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CITY BIBLE FORUM

Ask the bigger questions

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Losing your life to save it

A cost benefit analysis of following Jesus:

What does Jesus require of me? Is it worth it?

- Session 1

The words of Jesus

Luke 9:18-24

18 Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say I am?" 19 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life."

20 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "God's Messiah."

21 Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. 22 And he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."

23 Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. 25 What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? 26 Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels."

Q1. "Messiah" is the Hebrew word for God's promised king. What will being God's messiah mean for Jesus and what will it mean for those who want to follow Him¹?

Q2. When Jesus says lose your life for me and you will save it, is He saying that you need to take a bullet for Him?

¹ The following verse might be helpful in answering the first part of this question, especially around why the Messiah had to act in a certain way. ¹³For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." Colossians 1:13-14

Q3. What's the alternative and how does Jesus rate this alternative?

Q4. Does being ashamed of Jesus mean that if someone asks if you're a follower of Jesus (and let's just assume that you are) that you're too embarrassed to say "yes"?

Q5. Why is living this way hard?

Q6. Where is it hard for you personally?

Caroline Spencer is a staff member at City Bible Forum ...

I made the decision to follow Jesus 22 years ago now. If you ask me has it been worth it (in terms of following Jesus) then I would have to be honest and say there's been times when I've thought it would be heaps easier just to live for my own self-interest. I distinctly remember a time when I looked at the lives of some close friends who weren't followers of Jesus and thought their lives looked easier, more comfortable, more prosperous and more enjoyable than mine. It took me a few years to realise that while I knew intellectually what Jesus required of me, I wasn't convinced in my heart that it was worth it. So I went through the motions of trying to put Jesus first in my life - because I knew that was expected of me - but there wasn't any joy in it. It was only as I learned to trust that Jesus had my best interests at heart (the evidence being that he was prepared to die for me) that my experience of following Jesus changed. Yes it's hard work at times putting him first, but I know in my head and in my heart that I'm not missing out. In life it's not about what you have and don't have. It's about your attitude. And I'm not missing out if I'm convinced that Jesus has my best interests at heart in whatever happens (or doesn't happen) to me.

Published 21 October 2014
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