

## 7 - The Cost

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it. Matt. 13:44-46 niv

### Jesus Said --

The Kingdom of God, which is entered through the narrow gate of [Matt. 7:13-14](#), is like the hidden treasure and the fine pearls of [Matt. 13:44-46](#). Both parables illustrate great sacrifice followed by extraordinary reward.

In [Luke 14:25-35](#) we read Jesus' parable about building a tower but not first counting the cost. Some *really* straight talk follows, and if we took it seriously we would fall to our knees and fill our altars.

Who today dares to preach His "So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple" of v33?

For example, following Jesus can separate us from others because we are led to pursue the things of God rather than the things of this world as they do. We were created as relational beings and craving the approval of others is powerful. It can ensnare us in whatever measure we have failed to find our personal identity in God.

### Plain Talk

In verse 33 Jesus says, "So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple." What does that word "all" mean?

He follows that with, "Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear." (esv). Where is our fear of God?

This is all foreign to what we hear in the church in America today. Did we get a "pass" of some kind? An exemption?

If it is true that we can only enter the Kingdom of God through the narrow gate, then we might have a clue as to why we experience so little of Kingdom Life today.

### Our Will and the Cross

There is more too, and it's a matter of "life or death." It requires choosing His Abundant Life over trying to be our own god. It's the "hidden treasure" concept.

In [Luke 9:23-25](#) Jesus said, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?" (niv).

The word "life" in verse 24 is from the Greek *psuché*, [Strong's 5590](#). It is often translated as "soul" and speaks of our mind, will and emotions. Our will is the part of man where moral choices are made.

In the Garden of Gethsemane ([Matt. 26:39-44](#)), Jesus openly wrestled with the interests of His humanity, and the battle took place in His will. His soul. He knew the Father's plan for Him, which the Spirit was confirming to His spirit, but Satan was also appealing to him through his soul.

Three times, He prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Yet, not as I will, but as you will." Each time, He expressed His soul's interests but concluded with the surrender of His will.

It was there, that He was proven worthy to become our Savior ([Heb. 5:7-9](#)). Do you see the place of His "will" there?

## We Wrestle Too

Similar to Jesus, we also wrestle **with** our will in life decisions, and we must follow His example if we hope to experience the Life that He won for us.

We must deny our Satan-influenced, soulish impulses and submit to the Spirit of God, who now speaks into our born-again spirit!

For us, as for Jesus, it can come down to a gut-wrenching struggle in choosing between the voices of the two gods.

Now read [v25](#) again: “What good is it for a person to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit himself?”

Jesus said that we can gain everything the world offers and then lose the very essence of our being. Our self. The person we were created to be and the one whom Jesus wants to restore us to become. The “you” who could be alive with Abundant Life if we would only choose the way of the cross and enter the Life of the Kingdom of God through the narrow gate!

Sometimes I think it would be easier to die physically for a good cause than to die to the soulish folly that robs us of that Life.

## Surrender?

At issue is our choice to surrender to the living God who loved us enough to send His beloved Son to take our sins upon Himself, and who frees us from the arrogant stupidity of thinking that we can be our own god.

It is one or the other, but out of fear of discouraging people we often water down the “cost” of following Jesus, which simultaneously dilutes its reward and leads to the bland, faithless religion of so many American Christians.

## A Terrible Option

In [v26](#) Jesus says that if we are ashamed of Him and His words, He will be ashamed of us when He returns. Ouch!

That's serious, and He is not speaking of praying before you eat in public as much as being willing to embrace the life values,

world view and mission that His words and His example call us to.

This impacts the human affections of [I John 2:15-17](#); loving our enemies; turning the other cheek; serving others, living enerously; how we define contentment and more. Paul’s [Phil. 3:7-11](#) testimony puts things into perspective. More choices!

## Pseudo-Life

The “church” in America has little sense of Life or of the path into it. We are satisfied with our institutional religion, good works and “fire insurance” salvation.

We even attempt to redefine “Life.” A “good Christian” becomes one who goes to church, tithes, becomes a member, serves in the church institution, abstains from certain sins, and/or buys into a specific dogmatic belief system.

Some of those can be expressions of faith, and some are contrary to it, but none are its source or its proof. All have the potential to give false hope and to draw us away from Life.

The authenticity of American religion can be measured by the impact we are having upon our nation’s morality.

## Moving On

It is predictable that if Kingdom Life is as good as the Word says it is, the spirit of our Satan-saturated world will try to influence us to think that the cost is too high.

Satan will come with his worldly options, which are as appealing, deceptive, and deadly today as his first temptation was to Adam and Eve, but God has provided a way for us to prevail.

Let's look at “The ‘Abide in Me’ Key to Kingdom Life” in the next chapter.