

LET US PRAY.

Read Hebrews 5:11-6:3.

2 Tim 3: 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness

If you believe that, say 'Amen.' (comment).

By way of introduction, I want to say this: Any word you hear that comes from me, you may safely discard. God will not call you to account for anything I have said. However, any word that you hear from God, never forget it.

I feel safe in saying that 8 months ago, I would have never agreed to preach a Sunday morning message. That's ok, because 8 months ago God would have never allowed me to.

That is not to say that I have in any way 'arrived'. On the contrary, I bring this message to you today, as a fellow soldier in the fight.

I intend to read many Scriptures today, some coming from my Magic Bible. This Magic Bible is very special because it contains many translations. The best part is that I can always find at least one translation that makes me feel at ease, or justifies my actions. On the other hand, there is also at least one translation that, when read honestly, pierces the heart and soul.

The title of the message is "I'm saved, now what?", and the theme is moving on to maturity. This comes from my own awakening within. The three main points are Count the cost; Consider it loss; and, Carry the cross. Although, much more will be presented. I trust that if you are unsaved or a new Christian, you will be challenged; if a mature Christian, encouraged; and if a lukewarm Christian, rebuked.

COUNT (THE COST)

We begin by counting. First, we must count the cost of being Christ's disciple; and then, after doing so, count our old self dead.

1 Count the cost.

Many times in the Scriptures Jesus warned those who would follow him that they must not make their decision lightly. Probably many of us are familiar with the biblical phrase 'Count the cost'. Just what cost is there? Listen to the following verses.

From the Magic Bible, Luke 14:33

It's Easy So therefore, whoever of you who does not **try hard** cannot be my disciple.

Nail the Rich So therefore, whoever of you who does not give up **all his excess money** cannot be my disciple.

Luke 14:26 If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he **cannot be my disciple**.

28-30 For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and **count the cost**, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish.'

33 So therefore, whoever of you who **does not renounce all that he has** cannot be my disciple.

Ouch So therefore, whoever of you who does not renounce all his old habits, pride, fame and honor, house, cars, job, TV(s), stereo, VCR, all that he has, cannot be my disciple.

The Bible says that in order to be a Christian, a disciple, we must give up, renounce, everything we have. EVERYTHING. But that is only part of the cost.

Acts 5:41. The apostles left the Sanhedrin, **rejoicing** because they had been **counted worthy of suffering disgrace** for the Name.

2 Tim 3: 12 In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus **will be persecuted**.

Jam 1:2-3 **Consider it pure joy**, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.

Even more, after giving up all we have, we should understand that we WILL BE persecuted. And be happy about it.

2. Count yourselves dead.

We must also realize that, as a Christian, our flesh is now dead. We count it dead. The day you were saved, you, that is, your fleshly self, died. I suppose that is why salvation is called being born again, or a second birth .

Rom 6: 11 In the same way, **count yourselves dead to sin** but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Rom 6:6 For we know that our **old self was crucified** with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin-- because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

Col 3:5 **Put to death**, therefore, whatever belongs to **your earthly nature**: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

When we become a Christian, the old life dies, and a new one takes its place.

CONSIDER (IT LOSS)

Having finished counting, let us now move to the second phase: consider. We should consider it loss, those things which we have just renounced. We are commanded as well to consider others above ourselves, and also to consider from time to time our own spiritual state.

1. Consider everything (worldly) a loss.

We begin with Paul's reminder to us of how to think about the things we used to rely on, and cling to, before we were saved.

Phil 3:7-8 But whatever was to my profit I now **consider loss** for the sake of Christ. What is more, **I consider everything a loss** compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. **I consider them rubbish**, that I may gain Christ.

Acts 20:24 However, **I consider my life worth nothing** to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has, given me--the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.

What does the Magic Bible say? In Matt 6: 19,

No Problem Do not store up for yourselves so many treasures on earth that you never consider anything else.

Nail the Do not store up for yourselves a three-car garage, a new BMW, and a ten thousand dollar watch.
Rich

Matt 6:19-21 Do **not** store up for yourselves **treasures on earth**, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

Luke 12:33-34 **Sell your possessions** and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. **For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

Too Close To Home Do not store up for yourselves thousands of dollars in hobbies, \$75 sneakers for you or your children, \$200 dresses, \$200 suits, 40 pairs of shoes, a roomful of gadgets you never use, or spend hours upon hours watching TV, in idle conversation, or self-indulgence. For no matter how often you whitewash it, what you really value shines through.

This does not mean that all of us must immediately run out and sell every last spoon we own. Though for some, it might. What it does mean is that we must seriously contemplate everything we do, everything we say, everything we spend, that is in our name alone.

2. Consider the good of others.

After considering all we have as loss, it becomes much easier to do the next step, which is consider the good of others. Throughout the Old and New Testaments we are exhorted to do good to our neighbors, those around us.

Phil 2:3-4 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility **consider others better** than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the **interests of others**.

Heb 10:24 And let us **consider** how we may **spur one another** on toward love and good deeds.

In fact, that (the need of others) is the reason the Father gives us beyond what we need.

2Cor 9:11 You will be made rich in every way **so that you can be generous on every occasion**, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

3. Consider your spiritual state.

While we are busily considering the good of those around us, we must be careful not to forget to consider our own spiritual state. It is only when we examine our lives that we can remove the sin from it.

2Cor 13:5 Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; **test yourselves**. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you--unless, of course, you fail the test?

CARRY (THE CROSS)

Now, we come to the hard part. So far, we have only thought about things, but now we must do. As a Christian, we are required to carry 1) our cross, 2) carry our brother, and 3) carry on in the example of Christ.

1. Carry your own cross.

Just as Jesus strongly urged those who would follow Him to count the cost, He also commanded us we must carry our cross if we would be His disciples.

Once, again, first let's look at the Magic Bible, Luke 14:27.

Sunday Christian And anyone who cannot make it to church on Sunday, excluding football season, cannot be my disciple.

I Give And anyone who does not tithe, though it might be less than 10%, cannot be my disciple.

Luke 14:27 And anyone who **does not carry his cross** and follow me **cannot be my disciple**.

Luke 9:23 Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must **deny himself** and **take up his cross daily and follow me**."

Gal 6:5 for each one should **carry his own load**.

Are You Serious And anyone who does not daily love his neighbor, daily refuse to gossip, daily pray for his family, daily show to his wife his **Christ-like** love, OR, daily submit to her husband, and much much more, cannot be my disciple.

We see that we must daily deny ourselves and carry our cross. What is YOUR cross? I cannot say. I can say that it is not a lifelong struggle controlling your temper, or anything like that. Rather, I believe it is whatever Christ asks you to do that, if you had your own way, you would not.

Some everyday examples may be

allowing the car in the 'lane about to end' to pull in front of you
 not taking the front row parking spot at the mall, or church
 giving that pushy, ungrateful, loudmouth the last item on sale that you wanted for yourself praying that the guy who ran the red light in front of you will safely get where he is going
 telling the person with 14 items in the 10-item express lane that Jesus loves them, and so do you

(Just generally at least once a day putting someone else ahead of yourself)

2. Carry your brother's cross when he stumbles.

Not only are we to carry our cross, but we are also, on occasion, to carry our brother's cross. When your brother stumbles or falls, be there to help him, until he is able to walk again.

1Cor 10:23- "Everything is permissible" – but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible" – but 24 not everything is constructive. **Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.**
 Gal 6:2 **Carry each other's burdens**, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

3. Carry on in the example of Christ.

The third aspect to carry is the most important of all. We are all, each and every one of us, to think, act, talk, work, play, and live as Jesus did (and would if He were in our place).

1Pet 2:20 But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you 21 suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because **Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example**, that you should **follow in his steps**.

Again, I am not saying we must each literally sacrifice our lives. Far from it. But, after much prayer and study of the Scriptures, do whatever you come to believe that Jesus Christ would do if He were in your situation. You can do no more, and you must do no less.

1 John 2:4 The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is -6 not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: **Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.**

And just how did Jesus walk? Jesus

Gal 6:2 prayer		- spent the night praying to God
John 3:16	love	- loved us so much He died for us
Luke 23:34	forgiveness	- forgave those who crucified Him
Heb 5:7-8	submission	- submitted even though He did not have to
Phil 2:8	obedience	- became obedient to death on a cross
James 5:11	compassion	- The Lord is full of compassion and mercy

WHY?

You may be wondering what benefit is there in living this manner? Well, if you do all these things for the wrong reasons, with the wrong motive, there is no benefit.

1Cor 13:3 If I give **all I possess to the poor** and surrender my body to the flames, **but have not love**, I gain nothing.

I find three reasons to do what I have said.

1. gain an eternal reward.

First, by doing these things we lay up for ourselves eternal treasures.

Gal 6:9-10 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will **reap a harvest if we do not give up**. Therefore, as we have opportunity, **let us do good to all people**, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

And, we will be rewarded for our good deeds.

Rev 22:10 Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone **according to what he has done**.

2. live full and joyous life.

Next, God wants us to live a completely joyous life. God does not desire us to struggle under the weight of our burdens, nor is he pleased when we do.

John 10:10 The thief come only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have **life, and have it abundantly**.

John 15:10-11 If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that **my joy** may be in you and that your **joy may be complete**.

If you find yourself lacking in joy, in happiness, in fulfillment, examine yourself to see if you have fallen short. I believe that anyone living as Jesus commanded will be truly happy.

3. God has commanded us.

If these were not enough, there is a very basic reason to do these things. This is what God has commanded us. As Christians, not only must we not do what displeases God, but we must also do what pleases Him.

2Thes 3:13 And as for you, brothers, **never tire of doing what is right.**

 Jam 4:17 Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do **and doesn't do it, sins.**

ENDING

I end with a verse from the wisest man who ever lived.

Ecc 12:13 Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter:

Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

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