

**Managing Life's Transitions**  
**THE COST OF TRANSITIONS**  
**By Steve Chupp**  
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**Song: Worthy is the Lamb/Crown him**

- Thank You for the price You paid
- Thank You for the nail-pierced hands
- The darling of Heaven crucified

“Nothing is required in man that is not first in God.” (George MacDonald)

**The Big Idea**

Life is full of transitions. God has us on a journey. We want God to lead us to the next adventure in life. However, we often don't want anything to change, and we aren't willing to make major adjustments. This is logically and biblically impossible. If we are to manage life's transitions successfully, we must be prepared to pay something for that success.

We want life to get better, but we don't want anything to change.

- We can't go through life without expecting to pay.
- We can't follow Jesus through life's transitions without paying a price.

In our current Christian culture, the cost of following Christ is being removed.

- Jesus becomes our self-help coach rather than the Lord of our lives.
- Following Christ is promoted as a means to a “better life” without any price being paid by the follower.
- This is in direct contrast to what Jesus described.
- Costless Christianity is an oxymoron.
- If we don't consider the cost of being a Christ follower, we will become disillusioned and not finish well.
- Following Christ is costly, but overwhelmingly worth it.

Entitlement plays a role here.

- We live in an entitlement society.
- No matter what my calamity, someone else should pay, especially the government.
- Whether my crisis is illness,
- Unfortunately, as society goes, so goes the church.
- The Good News of God's Kingdom has always run counter to human nature.
- If we want to live in the Kingdom, we have to be willing to pay the price.

**1. Realize the cost of discipleship – Luke 14:25-35**

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### Luke 14:25-35 NIV

Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he **cannot be my disciple**. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me **cannot be my disciple**."

"Suppose one of you wants to **build a tower**. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'

"Or suppose a king is about to **go to war** against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple."

"Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

### Jesus portrayed the price of following him as clearly as possible.

- He used very strong language.
  - "He cannot be my disciple."
  - Not *may* not, but *cannot*.
  - That is a very high standard.

### Jesus outlined three requirements for being his disciples.

- **Hate** your family members – and even your own life.
  - **Luke 14:26** *If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple.* NIV
  - What do you do with that??
  - **Matthew 10:37** *Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.* NIV
  - Jesus is asserting his own claim to supreme affection. (It is assumed we love.)
- **Carry your cross** and follow Jesus.
  - **Luke 14:27** *And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.* NIV
- **Give up** everything you have.
  - **Luke 14:33** *In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.*

A disciple is not only a student but an **adherent**, one who follows and imitates their teacher.

### How does this apply to life's transitions?

- Every life transition carries a cost.

## 2. Pay the price of life's transitions.

- **2 Corinthians 12:14** *Little children don't pay for their parents' food. It's the other way around; parents supply food for their children. NLT*

### Pay the price of two types of life transitions:

- **Pay the price of life stages.**
  - Adulthood – increased responsibilities
  - Marriage – “That will cost you!”
  - Having children
- **Pay the price of life circumstances.**
  - Job
  - Relationships
  - Health – emotional and spiritual
  - Finances
- Each of the above come with their own price to pay.
  - God may ask an additional price.
- **Pay the price God asks of you.**
  - **Matthew 4:18-25 NLT**

*One day as Jesus was walking along the shore beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers — Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew — fishing with a net, for they were commercial fishermen. Jesus called out to them, "Come, be my disciples, and I will show you how to fish for people!" And they left their nets at once and went with him.*

*A little farther up the shore he saw two other brothers, James and John, sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, mending their nets. And he called them to come, too. They immediately followed him, leaving the boat and their father behind. Jesus traveled throughout Galilee teaching in the synagogues, preaching everywhere the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed people who had every kind of sickness and disease. News about him spread far beyond the borders of Galilee so that the sick were soon coming to be healed from as far away as Syria. And whatever their illness and pain, or if they were possessed by demons, or were epileptics, or were paralyzed — he healed them all. Large crowds followed him wherever he went — people from Galilee, the Ten Towns, Jerusalem, from all over Judea, and from east of the Jordan River.*
  - This goes beyond life's stages and circumstances.
  - God will ask you to pay a price that extends beyond those.
  - It is often the price of doing the right thing in spite of the transition.
  - It may also involve responding to his call on your life in spite of your life stage or circumstances.
- **Ask God, “What adjustments do you want me to make in this transition?”**

## 3. Recognize the benefits of paying the price.

### 3. Recognize the **benefits** of paying the price.

- **Matthew 19:29** *And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. NIV*
- The disciples in Mathew 4 gained the privilege of traveling with Jesus as he instituted the Kingdom, preached the Good News, and healed every kind of sickness and disease.

### **Bible examples of those who benefitted from paying the price.**

- Abraham left country and family behind to become the Father of the Faith.
- David left a comfortable life behind to slay giants, lead a nation, and become the prototype of the Messiah.
- Jesus left the glory of heaven to live on this broken earth and become our savior.
- The original disciples left family and the familiar to follow Christ, saw amazing miracles, most dying a martyr's death, and gained a better, eternal inheritance.
- Most of our sacrifices pale in comparison to these.
  - But they are still difficult.
  - God knows that, but does not hesitate to require them of us.

### **God also has transitions planned for our church.**

- They will cost us something.
- The transitions in the past have cost us something.
  - The Post, Downtown @ 808, sending out missionaries, building projects, starting new ministries.
  - But they have resulted in God's Kingdom advancing and more people involved.
- We need to be prepared to pay the price for the next transitions.
  - Building, name change
  - Some will benefit us more, some others

**“You can't stay where you are and go with God.” (Blackaby, p 20)**

### **Stages of Life:**

- Birth
- Toddler (Dependent, family conscious)
- Adolescence – self conscious
- Teen years – growing independence
- Graduation, leave home – independence
- Marriage – interdependent, adapt to another person and join family systems
- *Or:* single, career, friends
- Have children
- Stages of child-raising
- Empty nest
- Aging – health issues, physical limitations, loss of some independence
- Death – the ultimate transition

## Following Christ without Limits

I have vivid memories as a kid of my father taking me to an auction sale, telling me, "Don't scratch your nose at the wrong time, son." He said to me, "Always remember this: whenever you go to an auction sale, make sure you know your upper limit price."

That is ingrained in me. The great danger for us is that we walk into the Christian life knowing clearly our upper limit price. Jesus does not allow us to set that. "If you save your life, you will lose it; but if you lose your life for my sake and the gospel's, you will keep it," said Jesus.

Our calling is to a life of unconditional obedience where the price is unknown.

*Colin Smith, pastor of Arlington Heights Evangelical Free Church, Preaching Today #204*

## Romanian Converts Willing to Lose Everything

In February 2001, John Oros spoke to an audience at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary about his experience as a church leader in Romania during the Communist era:

During communism, many of us preached—and people came at the end of a service, and they said, "I have decided to become a Christian."

We told them, "It is good that you want to become a Christian, but we would like to tell you that there is a price to be paid. Why don't you reconsider what you want to do, because many things can happen to you. You can lose, and you can lose big."

A high percentage of these people chose to take part in a three-month catechism class. At the end of this period, many participants declared their desire to be baptized. Typically, I would respond, "It is really nice that you want to become a Christian, but when you give your testimony—there will be informers here who will jot down your name. Tomorrow the problems will start. Count the cost. Christianity is not easy. It's not cheap. You can be demoted. You can lose your job. You can lose your friends. You can lose your neighbors. You can lose your kids who are climbing the social ladder. You can lose even your life."

Let me tell you my joy—when we looked into their eyes, and their eyes were in tears, and they told us, "If I lose everything but my personal relationship with my Lord Jesus Christ, it is still worth it."

*Brent Kipfer, Brussels, Ontario*

## Tiny Sacrifices

Fred Craddock, in an address to ministers, caught the practical implications of consecration. "To give my life for Christ appears glorious," he said. "To pour myself out for others ... to pay the ultimate price of martyrdom—I'll do it. I'm ready, Lord, to go out in a blaze of glory.

"We think giving our all to the Lord is like taking a \$1,000 bill and laying it on the table--'Here's my life, Lord. I'm giving it all.'

"But the reality for most of us is that he sends us to the bank and has us cash in the \$1,000 for quarters. We go through life putting out 25 cents here and 50 cents there. Listen to the neighbor kid's troubles instead of saying, 'Get lost.' Go to a committee meeting. Give up a cup of water to a shaky old man in a nursing home.

"Usually giving our life to Christ isn't glorious. It's done in all those little acts of love, 25 cents at a time. It would be easy to go out in a flash of glory; it's harder to live the Christian life little by little over the long haul."

*Darryl Bell, Maple Grove, Minnesota. Leadership, Vol. 5, no. 4*