**THE COST AND BLESSING**

**OF FOLLOWING JESUS**

*“Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.” (Mk 8:34-35)*

1. What does it mean to lose your life for Jesus and the gospel, and what are some examples of this from Scripture and history? (Mk 8:34)
2. Why is suffering a necessary part of following Jesus, according to the apostles Paul and Peter? (2Co 5:15; Ac 9:15-16; 1Pe 4:13)
3. How should we help others to make sacrifices for the sake of Jesus and the gospel, and what do we need to be careful of in doing so?
4. How are the suffering and sacrifice of discipleship related to the biblical message of grace? (Ro 12:1,2)
5. Is losing our lives (our own ways and self-determination) for Jesus really a loss? Why or why not?
6. Do you believe that Jesus rewards and gives blessings to those who follow Him in proportion to how we live? (Mt 5:12; Mk 10:29-30)
7. What are some examples of blessings disciples receive in the present age? (Mk 10:29-30)
8. Discuss the blessings of God Himself (Ge 15:1), of adoption as God’s children (Ga 4:4-7), of knowing Christ (Php 3:8-10), of genuine fellowship in community (Jn 17:20-23), of being a blessing and bearing fruit (Jn 15:5, 16), of answered prayer (Jn 14:13), of God’s discipline (Heb 12:7-11), and of joy even in persecution (Ac 5:41).
9. What blessings will those who follow Jesus receive in the age to come? (Consider the presence of God (1Co 13:12; Ps 27:4), the new heaven and earth (Isa 65:17; 2Pe 3:13) and the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:1,2,11-14,23)
10. How does remembering the blessings of God encourage us as we live following Jesus? (Php 3:12-14; Heb 10:35; 2Pe 3:12; Mt 6:20)
11. Do you feel that the cost you are paying is more than the blessings you are receiving?