

# Bible Study: Counting the cost

## HOW TO USE THE GUIDE

This guide is not the object of the study. It is a pointer to the Bible, which should be the focus of the study/discussions. To get maximum benefit from the study, a few suggestions could be helpful.

### a. Preparation

Each member of the group needs to go through each study before the actual meeting time. This would deepen your insights and greatly enrich the discussions. Then spend some time in prayer for the study and for the group.

### b. The Discussion

Each member must participate in the discussions. The guide is designed in the Inductive Bible Study method, which aims to get the message of the Bible by first getting the details of the text and then drawing the conclusions and lessons from them. Each sub-section has 3 questions:

1. **Observation:** Meant to help you get the facts directly from the text. Ask yourself the question: 'What does the text literally say?' Do not spend too much time on this question.
2. **Interpretation:** Meant to bring out the meaning of the text. 'What do you think the writer intended to communicate? How do you think the first readers of the text understood its message?' Allow sufficient discussions on this question.
3. **Application:** Meant to help you relate the message of the text to your own life. They are questions for personal or group application of the facts. Allow sufficient discussions on this question. The applications should be as honest and as practical as possible.

### c. Memory Verse

As a key verse for the study, it helps you to keep in memory whatever is learnt in the discussions. Do your best to memorize it. Check on one another at the beginning of the next study.

## PREFACE

Today many are the Christians who would like to serve the Lord but avoid anything that has to do with hardship or persecution on their behalf. These days the wealth and health gospel teaches Christians that they are to have an ever easy and comfortable life and if ever it is not so, they must have sinned! Because of this, there many mission fields left without laborers and the few who dared to go, have done it with compromise. But the scriptures show plainly that while the Lord sends them for his mission he makes it clear that there will be challenges to face. He promises his ever presence with them but no soft journey.

Jesus said that whoever would come after him must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Him. By saying that Jesus wanted his disciples to know that there is a cost to pay, there are sacrifices to make if ever one wants to follow Him, to live like Him and to serve Him.

Jesus himself had to pay a cost for following God's will and fulfilling his mission on earth. This had to cost him his whole life on the cross. Even before the cross Jesus had to face persecution of all kinds and hardship in order to fulfill God's mission. Following means to walk in one's steps and of course we can't presume to be followers of Christ if we deny to walk like He walked and follow his own steps.

In this Bible study you will learn what it really means to follow Jesus facing different challenges in different aspects of our life while we seek to fulfill our mission without compromise. It is our prayer that it will help you evaluate your whole life in light of the Scriptures and make positive changes that will help you to walk in Jesus' steps. Allow the Holy Spirit to reveal the things of God that will transform you and motivate you to serve Him without being afraid of **COUNTING THE COST**.

**NOTE:** All scripture quotations in this guide are from THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION. Copyright. By International Bible Society.

## Counting the cost...

### 1. For forgiveness

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#### Introduction

*As people living together in society, we often happen to offend and hurt one another in one way or another. When they are deeply hurt, some people find it very difficult or impossible to forgive their offenders. Talking about forgiveness someone once said “refusing to forgive is like cutting a bridge you might need to cross one day!” But then where can one draw power to forgive and how is one supposed to forgive?*

#### Matt. 18:21-36

1. a. Describe the King’s behavior towards his servant in contrast to the King’s servants’ behavior towards his fellow servant in line with each one’s debt.
2. a. What do you think Jesus wanted to teach about God and about people by contrasting those two behaviors?  
  
b. In v.22 Jesus tells Peter to forgive his brother seventy-seven times. What do you think to be Jesus’ point here?

3. a. Ten thousand talents is approximately equal to \$10,000,000 and a hundred denarii is approximately equal to \$20. How should the comparison of the two amounts of money affect our view of the sins of others?  
  
b. Think of people you have had difficulty forgiving. What barriers keep you from being free to forgive these people?  
  
c. How would remembering God’s love and forgiveness for you help you forgive those people?

#### Memory verse

#### **Matt.18: 21-22**

*Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.”*

## Counting the cost...

### 2. For reconciliation

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#### Introduction

*In this world people are familiar with tragedies like wars, genocide, and many other conflicts such as tribal or racial. All this affects people's relationships whereby in steady of unity and love people live with divisions, discrimination, hatred for one another and revenge. However this situation may not always be apparent because some people happen to co-exist peacefully because of the governments' pressure or any other reason. As Christians we are no immune to such situations, what should be our behavior when offended or when we offend?*

#### When you're the offender: Matt.5:21-26

1. a. What are the things Jesus is saying can introduce one to judgment?  
b. According to this passage, what is the behavior one should have when offering gifts?
2. a. In line with V23 and V24, what does an acceptable worship before God involves on one's behalf?  
b. On V 24 we read about being reconciled with your brother. What do you think

to be the place of repentance in reconciliation?

c. What do you think to be the steps, the cost and the benefits of repentance?

3. a. Think about a person or people you have offended. What have so far prevented you from repenting to them?  
b. Knowing that God is please with our worship when we have healthy relationships, what are some specific steps you are going to take in order to repent and reconcile you with those people?

#### When you've been offended: Matt. 18:15-17

1. a. According to this text, what one should do once his /her brother sins against him/her?  
b. Describe the steps one may go through in doing that?
2. a. According to you, what should be one's objective as he/she goes to see his/her offender?  
b. What does the fact of taking initiative of going to see the offender even up to 3 times tell us about the way Jesus sees the offender?
3. a. According to this study, how should we view our offenders?  
b. Think about people who have offended you. In what practical ways can you approach them so that you wean them over? Share with your group.

#### Memory verse

#### **Matt.5:23-24**

*Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you; leave your gift in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled with your brother; then come and offer your gift.*

## Counting the cost...

### 3. For a godly family 1: Qualifying for leadership

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#### Introduction

*Most of the time we see Christian leaders so eager to serve the Lord to the point they forget and neglect their families. They would have time for crusades and church services; they would do counseling for their church members but not find time to take care of their own children and wives. Must the responsibilities of our families be in conflicts of those in leadership?*

#### 1Tim 3:1-13

1. a. What are the qualities of overseers and deacons according to this passage?  
  
b. Among these qualities which ones are related to family matters?
2. a. In v.5 Paul sees incompatibility between failure to manage one's family and running a church ministry. Why?  
  
b. How could the qualities described above be modeled in a home setting?
3. a. How do you evaluate your relationship with your family?

b. In line with this passage, what do you think you need to change in the way you treat your family? Talk about specific things you are going to put into practice.

#### Memory verse

#### 1 Tim 3:5

*"If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?"*

## Counting the cost...

### 4. For a godly family 2: Healthy relationships

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#### Introduction

*In our postmodern societies many are the families whose members are disconnected from one another, whose children are not obedient, whose parents are careless, families one could qualify as “dysfunctional families”. Some of these families are influenced by culture while others are not at all cared for because the members are too busy or do not know how to. Just as we go to the user’s manual to know the instructions guiding the use of a machine we also go to the scriptures to know the instructions of the creator for a healthy, peaceful and godly family.*

#### Wives and husbands: Ephesians 5:22-32

- Describe the attitude wives should have towards their husbands and vice-versa.
  - What parallels does Paul draw to these attitudes?
- Paul tells the wives to submit to the husbands as the church submits to Christ. What does this comparison implies from the wives’ side?
  - Paul compares the love of husbands for their wives to the love of Christ

for the church or to the care of one’s own body. What are the marks of this love?

c. Paul says that the husband is the head of the church as Christ is the head of the church. What do you think to be the meaning of a head and the responsibilities involved?

d. On v31 we read about a man and a woman becoming one flesh. What was Paul’s point by saying this? What do you think to be the implications of this truth from both wives and husbands?

- If you are married, think about your relationship with your spouse. In line with this study, what do you think you need to change or improve in your relationship? Share with the group.
  - If you are single, what are the things you learned from this study that affected your understanding on marital relationships?
  - Are there couples you know have problems in their marital relationships whom think you need to help? How are you going to help them from the truth we learnt? Share with the group.

#### Parents and children: Ephesians 6:1-4

- According to Paul, how should children behave and why?
  - What should be the fathers’ behavior toward their children?
- On v.1 we read that children should obey their parents “in the Lord”. What do you think to be Paul’s view concerning this obedience?
  - Obeying one’s parents is the first commandment with a promise. Why do you think this had to be so?

## ***Counting the cost...***

c. Why do you think Paul had to tell the fathers not to exasperate their children?

3. a. How does this truth motivate you to obey your parents or those who look after you?

b. If you have children, do you see anything to change or improve in the way you relate with them? In what practical ways are you going to do that?  
Share with you group.

c. Talk about practical ways parents can bring up children in the training and instruction of the Lord.

### **Memory verse**

#### **Ephesians 5:29**

*After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church.*

## Counting the cost...

### 5. For faithfulness in your profession

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**Right man in the right place!**



#### Introduction

*We probably came across people who would say that Christians or born-again people are not serious for they would pray and forget everything else. Indeed for many Christians, serving the Lord is all about being active in churches. They think Christianity is about praying, singing to the Lord and being faithful to their church programs. For them, God is neither interested nor concerned by their everyday life affairs. They neglect and show mediocrity in their studies or professions and are the kind of persons who don't make any difference outside the church. What kind of behavior does God expect from us in our studies and professions?*

#### Faithfulness: Daniel 6: 1-9

1. How is Daniel described compared to his coworkers?
2. What does v. 5 implies on Daniel's behavior toward his work and God?
3. a. How do you view your studies or work and how faithful are you toward what you do?

- b. Do people around you see your faithfulness toward God? Is there anything you need to improve or correct? How are you going to do that? Share with your group.

#### **Not without cost: Daniel 6:10-28**

1. a. How did Daniel behave when he knew that an unchangeable decree that is against God's law has been published?  
  
b. What was the consequence of Daniel's behavior and what impact did it bring in the whole kingdom?
2. a) According to you, why did Daniel keep on praying despite the risks and consequences of his prayers?
3. a. In which areas of your life (at your campuses or work) are you or have you been pressed to compromise the truth of the Word of God?  
  
b. How can you turn those pressures into opportunities to witness about God through your faithfulness to Him? Share with the group.

#### **Memory verse**

#### **Daniel 6:4**

*At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charge against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent.*

## Counting the cost...

### 6. For moral integrity

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3. a. Have you ever been in a situation that challenged your integrity? How did you respond to it then? Share with your group.
- b. What do you think causes many Christians to compromise their standards in in everyday life? Learning from Joseph's example, what can one do in order to keep integrity at all costs?

#### Memory verse

#### Genesis 39: 9

*"No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you because you are his wife. How then can I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?"*

#### Introduction

*We are living in a world whereby immorality is increasing day after day. In Rwanda and in many other countries corruption is a serious threat in both public and private services. We see people getting jobs and other services in exchange with sex or money for bribe. How can then Christians stand and make a difference in such a corrupt environment that always whispers in our ears: "everyone does it, why not you?"*

#### Genesis 39:1-23

1. a. What position Joseph had in Potiphar's house and how did he get it?
  - b. What are the challenges that Joseph met during his stay at Potiphar's house? How did he respond to them?
  2. a. What do you think pushed Joseph to refute Potiphar's wife's offer?
  - b. Do you think Joseph was conscious of the consequence or cost of his reactions? Explain.
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## Counting the cost...

### 7. For making disciples

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#### Introduction

*These days many churches seek popularity and big numbers of members attending their services. Their security is rather in the quantity than in the quality. Therefore we end up having many immature Christians; Christians who do not know much about their salvation or about God and whose life do not make impact outside the church because they do not know how they are supposed to live and the task they are to accomplish for the Lord. What kind of life does Jesus expect from those who believe in Him and what is the task they are to accomplish for Him?*

#### Being a disciple: Luke 14:25-35

- a. According to Jesus who is that who can not be his disciple?

- b. What are the illustrations Jesus is using in this passage?
- a. What do you think to be the meaning of “hating”, “carrying one’s cross” and “giving up everything one has”?
- b. Why Jesus had to disqualify everyone who would fail to do that?
- c. What do the illustrations on v. 28 up to v. 33 have to do with the behavior of the disciple?
- d. How do you relate the comparison of the salt on v.34-35 and the fact of being a disciple of Christ?
- a. Evaluate your life as a disciple of Christ. What are the things you need to change or improve? Share with the group.
- b. How did this study influence your idea of following Jesus?

#### Making disciples: Matthew 28: 16-20

- a. Describe the disciples’ reaction when they saw Jesus.
- b. What is Jesus saying to his disciples?
- a. Why does Jesus stress his authority (v. 18) as a backdrop to his command to “make disciples”?
- b. What does the disciple making involve?
- c. When do you think a disciple is made?
- a. In what practical ways are obeying Jesus’ command?

## ***Counting the cost...***

b. What are the things you need to be doing in order to be a good disciple of Christ and a disciple maker? Share with your group.

c. How can the church fulfill this mission of making disciples?

### ***Memory Verse***

#### ***Mat t. 28:19-20***

*...Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*

## Counting the cost...

### 8. For Integral mission

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#### Introduction

*Some Christians are convinced that the role of the church is to deal with “saving souls” only. They fear that much involvement in social issues might divert them from a concern of salvation. So they close their eyes to any kind of problems around them. Other Christians strive to make them better and follow the world’s philosophy of “Me first”, “If I don’t take care of myself, who else will?” Let’s look together at the biblical behavior of a Christian in this needy world.*

#### Isaiah 58:1-14

1. a. Describe the doings of the people of Israel contrasting them to the concern of God in this Passage?
  
- b. What is the real fasting that pleases God and what are its results?

2. a. What do you think is the place of social issues on God’s agenda?
  
- b. What does this have to do with the true worship?
  
3. a. Compare the behavior of the contemporary church toward the needy, injustice, corruption... to the behavior of the Israelites in this passage. Is God pleased with our worship? What can we do?
  
- b. What should the church and you as an individual do right now to make his/your light shine?

#### Memory verse

#### ***Psalms 41:1***

*“Blessed is he who has regard for the weak; the LORD delivers him in times of trouble.”*

## Counting the cost...

### 9. For supporting Missions

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#### Introduction

We have come across many people who are reluctant in joining fulltime ministry because they do not feel comfortable on relying on other's resources. They feel ashamed because some people see them as beggars while others support them our pity. But what does the Bible say about support God's work? Here is a guide for giving.

#### I Chronicles 29: 1-20

1.
  - a. Describe king David's and people's attitude when they were giving for the work on the temple?
  - b. How is God described in David's prayer?
  - c. What articles were provided for the building of the temple?
2.
  - a. According to you, why would king David and the people praise and thank God while they are the ones giving to God?

b. What was king David's and the people's view towards giving for God's work?

3.
  - a. Taking example from David and his people, what do you think you need to change or improve in your attitude toward supporting God's work?

b. Supporting God's work is giving to God himself and not to men. How does this truth affect your way of supporting God's ministers?

c. Think about practical ways you're going to support any missionary, mission organization or other ministers you know. Share your decisions with your group.

#### Memory verse

#### *I Chronicles 29: 17*

*I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things have I given willingly and with honest intent. And now I've seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you.*