

## To Be a Christian

12/13/17

Many years ago, my family and I lived in Valley Mills. We worked in Waco, at Waco Christian School, and our children attended school there. On our way home, somewhere past Speegleville, there was an old houseboat that was being renovated. Someone had obviously bought it in its state of disrepair and was making it a functioning, attractive houseboat. We passed that houseboat for years, and very little was accomplished in fixing it up. Eventually, it was gone, not because the work had been completed, but because, I suppose, the owner had not considered the time and money it would take to get the job done.

Jesus told a story in **Luke 14:28-30** that drove home the same point. This is what he said:

***“Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, saying, ‘This person began to build and wasn’t able to finish.’”***

The builder had not counted the cost of building the tower, so therefore he was considered a failure when he didn’t complete the project. Why did Jesus tell this story? Because he wanted people to understand the cost of being His disciple. Back in **Luke 9**, people had been telling Him that they would follow Jesus wherever He led them. He knew they didn’t know the importance of what they were telling Him. When pressed, they made excuses for not following him right then and there. They were not willing to sacrifice their comfortable life for a life dedicated to God. Jesus’ words stung: ***“No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”*** His words in **Luke 14**, just before He told the story of the man unable to finish his tower are even harsher:

***“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.”***

What people didn’t understand then and many more don’t understand now is that being a Christian is a life-long commitment to God and His Son Jesus Christ. Jesus spent the years of His ministry living for God—doing what He required, preaching the Kingdom, helping others. As God’s children, we are to take up where Jesus left off. He has given us of His Spirit, a Spirit that leads us to remain obedient, devoted, and lights to illuminate the world.

It is our responsibility to, as Paul said in **Philippians 3**, ***“know Christ.”*** Not just be familiar with Him, but truly know Him and what He expects of us—God’s children. Know all about Him, and as the old-timers would say: “study on Him.” Be in His word. Grow in grace and knowledge. Present your bodies as living sacrifices.

That's the cost of being a child of God—a Christian. It involves more than a dunking in a baptistry and a one hour a week (or every two or three weeks) meeting with the saints. Learning Him. Loving Him. Sacrificing time, talents, effort and, yes, even money for Him.

If Jesus was still walking the Earth, He would be doing the will of God and urging others to follow Him. He has ascended to heaven and left us to carry on His work, and we should make a concerted effort to do all we can to finish what He started. The question you must ask yourself is this: is the cost too high?