

# Count The Cost

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Part of the process that leads to a person being baptized must include counting the cost of what is involved after this very important decision is made. After baptism, a person begins living differently than they did prior to baptism (Rom. 6:4; 7:6), and this can result in an individual experiencing various forms of persecution.

Remember the word that I (Christ) said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you... (Jn. 15:20; *Ed. note in parentheses*).

Once an individual embarks on a new life of obedience to God (Ac. 5:32b), family members, friends, employers, and spouses will notice changes in attitude and conduct. This can cause divisions, and even strife, in these relationships. Therefore, a baptized member of the body of Christ must be prepared to endure these hardships.

If anyone comes to me (Christ) and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross (stake) and come after me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and **count the cost**, whether he has enough to finish it- lest, after he has laid the foundation (at baptism), and is not able to finish it, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man (person) began to build and was not able to finish.' "Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a

delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be my disciple (Lk.14:26-33; *Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added*)."

Unfortunately, some people make the commitment to be baptized prematurely, that is without counting the cost. These people are compared to those who respond emotionally, and, in their excitement, they make a decision without realizing how much is required to live according to God's way of life as laid out in His law.

When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes (Adversary/Satan) and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one sown beside the way.<sup>20</sup> But the one sown on the rocky ground, this is the man who hears the word and straightaway receives it with gladness (and in some cases gets baptized);<sup>21</sup> but it has no root in him, rather it is temporary, and when pressure or persecution (even greater difficulty) happens because of the word, straightaway he is caused to stumble (Mt. 13:19-21; RNT; *Ed. notes in parentheses*).

Consequently, anyone considering baptism must understand that living in accordance with God's way of life is going to be very difficult at times and will include resisting various forms of persecution and evil as described by Jesus Christ.

But from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of the heavens is forced, and those using force seize it, (Mt. 11:12; RNT; *Ed. notes in parentheses*).

In certain situations, some of God's people are required to give up everything they have, including their physical lives, in order to fulfill a task, they have been given to do.

... **Are you** (speaking to the disciples) **able to drink the cup which I** (Christ) **am about to drink?** (reference to his death) They said to him, "We are able." <sup>23</sup> He said to them, **"Indeed, my cup you will drink** (they would die also while doing God's work)... (Mt. 20:22b-23a; RNT; *Ed. notes in parentheses*).

In other situations, God's people are expected to give up all their physical pursuits and even possessions in order to do God's work.

Jesus said to him (a rich young ruler), **"If you desire to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have a treasury in the heavens, and come, follow me."** <sup>22</sup> But when the young man heard this word, went away grieving; for he had many possessions (Mt.19:21-22; RNT, cf. Mt. 13:22; *Ed. note in parentheses*).

Because a baptized individual is supposed to live in accordance with God's law, he/she will find living in this present evil world very difficult (Gal.1:4).

**Now because [the gate is] <sup>3a</sup>narrow and filled with tribulation is the way that leads to life** (in God's kingdom), **they are few who find it.** (Mt. 7:14; RNT, cf. 22:14; *Ed. note in parentheses*).

If someone is baptized while single, they must consider any future marriage carefully because it could hinder their continued spiritual development and relationship with God if they married an unbeliever.

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? (2Cor. 6:14)

Can two walk together unless they are agreed? (Amos 3:3)

Christ emphasized that some faithful and obedient servants of his Father sacrificed

having an intimate human relationship because it would have compromised their ability to serve and obey Him. Great wisdom and caution are often required because being married to an unbeliever, or someone skilled at pretending to be a believer, can lead to a failed marriage.

For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and **there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake** (Mat. 19:12; emphasis added).

Jesus Christ realized that it would be hard for those who want to follow God's way in this world and, as a consequence, he prayed for them just prior to his death.

**I do not pray that You** (God, the Father) **should take them** (true followers) **out of the world, but that You should keep them from the** (influence of) **the evil one** (Jn.17:15; *Ed. notes in parentheses*).

Finally, Christ pointed out that the world at large would hate the true followers of God because they would be seeking to uphold the law of God in very trying times.

**I have given them** (Christ's followers) **Your** (the Father's) **word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world** (Jn. 17:14; *Ed. notes in parentheses*).

At baptism, an individual is to come out of this world's way of doing things and this involves keeping God's law and commandments.

...Come out of her (this present evil system), my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues (Rev.18:4; *Ed. note in parentheses*).

And the dragon (the Adversary/Satan) was enraged with the woman (God's true church), and he went to make war with the

rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (Rev.12:17; *Ed. notes in parentheses*).

Consequently, anyone considering baptism has to understand that living in accordance with God's way of life is going to be very difficult at times and will include resisting various forms of persecution and evil as described by Jesus Christ.

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