

CHAPTER 5 – THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. (Mark 8:35–35 NIV)

BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

Mark 8:31–9:1; John 15:9–11

Jesus’ proclamation of the kingdom of God at the beginning of his ministry no doubt created anticipation and excitement in his disciples. But Jesus’ shocking declaration that his mission leads to death on the cross turned their expectations upside down. Please read Mark 8:31–39.

1. This passage is exactly halfway through the Gospel of Mark and a couple of years into Jesus’ ministry. Why do you think Jesus waited to unveil the cross?

2. The disciples went from elation to shock and denial. Are there times when you have realized that God's purposes for your life were unfolding in unexpected and even painful ways? What happened and how did you respond?

3. Having just revealed the cross, Jesus now reissues a new call for discipleship (vv. 34–38). How would you describe his discipleship challenge?

4. Jesus' call to discipleship could be rephrased, "You must die to live." How is it that, according to Jesus, following him to death makes good sense (vv. 35–37)?

CHAPTER 5 – THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

5. Jesus' call to die in order to live has multiple layers of meaning; for the early church it included physical death; Cyprian (d. 258) wrote, "The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church." What does it mean for you?

6. Jesus warned against gaining the world and losing your soul (v. 36). In what ways might the status of your soul factor into your daily decisions and motivations?

7. How might this consideration of the cost of discipleship and total surrender influence your ways of thinking, feeling, and acting?

8. In John 15:9–11, Jesus asks his disciples to obey his commands and remain in his love. What is the result of totally surrendering your all to Christ? How does that affect the way you view the cost of discipleship?

9. God is calling us to make him the highest priority in our lives, which he says will lead to joy. How can forsaking our selfish desires and following God's desire for our life lead us to greater fulfillment and joy?

10. Jesus hints in Mark 9:1 that the disciples will see the kingdom of God come with power. What power will the disciples be given to help them live out their calling to be disciples? (See Acts 1:8.) How does that power help you count the cost of discipleship?
