

We are in this series on 'Money, Sex and Power'. Disciples of Jesus are expected to live lives of **discipline** and **faithfulness**, especially regarding those three areas, for they have the power to bring a blessing or a curse. Our series on money has begun with perspectives on God himself and now on to matters of the **heart**. This subject reminds me of my late 20's and early 30's when I had to wrestle with what being a true disciple of Jesus really was. I ended up starting my mission experience with a group called Operation Mobilization (OM). I was attracted by their strong emphasis on evangelism, literature and living as soldiers of Jesus. It was said that anyone who was with OM for awhile would be readily accepted by most mission agencies. I later came to refer to OM as 'the marines of mission groups'. During the summer of 1983 I led three different OM Teams at three different churches in London, England. We slept on floors in the churches and bathed out of a sink, except on weekends when we went to homes for a shower! A life of a soldier is not about comfort but about completing a mission. ('endure hardship' - 2 Timothy 2:3-4)

This was exemplified by one book called **True Discipleship** by William McDonald. You would never find this book in a Christian bookstore for it is too radical for most Christians. It is based on the many words of Jesus about discipleship. (Note: rarely if ever do you hear media preachers ever talk about discipleship and the cost of following Jesus, which includes sacrifice and suffering for the sake of the kingdom.) Here is a summary of the topic.

TRUE DISCIPLESHIP ACCORDING TO JESUS

- **A supreme love for Jesus**....above and beyond even our family - Luke 14:26
 - **A denial of self**complete submission to Jesus of all our rights - Matthew 16:24
 - **A deliberate choosing of the cross**....willing to lay down our life for others, suffer shame, abuse, persecution and lack of popularity and conformity with the world - Matt.16:24
 - **A life of obedience in following the Lord Jesus Christ** - Matthew 16:24
 - **A fervent love for all those who belong to Jesus** - John 13:35, 1 John 3:16-18, 'Love one another deeply from the heart' - 1 Peter 1:22
 - **An unswerving continuance in His Word** - John 8:31, 'No turning back' - Luke 9:62
 - **A forsaking of all to follow Jesus** - Luke 14:33
- "This is perhaps the most unpopular of all Christ's terms of discipleship, and may well prove to be the most unpopular verse in the Bible." - William McDonald**

McDonald interprets that command very literally (as we will see), while others see this as turning over ownership of our life and all that we have for the Master's use as he directs us. For the rich young man, Jesus expected him to leave all his money behind, as this was his idol. -Luke 18:18-29

During marriage vows, the couple commit to 'forsake all others' in order to marry their wife or husband. God expects no less, as all idols must be left behind. - 1 John 5:21

'What is meant by forsaking all? It means an abandonment of all one's material possessions that are not absolutely essential and that could be used in the spread of the gospel. The man who forsakes all does not become a listless loafer; he works hard to provide for the current necessities of his family and himself. But since the passion of his life is to advance the cause of Christ, he invests everything above current needs in the work of the Lord and leaves the future with God. In seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, he believes that he will never lack food and clothing. - William McDonald / True Discipleship 1975

Prior to my missionary service, I was greatly influenced by the story of Jim Eliot and his sacrificial commitment to God as described in the book, *Under the Shadow of the Almighty*. At the age of 28, Jim and four others became martyrs for Jesus at the hands of the Auca Indians in Ecuador in 1956. A month before his death he wrote these words in his journal:

He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose. - Jim Eliot

'A missionary is a person who accepts temporary earthly discomfort so that others may experience eternal spiritual comfort.' - John Beckerink (what Jesus did, Philippians 2:1-11)