

## Jesus: A Life: Week 10

### Following Jesus on His Terms

Big Idea: Jesus calls us to die to ourselves daily and follow him unconditionally.

Read the Bible:

Luke 14:25-33

Luke 9:23-24

Galatians 2:20

### **STUDY**

\*\*\* Before interacting with this guide, all leaders should study the referenced texts using the HEAR Method. It's also important to encourage your group members to read the text using the HEAR Method. \*\*\*

H: Highlight, or take note of, things in the passage that stick out to you as you read.

E: Explain what the passage means by asking simple questions of the text:

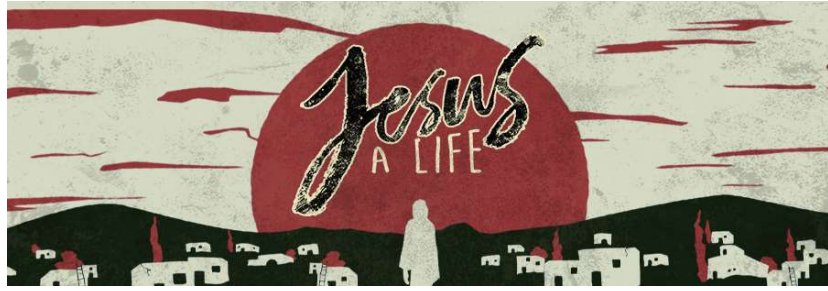
- **Why was this written?**
- **To whom was it originally written?**
- **How does it fit with the verses before and after it?**
- **Why did the Holy Spirit include this passage in the book?**
- **What is He intending to communicate through this text?**

A: Apply the text to your life. What does God want you to learn from this text?

R: Respond to God in prayer.



<sup>25</sup> Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, <sup>26</sup> "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. <sup>27</sup> Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. <sup>28</sup> For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? <sup>29</sup> Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, <sup>30</sup> saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' <sup>31</sup> Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup> And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. <sup>33</sup> So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.



## Summary

What does it mean to be a Christian? We all better be sure of the answer to this question because eternity is on the line.

Jesus doesn't leave us in the dark. He speaks with crystal clear clarity on this topic.

In Luke 14: 25-33 Jesus makes clear that to be a Christian means to make him our top priority in all of life. Jesus over everything. Jesus must be more important than familial relationships. Jesus must be more important than personal ambition. Jesus must be more important than worldly comforts.

Jesus says that we must renounce all that we have in order to be his disciples. Does that mean we need to go and sell all that we have on Facebook Market Place? No. it means we live with a new understanding that everything in our lives, including our very lives, belongs to Jesus. We live with open palms and bent knees understanding that everything we are, and everything we hope to be, belongs to Jesus.

Jesus helps us even more by laying out the specifics. If we want to be a Christian, we must do three things.

### 1. Deny Yourself

In a world that says we should be about ourselves, take care of ourselves, promote ourselves, and look out for ourselves, Jesus has a radically different idea. Deny yourself. Denial of self enables us to confess Jesus as the point and purpose of our lives.

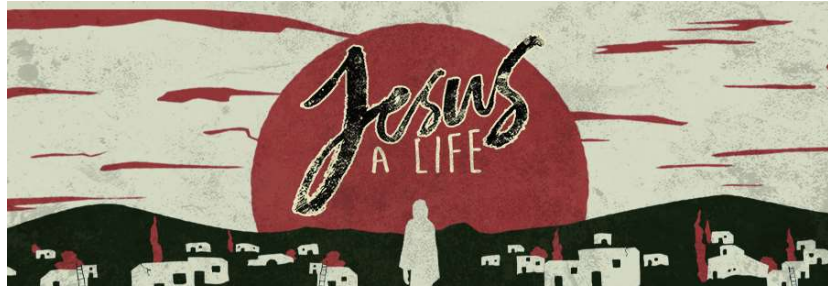
### 2. Die to yourself.

Make no mistake, this self-denial is not momentary or solitary. It is ongoing. It's non-stop throughout all of life. Jesus proves this point by calling us to take up our cross, daily. A cross. People die on crosses. That is exactly Christ's point. Deny yourself to the point where you are no longer the controlling influence in your life. Do it today. Do it again tomorrow.

### 3. Follow Jesus

Now that you aren't the controlling influence in your life, Jesus is. This means that he sets the direction of our lives. He is the captain of our boat. He calls the shots.

Jesus has come to tell us exactly what it means to be a Christian. Let's not miss his instruction.



## **Leading Your Group**

### **Community Time**

Start group by asking for Prayer requests and checking in on everyone.

### **Bible Study**

\*\*\*Have everyone in your group read assigned scripture before meeting.\*\*\*

Start Group by Reading Luke 14:25-33

### **Major Lessons – (These are the “Lesson Points” in Class)**

#### **Point No. 1 Jesus will not settle for second.**

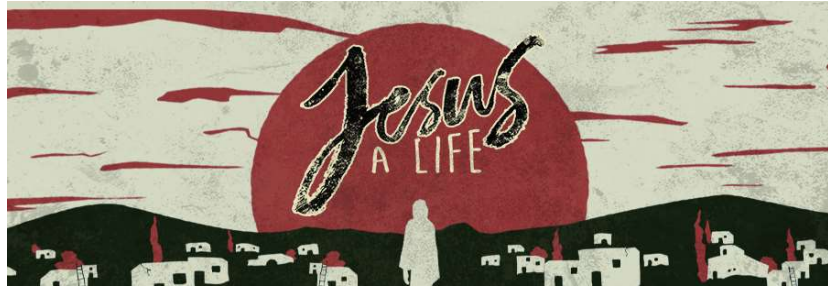
From the outset of today’s passage, Jesus is raising the stakes of discipleship. He is elevating the discussion.

His purpose is to show us that Jesus must be our greatest love in the world.

He does this by referencing our personal relationships, our most intimate personal relationships. Christ says that we must hate our father and mother, wife, and children if we are to be his disciples.

If we are honest, this seems a bit extreme. Hate our own family. Well, the trick here is to understand Christ’s point without numbing his words. We know that Jesus doesn’t want us to hate people. He rebukes the Pharisees in other places for treating their parents with contempt.

The point Jesus is making here is that our love for him must be so extreme, so over the top, so rich, that next to him our greatest loves look like hate.



Kent Hughes helps us here:

What Jesus was saying paradoxically was that our love for him must be so great and so pervasive that our natural love of self and family pales in comparison. We are to subordinate everything, even our own being, to our love and commitment to Christ. He is to be our first loyalty. All other relationships must take second place.

Christ's words introduce a test for us. Do we love him this much?

Discuss: How do these tough words challenge you and your walk with Christ?

**Point No. 2: True Christianity is about giving it all to Jesus.**

Jesus sums up his call to Christianity with a call for disciples to “renounce” all that they have.

Jesus terms are simple. He wants all that we have. No conditions. No qualifiers. He wants it all.

Earlier in Luke, Christ said it this way, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”

Deny yourself. Pick up your cross. Follow Jesus.

Jesus couldn't be clearer: your life is over. Now you live for me.

This is what it means to be a Christian.

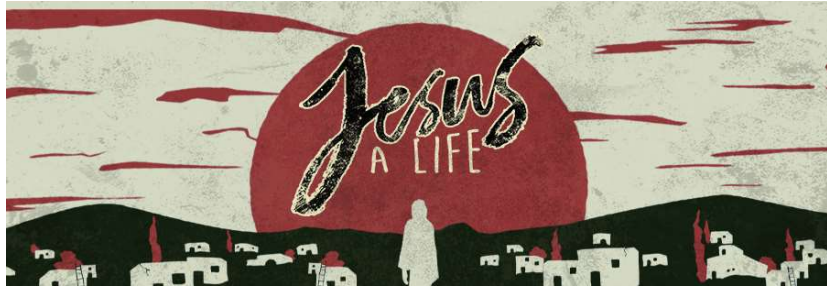
Discuss: In what ways do you try to live a life where you can give everything you are to Christ?

**Point No. 3: To follow Jesus we must count the cost.**

The big point of this sections is Christ's encouragement for people who are considering following him, to consider what it might mean to be a Christian.

To be a Christian comes with a cost. To follow Jesus comes at great personal expense to self.

Are you willing to pay the price? Be sure. Lest you be like countless others who have set out to follow Jesus and turned back because it seems like Jesus is asking too much.



Discuss: How can we count the cost in our everyday lives?

## Resources

### Expositor's Bible Commentary

#### 3. *The cost of being a disciple* (14:25–35)

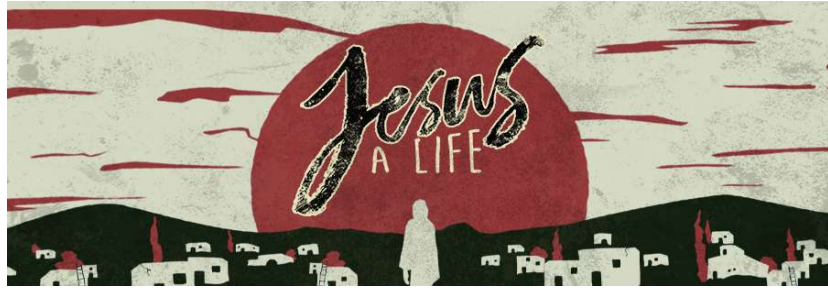
The serious tone of the preceding parable continues as attention now turns to those who profess allegiance to Jesus.

**25–27** With the words “large crowds” (v. 25), Luke again draws attention to Jesus’ popularity (see comment on 4:15). These crowds formed an entourage along with Jesus’ own group (cf. 8:1–3). They were “traveling,” an indication of further progress toward Jerusalem (see comment on 13:22). “Hate” (v. 26) is not an absolute but a relative term. To neglect social customs pertaining to family loyalties would probably have been interpreted as hate. Jesus is not contravening the commandment to honor one’s father and mother. Moreover, he says a disciple should hate “even his own life,” whereas he speaks elsewhere of loving ourselves (10:27; cf. Matt 22:39; Mark 12:31). It is important to understand the ancient Near Eastern expression without blunting its force. (For the meaning of v. 27, see comment on 9:23.)

**28–32** Jesus uses two different circumstances to illustrate his basic point: discipleship requires a conscious advance commitment, made with a realistic estimate of the ultimate personal cost. The practical nature of the circumstances Jesus so vividly pictures underlines the fact that Christian discipleship is not some theoretical abstract ideal but hard reality.

**33** This is clearly a crucial verse. But does it mean that it is impossible to retain any possessions at all if one wants to be a true disciple? The key word is *apotassetai* (“give up”). When used of persons, the verb means to take leave of or say good-bye to someone. When used of things, it means to give up or renounce (BAG, s.v.). Here, in contrast to the cares of the rich young ruler (18:22), Jesus does not say a disciple should sell all his possessions and give everything away. His thought probably is that of abandonment of things, yielding up the right of ownership, rather than outright disposal of them. The disciple of Jesus may be given the use of things in





trust, as a stewardship, but they are no longer his own. The present tense implies that what Jesus requires in relation to possessions is a continual attitude of abandonment.

In his recent work (cf. n. 34), Pilgrim (*Good News*, pp. 101f.) sides cautiously with those who take the view that abandonment was total only for Jesus' disciples in his lifetime. Pilgrim nevertheless sees this radical abandonment as speaking to the rich of Luke's day, urging them to share their goods with their needy brethren. But the principle of stewardship makes a spirit of abandonment—i.e., the willingness to part with our goods (which are not ultimately ours anyway)—necessary today. This is consistent with the command to use our possessions wisely (cf. 16:1–12).

**34–35** This saying (v. 34) poses two questions: Why does it occur here? and How does salt lose its saltiness? Its place here is due to the common element it shares with the preceding illustrations—the consistent quality of life Jesus expects of his disciples. We do not know with certainty what he had in mind in speaking of salt losing its saltiness. The reference may be to adulteration either by impurities in the beds by the Dead Sea from which salt slabs were taken or by inert fillers introduced by unscrupulous dealers. The point is that tasteless salt is useless. The one who “has ears” is expected to apply the lesson to himself (v. 35).<sup>1</sup>

## Teacher's Bible Commentary

### **The Demands of the Kingdom (Luke 14:1–35)**

*The passage.*—The teachings of Jesus in chapter 14 are placed in the setting of a sabbath dinner at the home of a leading Pharisee. The passage begins with an account of a healing which once again violated Jewish sabbath traditions (vv. 1–6). This is followed by a series of comments on the right conduct of guests and host (vv. 7–14). Beginning with the parable of the great

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<sup>1</sup> Walter L. Liefeld, [“Luke,”](#) in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 979–980.



banquet (vv. 15–24), the last part of the chapter emphasizes the demands of the kingdom on disciples.

*Special points.*—For “chief rooms” (v. 7) we should read “chief places of honor” (RSV). These would be the ones nearest the host. The teachings of Jesus lead to the principle enunciated in verse 11. In the kingdom of God human values are turned upside down. It is the humble man, the person who defers to others, who is first in God’s sight.

The pious platitude uttered by a self-assured guest (v. 15) serves to introduce Jesus’ parable of the great banquet (vv. 16–24). The religious leaders were sure that they had reserved places in God’s kingdom. But Jesus taught that it is not enough just to be invited. A person has to accept the invitation. Because they failed to accept God’s invitation, arrogant religious people would discover that places they thought were reserved for them would be given instead to the people that they despised and ostracized (v. 21). The people from the “highways and hedges,” from outside the city, would probably be Gentiles.

“Hate” (v. 26) means to love less. Jesus never taught that we should hate anybody. He did teach that the demands of the Kingdom must come first. We must be willing to deny claims of family, culture, job, and anything else if they interfere with our loyalty to God. This is essentially what is meant also by bearing one’s cross (v. 27). The disciple is to walk the way of self-denial and commitment to God if it costs him his life to do so.

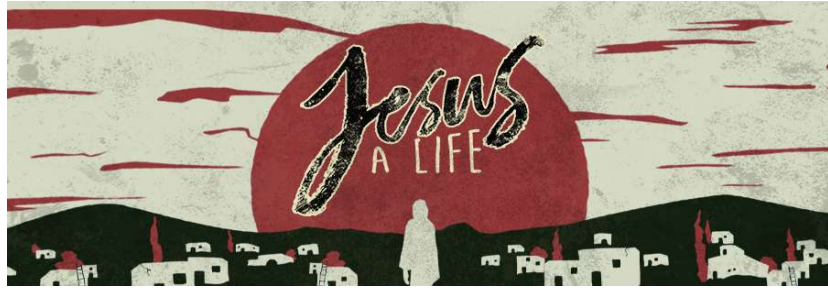
“Salt” (v. 34) is the element of self-sacrifice absolutely essential in the life of the disciple. Salt does not actually “lose its savor,” but it could be mixed with other substances so as to lose its strength. Such salt was good neither for food nor fertilizer (v. 35).

*Truth for today.*—What do you think would happen to us if we actually took seriously our responsibility to follow Jesus in all areas of our lives? Suppose we started to accept and associate with people of all races, classes, and moral levels. Suppose we started to go to the kinds of places and do the kinds of things that he did. Suppose we suddenly became totally generous, completely dedicated to serving others, entirely oblivious to thoughts of self-interest and advancement. What kind of criticism, misunderstanding, and even hatred do you think would beat against us from a scandalized society? Do you think that we would begin to understand what it means to “bear a cross” after Jesus?<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Malcolm O. Tolbert, [“Luke,”](#) in *The Teacher’s Bible Commentary*, ed. H. Franklin Paschall and Herschel H. Hobbs (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1972), 652–653.





## THE BIBLE PANORAMA

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### CHAPTER FOURTEEN

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**V 1–6: SENSIBLE SABBATH** Jesus is challenged at a leading Pharisee’s house, in the presence of a man with dropsy, as to whether healing on the Sabbath is lawful. He responds by healing the man! Then, using the analogy that an ox in the ditch will be pulled out on the Sabbath day, Jesus shows how ridiculous it is for the Pharisees and lawyers to oppose healing on the Sabbath. Jesus, eager to reclaim the Sabbath day from the legalistic distortion of the Pharisees, underlines that a sensible Sabbath includes glorifying God by doing good to others. Clearly, He has future plans for the Sabbath and for blessing people on it! **V 7–11: HUMBLE HONOURED** Using a parable about a wedding feast, Jesus teaches that His disciples should seek the lowliest place, not the highest. Self-exalters will be humbled and humble people will be exalted. **V 12–14: GENUINE GENEROSITY** Hospitality and kindness should be shown without any thought of reciprocation. In offering these to the really needy and underprivileged, there can be no thought of being repaid for that generous kindness and no opportunity for it to happen. God will repay such love at the ‘resurrection of the just’. **V 15–24: REPLACEMENTS RECRUITED** Jesus tells of a man who invites many to a banquet. All make excuses for not coming based on preoccupation with property, work requirements and marriage. The host of the banquet instructs his servants to bring in the poor, crippled, blind, and lame from wherever they can find them. They will occupy the places of those initially invited who rejected the invitation. The parable applies to the Jews, but also in principle to any who turn down God’s invitation to repent and trust Him. **V 25–27: CRUCIAL ‘CANNOTS’** A person’s love for God must exceed that of all family ties. By comparison only with love for God, the best human love should be seen as hatred. Without a love that puts God first like that, an individual cannot be God’s disciple. Neither can he be a disciple if he puts his own life first and does not crucify his own preferences and follow Jesus. **V 28–33: COST COUNTING** However, before trusting and following Christ in discipleship, one must count the cost and be willing to meet it. This is similar to a builder who checks his costs before embarking on a building project, or a king who ensures he has the resources he needs before going into battle. They both ensure that they are able to finish what they start. **V 34: SAVOURLESS SALT** Flavourless salt is useless and unusable. Any Christian who



loses his trust in and obedience to God also loses his distinctive flavour. He is then of no use to the kingdom of God. We should all heed this message<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Gerard Chrispin, [\*The Bible Panorama: Enjoying the Whole Bible with a Chapter-by-Chapter Guide\*](#) (Leominster, UK: Day One Publications, 2005), 437–438.