

SESSION 13 FAMILY GUIDE

HOW DO I KEEP FOLLOWING JESUS WHEN THINGS ARE DIFFICULT?

The Bible tells us what is true about following Jesus.

There are some people who think that following Jesus means a life of ease and comfort. They believe that Jesus will grant them their hearts' desires because they have called Him 'Lord,' but this is a false gospel. Jesus never promised us that life would be easy and give us worldly comforts. When we come to saving faith in Jesus, our lives do get better. We find joy, peace, and hope knowing that in Jesus, we have new life. However, this does not necessarily mean that all of our problems go away. In fact, the circumstances of our lives may get worse. Jesus told His disciples that they would face trials. He called them to count the cost of following Him. As believers, we too have to count the cost of following Jesus because at some point, we will have to ask ourselves if Jesus is really worth it.

Key Verse: *Philippians 3:8*

Key Passages: *Luke 14:25-33;*

Matthew 13:44-45; James 1:2-4, 12

STUDY

Do I love Jesus more than anything?

- The words Jesus spoke in these verses may be hard to hear. They definitely would have shocked the people He was talking to. We know from His other teachings and the rest of the Bible's testimony that God does not want us to hate people. It is likely that Jesus used such strong language to get people's attention, but then help them see that for Him to have the proper place in their lives, every other relationship must seem like hate in comparison for their love for Him. How will we respond when Jesus says, "Follow me"?

What will it cost me to follow Jesus?

- Something that every believer must be willing to consider is what it will cost to follow Jesus. Jesus described counting the cost as adding up all the money it would take to construct a building, or if going to war would be worth the sacrifice of the king's men, especially if he loses the war. Likewise, we must consider the cost. In verse 33, Jesus said that following Him could cost everything. Thousands of believers have suffered, lost their possessions, and given their lives because they loved Jesus more than anything in this world.

Is Jesus worth the cost?

- Jesus told these parables to remind us that despite what we lose on this earth, what we gain following Jesus will be far greater. We count the cost and joyfully sacrifice because we gain Christ. He is our reward. He is our joy. And not only do we gain Jesus, but we gain everything along with Him. We have an imperishable inheritance awaiting us in heaven. (See 1 Peter 1:4.) James tells us to count the trials of our faith as joy. When we face trials—and we will—we should do so with joy, knowing that Jesus is worth it. We are joyful because we know trials are a means for God to grow us more into the image of His Son.

DISCUSS

- Why should I choose to follow Jesus no matter how much it costs?
- What are some of God's promises to help me endure trials?
- How can I be joyful in suffering?

PRAY

Ask your preteen if she has any prayer requests. Go before God in prayer and thank God for His promises of faithfulness and unfailing love during difficult times. Ask God to help you to trust in Him and persevere through trials. Ask God to give you joy when difficulties arise. Praise Him for the reward we are promised despite whatever we lose on this earth.

SUFFERERS FOR CHRIST

As a family, choose to read a biography on a Christian who counted it joy to suffer for Christ. Oftentimes the testimonies of others encourage us to stand firm in our faith and endure trials. There are many who have willingly given all that they would gain Jesus. Here is a list to consider as you get started:

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- Jim Elliot
- Brother Yun
- Amy Carmichael
- Adoniram Judson/Ann Judson