

GOD's Solution To Life's Problems

Lesson 5 – Counting the Cost of Following Jesus

INTRODUCTION

While the Bible clearly teaches that there is nothing we can do to earn forgiveness of sins, we need to understand that being a Christian has great costs. Becoming a Christian is like joining the army. It may not cost you anything to get in, but it ultimately may cost you your life. We need to understand that the Gospel is not just adding Jesus to my life like a good luck charm or a free ride to heaven. Jesus is not here just so one can be healthy and wealthy or just take away one's problems. Rather, when one repents and trusts in Jesus, his or her life will be transformed into someone radically different. In fact, Christianity brings with it challenges that are difficult. Jesus told his disciples that *"In the world you will have tribulation. (John 16:33)"*

In this lesson, you will be taught what it means to follow Jesus and the costs of following Him. Also, this lesson will look at those Scriptures that give evidence that one is a Christian by what one does. Lastly, we will look at some passages of Scripture that give assurance that one has truly repented of their sins, and placed their faith in Jesus Christ.

I. COUNTING THE COST

1. Read Luke 14:25-33 and answer the following questions:

a. What does Jesus tell us we should do in verse 28?

b. What does Jesus mean that if anyone follows Him and does not hate his own family, he or she can't be His disciple (verse 26)? [Refer to Matthew 10:37 to help you understand what Jesus meant.]

Matthew 10:37 - "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."

c. Jesus said whoever does not bear his own cross and come after Him can't be His disciple (v. 27). In Luke 9:23, He said, *"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."* What did Jesus mean by these statements? [For help refer to 2 Corinthians 5:14-15]

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 - For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

d. What did Jesus mean that if one doesn't renounce all that he has he cannot be His disciple (v. 33)?

1) Study and compare the Rich Young Ruler (Mark 10:17-31) with Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10) to help understand what Jesus meant in Luke 14:33. Write down the difference(s).

Rich Young Ruler	Zacchaeus

2) Do you think we literally have to give away everything we own to become Christians? Why or why not? No. Jesus is teaching is that we need to put Him first. We must be willing to forsake all for Him.

"The road to following me is rough and steep. Stormy weather encompasses the entire course. There are many hills of difficulty and many valleys of humiliation for genuine Christians. So I set the symbol of a cross before you vividly to portray the difficulty and the personal demand made on My disciples. I want you to come. But I want you to weigh the cost as you follow."
Walter J. Chantry

THREE ELEMENTS NECESSARY TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN:

Knowledge: knowing who Christ is and what He done, the Gospel.

Acceptance: agreeing and approving the truthfulness of these teachings concerning Christ.

Trust: belief or faith that turns from self and rests entirely on Christ, and what He has done.

II. EVIDENCE OF HAVING TRULY REPENTED AND TRUSTED IN CHRIST

1. According to James 2:14, 17, & 20 what accompanies genuine faith?

James 2:14 - What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. 20 Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?

2. What proves that one is a true disciple of Jesus?

John 15:8 - By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

John 8:31 - So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples."

3. What are some examples of the "fruit" that is being referred to above [Refer to Galatians 5:22-23]?

Galatians 5:22-23 - "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control..."

[TEACHER EXTRA: These fruits are shown in good motives, desires, attitudes, words, and deeds that are for the glory of God.]

4. Using the following passages, underline the examples of works that a genuine follower of Christ does:

Mark 16:15 - "And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation."

Matthew 28:19-20 - "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Ephesians 6:18 - "praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,"

1 Peter 2:1-3 - "So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation— if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good." [TEACHER EXTRA: The spiritual milk is reference to the Word of God.]

Acts 17:11 - "Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

Hebrews 10:24-25 - "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

1 Peter 4:10 - "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace."

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 - "The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

1 Corinthians 11:23-25 - "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

III. PERSONAL ASSURANCE OF HAVING ETERNAL LIFE

Assurance means to be certain in the mind and to have confidence. 1 John gives us several tests to help an individual know for sure that they have truly repented and trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

Four Possible Positions With Respect to Assurance of Salvation:

- Position 1: There are people who are unsaved and know that they are unsaved.
- Position 2: There are people who are saved but are not certain they are saved.
- Position 3: There are people who are saved and are certain they are saved.
- Position 4: There are people who are unsaved and yet falsely believe they are saved.

1. What is the purpose of writing 1 John (Read 1 John 5:13)?

1 John 5:13 - "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life."

2. Read 1 John 2:3-6 and write down those things that give assurance that one is a true Christian.

1 John 2:3-6 - And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may be sure that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

3. Read 1 John 2:15-17 and answer the following questions:

a. How does a person know if the love of God is not in him or her (v. 15)?

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him

b. What are the three things that define the "world" that Christians are not to love (v. 16)?

- 1) the desires of the flesh
- 2) and the desires of the eyes
- 3) pride in possessions

c. Who will abide forever with God (v. 17) [Refer to Matthew 7:21-23)?

whoever does the will of God abides forever

4a. What is one way believers can know if someone is a true Christian ("had been of us") (1John 2:19)?

1 John 2:19 - "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us."

4b. What might be some explanations why someone would depart from the church and deny their profession of faith in Christ [Refer to Matthew 13:18-23)?

When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it,

...this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away.

As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

5. Read 1 John 3:5-10 and answer the following questions.

a. According to verse 6, "no one who keeps on sinning" really knows Christ as their Lord and Savior.

What does it mean for someone to keep on sinning? [Refer to 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 & 2 Timothy 3:1-5]

b. Why is a true Christian unable to continue to live in a lifestyle of sin (v. 9)

9 No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.

c. How is it evident or obvious who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are (v. 10)?

10 By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

6a. How can a person tell if they have been born of God (become a Christian) and personally know God?

1 John 4:7-8 - "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love."

6b. If expressing love for others is an indication that a person is a Christian, what does love look like?

1 John 3:17-19 - "But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him;"

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 - "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

1 John 5:1-2 - "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments."

Luke 6:35 - "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil."

Thinking Question

Why would God put us through trials or difficulties according to 1 Peter 1:6-7?

1 Peter 1:6-7 - "In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

It should be clear by now that GOD's Solution to Man's Problems is found in Jesus Christ. If you have repented of your sins and placed your faith in Christ, then you are a new creation, which means the old has passed away; behold, the new has come (2 Corinthians 5:17). As one turns their life over to Christ to follow Him, they will receive the grace and mercy that they need to overcome anything that God may bring their way. 2 Peter 1:3 states, "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence."

You should now walk in obedience to the truths you have learned. The Scriptures command that you grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18). May God pour His grace and mercy on you as you passionately pursue God in all things.