

The Cost of Discipleship

The Year of Transformation Series – Part 02

Connect: An old saying goes: *“There is no such thing as a free lunch!”* Can you recount a time when you thought something was going to be free, inexpensive or perhaps even profitable, but instead, the cost became great?

Hook: Our country is experiencing record high numbers on the stock exchange. If you have money in the stock market, its earnings are headed up. Yet, investing in the market can be a tricky thing fraught with many kinds of risks that can transform profits to losses within days. Look at the following chart that shows how Amazon’s stock prices went up and down:

Time Period	High	Low	Drop From High to Low
April 1999-Aug. 1999	\$105.06	\$44.78	(57%)
Dec. 1999-Sept. 2001	\$106.69	\$5.97	(94%)
Oct. 2003-Aug. 2006	\$59.69	\$26.07	(56%)
Dec. 2007-Nov. 2008	\$94.45	\$37.87	(60%)

With this kind of roller coaster ride, very few people kept their Amazon stock over the early years . Yet if you had made a \$5000 investment in 1997 and held onto it, you would have over \$1 million today. That low price of \$5.97 in 2001 is now trading at over \$1300. Wow!

Sometimes it takes great discipline and fortitude to reap the benefits. The disciplines that Jesus wants us to practice also offer great benefits as well...but there are costs! Are they worth the cost?

Book: Luke 14:25-33

Luke 14:25 A large crowd was following Jesus. He turned around and said to them,

Luke 14:26 "If you want to be My disciple, you must hate everyone else by comparison—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be My disciple.

Luke 14:27 And if you do not carry your own cross and follow Me, you cannot be My disciple.

Luke 14:28 "But don't begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it?

Luke 14:29 Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you.

Luke 14:30 They would say, 'There's the person who started that building and couldn't afford to finish it!'

Luke 14:31 "Or what king would go to war against another king without first sitting down with his counselors to discuss whether his army of 10,000 could defeat the 20,000 soldiers marching against him?

Luke 14:32 And if he can't, he will send a delegation to discuss terms of peace while the enemy is still far away.

Luke 14:33 So you cannot become My disciple without giving up everything you own.

Look:

According to the scriptures above, how should a relationship with Christ change our values? Discuss the following questions:

1. How will true discipleship affect our relationships (family, spouses, friends, etc.) What does it mean to “hate”? Is “self-hate” a good practice?
2. What kinds of “crosses” are we being called to carry? What does the “cross” represent to Jesus?
3. How can discipleship be costly? What has been some recent costs to you to follow Christ?
4. Is it a cop-out to say, *“We don’t literally have to forsake all to follow Christ”*?
5. Is forsaking all just for the super-committed or is it the requirement for every believer?
6. What are the costs if we do not practice spiritual disciplines?
7. How can we extricate ourselves from the materialism that surrounds us? How can we know when we give up enough?
8. Where is the balance between family versus ministry? To which extreme are American Christians most prone?

Took:

Which of the following disciplines would you like to know more about? Prayer, Worship, Giving, Fellowship, Ministry, Bible study, Evangelism

What can you do to get started in “investing” in this discipline?