Charlotte Eriksson*

The true wealth of a man is not what's in his pocket, but what's in his heart.

— *Unarine Ramaru*

Suffering MUST be for the right reasons and with the right attitude:

1 Peter 2:19-23: (NASB) ¹⁹For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. ²⁰For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. ²¹For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in his steps, ²²who committed no sin, not was any deceit in his mouth; ²³and while being reviled, he did not revile in return; while suffering, he uttered no threats, but kept entrusting himself to him who judges righteously.

Were these men counting the cost?

Luke 9:57-62: (NASB) ⁵⁷As they were going along the road, someone said to him, I will follow you wherever you go. ⁵⁸And Jesus said to him, the foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.

Jesus gives fair warning of the conditions that discipleship may bring:

⁵⁹And he said to another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father. ⁶⁰But he said to him, Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.



This sounds harsh, but in fact the "follower" was saying, "My father is old, let me see him through to his end." Jesus was showing him the priorities of discipleship.

⁶¹Another also said, I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home. ⁶²But Jesus said to him, No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

This "follower" simply had great *attachments* to his earthly ties. Jesus was saying discipleship requires attachment to the cause first and foremost!

To count the cost - understand the conditions of discipleship, so we can be sure our priorities are in order, so we can release any unnecessary attachments.

Mark 12:41-44: (NASB) ⁴¹And he sat down opposite the treasury and began observing how the people were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums. ⁴²A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent. ⁴³Calling his disciples to him, he said to them, Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury; ⁴⁴for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on.

Christian sacrifice is costly - notice Jesus did not say that the other contributions were worthless. He said that the widow's contribution was priceless - for it was her all.

Romans 5:1-5: (NIV) ¹Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. ³Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

Suffering can be fertile ground for great growth.

Some of the aspects of Christian sacrifice:

Persecution: to pursue

Suffering: to experience or suffer

Reproach: to defame, i.e. rail at, chide, taunt

Tribulation: pressure

Temptation: (first Greek word) endeavor, scrutinize, entice, discipline

Temptation: (second Greek word) a putting to proof - by implication, adversity

