

### A/ Teaching

**Bible Material – Key Points** - based on Philippians 2v5-11, Luke 9v23

[Illustration: marriage “with my body I honour you, all that I am I give to you, and all that I have I share with you”]

#### **Obeying Jesus’ Teaching** (John 8v31) [like a bird set free]

- Now not later (Luke 9v61-62)
- First not second (Luke 14v25-27)
- Deny self, take up cross, follow me (Luke 9v23)
- Constant not temporary ( Luke 14v33-35)
- Blessing now and eternity (Luke 18v28-34)

⇒ What’s your choice?

#### **Following Jesus’ Example** (Philippians 2v5-11)

- Position – Equal with God (v6) - We are Children of God (John 1v12)
- Attitude – Humble, not self-seeking (v7)
- Action – Obedient to death (v8)
  - Jesus “not my will but yours” – angel strengthens (Luke 22v42-43)
  - Daniel’s friends “even if he does not …” – son of man in fire (Daniel 2v17-18)
  - Daniel “he prayed” – “angel shut the mouths of the lions” (Daniel 6v10,21)
- Altruistic (2 Corinthians 8v9) – Acceptable religion is practical love (James 1v27); Whoever loves God, must love his brother (1 John 4v21) – “follow me”
- Accounting - Cost the earth, but profit heaven. (Matthew 6v19-34, John 12v23-26)

⇒ Who are you following?

#### **Obedience vs Sacrifice** (1 Samuel 15v22)

- False motives
  - to be a Saviour - but Jesus is
  - to be a sacrifice (ascetism) – but it is not for our name, but Jesus’
  - to gain favour with God – but we are already accepted in Christ
  - to expect favour from others (Luke 14v12-13) – only for God
  - are unfruitful and lead to burnout!
- Only sacrifice where obedience to God requires it or risks it
  - Evidence I am his child
  - Brings fruit (Matthew 19v29)

⇒ Why are you doing it?!

#### **Practical Call vs Pull** ( see last page)

## ***B/ Personal Reflection & Development - Materials available***

Some of the following may help you reflect on these things further:

- Meditate on the following passages while asking the following questions:
    - In what way did Jesus model this passage?
    - What level of commitment does Jesus demand?
    - What might be getting in the way of such commitment?
  - Matthew 4v18-22                      ○ Mark 8v31-9 v1                      ○ Luke 18v28-30
  - Matthew 9v9                              ○ Mark 10v21-31                      ○ John 12v23-28
  - Matthew 8v19-22                      ○ Luke 9v21-26                      ○ John 21v17-19
  - Matthew 16v21-28                      ○ Luke 9v57-62
  - Matthew 19v20-30                      ○ Luke 14v25-36
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- Think through section on bottom half of the last page (under Section D)
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- Readings regarding the battle between fleshly desires and the Spirit:
  - Romans 7v7-25, James 4v1-10
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- Songs to help you meditate on this theme
  - Blessed be your name (you give and take away)
  - All to Jesus I surrender
  - I've counted up the cost
  - All I once held dear
  - All that I am
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- Key Bible verses to memorise and meditate on:
  - Luke 9v23
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- Further study:
  - Read inspiring biographies (in the Bible or outside of it) of people who have given up much in their lives for the Lord.

Reflect on some of the "Small Team" and "Pair/Triplet" material before meeting.



## C/ Small Team (1 hour 15mins + worship)

- Worship
- Summary of “Bible Material” (5 mins)
- Talk Questions (15 mins)
  - Read Luke 9v21-26
  - What does Jesus mean “deny yourself”?
  - What does Jesus mean “take up your cross”?
  - What does Jesus mean “follow me”?
  - What authority does Jesus have to say this? (eg Luke 9v21-22)
  - What is the ultimate result of following this through in our lives? (eg Luke 18v28-34)
- Summary of “Practical” (5 mins)
- Practical Questions (30 mins)
  - The Pull of Fleshly Desires (see bottom of last page)
    - What Pulls most impact you?
    - Why do they have such a pull?
    - In what ways do they stop you fulfilling God’s call on your life?
  - The Call of God to the Way of the Spirit (see bottom of last page)
    - Which areas of God’s Call do you most struggle with?
    - Why do we struggle?
    - Is “deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me” the answer?
    - How is this possible? (John 16v33, Romans 8v9-11, Matthew 19v25-27)
  - Sacrifices
    - Why might we make sacrifices, but not be obedient?
  - Do we tend to water down the message of Jesus in our own lives and in our evangelism?
- Take time to commit to God
  - to leave behind the desires that need leaving behind
  - To take up the things he is calling you to
  - To ask for his help in this.
- Pray together (20 mins)
  - Share and pray about practical matters arising from above.
  - Pray for wholehearted commitment, total dedication. Offer your lives to God.
  - Pray for your “list-of-5” – and for your commitment towards them!

## D/ Pair/Triplet (40 mins)

- Share and Discuss together (15 mins)
  - Share encouragements you have had from bible reading / prayer / worship.
  - Share about your struggles with fleshly/worldly/sinful desires.
  - Share about areas you feel you fall short of God’s call.
- Slowly read a passage from the Bible together (this could be one that one of you has read during the week or Luke 9v18-27). (15 mins)
  - What proceeds Jesus’ call to all out discipleship?
  - How does this help us understand Jesus’ call?
  - When can we expect a dividend?
  - How does this challenge you?
- Pray together (10 mins)
  - Give thanks and pray for one another based on the Bible passage and your discussion.
  - Pray for your “list-of-5”.

## Further Material for Reflection

- In Romans 6-8 Paul writes about the conflict between the “ways of the Spirit” and the “ways of the Flesh” (often translated “sinful nature”). The table below lists some ways of the Spirit to which God calls us and the ways of the sinful nature to which the flesh pulls us. On the right are God’s answers to these pulls. Any of the “pulls” can limit our capacity for any of the “calls”: so for example our desire for “experiences” might limit our time with God, or limit our love for our neighbour.
  - Which areas of “God’s call” are being most limited in your life at present?
  - Which of the “Flesh’s pulls” have greatest influence on you?
  - Commit to God to not be pulled by the flesh but to live by the Spirit, and ask Him to help you.

God’s Call – Way of the Spirit	Flesh’s Pull - Worldly Desires	God’s Answer to Worldly desires
Time with Him	Money	When provision is uncertain (Matthew 6v25-34) “your Father knows what you need”.
Trust in Him	Power	When trampled on (John 19v10-11) “You would have no power if it were not given to you from above”
Be a witness	Relationship	When left alone (John 16v32) “I am not alone for my Father is with me”
Love “neighbour”	Experience	Under persecution ( Acts 4v31) “The place where they were praying was shaken”
Be holy	Control	Going into uncertain times (Jeremiah 29v10-11) “I know the plans I have for you”
Generosity	Comfort	With “enemies” crowding in (Psalm 23v5) “You prepare a table before me in the midst of my enemies”