

3. I'm All In

1 Kings 19:19-21 NLT - 19 So Elijah went and found Elisha son of Shaphat plowing a field. There were twelve teams of oxen in the field, and Elisha was plowing with the twelfth team. Elijah went over to him and threw his cloak across his shoulders and then walked away. 20 Elisha left the oxen standing there, ran after Elijah, and said to him, "First let me go and kiss my father and mother good-bye, and then I will go with you!" Elijah replied, "Go on back, but think about what I have done to you." 21 So Elisha returned to his oxen and slaughtered them. He used the wood from the plow to build a fire to roast their flesh. He passed around the meat to the townspeople, and they all ate. Then he went with Elijah as his assistant.

In the Old Testament we find a story of someone who was given a choice between God and family. When he burned the plow and slaughtered the bulls Elisha showed that he had broken ties with his old life and was "all in" to follow Elijah.

What are some the things you have let go of in order to pick up your cross and follow Jesus? Are there any you still need to let go?

WRAP-UP

Major life change is possible, because of what God can do in our lives. But it is not a once and done proposition. When God invites us to follow, we choose to take the first step, but our journey is made up of many more choices, and those choices can be costly. Following Jesus means laying down our lives and making Him our first priority, above all else. To see our lives change we must count the cost as we make God number one in a million little choices each and every day.

Memory Verse

And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple.
- Luke 14:27 NLT

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members' needs: (see back for more space)

Challenge-Don't forget to check in with God as you make choices today.

"Cost of Change"

Million Little Things - Week #1

INTRODUCTION

As we embark on a new year you are probably thinking about major resolutions and big dreams. Hopefully that includes a desire to see real change and growth in your spiritual life. But does lasting change really depend on one big choice, or a million little ones? We would all like our desires fulfilled instantly, radically and easily. But apart from the spectacular miracles, like instantaneous healings, the scripture actually teaches us that real change takes time and it costs something, and we should count the cost. So, let's take a hard look at what it takes to have our lives changed by God.

Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

Did you make any New Year's Resolutions?

STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

1. What Change Can God Bring?

Matthew 9:9 NLT - 9 As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. So Matthew got up and followed him.

The story of Matthew the tax collector is a good example of how major life change begins.

How did Matthew respond to Jesus' invitation to follow?

When we see God opening an opportunity, or challenging us in some way, there needs to be a first step, or nothing will ever come of it.

Can you share one time you stepped out in faith, responding to God?

Matthew heard Jesus' response recorded in Chapter 8 verse 20 even before he chooses to follow.

After one of the scribes declared he would follow wherever Jesus went, what was Jesus' reply?

Matthew 8:19-20 NLT - 19 Then one of the teachers of religious law said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." 20 But Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens to live in, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place even to lay his head."

Why do you think Jesus' replied in this way?

Matthew was a tax collector; a well-educated and superior official, working for Herod. But because he could profit from the excessive taxes he collected, Matthew was resented, even hated by his fellow Jews. In his choice to follow Jesus, Matthew left behind that life and eventually became one of the twelve apostles. God is capable of great change, but it comes at a cost to us.

Were you aware that following Jesus came with a cost to you when you committed your life to Him, or did you discover that only as you grew in faith?

2. What will it cost?

Matthew 8:21-22 NLT - 21 Another of his disciples said, "Lord, first let me return home and bury my father." 22 But Jesus told him, "Follow me now. Let the spiritually dead bury their own dead."

Immediately after his statement about having no place to lay your head, Jesus was asked permission by another disciple to bury his father first. Jesus' reply seems shocking.

What did He tell the disciple?

There are speculations about the condition of this man's father by various commentators. Was he already dead, near death or only aged? This is unclear. Even though we immediately sense that his request is reasonable, the key may be in the disciple's priority.

What was he putting "first" in his life? What priority does that give to Jesus?

While this seems incredibly harsh, it is not the only place where attending the dead is secondary to serving God.

What demands were placed on the high priest in regard to burying the dead in Lev21:11? What reason was given for this in verse 12?

Leviticus 21:10-12 NLT - 10 "The high priest has the highest rank of all the priests. The anointing oil has been poured on his head, and he has been ordained to wear the priestly garments. 11 He must never leave his hair uncombed or tear his clothing. 12 He must not defile himself by going near a dead body. He may not make himself ceremonially unclean even for his father or mother. 12 He must not defile the sanctuary of his God by leaving it to attend to a dead person, for he has been made holy by the anointing oil of his God. I am the LORD.

In 1 Peter 2:9 believers are referred to as royal priests. Just like the high priest in Leviticus, our first duty is to God.

1 Peter 2:9 NLT - 9 But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

Another statement of Jesus that challenges us is found in Luke 14:26.

Luke 14:26-27 NLT - 26 "If you want to be my disciple, you must hate everyone else by comparison--your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters--yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. 27 And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple.

In this verse, the New Living translation qualifies "hating family" as in comparison to your devotion to Jesus, but the sentiment is clear- no one, not even our family, can be a higher priority than God in our lives.

Perhaps you haven't been asked to renounce your faith to save your children as some in the persecuted church have, but can you think of more common situations where your devotion to God may be challenged by your devotion to family such as- how you spend your time and resources, or how you make an important decision for the household? What are some ways you can keep God as the first priority in your family, in the million little things you do each day?