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COMMUNITY BIBLE STUDY

THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 2010

7:00PM

STUDY OUTLINE #021

THEME: Life priorities, true Cost of Discipleship

SCRIPTURAL TEXT: Luke 14:14-35

WORDS IN MARBLE: the choices you make will determine the future you end up with.

In our last study we defined a disciple as a follower, one who takes after or patterns his life after his master. It is clear from what Jesus said, we become or adjust to what we observe or continue in - John 8:31 (See also Joshua 1: 8, Abraham and Jacob in Genesis 15, 30:41). However, the true test of discipleship is the price you are willing to pay when the stakes are raised and this is dependent on your priority in life

A. What is priority?

Wordsmith: the quality or condition of being earlier in time or order; precedence, esp. because of authority, right. It also means urgent need, precedence, choice, main concern, preference, pre-eminence, supremacy, superiority or lead.

Discipleship is about priority. What matters most to you preoccupies your thought life. You are favourably disposed to it and such informs your best option at any given situation.

B. Pre-requisites of Discipleship

There are fundamental actions we exhibit in demonstrating our choices. Often, they are attitudes we display in response to our convictions or preferences in life. These attitudes are important as they mirror our discipleship walk, ascertain who we are; the conflicts and challenges we are facing as well as the quality of our commitment.

For example Daniel, because of his resolve for God refused to compromise - **See Daniel 1: 8**

With the help of the scriptures let us identify attitudes that confirm our convictions as true disciples...evidence that God indeed is our priority. **From Luke 14: 25-35 we can make the following deductions:**

1. What we hate helps define what we love.

- You do not know what you love until you know what you hate. When we love God, the love we profess for other things pales in comparison. **See verses 26 and 33. (Also Joseph in Genesis 39: 9, Paul in Philippians 3: 1-10)**
- Whenever our expression of love for others is put side by side with our fondness for God, the balance will tilt towards God. It will seem we hate our relations.
- We operate with an unstoppable disposition towards God-given assignment. **Acts 20: 17-24; 26:19.**
- When we are totally sold out to God, we do not hesitate to go all alone even when we are misunderstood.
- Our aspiration is not to be accepted by all nor do we struggle to belong to the clique or the club.

2. The second attitude that reveals the true mark of discipleship is our readiness to carry our cross - Matthew 16: 24,

What does it mean to bear our cross?

It means denying ourselves. This does not mean living in self-denial, nor delay gratification and waiting for opportune time to go on with our desires not minding whose will is highlighted. Rather, emptying of ourselves; not seek our own things or end - **Philippians 2:3-11; Proverbs 3:5-7; Romans 12:10.**

LIFE PRIORITIES, TRUE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP *(Continued)*

- It is demonstrating our readiness and willingness to suffer for His sake - **Acts 5:41; Romans 8:17; Philippians 1:29; 2 Timothy 2:12; 1 Peter 4:15,19.**
- The cross represents troubles, persecutions, oppositions, challenges, delays or frustrations we encounter in keeping true to our faith.
- Following Jesus is a deliberate choice coming from a personal resolution, an act of one's will and not influenced by others.
- We must recognise that every heavenly assignment has its own cross which strengthens us rather than diminish us - **Acts 9:16; Romans 8:28-39; 2 Corinth 12: 5-10. (It comes with the calling).**

Consider the 3 Hebrew Children, they denied themselves i.e. did not love their lives above God.

The practise in the world is **Self-preservation**; being politically savvy. We are economical with truth and want to be in the good book of all. We love those who do not love the Lord. Most times, we share in evil jokes to be sociable, cannot stand for testimony of truth; we can not stick out for righteousness because we are mired in compromise.

We do not condemn evil schemes, immoral practises in our offices nor do we stand out against unrighteous deeds because of pressure to survive.

We make excuses and justification for compromise. Matthew 7:23-24.

Unfortunately, in the process of preserving, we definitely lose all...Mark8: 35-38.

3. The third attitude that re-inforces true discipleship is forsaking all to follow - consider Luke 14:33.

To forsake means: to desert, abandon, renounce, reject, be pulled out, to leave entirely or withdraw from. Our allegiance to God must be of such level that nothing pulls us apart. We must be dedicated to pleasing Him rather than trying to do Him some favours.

In discipleship you cross the line, burn the bridge, throw in everything, often leaving security for insecurity.

Read Ruth 1:8-18; Mark 10:28-31; Luke 14: 33.

Note: As stated clearly in Matthew 19: 27-29, there is no sense of loss in forsaking. We receive proportionally those things we leave.

Personal assessment -

1. *Are you still entangled in compromising situations, playing games, longing to be in everybody's good book, striving not to offend anyone even after many years of Christianity?*
2. In determining the values and priorities of your life, do you consider God? Are you ready to forsake all in order to follow Him?

May He grant you grace to stand up for Him and follow Him wholeheartedly.

Prayer focus:

Jeremiah 9:23-24, Psalm 15.

Lord, my life must bring glory and honour to you therefore help me to prioritise you at all times.