

# GENUINE DISCIPLESHIP

## INTRODUCTION

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- Salvation is entirely free but it will cost you everything...that is not a contradictory statement even though it may appear to be
- On the one hand, salvation is an entirely free gift...it can't be earned, bought, purchased, or in any way secured through our own efforts
- It has been purchased for us by Christ...he paid the ultimate price...he did all that needed to be done in order to rescue us from our sin
- We contribute nothing to our salvation except the sin that makes it necessary
- Salvation is granted to us by the Father through the Son...it comes simply by divine mercy
- It is not by works...not by human merit...not by anything in us or by us
- It is all of grace...and entirely by the kindness and compassion of God...there is nothing left to pay
- On the other hand, it will cost you everything...it will cost you your entire life
- Salvation requires total commitment...and total surrender to Christ...it involves forsaking everything in order to gain Christ
- It involves a complete exchange of all that we are for all that he is
- This is not some optional step of discipleship subsequent to conversion for the super spiritual believer
- This is normal Christianity...Jesus always made difficult demands on those who would follow him
- He commanded those who sought eternal life to deny themselves...forsake everything...and follow him
- Those who refuse to submit to his Lordship...and surrender to him in obedience...and give up living their own life, will never truly come to know him
- A true believer will gladly give up anything if it means gaining Christ and the riches of his kingdom
- In this sense, salvation will cost you everything
- Last class, we talked about 3 necessary components of genuine saving faith
  - Knowledge – the intellectual element involving the mind
  - Conviction – the emotional element involving the heart
  - Trust – the volitional element involving the will
- Thus, saving faith involves not just a knowledge and a belief in the facts of the Gospel; it involves a commitment to and trust in the person and work of Christ
- It involves, by a decision of the will, placing complete trust in Christ as Savior
- It involves the heart, the mind, and the will...it involves personal reliance and dependence on Christ himself whereby we personally appropriate the person and work of Christ
- We embrace with our hearts the sweetness and loveliness of Christ in a saving commitment to him
- “[S]aving faith moves beyond ‘believing that’ and arrives at ‘believing in’; it moves beyond mentally assenting to truth about Christ and arrives at personally trusting in Christ and depending on him for forgiveness of sins and reconciliation to God.”<sup>1</sup>
- But what does this really look like? What does it really mean to be a disciple of Christ?

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<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 598-599.

- This is a serious issue because modern-day evangelism emphasizes a person's making a decision, praying the sinner's prayer, and receiving Christ into their heart
- These steps have become so ingrained in the modern evangelical mind that to question them almost seems unwise
- However, we need to ask if such a methodology is truly biblical
- "Many would agree that the most common maladies among evangelicals in the West are empty professions and rampant carnality. These are millions of people convinced of their salvation because they have followed the 'steps,' yet they continue in worldliness, without the slightest desire for the things of God. What is the reason for this? Is salvation so weak that it has no effect upon a person unless he follows up with a lifetime of intensive personal discipleship and accountability? Or, is there another, sadder reason: many of our supposed converts are not converted at all? Could it be that our lack of knowledge of the gospel is leading to the destruction of millions?...We would do well to remember that we are not preaching a biblical gospel unless we are also giving a biblical gospel invitation."<sup>2</sup>
- "The receiving of Christ unto salvation not only concerns His sovereignty but also His supremacy. The gospel does not call us to receive Christ as an addition to our life, but rather as our life. Jesus Christ is not to be treated as an accessory to our lives in the same manner than a belt or pair of shoes might accessorize a certain outfit. It is the worst thing to tell sinners that they have a great life, a wonderful family, a beautiful home, and a great job, but they lack one thing to make it all complete – a personal relationship with Jesus Christ! Such language portrays Jesus as a cherry on top of an already great life. At best, it makes Him nothing more than a necessary or complementary addition. Such language degrades Christ to the point of blasphemy, It is foreign to the Scriptures and to those saints throughout the history of Christianity who best understood the supremacy of His person and the privilege of His gospel."<sup>3</sup>
- "The following illustration shows a correct understanding of what it means to receive Christ as Savior and Lord. Imagine a walled city under the peril of destruction from an approaching army. While then enemy is still far off, a great king approaches the city gates and calls to the people within. He commands them to open the gates and turn over complete sovereignty to him. In return, he promises salvation from the approaching army. In one scenario, the people laugh him to scorn. Either they believe they have no need of a savior, or they do not believe that this one king can save them. In either case, the king turns away and the city is destroyed. In another scenario, the people recognize the king's power to save and are willing to receive him as savior, but they refuse to turn over their sovereignty to him. Again, the king turns away and the city is destroyed. In the last scenario, the people recognize the king's power to save and joyfully throw open the gates of the city to receive him as both savior and sovereign. The king enters the city, takes the throne, and delivers the people."<sup>4</sup>
- Sadly, we are living in an age awash with easy believism which has reduced the gospel message to a few trite statements to be repeated
- One of the great issues facing the church in our country today is that of superficial discipleship
- There are many people who say they know Christ but by their lives demonstrate that they really don't
- These are false converts who have never truly come to surrender their lives to Christ
- They may have had some sort of religious experience...responded emotionally to God at a certain point...made a decision for Christ...asked Jesus into their heart...invited Jesus into their life...or recited a prayer
- But there is little on-going evidence of a saving relationship with Jesus Christ

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<sup>2</sup> Paul Washer, *The Gospel Call and True Conversion*, 47-48.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 51-52.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 50-51.

- This has been the fruit of our contemporary evangelistic strategies which often downplay the difficult demands of true discipleship
- Often what is communicated today is that the only criterion for salvation is knowing and believing some basic facts about Christ
- Obedience is said to be optional...and submitting to the Lordship of Christ is not necessary as long as you believe the facts about Christ and claim eternal life
- A shallow, contentless faith is viewed as sufficient for salvation...even in the absence of turning from sin, commitment to Christ, and a resulting change in lifestyle
- This amounts to cheap grace...where the hard demands of the Gospel are downplayed ...and the high cost of following Christ is softened
- This approach to evangelism promises people that they can have eternal life yet continue to live in rebellion against God
- It not only holds forth a false hope to sinners, it creates false converts...it encourages people to claim Jesus as Savior yet defer until later the commitment to follow him with their whole lives
- “It promises salvation from hell but not necessarily freedom from iniquity. It offers false security to people who revel in the sins of the flesh and spurn the way of holiness. By separating faith from faithfulness, it teaches that intellectual assent is as valid as wholehearted obedience to the truth...This new gospel has spawned a generation of professing Christians whose behavior is indistinguishable from the rebellion of the unregenerate...Theirs is a damning false assurance”<sup>5</sup>
- In short, because it is a Gospel that is gutted of its costly demands, it is also a Gospel that is gutted of its power to truly redeem and save
- This often shows up in people who make a distinction between salvation and discipleship...who say they became a Christian at one point in their life and then became a true disciple later
- While it is true that young believers usually don’t fully understand the full implications of following Christ, the Bible nonetheless knows nothing of a distinction between salvation and discipleship
- In other words, the Bible knows nothing of separating faith from discipleship and grace from obedience
- These are artificial distinctions imposed upon the Scriptures
- Therefore, we must recover what it means to genuinely follow Christ
- We must understand what being a genuine disciple of Christ involves
- Disciples are Christians...those terms are used interchangeably in Scripture
- Acts 11:26 ~ the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.
- Disciples are not a separate class of more dedicated believers...they are one in the same
- “Every Christian is a disciple...Disciples are people who believe, those whose faith motivates them to obey all Jesus commanded. The word *disciple* is used consistently as a synonym for *believer* throughout the book of Acts (6:1-2; 11:26; 14:20, 22; 15:10). Any distinction between the two words is purely artificial. Though introduced by sincere and well-meaning men, it has given birth to a theology of easy-believism that disposes of the hard demands of Jesus.”<sup>6</sup>
- This was an issue in Jesus’ day as well which is why he often spoke of the high cost of genuine discipleship
- Jesus never sugar-coated it...he never watered it down...he never softened the edges of the gospel demands
- The Gospel Jesus proclaimed was a call to discipleship...a call to follow him in submissive obedience
- He often warned those who might be tempted to take salvation lightly

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<sup>5</sup> John MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus*, xxi.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 221.

- He wants disciples who are willing to forsake everything...to deny themselves...with no reservations...no uncertainty...no hesitation...no wavering
- He wants people who will sever ties with the world...seal the escape hatches...follow him no matter what
- He wants those who will put their hand to the plow...who will not look back
- That's the stuff of true discipleship

## KEY BIBLICAL TEXTS

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### Matthew 8:18-22

**Matthew 8:18-22** ~ Now when Jesus saw a crowd around Him, He gave orders to depart to the other side of the sea. 19 Then a scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go." 20 Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." 21 Another of the disciples said to Him, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." 22 But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and allow the dead to bury their own dead."

- In this text, Jesus lays out the true cost of following him...he demonstrates that there is nothing superficial about it...it is a wholehearted commitment to Christ that is called for
- This passage describes the interaction between Jesus and 2 would-be disciples: 1) An enthusiastic legal expert who was quick to promise but didn't count the cost; 2) A hesitant disciple who was too slow to respond
- Jesus knew their hearts...he could see their superficial commitment...he knew that neither of them possessed the wholehearted loyalty necessary to follow him
- As far as we know, he turned both of them away for their unwillingness to make the necessary sacrifice

### *A Willingness to Sacrifice Cherished Comforts (vv. 19-20)*

- The legalistic scribe promised to follow Jesus wherever he went (v. 19)
- But Jesus knew that he had not truly counted the cost of following him
- He knew this man failed to take into serious consideration the suffering he would encounter
- He knew this man failed to understand the implications of discipleship: self-denial, sacrifice, service
- So, Jesus confronted him (v. 20) and pointed to the fact that he really had no material possessions at all to speak of...not even a home to call his own...he didn't even have what the animals had (dens and nests)
- But not Christ...he didn't have the comfort enjoyed by animals
- His point is that following isn't comfortable...it's costly...and difficult
- Even if a believer is never asked to give up their material possessions, the willingness to do so is always there for the true believer
- We will likely get to the end of this life still having all that we currently own materially and physically
- But a true disciple understands that following Christ is costly...they understand that it will be uncomfortable at times
- "Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a man will gladly go and sell all that he has. It is the pearl of great price, to buy which the merchant will sell all his goods. It is the kingly rule of Christ, for whose sake a man will pluck out the eye which causes him to stumble; it is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows him...Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Dietrick Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*

## *A Willingness to Sacrifice Personal Relationships (vv. 21-22)*

- Another man indicated interest in following Jesus but asked if he could first bury his father (v. 21)
- On the surface, it looks like this man is merely asking to attend his father's funeral
- Jewish custom required that taking care of the affairs of a parent's death be a priority
- So, if all the man was asking for was time to work on the details, it wasn't an entirely unreasonable request
- But that's not what this man is asking...the man's father had not died yet...nor was he even near death
- If the man's father had just died, he wouldn't even have been in the crowd surrounding Jesus
- He would have been home...with his family...making funeral plans and preparations
- The phrase "I must bury my father" was a common figure of speech meaning "Let me wait until my dad has passed"
- He wanted to wait...he wanted to remain at home during the rest of his father's life...and would then follow Jesus only after his father had passed
- In fact, often in that culture, when someone said, "permit me first to go and bury my father," they were saying "let me get my inheritance"
- He apparently wanted to receive his part of the estate when his father died
- He put material and relational concerns ahead of Jesus...those took priority over following Jesus
- His commitment to discipleship was not very serious...he didn't want to risk losing inheritance
- He wanted to be associated with Jesus...but the focus of his life was on personal prosperity
- His loyalties were divided...he was not ready to give himself wholeheartedly to Christ
- That's why Jesus replied, "Follow Me, and allow the dead to bury their own dead" (v. 22)
- That means "allow the spiritually dead to bury the physically dead"
- He was urging the man to let the world take care of those mundane, earthly things
- He was urging the man to not let family obligations stand in the way of following him
- Following Christ is no half-hearted thing...it's not a part time occupation
- Even the closest family ties must not be set above allegiance to Christ
- The demands of Christ and the commitment he requires make all other relationships take a back seat to him
- That doesn't mean that we will have to give up those relationships...but there must be a willingness
- These are the radical demands of the kingdom...it may seem extreme, but it's not extreme at all
- If Christ really is who he says he is, then we owe him total obedience and total surrender
- We don't get to set the terms of following Christ...it's on his terms, not your ours
- He alone sets the terms...and the terms are total commitment to him...or it's not commitment at all
- Following Christ is the most important thing in life...everything in our lives should fall under that great aim

## **Matthew 10:32-39**

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**Matthew 10:32-39** ~ Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. 33 But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven. 34 Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW; 36 and A MAN'S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD. 37 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it."

### ***A Willingness to Confess Christ Before Others (vv. 32-33)***

- To confess (*homologeō*) Christ means to acknowledge him as Lord of your life...and to do so openly...even in the hearing of those who oppose him
- “If the heart truly believes, the mouth will be eager to confess. Confession is not merely a human work, it is prompted and energized by God, subsequent to the act of believing but separable from it...confession is characteristic of true faith; it is not an additional condition of salvation.”<sup>8</sup>
- This is what true disciples do...they openly identify with Christ no matter the environment, whether its friendly or hostile...they are committed to him no matter what
- True regeneration makes denying Christ an impossibility...he is your Lord...your life...your all...your greatest joy and passion
- For those who confess Christ before men, he promises to confess them before the Father
- What an incredibly wonderful thought...he will be your advocate...your intercessor...before God
- What a glorious reality...to know that Christ claims us as his own...and holds us fast
- But those who deny Christ before men, he will also deny
- To deny Christ means to repudiate him...to refuse to acknowledge him as your own...to disown him
- Many will not be willing to confess Christ in the face of hostility...they will deny him when put to the test
- They will be those who make an outward profession of faith but turn away when the hard testing comes
- “This does not speak primarily of open rejecters – people who would deny Christ flagrantly, have nothing to do with him, despise him, speak against him, or blaspheme his name. The truth certainly applies to people like that, but our Lord is talking specifically about false disciples, people who claim to be Christians but are not. When put to the test, false disciples consistently deny the Lord, either by their silence, by their actions, or by their words...It speaks of someone whose entire life is a denial of Christ. He may claim to believe, but everything about his way of living exudes denial...Churches are filled with such people, masquerading as disciples but denying the Lord in some very disturbing ways.”<sup>9</sup>

### ***A Love for Christ That Supersedes Love for Family (vv. 34-37)***

- Following Christ can cause great conflict...it can separate friends...and families
- It can divide those who were once close...and make them bitter enemies
- This is what holding fast to Christ and standing firm on biblically rooted convictions does...it divides believers from the world...and it potentially fractures the closest of human relationships (vv. 34-36)
- Jesus lays down the demands of genuine discipleship in v. 37 ~ He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.
- This is not a requirement to literally hate our family members...that would be a violation of other Scripture (Ex 20:12; Eph 5:25)
- The key to the passage is the phrase “more than Me”
- True disciples love their families...genuinely care for their families
- But if it comes down to keeping relationships with family or severing the relationship with Christ, the choice is clear
- Love for Christ always transcends love for others...and loyalty to Christ transcends loyalty to others
- Jesus demands a loyalty which transcends even the closest family ties

<sup>8</sup> MacArthur, *Gospel According to Jesus*, 224.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

- “Why is this language so severe? Why does Christ use such offensive terms? Because he is as eager to drive the uncommitted away as he is to draw true disciples to himself. He does not want half-hearted people to be deceived into thinking they are in the kingdom. Unless he is the number one priority, he has not been given his rightful place.”<sup>10</sup>

### *A Heart of Self-Denial (vv. 38-39)*

- Christ doesn't want people to simply add him to their life...he wants disciples willing to forsake everything
- It's a call to die to self...even a willingness to die for his sake if necessary
- To “take up the cross” does not refer to dealing with a long-term difficulty...a difficult person...bad health... a broken car
- That's not how the disciples would have understood it...the cross was an instrument of death...convicted criminals were forced to take up their cross and carry it to the place of their execution
- It was an instrument of torture and death...they had seen people die excruciating deaths on a cross...they knew exactly what Jesus meant by the phrase "take up the cross"
- They knew that Jesus was calling for them to surrender to him as Lord in every sense
- Jesus drives home the exacting nature of discipleship in v. 39 ~ He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.
- Those who want to save their lives refer to those who are not willing to count the cost of following Christ
- They won't deny themselves for Christ's sake...their comfort and physical safety are most important to them
- They may want to follow Christ but are not interested in really giving anything up
- And there are many people today trying to find themselves and keep their lives...they prefer themselves over Christ...they prefer this life...the things of this world
- But Jesus says that those people will lose their life...that's not the heart of a true disciple
- If you want to find your life, you need to lose it...to give up everything and come to Christ
- True followers of Christ are willing to lose their lives for Christ's sake
- When confronted with a decision between serving self and serving the Lord, the true disciple is the one who chooses to serve the Lord, even if it means a great cost to them personally
- They are willing to lose popularity...friends...family...jobs...reputations...because Christ is worthy!
- “The idea of daily self-denial does not jibe with the contemporary supposition that believing in Jesus is a momentary decision. A true believer is one who signs up for life. The bumper-sticker sentiment “Try Jesus” is a mentality foreign to real discipleship – faith is not an experiment, but a lifelong commitment. It means taking up the cross daily, giving all for Christ each day. It means no reservations, no uncertainty, no hesitation...It means nothing is knowingly held back, nothing purposefully shielded from his lordship, nothing stubbornly kept from his control. It calls for painful severing of ties with the world, sealing the escape hatches, and ridding oneself of any kind of security to fall back on in case of failure. Genuine believers know they are going ahead with Christ until death. Having put their hand to the plow, they will not look back (Luke 9:62). That is how it must be for all who would follow Jesus Christ. It is the stuff of true discipleship.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 226.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 227-228.

## Luke 14:26-33

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**Luke 14:26-33** ~ If anyone 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. 27 Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. 28 For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, 30 saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ 31 “Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. 33 So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.

### *Unrivaled Love for Christ (v. 26)*

- Christ is calling for a love that gives absolute priority to him...no other relationship should ever compete
- He is saying here that we can only be his disciple if we love him more than anyone else
- And not only should there be no competitors, no rivals, no comparison, our love for him should be all consuming
- The love we are called to show here is the love of the total person
- We’re not merely to love Christ with our minds so that we think we love God
- Nor are we merely to love Christ with our hearts so that we feel we love God
- We are to love Christ with all of our being...all our thoughts, feelings and choices are to be consumed with him...our entire life is focused on Him even when we are at school, or at work, at home, or at a movie

**Matthew 22:37-38** ~ YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND. This is the great and foremost commandment.

### *Selfless Sacrifice for Christ (v. 27-32)*

- Although carrying our own cross could refer to physical death (being a martyr), it more likely means death to ourselves
- It means not living our way anymore but God’s way...not living for ourselves but for Jesus Christ
- It means the dying of our will and the dedication of our life to Christ’s will
- Genuine disciples are those who have died to themselves

**Romans 6:5-7** ~ For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; 7 for he who has died is freed from sin.

**Romans 12:1** ~ Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

**Galatians 2:20** ~ I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me

**Galatians 5:24** ~ Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires

- In vv. 28-32, Christ spelled out the importance of counting the cost of following him
- Those who become his disciples are those who have counted the cost carefully
- “The Christian landscape is strewn with the wreckage of derelict, half-built towers – ruins of those who began to build and were unable to finish. For thousands of people still ignore Christ’s warning and undertake to follow him without first pausing to reflect on the cost of doing so. The result is the great



scandal of Christendom today, so called ‘nominal Christianity.’ In countries to which Christian civilization has spread, large numbers of people have covered themselves with a decent, but thin, veneer of Christianity. They have allowed themselves to become somewhat involved; enough to be respectable but not enough to be uncomfortable. Their religion is a great, soft cushion. It protects them from the hard unpleasantness of life, while changing its place and shape to suit their convenience. No wonder the cynics speak of hypocrites in the church and dismiss religion as escapism.”<sup>12</sup>

- Genuine disciples are those whose faith expresses itself in submission and obedience
- This doesn’t mean they are perfect...but when they fail, they seek forgiveness and move forward
- This is what full commitment to Christ looks like

### ***A Willingness to Renounce Personal Possessions for Christ (v. 33)***

- Genuine disciples are those who are fully surrendered to Christ and are willing to give up everything for the cause of Christ
- They recognize that everything they have belongs to Christ...as a result, they are willing to turn them over to him because they realize they are not theirs anyway
- Jesus uses the word “all” to describe the comprehensiveness of this commitment
- The heart of a true believer is to offer up everything to Him
- Instead of a tightly clenched fist, which holds firm to the things they have, true believers hold all that they've been given with an open hand
- They say “Lord, help yourself to whatever you wish of mine in whatever manner you want me to give it and whenever you want me to give it away.”
- This is what the rich, young ruler was unwilling to do

**Matthew 19:16-22** ~ And someone came to Him and said, “Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?” 17 And He said to him, “Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.” 18 Then he said to Him, “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER; YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY; YOU SHALL NOT STEAL; YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS; 19 HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER; and YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.” 20 The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?” 21 Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” 22 But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.

- “Our Lord gave this young man a test. He had to choose between his possession and Jesus Christ. He failed the test. No matter what points of doctrine he might affirm, because he was unwilling to turn from what else he loved most, he could not be a disciple of Christ. Salvation is only for those who are willing to give Christ first place in their lives.”<sup>13</sup>
- Sadly, this man’s possessions were more important to him than Christ

### **Luke 9:23-26**

**Luke 9:23-26** ~ And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. 24 For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. 25 For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? 26 For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

<sup>12</sup> John Stott, *Basic Christianity*, 108.

<sup>13</sup> MacArthur, *Gospel According to Jesus*, 85.