



Links Players

FOLLOWERS OF JESUS 2: THE COST

“Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?” (Luke 14:28, NIV)

YOU’VE HEARD IT AND SO HAVE I: “Golf is expensive.” To which the most accurate response is probably this: It depends how much you play.

Golf has its costs, from equipment to lessons to greens fees or membership. If you want to participate, you’re going to make some level of financial commitment. But I don’t find this to be less true with other sports. They, too, come with costs. And the more involved you become, the more those costs add up.

Apart from the fiscal outlay, you may also commit significant time to developing your game. Great athletes don’t just walk on and win. They work hard. So hard, in fact, that many players decide it just isn’t worth all the effort to play at the highest levels. They move on to other things.

What about a life of following Jesus? Is there a cost to that as well?

I wish I could tell you again that the answer to these questions is a variable one. I wish I could say that the cost depends on how involved you want to be—a little bit of Jesus one day, a little more the next, then maybe a day off or two. But Jesus never presented that option. Following him was going to cost a lot. Maybe even your life.

In Luke 14, we read Jesus’ Parable of the Great Banquet. He told the story of man who prepared a wonderful feast, then sent his servant to bring the guests. Then this: “But they all alike began to make excuses.” Jesus went on to identify some of the excuses, and I have to say that they were pretty good—you know, work and family obligations, the stuff of a responsible life.

Yet on the heels of this parable, Jesus pressed harder. He spoke of his followers hating their families and carrying their crosses. This was as serious as it gets. But Jesus let the crowds know that this was no different than other big endeavors where we first consider the cost. Why? Because following Jesus would also require something of those who did it. In fact, it would require much, thanks to the depth to which one’s life is changed once Jesus lays hold of it. That change will take you places you never imagined. In the end, it will take you to the most wonderful place of all: eternal life with Jesus himself. But along the way, there may be heavy costs exacted, and Jesus never wanted us to be ignorant of this possibility.

Opening questions What commitments have you made—financial and otherwise—for golf or for another important endeavor in your life? How do you know the price has been worth it?

READING Luke 5:11, Luke 9:57-62, Luke 14:15-24, Luke 14:25-33

Leaving it all behind (Luke 5)

When the fishermen followed Jesus, they “left everything.” What compelled them to be so committed? When it comes to it, do you think it is hard or easy to leave old things behind for the sake of following Christ?

Excuses, excuses (Luke 9:57-62 & Luke 14:15-24)

What excuses do we find in these passages for those who hesitated in answering Jesus’ call? Do any of these land close to home for you? What allows us to put our excuses aside and follow Christ earnestly?

Considering the cost (Luke 14:25-33)

Why do you think Jesus urged his listeners to consider the cost of following him? Is there a difference between simply believing and faithfully following? How would you explain to a friend that the cost of following Jesus is worth it?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2020 Links Players International. An introductory video for this study is available here: <https://youtu.be/0hlxYGPHmoA>