

Undivided

(15–20 minutes, easy setup)

Use this outline and the Biblical Commentary to prepare to share the truths of this passage with learners. Encourage learners to take notes on their copies of the Learner Worksheet as you teach. The underlined words in the Master Teacher Outline correspond to the blanks on the worksheet.

Introduction: Jesus' disciples did not gain a fast track to fame and fortune when they answered the call to follow Jesus. In fact, Jesus told them that their lives would never be the same and would be full of challenges. No matter what, though, Jesus wanted His followers to know that to truly follow Him meant that they fully gave their lives to Him in every way and loved Him more than anyone or anything.

1. A disciple's priorities reflect undivided loyalty and love for Christ (see Matthew 10:37).

- Jesus had just informed His disciples that they would likely experience persecution, possibly even from their families, because of their decision to follow Him.
- Taking care of one's family, particularly one's parents, was very important to Jewish culture.
- Because **Jesus is God and Savior**, He could require a disciple to value Him above anyone else, including the closest family loyalties. This commitment is so great and unique that nothing else is even worthy of being called "love" in comparison to a disciple's love for Jesus.

Illustration: For many new believers around the world, their conversion results in abandonment from their families. *The Voice of the Martyrs* often tells these stories of persecution, violence, and rejection. Despite pressure, though, those who are true disciples claim that Christ is worthy of their continued loyalty and love, even above family.

2. A disciple surrenders complete control of his or her life to Christ (see Matthew 10:38).

- Crucifixion was a well-known form of shameful public execution, which included having the criminal, often a political rebel, carry the crossbeam to the location of execution.
- Jesus wanted His disciples to know that to follow Him meant being willing to endure whatever came as a result of following Him and living for His kingdom, even suffering and death.
- Following Christ ultimately meant surrendering control of one's entire life over to Christ.

Interaction: What part of your life is the most difficult to give Christ control of?

3. A disciple navigates life by clinging to what is eternal (see Matthew 10:39).

- The first half of each phrase ("whoever . . .") refers to one's physical life, while the second half ("will . . .") refers to one's eternal spiritual life in Jesus' kingdom.
- Jesus wanted His disciples to know that those who truly follow Him in this world will live eternally and those who guard their own self-centered interests are not His followers.

Illustration: In a world full of microwaves, streaming video, and instant messaging, it can be difficult to be content with delayed gratification. We want quick results and little pain or effort. But following Christ often requires us to focus on the eternal because we are still living in a world full of sin and suffering. We can experience abundant life in the here and now, but our reward will not be complete until we reach eternity.

Conclusion: When we become Christians, Jesus becomes our Savior and our Lord. To be a true follower of Christ is to be more than a believer in name only. It is more than having "eternal life insurance." To follow Christ is to be a disciple, which is a calling to be devoted to Jesus and love Him more than anything or anyone else in this life. It means following Him no matter where He leads, no matter what the price or how difficult the journey, because He is worth it and His kingdom is our home.