

## THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

*“If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.”* (Luke 14:26-27)

### 1) The historical context: Why did Jesus say that?

Jesus is saying this to a large crowd. The context is found in Luke 14, when Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem, heading toward the cross.

What was going on? Many people followed Jesus for different reasons: curiosity, interest in miracles, a search for food, political hope, or a momentary thrill.

So instead of “making it easier,” Jesus makes it clear: “If you want to follow me, you need to understand the cost.” In other words, Jesus is weeding out the crowd, separating admirers from disciples.

### 2) “If anyone” — what does that mean in Greek?

Meaning: anyone, anyone at all, whoever it may be. This shows that the call is open to everyone, but the conditions are strict.

Jesus isn’t speaking only to a spiritual elite. He is saying, “Anyone can come, but they can’t come their own way; they have to come my way.”

### 3) “To annoy” — what does that mean in Greek?

Literally, it can mean to hate, to dislike, or to reject, but here the meaning is contextual.

Jesus isn’t telling us to hate our father, mother, wife, or children. That would contradict other commandments, such as Exodus 20:12 (“*Honor your father and your mother*”) and Ephesians 6:1–3 (children are to obey their parents in the Lord).

So what does Jesus mean? He’s using strong language to draw a comparison: “To love less than I do.”



In other words: Christ must be above all human bonds; no earthly love can rival Him; no relationship can take Jesus' place.

A simple example: If love for Christ is the sun, other kinds of love are like lamps. It's not that the lamp ceases to exist, but in the presence of the sun, it loses its central place.

#### **4) "His own life" — what does that mean in Greek?**

It can mean life, soul, person, ego, inner self, or personal existence.

In this text, the meaning is: life itself as the center of control, the self, one's own will, the instinct for self-preservation.

What does Jesus mean? Not even life itself can take precedence over Him. In other words: my plans, my will, my comfort, my security, my identity—all of these must be submitted to Christ. In simple terms, Jesus is saying, "Not even you yourself can take the place that is mine."

#### **5) "You cannot be my disciple"—why does He keep saying that?**

Meaning: can't, isn't possible, can't manage, isn't capable of doing that.

Why the repetition? Because Jesus wants to emphasize that true discipleship is incompatible with divided loyalty. He repeats the idea three times in this context: unless you love your family less, unless you take up your cross, and unless you renounce everything.

What is Jesus emphasizing? That there is no such thing as a true disciple who puts Christ in second place, divided between Christ and the ego, or competing with family, possessions, or ambition. Either Jesus is the center, or the person has not yet understood what discipleship is.

#### **6) "Take up your cross" — what does that mean?**

In Jesus' time, the cross was not a beautiful symbol. It was a Roman instrument of execution. To take up the cross meant: a path of shame, a death sentence, total surrender, and losing control of one's own life.



So Jesus is saying, “Be willing to die to yourself and follow me, even if it costs you everything.”

## 7) “Follow me” — what does that mean?

This means: following Jesus, walking in His way, obeying His guidance, and submitting to His leadership. Discipleship isn’t about Jesus following us. It’s about us following Him.

**“Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.”**

## 8) Conclusion for the church

This text teaches that discipleship is not about emotion; it is about surrender. It is not about crowds; it is about commitment. It is not about Jesus as an addition to our lives; it is about Jesus as Lord.

In short: Christ above family, Christ above self, Christ above convenience, and Christ above all else.

*“Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.” (Matthew 10:37-39)*

Pr. Gilberto Souza

