

False Advertising

“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 (NIV)

I love to look at commercials on billboards, magazines or TV. Advertisers out do one another to get our attention and persuade viewers that their product is something we cannot live without. How did we manage to live so long without this or that, we wonder, after looking at certain commercials.

Christianity—true Christianity—never sells us a bill of goods. Scripture does not try to win us to devotion toward Jesus through deceptive advertising. The Bible is blunt in its statements about how difficult the way of Jesus really is. Our verses today make it clear that we need to count the cost prior to coming to Jesus for forgiveness and reconciliation.

Certainly we recognize that Jesus is using hyperbole when He talks about hating loved ones. Did I say something self contradicting when I wrote the words, “hating loved ones”? Well we easily recognize that Jesus is making a comparison between kinds of love—or degrees of

love—when He tells us we must love Him so much that we seem to hate loved ones. C. S. Lewis said something like, “A Christian’s spiritual health is directly proportional to their love for God.” How true this is. We must spend all our Christian life in this world dying to personal ambition and living the will of God for us.

For the Lord is a jealous Lover. In Exodus 20:5 (NIV) the Lord says, “...for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God...” He does not accept second place in our hearts. Beware of this reality. Clearly whatever takes first place in our hearts above the Lord provokes Him to anger. As it says in Deuteronomy 32:16 (NIV) “They made him jealous with their foreign gods and angered him with their detestable idols.”

The Bible does not have false advertising about the Christian life. We must place the Lord ahead of anything else in this life if we are Christians. Indeed that is the first step into the faith of the Bible—placing the Lord first in our life. This is

performing our created purpose because God made us for Himself and any use of ourselves that is not obedience to the Lord is sin.

This is exactly what makes accepting the Lord’s “strange providence” so difficult at times. Many of us may have believed in the Lord for eternity but not for hard times in this life. Do you need to go back and renew your submission to the Lord? Are you rebelling against the Lord’s difficult will for your life? Remember that you are not your own, you are bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:20) therefore glorify God in all you do and think. The paradox in this truth is that the more a Christian pleases the Lord, the more they are pleased with their life. Seek pleasure and it will elude you, seek the Lord and your life will be full of pleasure in His presence.

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