

*Amway makes some good cleaning products. I'm **not** sure that they're any better than anybody else's, but I **am** sure there are plenty of Amway devotees about the place who will willingly espouse their benefits... Many of us are willing to buy a little bit of Amway, and use it to clean the bathroom or whatever, but there is a **small** contingent of people who..., well, you'd think it had changed their life. In fact, Amway becomes their life:*

- *They have parties to celebrate it*
- *They invite all their friends and try to convert them*
- *In every conversation they have with friends, neighbours – even strangers, “Amway” will pop up.*
- *The times they enjoy most, is when they get to go away to an “Amway” conference, where they can be surrounded by other “Amway” devotees, and enjoy each other's company.*

*And when a friend or a relative makes the great confession:*

- *I'm an Amway rep.*
- *I'm a Tupperware lady*
- *Avon calling..*
- *Or some kind of vitamin salesman ;*
- *Or weight-loss consultant;*
- *Or sheets*
- *Or whatever else*

*You know, ... , you're going to hear all about it.*

*For most of us, we're happy to get a little bit of product....*

*But for some, it becomes their life....*

Now, I'm obviously **not** an Amway consultant.... But I am going to ask you, "When it comes to the Lord Jesus Christ, are you someone who's looking for a little bit of product... or are you in it, for a total and complete, all consuming, change of life?"

Jesus didn't come to sell us a bit of product –

- sin-cleanser in a bottle or
- freedom-eze spray-on cure-all...

Jesus came to take your old life, and to give you a completely new one...

Jesus didn't command us to go out into the world to make "converts" – He told us to make "disciples". Now, the thing with disciples, is – they follow.

Jesus, is looking for disciples. Jesus, is looking for men and women, boys and girls, who are willing to follow Him – Follow, no matter where He leads – Follow, no matter what the cost...

For many years, in many churches, our aim has been to get people to say those magic words "*I accept the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal saviour...*" ... "Ahh, the work's done... Success..." Baptise them & that's it – Right??? ... Wrong!

The thing is, when you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour – when you are born again – you are born to a very different life... You are born to the life of a disciple...

So, when it comes to Jesus, are you looking for a little bit of product, so you can tick the “I’ve done it” religious box, by coming along to church every one or two weeks... Or is discipleship the all consuming, change of life, where Jesus **becomes** your life????? Where your desire, becomes a desire for Christ – where your every step, is a step, set toward following Christ?.. and where every one of your old passions, fade, compared to your passion for Jesus Christ.....

Little bit of product???? Or all-consuming desire??? – That’s the question.

Discipleship – following Jesus – is **not** for the feint-hearted – there is a cost...

Jesus just finished preaching the greatest sermon the world has ever heard (the sermon on the mount). He comes down from the mountain (the people recognising the authority with which he spoke). And He then demonstrates His authority again, by healing people and casting out demons....

As you can imagine, He’s gathered quite a crowd by now – and why wouldn’t He? Fantastic teaching, amazing

healings... People are following Him.... So what does He do?

Verse <sup>18</sup> **When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he gave orders to cross to the **other** side of the lake.**

What the?????...

Jesus, you've just gotten their attention – people are coming along – why would you move??? You've got numbers. You've got people lapping up what you've given them... Mate???? Why would you leave now???? – You're just starting to make a difference.

I'll tell you why Jesus left – to see who would follow Him.... Disciples of Jesus, follow Jesus. And sometimes – actually often – the cost of following Jesus, is a tough cost to bear... And I wonder, if Jesus were to turn up today, and said to you, "Follow me", ... Would you???... If following meant "Leaving your home, would you?" ... If following meant – "all the way to the cross" – would you????

A scribe – somebody who studied and knew well, the religious law, said to Jesus, **"Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go."**

And Jesus warned him what that could mean for him – you might have no home....: **"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."**

Jesus was a carpenter for goodness sake – if He didn't have a home, He could easily knock one up... But the thing is, for Jesus to follow the will of His Heavenly Father, meant that He would have to move about, and sleep wherever His ministry took Him. And of course, that night, He was going to sleep in a boat – through a storm...

*Neither Robyn, nor I, like to move. And every time we've taken big steps to obey God, it's cost us that. First of all, God had to get me off the farm. Then He had to take my dream away – of one day, having my own farm again. We built a house in Dalby. And then, when God called me to Bible College, we had to sell it. We moved to Brisbane. We moved to St George... And then last year, we were very settled, until God said "It's time to leave the Uniting Church". Which meant we had to move again.*

*And let me tell you, for Robyn and I, that was a hugely unsettling time – "Where will we live?" .... Well, we went to the bank, and we bought a house... Who knows how long we'll be in it?*

But that, is nothing, compared to how some of Jesus' disciples are called to live... *Robyn's Aunt and Uncle have an itinerant ministry – moving from town to town... I remember them coming to Goondiwindi when I was in primary school. They usually only stay in the one place a few days, or a few weeks. They pretty much know what it means to have no permanent*

*home. It's only in the last 18 months that they've finally bought their first home... And they still don't spend much time in it.*

The lesson: Sometimes, God calls us to give up something we have, so we can follow Him. Not all of us have to give up our homes – but most of us will have to give up something. It's actually pretty rare, that a disciple of Jesus Christ, doesn't have to give anything up ...

As a disciple of Jesus, be prepared to give up what you have. When Jesus leads, anything that you have, that prevents you from following – well, it's got to go. Anything that keeps you from following – anything that becomes an excuse – it's got to go....

I'm reminded of the parable Jesus told in Luke 14. The invitation went out, "Come to the banquet"... but there was all these excuses. Oh, I can't come – I've just bought a paddock. Oh, I just got a new tractor, and I've got to try it out....

Sometimes God calls us to give up something we have, so we can follow Him. Don't let anything that you have (any thing; any person; any dream), keep you from following Jesus.

So, disciples are very often called to give up physical possessions (or conveniences)... But anyone who's been in

full-time ministry, will soon tell you, that the biggest cost that they have had to endure, has been the cost on their family.

*I am very aware, that as a husband and as a father, when I obey God, it's not only going to cost me – it costs my family too. Every time we've had to move, my family has had to move. Every time, I've left my friends behind, my wife and children have left their friends behind.*

*Now that we've started out in "Bush Disciples", that's been an enormous cost on my family – They help me set up. They go out on mission with me from place to place. We can rarely go away for a weekend... it's a huge cost on a family...*

But get this... it's not just the 'pastor' or the 'minister', that it costs.... I am a disciple of Jesus, the same as you are a disciple of Jesus. I might have different gifts to you. I might have a different call to you... But as a disciple of Jesus, it will cost you too... And it'll probably cost your family as well.

Verse 21 Another disciple said to him, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

22 But Jesus told him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

Now, I don't know if this man had to wait for his dad to die, or if he was waiting for bones to dry so he could put them in a box in a nook in a tomb. Or maybe his dad was still young

and spritely and he was saying, when Dad's gone, I'll be free to follow... I don't know what he was saying. But I do know what Jesus answer was: If you want to experience true life, you come and follow me now. "Let the dead bury their dead."

Family is a good thing. But as soon as you or I let 'family' take the place of God, then we've become idolaters. And that's a question, every Christian has to consider – "Does God take first place, or does my family take first place?" When it's going to cost my family, by following Jesus, well, am I going to follow Jesus, or am I going to appease my family?

Is God your god, or is family your god?

You know, I actually believe many Christians today, put "family" in the place of God. We're coming up to an election, and so this is pretty topical at the moment. There is a Christian party, but they call themselves "Family First". "Family first? Or God first? I've had many, many Christians say to me, "I know God's calling me to such and such, but my family's got to come first...." Do they?.... And they try and justify it by saying "God's will has to be for me to put my family first..."

Rubbish. God's way isn't "Family First". God's way is "God first".

As we keep working our way through Matthew, I'm going to keep coming back to **Matthew 6:<sup>33</sup> But seek first his**

**kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.**

I spoke to you about the cost of ministry on my family. But you know what? I wouldn't have it any other way. Your kids learn what is important, by what you do. If what you do, demonstrates to your child that he/she is the most important person in the world, then that's what they will believe. If you demonstrate to your kids that they are more important than obedience to God, then that's exactly what they'll believe. And they'll grow up 'self centred' instead of 'God centred'.

But if Mum and Dad demonstrate to the kids, that following Jesus Christ, is the most important thing in the world, then your children will learn that too...

I want to tell you, that especially in the last 8 months, it has cost my family to follow Christ, but the biggest joy that I've been able to see, is each of them, individually, choosing to follow Christ, and serve Christ, and to count the cost as their own cost...

And when you take your family on a journey of following Jesus, you are teaching them the way of discipleship. There is nothing greater for a family, then to bear the cost of discipleship together...

Can't get to bible study because of the kids, well bring them with you, or form a group at your own home.... Faced with a

choice of church or sport??? Well, put God first – sport can follow...

God's got a mission for you, but for family reasons, there's an excuse for not obeying immediately??? Well take your family with you, and give them the opportunity to go on mission too....

You don't have to protect your kids from Jesus. Bring them on the journey of discipleship too.

Gotta move on.

When we follow Jesus, no matter what the cost – no matter what the dangers, we can do it with confidence.... Jesus and His disciples, were in a boat, out on the Sea of Galilee, and a huge storm came up. The boat was in peril. Some of these men were seasoned fishermen, and they were terrified.... And so they woke Jesus up.

<sup>25</sup> ..., "Save us, Lord; we are perishing." <sup>26</sup> And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.

Imagine that... They're about to die, and Jesus rouses on the wind and the sea... "You there – wind – stop that ruckus.

Enough of that turmoil you sea.”.... and instantly, the sea was like glass...

The cost of following Jesus, **can** be steep. But when you're in the boat with Jesus, you've got nothing to worry about. When you're in the boat with Jesus, He's got you safe in His hands – that's what faith is about. Discipleship – following Jesus – wouldn't make any sense – except for faith.

When Jesus calls us, as His disciples, to follow Him, we have every reason to trust him.

**If** you have to leave your home – don't worry about that – He'll provide a place for you to live. If you think it's going to be a cost on your family – don't worry about that – take your family with you – I'd much rather bring my family into the boat with Jesus, then try to swim the storms of life without Him.... Wouldn't you?

**seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.**

Discipleship is not “gettin a bit of religious product”  
Discipleship is all-in – following Christ, no matter what the cost.... Trusting Him, with good reason to trust Him.

Questions