

The Cost of Discipleship

☀ What does it look like to please God?

“I believe that the cost of discipleship, the price we pay in following Christ is to live our lives in ways that honor, please and glorify God. When you accept Jesus’ offer of forgiveness, and realize both what he has saved you from and what it cost Him to do so...you want to live your life for Him out of sheer gratitude and love.”

The Big Picture of Honoring God

☀ If you were to ask the average person what it takes to please God what would they say?

“In response to our normal assumptions toward what does and does not please God, I would have to say that these things, however good they all are, are not part of the main things that please Him.”

3 Questions to Ask When Seeking to Honor God

1. WILL I LIVE A LIFE OF FAITH?

“You can never please God without faith, without depending on him.” Hebrews 11:6 (LB)

“Now faith is really about taking risks. It’s about trusting in God enough to do something that brings me face to face with my fears. In fact, I think the greatest barrier to faith isn’t our unwillingness to trust God as much as it has to do with our unwillingness to face our fears.”

Example to Follow:

“A large crowd followed and pressed around him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, ‘If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.’ Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, ‘Who touched my clothes?’ ‘You see the people crowding against you,’ his disciples answered, ‘and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’ But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. He said to her, Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.” Mark 5:24-34

☀ If you were this woman, what would you be thinking, feeling as you approached Jesus?

☀ Was Jesus pleased with this unprompted healing?

THE COST: I MUST FACE MY FEARS.

“The kind of faith that pleases God is when we step out in spite of fear and trust God and take a risk. I think this woman was afraid. Not afraid of being healed, but afraid that Jesus, her last chance, couldn’t heal her and that would mean that she would have to live with this condition for the rest of her life.”

☀ What fear is it in your life that you know you need to face?

☀ What spiritual disciplines help you to face your fears on a day-to-day basis?

🕯 Questions for personal reflection:

When facing fears, is turning to Jesus my first response or last resort?

How does fear affect my life?

🕯 Scripture for personal study on facing fear:

When facing fears, is turning to Jesus my first response or last resort?

2. WILL I LIVE A LIFE OF LOVE?

“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” John 15:13

☀ What does it mean to lay your life down for your friends?

“Living a life of love is not just about being kind to animals, hugging trees and helping little old ladies across the street. Living a life of love as described in the Bible is living a life of sacrifice towards others.”

Sacrificial love is composed of two elements:

Grace is giving people what they don’t deserve.

Compassion loves the unlovely.

Grace in action:

“There is a saying, ‘Love your friends and hate your enemies.’ But I say: Love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way you will be acting as true sons of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust too. If you love only those who love you, what good is that? Even scoundrels do that much.”

Matthew 5:43-46 (LB)

☀ Do you consider yourself a graceful person?

☀ In your dealings with people, do people get what they deserve?

Compassion in action:

"A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, 'If you are willing, you can make me clean.' Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!' Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured." Mark 1:40-42

**"This is not just about Jesus healing a man with a disease,
it's a story about compassion and love. It's about Jesus reaching
out and touching someone considered in his society to be an outcast.**

- ☀ Who are the "outcasts" of our day that we should reach out and touch?
- ☀ What will it cost you to reach out to them?

THE COST: SACRIFICING MY REPUTATION TO TOUCH AN OUTSIDER.

Discipleship is about love. If you want to reduce the kind of life God wants His followers to lead you can reduce it to that one word: LOVE.

*Jesus said: "Live generously and graciously toward others, the way God lives toward you."
Matthew 5:48 (Message)*

"And loving others sacrificially is inconvenient. It takes time. It will cost you your cool reputation because you're going to be seen talking to people who are considered "un cool" or "socially challenged". Ditch your reputation, forget about needing to be cool and looking good... who cares. I'll guarantee you God doesn't."

- ☀ What can we do to grow in our grace, compassion and love for people?
Consider taking concrete steps to take action on these ideas.

🕯 Questions for personal reflection:

Do I live a life of love?

Do grace and mercy characterize my life?

Do I demonstrate unconditional love and compassion towards others when it is of no benefit to me?

Is there someone at work or church to whom you should reach out with the compassion of Christ?

🕯 Scripture for personal study on compassion and grace:

James 2:1-12; Psalm 86; 1 Peter 3:7-9

3. WILL I LIVE A LIFE OF OBEDIENCE?

"These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men." Isaiah 29:13

- ☀ If you obey God out of a wrong motivation, is He pleased?

"God doesn't just want our outer compliance, he wants

our inner motivation. And the kind of obedience that pleases
God is the kind that is motivated by our love for him.”

"If you love me, you will obey what I command." John 14:15

- ☀ Why is love and obedience linked?
- ☀ What happens if your obedience to God is disconnected from love?
- ☀ What does obedience to God's commands look like?

"One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: 'Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?' Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Matthew 22:35-40

THE COST: MY AGENDA FOR MY LIFE

- ☀ How does a passionate love for God and for people change the agenda for your life?

**"Make no mistake, pleasing God is not easy, and it's going to cost you everything.
But it's so worth it."**

🔗 Questions for personal reflection:

Is my obedience to God based on my love for Him?

Is there an area of my life where I am deliberately disobeying God? (Ask God to show you these areas.)

🔗 Scripture for personal study on obeying God:

Matthew 5:13-19; Psalm 14; James 2:14-26