

# Do You Really Want To Work For Jesus?

by Eva Zarley

***Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? Luke 14:28 [NIV]***

What does it take to work for Jesus? Do you have what it takes? Do you want to have what it takes? Do you really want to work for Jesus? Let's consider what it will cost.

First, you will likely have to go through some suffering. Otherwise, you may not have the compassion that is needed to love those whose pain and suffering has made them unlovable. Then you will probably have to go through some humiliation. Otherwise, you may be too self-righteous to be able to humble yourself and come down to the level of those you are trying to reach, just as Christ humbled Himself to become one of us. You may have to go through some things that challenge and even shatter pet doctrines and beliefs that you held dear and would even kill to defend. Just ask the apostle, Paul. Working for Jesus will require that you allow your idols and pre-conceived notions to be torn down. You must learn not to trust appearances.

Most of all, working for Jesus will demand much of your time, if not all of it. You have to be able to hear the Master's commands, if you plan to work for Him. You can't hear Him until you listen. It takes time to learn to listen to His still, small voice. You have to take time to get to know Him and His word, so that you will know that He is the one who is speaking to you and not an imposter. Furthermore, you can't represent Him to others unless you are very familiar with what He is like. Otherwise, you may misrepresent Him and cause a soul to stumble.

You may have to roll up your sleeves and get down and dirty. You may have to rub shoulders with people who are considered among the dregs of society. You may be exposed to rough behavior and coarse language. Can you love people who appear quite different from our sterile image of a "Christian"? They may be drug addicts, convicted felons, prostitutes, mentally impaired, impoverished and considered undesirables or cast offs, by many folks. They may not follow our traditional ideals of social behavior and churchy protocol. Can you minister to such people, seeing them as equally valuable to God as those more "refined"?



We live in a society that is very troubled and confused. Some families are so dysfunctional and embroiled in turmoil, those of us with more "normal" backgrounds can't begin to relate. There is no way the lost can be reached, through the hyped up and shallow version of Christianity, that some have presented to this lost and dying world. Sadly, many churches want to be prosperous, so the wealthy, decent, respectable candidates have

been wooed by pastors and saints alike. Everyone wants a high dollar tither and members who look good, giving the church a nice outward image.

I once heard a preacher share how God had prospered his church and how it began with a group of "nobodies." He told several "rags to riches" stories of how God prospered some of the new converts and they became wealthy "somebodies." He boasted how his tiny church that had started with "nobodies" was now filled with doctors, lawyers, businessmen and lots of prosperous people.

Forgive me if I fail to see how that necessarily enriches a church in the Holy Spirit and in Christlikeness. I don't think such will be the sort of people coming to salvation in these turbulent times, prior to the final harvest of souls. I am seeing more and more broken, crippled and destitute people crying for Jesus. The world has given its worst to them. They never had a chance for normalcy.

One afternoon, my husband and I stopped at a nearby park for lunch. A group of young people were laughing and talking at the nearest picnic table. Their language and topic was coarse and I was repulsed, at first. But the Lord admonished me to not judge by appearances. He reminded that I could not minister to the lost of this generation, if I could not cope with them at their level of entry. How could I help a prostitute if the crudeness of her language and life-style offended me? So I began to pray. Soon, one of the young men walked over to play with our dog. The Lord instructed me to inquire about the man's life. He started pouring out one of the most heart-wrenching stories I had ever heard. His life was a mess, as were the lives of all of his family members. He never had a chance. Now he was a convicted felon, suffering from bipolar disorder and ADHD. He could not afford his medication. He could not get a job. Since Vic and I particularly enjoy ministering in prison, Vic asked if the young man had, by any chance, met Jesus while in jail. His face lit up and he said yes. He was attending a church and had his Bible with him. He ran to get his wife and we prayed for him and his wife. Because of profound suffering in my own life, the Holy Spirit was able to flood my heart with compassion for this family, with the odds piled up so high against them. I reminded them that the name of Jesus had more power and authority than all these issues that plagued them. It was a holy and tender moment as this couple felt the love of Christ envelope them. I still pray for them, knowing they desperately need it.

I was talking to a dear friend in Texas, recently. She shared how she attended a Sunday morning service at a local ministry. She observed that the Holy Spirit's presence was very strong there. However, she noticed a distinct characteristic of the people who were attending. None of the affluent people, who used to come, were there. Instead, she was looking at what would be considered, by worldly standards, the lowliest group of people on earth. They were broken souls, having passed through the most difficult of trials. They were impoverished and desperate. Yet they were so full of joy and thankfulness to be there. An autistic boy walked through the room, hugging one person after another, his joy spreading throughout the room.

The next day, I got an email from a friend who held a large home Bible study. She shared a similar story about the changes to her fellowship. Many of the former, more blessed

members had either left the group or just seemed to not be growing. Yet the newer members were going through tremendous hardship and suffering. There was one mentally handicapped adult who exuded joy and gratitude. One of the older members complained to my friend about how the fellowship seemed to attract a lot of "down and outers." My friend just looked at her and said, "Yes, praise God! Isn't it wonderful?"

Such stories remind me of the parable that Jesus told his disciples about the wedding feast a man gave for his son. All was prepared, but the guests gave one excuse and another, as to why they wouldn't come. Finally, the host sent his servants out to gather those who weren't on the guest list, people off the streets and compelled them to come to the feast. Could it be that modern Christians have become like the Pharisees of the Jews who rejected the Messiah? I tell you that the Lord will take his blessing from the indifferent and give it to the desperate and hungry. Those very people, whose hard lives repulse the genteel, will be the ones who will be given the precious truth.

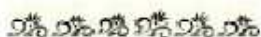
***Then he said to his servants, The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited do not deserve to come. Go to the street corners and invite anyone you find. Luke 22:8-9 [NIV]***

Can you love them? Can you suffer with them? Can you pay the cost of working for Jesus? Because the truth is, beloved, it is going to cost you everything.

A dear brother once preached about sharing in the sufferings of Christ and counting the cost. He was working with a ministry that was established in a bad part of town. He went on his visitation rounds and found himself in a dirty slum home of a woman who had attended the services. Her home was varmint-ridden and piled with trash and junk. She offered him a cup of coffee, which, glancing at his surroundings, he politely declined. She poured him one anyway into a filthy cup she grabbed from the sink. He stared into it, not wanting to put it to his lips. But the Lord said to him, "Shall you not drink of the cup I have given you? Then you cannot be a servant of my Son."



***Lord, grant me Your strength and deep concern for the lost. Let me be able to count and bear the cost of serving You, just as You bore the cost of my sins. Forgive me for allowing my love for my fellow man to wax cold, when Your own passion for all Your human beings is so deep that You poured out Your life and blood to save them, just as You did for me. Please forgive and heal my indifference toward the souls of others, while I bask in the delight of knowing I am saved and will be with you eternally. I am ashamed to have failed to love others as You have commanded me to do. Lord, this day, I repent. Amen.***



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Thank you, and God bless you.  
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