

Master Teacher Outline
THE COST OF FOLLOWING CHRIST
(15–20 minutes)

Use this outline and the Biblical Commentary to prepare to share the truths of this passage with students.

Introduction: Today, just like in Jesus' day, there are many who try to follow Jesus at a distance or on their own terms. We often try to make "being a Christian" as easy or attractive as possible. But Jesus never presented this way of following Him as an option. Following Jesus is more than surface-level belief, doing "good" things, saying a couple of prayers, or going to a cool church. In reality, it will cost you everything, but what you get in return is infinitely more valuable than anything in this world.

Illustration: David contrasts a celebration on his first Sunday as Pastor of a multimillion-dollar church campus in Birmingham, Alabama, with a recent trip he had taken to work with persecuted Christians in Asia. He points out, in the midst of our American culture, even "well-meaning, Bible-believing Christians" can settle for a "Christianity that revolves around catering to ourselves when the central message of Christianity is actually about abandoning ourselves" (p. 7).

Description:

1. Following Christ requires complete devotion (Luke 14:25–27).

- Jesus was concerned with having true disciples as opposed to crowds full of fans; therefore, He calls his followers to lay down their lives for Him, even to the point of physical death if necessary.
- Jesus used drastic and dramatic language to show people the level of devotion necessary to be His disciple, especially when compared to their commitment to other relationships in their lives.

Illustration: David relates other accounts from earlier in Luke. He summarizes what Jesus was saying to people by writing: "Become homeless. Let someone else bury your dad. Don't even say good-bye to your family" (p. 8). He closes the section by pointing out that Jesus "was simply and boldly making it clear from the start that if you follow him, you abandon everything . . . even your family" (p.10). To be sure, this does not mean you may now neglect other Scriptures that speak of honoring your father and mother; the point here is that your *ultimate* allegiance lies with Jesus and no other. As difficult as this teaching may sound, Jesus demands the entire life of anyone who would follow Him.

2. Following Christ requires counting the cost (Luke 14:28–32).

- Jesus strongly encouraged His listeners to consider whether or not they were willing to follow Him fully to the end, wherever He might lead them.
- Jesus also called upon His audience to consider whether they were willing to follow Him in the face of great adversity from a hostile world.

Illustration: David acknowledges the cost of following Christ can certainly be high, but also shares a realization he had in India: that the cost of our not following Christ is high for those who do not know Him at all (pp. 14–15).

3. Following Christ requires radical abandonment (Luke 14:33).

- For any who still might not have understood, Jesus makes it perfectly clear that in order to be His disciple we must give up everything, all of our earthly pursuits and desires.
- Being a disciple of Jesus is an all-or-nothing pursuit; there can be no casual observers.

Illustration: David imagines what it would be like if we literally lived the parable of the treasure in the field. He concludes that, in this picture, Jesus is someone worth losing everything for (pp. 17–18).

Conclusion: When we follow Christ the way He has demanded, we find ultimate satisfaction in Him and the world sees a clearer picture of who He is.

Description: Many of us might find ourselves stuck in the tension that exists between following Christ fully and enjoying the comforts of this world excessively. We like Jesus, but we also like our stuff, and we don't really want to give up either. However, if we are to live our lives for the glory of God as we ought, then we must be willing to give up everything in order to follow Christ. When we do this, the world will begin to see who Jesus really is, and that only He is all-satisfying. The question we're left with is this—do we believe He is worth it?