

Message Discussion Guide

THE GOSPEL DEMANDS RADICAL SACRIFICE

The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. David Platt

September 14, 2008

Luke 14:25-35

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Connect . . .

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Remind learners that David mentioned a quote by C. S. Lewis that states "We are far too easily pleased." Invite learners to share a time when they tried to find satisfaction in something or someone who left them empty. Ask the following questions:

- Why do we have such low expectations when it comes to our satisfaction and pleasure?
- Do we want to get satisfaction without sacrifice?
- What are we willing to give up to have true abundant satisfaction?

Explain that we will discuss what Jesus demands that we give, so that we can have satisfaction in Him?

Option 2

Invite learners to consider the following statements that they may have heard or even spoken to someone about salvation:

- Do you want to go to heaven when you die?
- Do you know where you will spend eternity?
- Jesus will heal all of your hurts.
- You can receive forgiveness for your sins and be guilt-free.

Ask the following questions: Whom do these questions revolve around? What kind of Christianity do we portray when we focus salvation on questions/statements such as those above?

Explain that we will discuss a Christianity that Jesus calls to be solely consumed by Him alone, and that is solely for His purpose.

Review the Message . . .

The Sacrifice of the Christian . . .

- **Jesus requires superior love.**
 - **In comparison to Christ, we hate the people we love.**
 - **This changes our perspective.**

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Discussion Questions

- Enlist three volunteers to read Luke 14:25-26, Matthew 22:34-40, and Matthew 10:37-39. How can we reconcile Jesus' command to love others and His apparent calling to hate others?
- Based on what Jesus says in the passages in Matthew, how can we explain what He meant in Luke 14:26? Did Jesus mean that His followers would have to hate the people who meant the most to them?
- Why was loving Christ supremely a requirement for following Him?

Application . . .

- Do we present Christ as demanding our greatest love to those who want to follow Him? Why or why not?
- Emphasize that Jesus called His followers to love Him first and supremely more than any other person. As a result, what role does Christ play in how we relate to others?
- Explain that for some of us, loving Jesus more than others is not always difficult because of the pain of a broken relationship. How does loving Christ first allow us to love others more like Christ?

- **Jesus requires exclusive loyalty.**
 - **Through the cross of Christ, we die to the life we live.**
 - **This changes our priorities.**
 - **We are workers constructing a building.**
 - **We are warriors fighting a battle.**

Discussion Questions

- Invite a volunteer to read Luke 14:27-32.
- Remind learners that the cross was the horrible way that Jesus was crucified. Considering this truth, what did a cross mean to Jesus' audience? Did He want them to literally die?
- Read Galatians 2:20. Encourage learners to describe what Paul meant when he said that Christ was the only life in him.
- If Jesus was instructing His followers to relinquish all of their lives in pursuit of His glory and desires, how did their lives change in terms of priorities? Who was the center of their lives?
- Jesus instructed the crowd to count the cost of following Him. Was Jesus pleading with these people to follow Him? What kind of a follower was Jesus demanding?

Application . . .

- If we are dead to ourselves, who makes the decisions in our lives? What decisions do we not like to give to Him? What does this indicate about our relationship with Christ?
- Should we truly seek Christ in decisions such as where we live, what kind of home we live in, what clothes we wear, what we eat, what kind of vehicle we own, etc.? Why does it matter? What would our lives look like if we did?

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- Are we afraid that others will not want to follow Christ if we explain the cost and demands of following Him? What is the danger in this thinking? Could we present an unbiblical gospel this way?
- **Jesus requires total loss.**
 - **For the cause of Christ, we give up everything we have.**
 - **This changes our possessions.**

Discussion Questions

- Enlist a volunteer to read Luke 14:33-35. Was Jesus literally telling His audience to give up everything they owned for Christ?
- This last statement by Jesus is the final call in counting the cost of following Him. What was Jesus asking His followers to give up? What would their response to this demand indicate about their attitude toward their possessions?
- Read Hebrews 11:13-16. What did the author of Hebrews indicate was the reason that these men did not cling to the promise of possessions? What gave them satisfaction over possessions?
- Considering these men from Hebrews, what did Jesus want for His followers?

Application . . .

- How do we demonstrate our “rights” to our possessions instead of viewing them as God’s possessions to be used for His glory?
- Some of Jesus’ followers literally gave up everything, including their possessions, jobs, and families to follow Him. Not all of us are called to the same literal action, but what would our attitudes be if we *were* asked to give up everything?
- How do our attitudes towards our possessions reflect our relationship with Christ and our desire for His mission? How would our lives look if we sought to glorify Christ in the way that we purchase and obtain possessions?
- What are some ways that we can use our possessions to make Christ known to all nations? What are some ways that we can help the poor, suffering, and outcasts with our possessions?

The Supremacy of Christ . . .

- **Jesus is supremely loving.**
 - **He is worthy!**
- **Jesus is supremely loyal.**
 - **He will be faithful!**
- **Jesus sacrificed the supreme loss.**
 - **He is our reward!**

Application . . .

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- Explain that Jesus can rightly demand our love, loyalty, and loss because He is the ultimate example of all three. These are His terms for following Him. How have we devised our own terms for following Christ?
- If knowing Christ is our reward, then is giving up anything a true sacrifice? Would the sacrifice be greater if we gave up Christ for the sake of temporal things?
- Do our “sacrifices” really cause life changes for us? If they don’t, are they really sacrifices?

Conclusion...

Will Jesus Christ be your supreme joy, or will you forsake Him for the fleeting pleasures of this world?