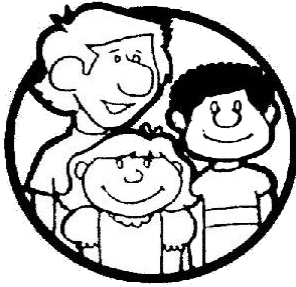


I will follow you, Lord; but first ...

Luke 9:46-62



Imagine a museum that is about all the great people of history. Inside this museum you can see pictures and displays about the world's greatest scientists, greatest rulers or kings, greatest generals, painters, sculptors, philosophers, doctors and so forth.

One display that you will probably never see is a display called "World's Greatest Disciple." Yet, if you were on that dusty road in Galilee, you would have heard the disciples of Jesus having a discussion about whose name and picture should be on such a display. What had prompted this discussion about who was the greatest disciple? Maybe the events of the previous few weeks had caused them to think about the future, and what lay in store for them. Jesus had told them many things, but they didn't understand what he was telling them, and they were afraid to ask him about it.

Perhaps it began to sink in that, as Jesus had told them several times, he was heading to Jerusalem to be handed over to the rulers and put to death. They had also been in the presence of Moses and Elijah and had seen the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain. All of this may have made them realize that they might lose Jesus.

If so, what would happen to them? Who would Jesus put in charge if something were to happen to him? The argument then might have been about who was most qualified to take leadership of the group if something happened to Jesus. They were facing some unknown paths that they would have to walk, and they were unsure what the future held for them.

But Jesus was listening to this discussion, and whatever the discussion was about, greatness wasn't what they thought it was. They were arguing about their rank in the kingdom, and the position and prestige that it would bring.

Jesus ended the discussion when he took a small child, put it by his side, then spoke to them.

Discussion Question

Think about the qualities that are important for someone who wants to start a business.

What qualities do think are the most important?

Which of these qualities do you think are important to be a follower of Jesus Christ?

Study Guide

A. Background: Luke 9:1-45

There are four stories that provide background for our study.

1. In 9:1-45, Jesus has been preparing his disciples for his coming departure. What are some of the events that occurred during this time?

Luke 9:1 –

Luke 9:21 –

Luke 9:28 –

Luke 9:43 –

What was Jesus trying to tell his disciples?

Read Luke 9:41-45. Did the twelve understand what Jesus was telling them?

2. Luke 9:51 tell us about the journey Jesus plans to make.
Where was he going? Why?

B. Aspects of Discipleship: 9:46 - 48

Luke 9:46-62 records a series of encounters with Jesus, which focuses on what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

1. Jesus heard the disciples arguing about who was the greatest, he took a child and put it in their midst. Why would Jesus use a child as an object lesson? We need to understand that children in antiquity did not enjoy the rights and privileges that they do today in our culture. They were seen as property and chattel, under the direct control of the father of the family to do as he wants.
 - a. By standing a child in their midst, what does Jesus tell the disciples about the kingdom of God?
 - b. What should relationship like for the disciples to Christ and to each other? (cf. Matt. 20:26-28)

2. In summary, what does Jesus teach about discipleship in this passage?

C. Jesus and the Samaritans: 9:51-56

1. What decision does Jesus make in Luke 9:51?
2. How do people respond to Jesus after he makes this decision?
3. Why does Jesus meet with such resistance?
4. If Jesus experiences rejection and resistance, what does that say to those who want to follow after him?

D. Count the Cost 9:57-58

If someone wanted to learn the Old Testament Law (Torah), they would first have to find a Rabbi who would take them on as a disciple. The person would then literally follow the Rabbi about as he moved from place to place.

1. First encounter - What does this person tell Jesus that he wants to do?
2. Jesus contrasts his life with the birds and foxes. What is he telling the would-be disciple? (Dependence on God)
3. What costs could we face today if we decide to become a follower of Christ?

E. Honor your Father and Mother 9:59-60

If the father had recently died, the son would be responsible for the funeral. The father would be placed in a temporary grave, and then after about a year. His bones would be gathered up and the remains put in a permanent grave.

1. Second encounter - How is this encounter with Jesus different from the previous encounter?
2. Read Ex. 20:12, and Ezek. 24:15-18. The command of the Law was to honor the father and mother. Was the funeral practice a biblical command, or the way funerals were done in the culture of Jesus' day?
3. Would the son be disobeying the command of the law if he left his parents and followed Jesus? What is the cost involved?
4. Sometimes how we understand what scripture is teaching is based on the country and culture that we live in. How can we tell when our understanding of a passage of scripture is based on our culture, and not on what God commands of us?

F. Saying Goodbye 9:61-62

In Jesus' time, family relationships were the most important relationships, and had to be honored over all others.

1. Third encounter - What does this person tell Jesus that he must do before he can follow Jesus?
2. There are two different relationships represented in this story. What are they?
3. What does Jesus say about our family relationships, or any other relationships? Note role of social networks and relationships in other cultures

Conclusion

How radical is the cost of discipleship? Think about what some of the qualities of discipleship that Jesus wants for those who follow him.

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Application – Questions to Ponder

1. Reread the discussion question from the beginning of this study. Would you change your answer because of this study? What would you say differently?

2. Imagine a time and place where Jesus walks up to you and says, "Follow me."

What would you say? Would your answer be "Yes, Lord," or would you say "Yes, Lord, but first...?"

3. Why does Jesus place so much importance on discipleship? Is this an example of being over-zealous about something?

4. Do you think that you have some obstacles or barriers that would make you hesitate about following after Christ?

5. How would you respond to each of the situations given in v57, 59, and v61?

*"Discipleship is commitment to Christ. Because Christ exists, he must be followed. An idea about Christ, a doctrinal system, a general religious recognition of grace or forgiveness of sins does not require discipleship. ...One enters into a relationship with an idea by way of knowledge, enthusiasm, perhaps even by carrying it out, but never by personal obedient discipleship. Christianity without the living Christ remains necessarily a Christianity without discipleship; and a Christianity without discipleship is always a Christianity without Jesus Christ. It is an idea, a myth." (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, **Discipleship**, p 59)*