

# UNIT

# 8

## VERSE TO MEMORIZE

"Every one of you who does  
not renounce all his possessions  
cannot be my disciple."

LUKE 14:33





# ADJUSTING YOUR LIFE TO GOD

## A Young Couple's Sacrifice

When a need arose in one of our mission churches 40 miles away, I asked the church to pray that God would call someone to move to that community to serve as the lay pastor of the mission. A young couple responded and said they would move there to serve. Because the husband was attending the university, they had very little money.

If they took up residence in the mission community, he would have to commute 80 miles a day to the university. I knew they couldn't afford to do it. I said, "No, I can't let you do that" and named several reasons why that would not be fair or practical.

This young couple was deeply grateful that God had saved them. The young man looked at me and said, "Pastor, don't deny me the opportunity to sacrifice for my Lord." That statement crushed me. How could I refuse? Yet I knew this couple would have to pay a high price because our church had been obedient to start new missions.

We had prayed for God to call a lay pastor, so I needed to be open to God's answering our prayers in an unexpected way. When this couple responded with a deep sense of commitment and personal sacrifice, our church affirmed their sense of call, and God provided for their needs! What I could not have known at the time was that God was preparing this young couple for decades of faithful and fruitful ministry in the future.



# DAY 1

*You cannot stay where  
you are and go with God.*

## Critical Turning Points

1. Crisis of Belief
2. Major Adjustments

# ADJUSTMENTS ARE NECESSARY

While God was using our church to start missions all over our province, I had many people tell me how much they wanted to join us. But then they would say, "But I could never handle the cold winters!" Or, "But we could never leave our home state." Some even worried they wouldn't be able to obtain their favorite foods. I grieved to know that these dear people assumed they could follow Jesus without first denying themselves, and taking up their cross.

Many of us want God to speak to us and give us an assignment. However, we are often reluctant to make major adjustments in our lives. Biblically, that is impossible. Every time God spoke to people in the Scripture about something He wanted to do through them, major adjustments were required. They had to adjust their lives to God. Once the adjustments were made, God accomplished His purposes through them.

Adjusting your life to God is the second critical turning point in your knowing and doing the will of God. The first turning point is the crisis of belief: you must believe God is who He says He is and that He will do what He says He will do. Without faith in God, you will make the wrong decision at this first turning point. Adjusting your life to God is another turning point. If you choose to make the adjustment, you can move on to obedience. If you refuse to make the adjustment, you will miss what God has in store for your life.

## 1 Why is it necessary to make adjustments before you can join God in His activity?

Once you have come to believe God, you demonstrate your faith by what you *do* (your actions). A response is required. This action is one of the major adjustments we will focus on in this unit. Your obedience will also be part of the action required. Your adjustments and obedience may be costly to you and to those around you.

FAITH ► ACTIONS

ACTION = ADJUSTMENTS + OBEDIENCE

## 2 In your own words, summarize what is stated in the preceding box.

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God's revelation  
is your invitation  
to adjust your  
life to Him.

## ADJUSTMENTS TO GOD

When God speaks to you to reveal what He is about to do, that revelation is your invitation to adjust your life to Him. Your faith will be most clearly demonstrated by your actions. Actions you will take include the adjustments you must make to be in a position to obey the Lord. Once you've adjusted your life to the Lord, you act in obedience. Then God accomplishes through you what He has purposed to



do. Adjustments prepare you for obedience. You cannot continue life as usual or stay where you are and go with God at the same time. This truth is demonstrated throughout Scripture. For instance:

- Noah could not continue life as usual and build an ark (see Gen. 6).
- Abram could not stay in Ur or Haran and father a nation in Canaan (see Gen. 12:1-8).
- Moses could not stay in the back side of the desert herding sheep and stand before Pharaoh in Egypt (see Ex. 3).
- David had to leave his sheep to become king (see 1 Sam. 16:1-13).
- Ruth had to leave her homeland to support her mother-in-law. (see Ruth 1:8-17)
- Jonah had to leave his home and overcome a major prejudice in order to preach in Nineveh (see Jonah 1:1-2; 3:1-2; 4:1-11).
- Peter, Andrew, James, and John had to leave their fishing businesses to follow Jesus (see Matt. 4:18-22).
- Mary had to renounce her vision for engagement and matrimony to give birth to the Messiah (see Luke 1:26-38)
- Saul (later Paul) had to completely change directions in his life to preach the gospel to the Gentiles (see Acts 9:1-19).

These people had to make enormous adjustments! Some had to leave family and country. Others had to renounce prejudices and change their values. Others had to abandon life goals, ideals, and desires. They had to yield everything to God and align their lives to Him. The moment they made the necessary changes, God began to accomplish His purposes through them. Each one, however, learned that adjusting one's life to God is well worth the cost.

Adjusting one's  
life to God is well  
worth the cost.

- 3** Your Scripture memory verse for this unit speaks of a major adjustment that must be made to be a disciple of Jesus. Write Luke 14:33.

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- 4** Have you come to a place in your life where you are willing to yield everything to God in order to follow Him? ☐ Yes ☐ No  
If you have, what is something you have surrendered to God?

\_\_\_\_\_

- 5** What is an adjustment you are afraid God might ask you to make if you truly get serious about your walk with Him? "I am afraid God might ask me to . . ."

\_\_\_\_\_

You may be thinking, *But God will not ask me to make major adjustments.* Scripture shows that God most certainly requires adjustments of His people. He even required them of His own Son: "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: Though he was rich, for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). Jesus emptied Himself of position and comfort in heaven in order to join the Father in providing redemption through His death on the cross. That was a major adjustment!

If you want to be a disciple—a follower—of Jesus, you have no choice. You must leave where you are to follow Him. You must make major alterations in your life to follow God. Until you are ready to make any change necessary to follow and obey



## Isaiah 55:9

"For as heaven is higher  
than earth,  
so my ways are higher  
than your ways,  
and my thoughts than  
your thoughts."

what God has said, you will be of little use to God. Your greatest single difficulty in following God may come at this point of full surrender.

We tend to want to skip making adjustments and go directly from believing God to obedience. If you want to follow Him, you don't have that choice. His ways are so different from yours (see **Isa. 55:9**) that the only way you can follow Him requires an alignment of your life to His ways.

**6** Elisha and the rich young ruler were invited to join God and His activity. Read about them in 1 Kings 19:15-21 and Luke 18:18-27, respectively; then answer the following questions.

The LORD said to him [Elijah], "Go and return by the way you came to the Wilderness of Damascus. When you arrive, you are to anoint Hazael as king over Aram. You are to anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel and Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel-meholah as prophet in your place." ...

So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him. Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. "Please let me kiss my father and mother, and then I will follow you."

"Go on back," he replied, "for what have I done to you?"

So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his attendant (1 Kings 19:15-21).

A certain ruler asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

"Why do you call me good?" Jesus asked him. "No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: Do not commit adultery; do not murder; do not steal; do not bear false witness; honor your father and mother."

"I have kept all these from my youth," he said.

When Jesus heard this, he told him, "You still lack one thing: Sell all you have and distribute it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

After he heard this, he became extremely sad, because he was very rich. Seeing that he became sad, Jesus said, "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God" (Luke 18:18-23).

a. What adjustment was required of each?

Elisha: \_\_\_\_\_

Rich young ruler: \_\_\_\_\_

b. What was the response of each?

Elisha: \_\_\_\_\_

Rich young ruler: \_\_\_\_\_



The **rich ruler** desired eternal life, but he didn't want to make the necessary adjustment to Jesus. He considered his money and wealth to be more important. Jesus knew that people cannot love God completely and love money at the same time (see Matt. 6:24). Jesus asked him to put away what had become his god—his wealth. The young ruler refused to change his priorities, and he missed experiencing eternal life. The rich young ruler's love of money and his greed made him an idolater (see Eph. 5:5). He missed coming to know the true God and Jesus Christ, whom God had sent. He wanted to gain eternal life, but he refused to do what was necessary to obtain it.

**Elisha** responded much differently. He had to leave family and career (farming) to follow God's call. You may have heard the phrase *burning your bridges behind you*. Elisha burned his farm equipment and provided barbecued oxen for the people of his community (see 1 Kings 19:19-21). He was not about to turn back! When he made the necessary adjustments, he was in a position to obey God. As a result, God worked through Elisha to perform some of the greatest signs and miracles recorded in the Old Testament (see 2 Kings 2-13). Elisha had to make major changes on the front end of his call. Not until he took those actions did God work through him to accomplish the miracles.

- 7** As you come to know and do God's will, in what order do the following responses come? Number them in the correct order. Refer to the seven realities on the inside back cover if you need help.

\_\_\_ obedience    \_\_\_ adjustments    \_\_\_ faith

When God invites you to join Him, the task will have such God-sized dimensions that it will cause you to experience a crisis of belief. Your response will require faith. Faith will be demonstrated by action. The first thing you will do is adjust your life to God. The second step will be to obey what God asks you to do. You cannot go on to obedience without first making the necessary adjustments. The order is (1) faith, (2) adjustments, (3) obedience. You can't begin to imagine up all God is able to accomplish through one solitary life that is wholly yielded, adjusted, and obedient to Him!

- 8** Do you want to be wholly obedient to God? ☐ Yes ☐ No What do you need to surrender to God so you are prepared to follow Him anywhere?

- 9** Begin memorizing your Scripture memory verse for this unit and review your other verses.

### Ephesians 5:5

"For know and recognize this: Every sexually immoral or impure or greedy person, who is an idolater, does not have an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

### SUMMARY STATEMENTS

When God speaks to me to reveal what He is about to do, that revelation is my invitation to adjust my life to Him.

Adjustments prepare me for obedience.

I cannot stay where I am and go with God.

No one can sum up all God is able to accomplish through one solitary life that is wholly yielded, adjusted, and obedient to Him!

**Review today's lesson. Pray and ask God to identify one or more statements or Scriptures He wants you to understand, learn, or practice. Underline them. Then respond to the following.**

What was the most meaningful statement or Scripture you read today?

Reword the statement or Scripture into a prayer of response to God.

What does God want you to do in response to today's study?

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# DAY 2

*God is interested in  
absolute surrender.*

## KINDS OF ADJUSTMENTS

What kinds of adjustments are required to position your life to be used by God? Trying to answer that question is like trying to list all the things God might ask you to do. The list could be endless. However, I can point you to some examples and give you some general categories of adjustments God might ask of you.

Adjustments may be required in one or more of the following areas.

- In your circumstances—job, home, finances, and others
- In your relationships—family, friends, business associates, and others
- In your thinking—prejudices, methods, your potential, about your past, and others
- In your commitments—to family, church, job, plans, tradition, and others
- In your actions—how you pray, give, serve, and others
- In your beliefs—about God, His purposes, His ways, your relationship with Him, and others

The list could go on and on. The major adjustment will come at the point of acting on your faith. When you face a crisis of belief, you must decide what you believe about God. That mental decision may be easy. The hard part is adjusting your life to God and taking an action that *demonstrates* your faith. You may be called to attempt things only *God* can do, whereas before you may have attempted only what you knew *you* could accomplish.

**1** From the list of adjustments listed above, from which of the four categories do you struggle the most to make adjustments?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

**2** Go back and write one example for each area listed that you've experienced in your life. For example, in the area of beliefs you may have to make an adjustment to believe that nothing is impossible with God.

**3** Read each of the following Scriptures. What kind of adjustment was (or is) required in each? Match the Scripture on the left with the correct adjustment required on the right. Some may call for more than one type of adjustment. Write a letter or letters in each blank.

- | Scriptures                | Adjustments         |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| _____ 1. Matthew 4:18-22  | a. In circumstances |
| _____ 2. Matthew 5:43-48  | b. In relationships |
| _____ 3. Matthew 6:5-8    | c. In thinking      |
| _____ 4. Matthew 20:20-28 | d. In commitments   |
| _____ 5. Acts 10:1-20     | e. In actions       |
|                           | f. In beliefs       |

### Adjustments

- a. In circumstances
- b. In relationships
- c. In thinking
- d. In commitments
- e. In actions
- f. In beliefs



Sometimes an adjustment may involve several of these areas at once. For instance, Peter's experience with Cornelius probably required adjustments in Peter's relationships with Gentiles, his thinking and beliefs about what is religiously pure, his commitments to the traditions of the Jews, and his actions regarding fellowship with Gentiles. Being able to place a title on an adjustment is not as important as identifying what change God wants you to make to Him, His purposes, or His ways. The primary adjustments I see in the Scriptures above are 1-a; 2-b or c; 3-e; 4-b, c, or e; 5-c or f. You may have seen others.

Some people have asked whether a *major* adjustment is always involved in joining God's work. Anytime you go from where you are to where God is working, from your way of thinking to God's way of thinking, from your ways to God's ways, or from your purposes to His purposes, a *major* adjustment will be required. Now, you may make adjustments at one point in your life that will prepare you for joining God at a future time. When the time comes for obedience, you will have already adjusted to God and you will not sense a *major* adjustment is required.

**4 Write *major* or *minor* beside each adjustment listed below.**

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Moving from my way of thinking to God's way of thinking
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. Moving from my purposes to working on God's purposes
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Moving from my way of doing things to God's ways
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. Moving from my human values to God's values

Did you write *major* beside each one? The distance from where we are to where God is in any one of these areas requires a major shift. If you don't think it requires a major adjustment, you may have underestimated God and overestimated your own ability! The adjustments may be gradual over time so they don't seem so major at once, but these are all huge adjustments.

## ABSOLUTE SURRENDER

God frequently requires adjustments in areas of your life that you have never considered or been open to changing in the past. You may have heard someone say something like this: "Don't ever tell God something you don't want to do. Sure enough, that is what He will ask you to do." Be careful! God is not looking for ways to make your life difficult. However, He intends to be the Lord of your life. When you identify a place where you refuse to allow His lordship, that is an area He will go to work. He is seeking **absolute surrender**. God may or may not require you to do the thing you dread doing, but He will keep working until you are willing for Him to be Lord of all. Remember, because God loves you, His will is always best! Any adjustment God asks you to make is for your good. As you follow Him, the time may come when your life and future may depend on your adjusting quickly to God's directives.

You don't adjust your life to a concept. You align your life to a Person! God. You alter your viewpoints to resemble His. You change your ways to be like His ways. After you make the necessary adjustments, He'll tell you what to do next to obey Him. When you obey Him, you'll experience Him doing through you something only He can do.

- 5 In the margin write at least one adjustment you have made in your thinking as you have studied this course. For example, someone might respond, "I had to accept the fact that I cannot do anything of Kingdom value apart from God. Instead of doing things for God, I am now watching and praying to see what God wants to do through me."**



Any adjustment  
God expects you  
to make is for  
your good.



- 6 Read the following statements that were made by godly men. Under each statement describe the kind of adjustment the person made or was willing to make. For example, one adjustment David Livingstone was prepared to make was to live in poverty as a missionary in Africa rather than to have wealth as a physician in his homeland.

**David Livingstone** (medical missionary to Africa): "Forbid that we should ever consider the holding of a commission from the King of Kings a sacrifice, so long as other men esteem the service of an earthly government as an honor. I am a missionary, heart and soul. God Himself had an only Son, and He was a missionary and a physician. A poor, poor imitation I am, or wish to be, but in this service I hope to live. In it I wish to die. I still prefer poverty and missions service to riches and ease. This is my choice."<sup>1</sup>

Adjustment: \_\_\_\_\_

**Jim Elliot** (missionary to Quichua Indians in South America): "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."<sup>2</sup>

Adjustment: \_\_\_\_\_

**Bob Pierce** (established World Vision and Samaritan's Purse): "Let my heart be broken by the things that break the heart of God."<sup>3</sup>

Adjustment: \_\_\_\_\_

**Oswald J. Smith** (missionary statesman of Canada): "I want Thy plan, O God, for my life. May I be happy and contented whether in the homeland or on the foreign field; whether married or alone, in happiness or sorrow, health or sickness, prosperity or adversity—I want Thy plan, O God, for my life. I want it; oh, I want it!"<sup>4</sup>

Adjustment: \_\_\_\_\_

**C. T. Studd** (missionary to China, India, and Africa): "If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice is too great for me to give for Him."<sup>5</sup>

Adjustment: \_\_\_\_\_

Some adjustments these people made or were willing to make include the following.

- Livingstone considered a missionary work in Africa a high honor, not a sacrifice.
- Jim Elliot was willing to give up his life for heavenly reward. He was killed by South American Indians as he sought to spread the gospel to those who had never heard about Jesus.
- Bob Pierce was ready to be brokenhearted so he could be like the Father.
- Oswald Smith wanted God's plan for his life so much that he was willing to be content with any pleasure or adversity.
- C. T. Studd was open to make any sacrifice for Jesus' sake.

"If Jesus Christ  
be God and died  
for me, then no  
sacrifice is too  
great for me to  
give for Him."  
—C. T. Studd

- 7 Draw a star in the margin beside the quotation that is most meaningful to you.



- 8** Think about the level of commitment that is reflected in that quotation. If you are willing to make a similar commitment to the lordship of Christ, spend a few moments in prayer expressing your willingness to adjust your life to Him.

You cannot stay where you are and go with God in obedience to His will. Adjustments must come first. Then you can follow in obedience. Keep in mind that the God who calls you is also the One who will go with you and enable you to do His will. In the remainder of this unit we will study the second and third points below.

### Obedience Requires Adjustments

1. You cannot stay where you are and go with God at the same time.
2. Obedience is costly to you and to those around you.
3. Obedience requires total dependence on God to work through you.

When you are willing to surrender everything in your life to the lordship of Christ, you, like Elisha, will find the adjustments are well worth the reward of experiencing God. If you have not come to the place in your life where you have surrendered *all* to His lordship, decide today to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Him (see **Luke 9:23**).

### From Cannibalism to Following Christ

A pastor approached me with a wonderful testimony while I was in Hawaii speaking at a pastors and staff retreat. He and others regularly took a mission trip to the mountain region of Fiji. He showed me a picture that astounded me, so I asked him to tell me the story behind it.

In the picture a man, smiling broadly, was pointing to some rough boards nailed together and a diagram of the seven realities of *Experiencing God* with words in his language over each of the realities. Behind him was a modest, thatched-roof building with open walls. The pastor told me that this man was the chief of his people. At one time in their past this tribe had been cannibalistic and had even eaten a missionary. Now, years later, they had repented and come to faith in Christ. This man in the picture was not only their chief but also their pastor. He was teaching *Experiencing God*. What an adjustment these people had made to God!



You cannot  
stay where  
you are and  
go with God!

Luke 9:23

"If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me."

### SUMMARY STATEMENTS

God is interested in my absolute surrender to Him as Lord.

I adjust to a Person.

Adjustments are well worth the reward of experiencing God.

The God who calls me is also the One who will enable me to do His will.

**Review today's lesson. Pray and ask God to identify one or more statements or Scriptures He wants you to understand, learn, or practice. Underline them. Then respond to the following.**

What was the most meaningful statement or Scripture you read today?

Reword the statement or Scripture into a prayer of response to God.

What does God want you to do in response to today's study?

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# DAY 3

## OBEDIENCE IS COSTLY, PART 1

*Obedience is  
costly to you.*



You cannot know  
and do God's  
will without  
paying the price  
of adjustment  
and obedience.

You cannot stay where you are and go with God. You cannot continue doing things your way and accomplish God's purposes. Your thinking cannot come close to thinking like God. For you to do the will of God, you must adjust your life to Him, His purposes, and His ways.

**1** In this unit we are looking at three statements about adjustments and obedience. Personalize each one from your perspective by writing in the blanks *I* and *me* instead of *you*.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ cannot stay where \_\_\_\_\_ [am] and go with God at the same time.
2. Obedience is costly to \_\_\_\_\_ and to those around \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Obedience requires total dependence on God to work through \_\_\_\_\_.

Look at the second statement: obedience is costly to you and to those around you. You cannot know and do God's will without paying the price of adjustment and obedience. Willingness to pay the price of following His will is one of the major adjustments. At this point "many of his disciples turned back and no longer accompanied him" (John 6:66). Many churches will not know and experience the fulfilling of God's purposes through them because they are not willing to pay the price of obedience.

While I was pastoring a wonderful church in California, I received a call from a tiny congregation in Saskatoon, Canada, that said they would have to disband their church if I did not come as their pastor. As Marilyn and I prayed, we sensed God was moving our family from our comfortable church setting to an extremely challenging assignment. After driving 1700 miles, we finally arrived. We had barely eaten lunch when a car pulled up with six men in it. They were from a community 90 miles away. They said they had been pleading with God to send them a pastor who would start a church in their community, and they asked if I would be their pastor too. For the next two years every Sunday I would teach Sunday School and preach at my home church. Then I would drive 90 miles and teach Sunday School and preach at the mission church. Then I would drive 90 miles back and preach at our evening service and then teach adults in discipleship training. Every Tuesday afternoon I would drive to our mission and lead them in a prayer meeting. There was a cost in accepting God's invitation, both to me and my family, but the times of fellowship with those dear believers and with my Lord as I drove those highways for countless hours were a tremendous reward.

We say Christ is Lord, and He can interrupt our plans anytime He wants. We just don't expect Him to do it! We assume He will affirm everything we are doing and never ask us to change anything we have planned. If we expect God to work through the channels we have already established and bless our plans and programming, we are destined for disappointment. When God invites us to join Him, we will have to make major adjustments. Such a response can be costly.



Are they servants of Christ? I'm talking like a madman—I'm a better one: with far more labors, many more imprisonments, far worse beatings, many times near death.

Five times I received the forty lashes minus one from the Jews. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received a stoning. Three times I was shipwrecked. I have spent a night and a day in the open sea. On frequent journeys, I faced dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my own people, dangers from Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers at sea, and dangers among false brothers; toil and hardship, many sleepless nights, hunger and thirst, often without food, cold, and without clothing. Not to mention other things, there is the daily pressure on me: my concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?

If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is to be praised forever, knows that I am not lying. In Damascus the governor under King Aretas had the city of the Damascenes guarded in order to arrest me. But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands (2 Cor. 11:23-33).

Sometimes obedience to God's will leads to opposition and misunderstanding. Because of his obedience Paul suffered much for the cause of Christ. The beatings, imprisonments, and danger listed in 2 Corinthians 11:23-27 sound like more than one person could bear. He concluded one letter by saying, "I bear on my body the marks of Jesus" (Gal. 6:17). Paul had not had these experiences before he began to do the will of his Lord. Obedience was costly to him. Even so, Paul could still say, "My goal is to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death, assuming that I will somehow reach the resurrection from among the dead. Not that I have already reached the goal or am already perfect, but I make every effort to take hold of it because I also have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:10-12).

The apostle Paul revealed the adjustments he made to do God's will when he said, "I have become all things to all people, so that I may by every possible means save some" (1 Cor. 9:22). Your adjustments and obedience to Christ may be difficult as well.

#### SUMMARY STATEMENTS

Obedience is costly to me and to those around me.

I cannot know and do the will of God without paying the price of adjustment and obedience.

I must adjust my plans and program to what God is doing.

- 7** Have you ever had an experience in which your adjustment or obedience to God was costly? ☐ Yes ☐ No If so, briefly describe that experience and the cost you had to pay. \_\_\_\_\_

**David Livingstone** was a 19th-century missionary from Scotland who committed his life to making Christ known in Africa. Perhaps his prayer may inspire your own commitment to pay the cost of following Christ:

Lord, send me anywhere, only go with me.  
Lay any burden on me, only sustain me.  
Sever any tie but the tie that binds me to Thyself.

- 8** Practice quoting or writing your Scripture memory verses.



Review today's lesson. Pray and ask God to identify one or more statements or Scriptures He wants you to understand, learn, or practice. Underline them. Then respond to the following.

What was the most meaningful statement or Scripture you read today?

Reword the statement or Scripture into a prayer of response to God.

What does God want you to do in response to today's study?

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## OBEDIENCE IS COSTLY, PART 2

### DAY 4

One of the most demanding adjustments to doing God's will is deciding to obey even when obedience is costly to those around you. Your family and friends may have to pay a price for *your* obedience.

*Obedience is costly  
to those around you.*

**1** Answer the following questions. Read the Scripture passage if you do not already know the answer.

- When **Moses** was obedient and told Pharaoh to let Israel go, what did it cost **the Israelites** (see Ex. 5:1-21)?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- When **Jesus** obeyed and went to the cross, how did it affect His mother, **Mary** (see John 19:17-37)?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- When **Paul** was obedient in preaching the gospel to the Gentiles at Thessalonica, what happened to **Jason** (see Acts 17:1-9)?  
\_\_\_\_\_

When Moses obeyed God, the workload of the children of Israel was increased, and the foremen were beaten. The Israelites paid a price for Moses to do God's will. When Jesus did the Father's will and died on a cross, His mother had to suffer the agony of watching her Son be cruelly killed. Jesus' obedience put Mary through a heartbreaking experience. His obedience brought fear and pain to the disciples. For Jesus to do God's will, others had to suffer. When Paul followed God's will in preaching the gospel, others were led to respond to God's work in their own lives. Jason and some fellow Christians were arrested by a rioting mob and were accused of treason because of their



association with Paul. Frequently, Paul's obedience to God's will endangered the lives of those who were with him.

You must not overlook this element in knowing and doing God's will. God will reveal His plans and purposes to you, but your obedience will impact you and others around you. When, for instance, a couple surrenders their lives to missions, it may cost those around them, such as their children and elderly parents, as well as the church where they have served, more than it affects them. Yet not obeying God would be much worse.

## 2 Fill in the blanks in the following statements.

1. You cannot \_\_\_\_\_ where you are and go with \_\_\_\_\_ at the same time.
2. Obedience is \_\_\_\_\_ to you and to those \_\_\_\_\_ you.
3. Obedience requires total dependence on God to work through you.

Check your answers on page 163.

When Marilyn and I committed ourselves to do mission work, one of the great prices we had to consider was the cost our children would pay for me to be gone so much. Our oldest child was eight when we moved to Saskatoon. Our youngest child was born a few months after we arrived. I was away from home much of the time the children were growing up. Marilyn also had to pay a high price by rearing all five children during my frequent absence.

I have heard many Christians say, "I really think God is calling me to serve Him, but after all, my children need me. I can't put my family through that." Your children certainly need your care, but do you suppose that if you obediently responded to God's activity, He would provide for your children? We did!

We believed God would honor our obedience to Him. We trusted that He would show us how to rear our children. We believed the heavenly Father, who loves His servants, could take better care of our children than we could. We were convinced that God would show us how to relate to our children in a way that would make up for the lost time with them. I could not let God's call become an excuse for neglecting my family, but when I was obeying the Father, I could trust Him to care for my family.

We baptized three persons the first year we were in Saskatoon. After 2½ years of hard and demanding labor, we were averaging 60 in attendance. Marilyn said to me, "Henry, Richard came to me today and said he really feels sorry for you. He said, 'Dad preaches such good sermons. He gives an invitation week after week, and nobody comes forward to make a decision.'"

I went to Richard and said, "Richard, don't ever feel sorry for your dad. Even if God lets me labor for 10 years and see very little results, I will hardly be able to wait for the day when He brings the harvest." I had to help Richard understand what was taking place. I explained God's promise of a future harvest in **Psalm 126:6**. God worked through me at that moment to teach my son a deeply meaningful spiritual truth.

I remember a time when Marilyn hit a low point. She had grown discouraged. The next Sunday after I preached, our oldest son Richard, a first-year university student, came down the aisle to make a decision, saying, "I feel God is calling me into ministry." Behind him came another young man. Marilyn had spent many hours ministering to this young man who had grown up in a troubled home. He said, "I also believe that God has called me to the ministry." Then he turned and said, "And a lot of the credit goes to Mom Blackaby."

Another young man stood in that same service and said, "I want you to know that God is also calling me to the ministry. And I want you to know that it is due

### Psalm 126:6

Though one goes along weeping,

carrying the bag of seed,  
he will surely come back  
with shouts of joy,  
carrying his sheaves.



largely to Mom Blackaby." At a crisis time in his life, our family had ministered to him and encouraged him to seek God's will for his life. Marilyn had done much to show him love. At this critical time for Marilyn, God encouraged her.

Ultimately, all five of our children sensed God's call to vocational ministry or mission work, and all five are serving in full-time Christian ministry today. Only God could have done such a beautiful work with our children. You can trust God with your family! I would rather entrust my family to God's care than to anyone else in the world.

- 3 Can you recall an experience when your family had to pay a price for following God's will? ☐ Yes ☐ No If so, briefly describe the experience. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Can you recall a time when you chose not to obey God because of the cost to those around you? ☐ Yes ☐ No If so, briefly describe the situation. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 What are some things you know about God that could help you trust God to care for your family and friends? List several. \_\_\_\_\_

## LET CHRIST COMMUNICATE WITH HIS PEOPLE

If you ever ask God's people to seek the mind of the Lord, be prepared to accept what they tell you. Honor what they say. I have seen some leaders ask a church, a committee, or group to pray and seek God's will in a matter. The people expressed what they sensed God was saying. Then the leader would say something like "Now let me tell you what God wants us to do." If the people of God are the body of Christ, Christ is the Head. The whole body must come to Christ for an understanding of God's will for that body. We must learn to trust Christ to communicate with His people.

- 6 Suppose your church began praying for a special financial need, and a retired person sensed God wanted her to give half of her four-thousand-dollar life savings to meet that need. How do you think you would respond? Check your response.
  - ☐ a. I would refuse her gift and ask the wealthier members to give instead.
  - ☐ b. I would receive the gift, thank God for answering prayer, and weep about the high cost she had to pay for our church to do God's will.
  - ☐ c. I would receive the gift, but I would try to find a way to replace the money as soon as possible.
  - ☐ d. I would ask her to pray for two more weeks to make sure this is what God wanted her to do.

I had to face this situation. One of our new missions needed a building. The financial agency we were working with required that a certain percentage of the cost be paid as a downpayment in order for us to obtain the loan. The mission was extremely small, so I asked our church members if they would be willing to pray about the possibility of contributing toward the downpayment. They agreed to pray and watch to see how



You can trust  
God with  
your family!



We must learn  
to trust Christ  
to communicate  
with His people.



God would provide. **Ivah Bates**, one of our diligent pray-ers, was a widow. In addition to a small pension, she had a total of four thousand dollars in the bank to last for the rest of her life. She gave a check for two thousand dollars to the building fund.

Because I was her pastor, many emotions went through my heart. Although I was leading our church to do what we believed God wanted us to do, my heart ached when I saw what it was costing our dear people to respond to God's invitation. I talked with Ivah's daughter. She said, "Don't deny my mother the right to give. She has always trusted her Lord. She wants to do that now too."

Some pastors or finance committees say, "We can't ask our people to give too often, or it will hurt our ongoing budget giving." I learned never to deny God's people the opportunity to contribute. I never tried to pressure or manipulate people to give. That was not my job. Instead, I created the opportunity and encouraged them to contribute only what God led them to donate. Most of God's people will cheerfully do God's will. Some of them will respond with generosity, counting it an honor that God has allowed them to sacrifice for Him. Some will have life-changing experiences as a result of such an opportunity.

- 7** Do you know of a situation in which a person or a family had to pay a high price because your church followed God's will?  
☐ Yes ☐ No If so, briefly describe the situation. \_\_\_\_\_

- 8** Why did Jesus say it was impossible to follow Him unless we denied ourself and took up our cross? (Matt. 16:24) \_\_\_\_\_

**Hudson Taylor**, a great man of prayer and faith, responded to God's call to go to China as a missionary. In 1866, Hudson left his country and his family to go to China. By the end of his life in 1905, he had been used by God to found the China Inland Mission. There were 205 preaching stations, 849 missionaries, and 125,000 Chinese Christians—a testimony of a life absolutely surrendered to God. Hudson Taylor described something of the cost he and his mother experienced as he obeyed God's will to go to China as a missionary.

- 9** Imagine that you are Hudson Taylor. You are preparing to travel to the other side of the world, and you realize that you may never see your parents again on earth. Slowly read Taylor's account of their parting and try to imagine the emotions they must have felt.

My beloved, now sainted, mother had come to see me off from Liverpool. Never shall I forget that day, nor how she went with me into the little cabin that was to be my home for nearly six long months. With a mother's loving hand she smoothed the little bed. She sat by my side, and joined me in the last hymn that we should sing together before the long parting. We knelt down, and she prayed—the last mother's prayer I was to hear before starting for China. Then notice was given that we must separate, and we had to say good-bye, never expecting to meet on earth again.

For my sake she restrained her feelings as much as possible. We parted; and she went on shore, giving me her blessing! I stood alone on deck, and she followed the ship as we moved towards the dock gates. As we passed



through the gates, and the separation really commenced, I shall never forget the cry of anguish wrung from that mother's heart. It went through me like a knife. I never knew so fully, until then, what "God so loved the world" meant. And I am quite sure that my precious mother learned more of the love of God to the perishing in that hour than in all her life before.

Praise God, the number is increasing who are finding out the exceeding joys, the wondrous revelations of His mercies, vouchsafed to those who "follow Him," and emptying themselves, leave all in obedience to His great commission.<sup>6</sup> We often count the cost to us for following God's will, but we must also count the cost to us, and to others, if we fail to obey. The cost of disobedience is always greater!

**10 Based on this brief account, answer the following questions.**

- What did it cost Hudson Taylor to adjust his life to God and obediently go to China? \_\_\_\_\_
- What did it cost Hudson's mother for him to obey God's will? \_\_\_\_\_
- What did they learn about God's love through this experience? \_\_\_\_\_

Leaving home and family on a dangerous mission was a costly step for Hudson Taylor to take. His mother loved the Lord so much she was willing to pay the price of releasing her son to missions. Both of the Taylors had to pay a high cost for obedience. Yet they both experienced God's love in a way they had never known before. History reveals that God rewarded the faithfulness of His servant Hudson Taylor. God used him in miraculous ways to reach interior China with the gospel of Christ.

**11 Are you currently counting the cost for obeying God? What is the cost for saying "yes?" What is the cost for saying "no?"**

We often count the cost for obeying God, but we must also count the cost if we disobey. The cost of disobedience is always greater! Your whole life should be lived with the attitude of "Lord, whatever You may ask of me today or in the future, my answer is yes!" Come to the place in your life where you are willing to surrender all to Him.

**SUMMARY  
STATEMENTS**

My obedience is costly to those around me.

I can trust God to care for my family.

Don't deny others the opportunity to sacrifice for their Lord.

I need to trust Christ to communicate with His people.

Lord, whatever You may ask of me today or in the future, my answer is yes!

**Review today's lesson. Pray and ask God to identify one or more statements or Scriptures He wants you to understand, learn, or practice. Underline them. Then respond to the following.**

What was the most meaningful statement or Scripture you read today?

Reword the statement or Scripture into a prayer of response to God.

What does God want you to do in response to today's study?

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# DAY 5

## TOTAL DEPENDENCE ON GOD

*Obedience requires  
total dependence  
on God to work  
through you.*

Another adjustment that is a part of knowing and doing the will of God is your coming to a total dependence on God to complete what He wants to do through you. Jesus said our relationship with Him would be like a vine and branches. He said, "You can do nothing without me" (John 15:5). When you are God's servant, you must remain in an intimate relationship with God in order for Him to complete His work through you. You must depend on God alone.

The adjustment requires moving from doing work for God according to your abilities, your gifts, your likes and dislikes, and your goals to being totally dependent on God, His working, and His resources. This is a major adjustment, and it is never easy to make.

- 1** List some areas of your life in which you are currently trusting God to provide, protect, or guide if you are to be successful. If you cannot list anything, what might that indicate?
- 2** Read the Scriptures in the margin and below. Answer the question that follows.

John 15:5

"I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me."

1 Corinthians 15:10

"But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me."

Galatians 2:20

"I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

"The LORD of Armies has sworn:

'As I have purposed, so it will be;  
as I have planned it, so it will happen' " (Isa. 14:24).

"Do not fear, for I am with you;

do not be afraid, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you; I will help you;  
I will hold on to you with my righteous right hand" (Isa. 41:10).

"I am God, and there is no one like me. ...

My plan will take place,  
and I will do all my will. ...

I have spoken; so I will also bring it about.

I have planned it; I will also do it." (Isa. 46:9-11).

Why must you depend on God to work through you? \_\_\_\_\_

Without God at work in your life, you can do nothing to produce kingdom fruit. When God purposes to do something, He guarantees it will come to pass. He is the One who will accomplish what He intends to do. If you depend on anything other than God, you are asking for failure in kingdom terms.

Once a church asked, "O God, how do You want to reach our community through us and build a great church?" God led them to start a **bus ministry** and provide transportation for children and adults to come to church. They did what God told them to do, and their church grew into a great church.



They were flattered when people from all over the country began to ask, "What are you doing to grow so rapidly?" They wrote a book on how to build great churches through a bus ministry. Thousands of churches began to buy buses to reach their communities, believing the method was the key to growth. Later many sold the buses, saying, "It didn't work for us."

*It never works. He works!* The method is never the key to accomplishing God's purposes. The key is your relationship with a Person. When you want to know how God wants you to reach your city, start a new church, or be involved in His work, ask Him. Then when He tells you, don't be surprised if you can't find any church that is doing it that same way. Why? God wants you to know Him. If you follow someone else's plan, method, or program, you tend to forget about your dependence on God. You leave the relationship with God and embrace method or a program. That is spiritual adultery.



*It never works!  
He works!*

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**3 Answer the following questions by checking your responses.**

Where do you usually go to find out how to accomplish God's purposes for your life or for your church? Check all that apply.

- ☐ 1. I read popular Christian books on the subject.
- ☐ 2. I talk to people or churches that are successful.
- ☐ 3. I contact the denominational office and ask which program to use to get the job done.
- ☐ 4. I spend time in prayer and the Word asking God to guide me (us) to do things His way.

Currently in North America, approximately 70% of churches are plateaued or declining. Many are still using methods and programs they have used for years. They desperately need to go to God and ask them to show them how He wants to reach their community. He may well lead them to do things they have never heard of before!

Good books, successful methods, creative programs, and others' success cannot take the place of your relationship with God. They never do the work. God does the work. Apart from Him you can do nothing (see John 15:5). By focusing on anything other than God as the answer, you rob yourself and your church from seeing God at work. You keep yourself and your church from knowing God. That is a great tragedy for many in our day. May God deliver us from that.

Does that mean God will never lead you to develop an organized program or follow a method? No. But only God has the right to tell you what to do. Don't take the initiative to decide for yourself what you will do. Wait before God until He reveals what His will is for you.



*Only God has  
the right to tell  
you what to do.*

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**4 Read the following Scriptures and circle the word *wait* in each one.**

"In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice;  
in the morning I plead my case to you  
and watch expectantly" (Ps. 5:3).

"We wait for the LORD;  
he is our help and shield" (Ps. 33:20).

"Wait for the LORD  
and keep his way.  
and he will exalt you to inherit the land" (Ps. 37:34).



"For I put my hope in you, LORD;  
you will answer me, my Lord, my God" (Ps. 38:15).

"But those who wait on the LORD, shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. (Isa. 40:31, NKJV).

**5 Why do you think you should wait until you have heard a word of direction from the Lord?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 7:7-8**

"Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened."

You may think of waiting as a passive, inactive time. Waiting on the Lord is anything but inactivity. While you wait on Him, pray with a passion to know Him, His purposes, and His ways. Ask God to interpret your circumstances by revealing His perspective to you. Talk with other believers to find out what God is saying to them. As you wait on the Lord, actively ask, seek, and knock (see **Matt. 7:7-8**). While you wait, continue doing the last thing God clearly told you to do. By waiting, you shift the responsibility of the outcome to God, where it belongs.

When God gives you specific guidance, He will do more through you in days and weeks than you could ever accomplish in years of labor on your own. Waiting on Him is always worth the effort. His timing and His ways are always right. Depend on Him to guide you in His way and in His timing to accomplish His purpose.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS YOU ACCOMPLISH THE FATHER'S WILL

The Holy Spirit will never misunderstand the Father's will for your life. The Father has a purpose to work out through your life, and He places His Spirit in you so you don't miss it. The Holy Spirit will never misunderstand the Father's will for your life. The Spirit's job is to guide you according to the Father's will. Then He enables you to do God's will. You are completely dependent on God for the knowledge and ability to accomplish His purposes. That is why your relationship with Him is crucial. That is why you need to wait until you have heard a word from Him about His purposes and ways.

Jesus is your example of One who never failed to know and do His Father's will. Everything the Father purposed to do through His life, the Lord Jesus did immediately. What was the key to His success? He was always rightly related to the Father! If you consistently walk in step with the Holy Spirit, then you should never come to a time when you do not know God's will. Nor should there be a time when you are not able to carry it out.

In Jesus we have a picture of a solitary life in a love relationship with God, consistently living out that relationship. He is the perfect example. You and I quickly realize we are a long way from that. True! But the Christ who lived His life in complete obedience to the Father is fully present in you to enable you to know and do His will as He did. We need to adjust our lives to God and consistently live out that relationship with absolute dependence on Him. He will never fail to lead your life into the middle of His purpose and enable you to do it.



- 6** On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the intimacy and quality of your walk with God? Circle one: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Why did you rate it as you did? \_\_\_\_\_

- 7** What, if any, adjustments do you think God wants you to make to renew a consistent, close relationship with Him? \_\_\_\_\_

## ADJUSTMENTS IN PRAYER

When our church received a directive from God, I often experienced a crisis in my prayer life. I learned more about prayer on those occasions than at almost any other time. Only prayer could bring about certain things, and God often waits to act until we ask. The crisis was this: was I willing to pray until God brought it about?

**Mark 11:24** has challenged me about the relationship of faith and prayer.

- 8** Read Mark 11:24 again and write the promise in your own words.

This verse is sometimes used to teach a name-it-and-claim-it theology. *You* decide what *you* want. *You* name what you want in *your* request and claim it, and it's *yours*. That is a self-centered theology. Remember that God takes the initiative. He gives you the desire to do His will (see **Phil. 2:13**). The Holy Spirit guides you to pray according to God's will (see **Rom. 8:26-28**). The God-centered approach involves God leading you to pray according to His will—in the name and character of Jesus. Believe that what He has led you to pray, He Himself will bring to pass. Then continue praying in faith and watching for it to come to pass.

When God encounters you, you face a crisis of belief that may require major adjustments in your life. You need to learn how to pray. However, realize that prayer will be exceedingly costly to you. God may wake you up in the middle of the night to pray. Times may come when you pray into the night or even all night. Becoming a person of prayer will require a major adjustment of your life to God.

Another cost will come as you try to guide the people around you to pray. Many churches have never learned how to pray. The greatest untapped resource is the prayer of God's people. Helping your church become a praying church will be a rewarding experience, but prayer will be costly. Every church needs to be a praying church!

- 9** Is your church known in your community as a house of prayer? Is your church a praying church? Which do you think is true? Check one.

- ☐ Our church is widely known as a praying church.
- ☐ Our church is becoming a praying church, but we have a long way to go.
- ☐ Our church prays some but not very effectively. We need to become a praying church.
- ☐ Honestly, our church doesn't know how to pray. Our church needs to become a praying church.

**Mark 11:24**

"Therefore I tell you, everything you pray and ask for—believe that you have received it and it will be yours."

**Philippians 2:13**

"For it is God who is working in you both to will and to work according to his good purpose."

**Romans 8:26-28**

"The Spirit also helps us in our weakness, because we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with inexpressible groanings. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because he intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose."



SUMMARY  
STATEMENTS

Obedience requires total dependence on God to work through me.

*It never works. He works!*

The key is my relationship with a Person.

He will do more through me in days and weeks than I could ever accomplish in years of labor. Waiting on Him is always worth the wait.

I must believe that what He has led me to pray, He Himself will bring to pass.

My church needs to be a praying church!

10 What, if anything, do you think God wants to do through you with regard to prayer in your church? \_\_\_\_\_

11 Review your Scripture memory verses and be prepared to recite them to a partner in your small group session this week.

## A Leper Pays the Price for His People to Experience God

A local church that responds to God's leading is God's strategy to change a lost world. It often begins when God moves in the heart of one member. This happened in the life of an Indonesian pastor on the east coast of Java. The pastor, who knew English, studied *Experiencing God*, and his life was dramatically changed. He wanted all of his people to have the opportunity to study this material as well, but they did not know English. He began the long, arduous task of translating the entire course into the language of his people. Missionaries saw him sitting at a manual typewriter three or four hours every day translating. Because he was a leper, his hands were badly marred, and he couldn't sit still long. But his pastor's heart kept him at his typewriter day after day until his people could have the material for themselves.

When I heard this, I wept. I asked the missionary who told me the story if she could get a picture of the man at his typewriter, showing his hands. She said he was very humble and might not let her. Several years later at a large meeting in Salt Lake City, I saw the missionary running toward me holding a picture. "I've got the picture. It is for you!" I have it hanging in my prayer room, where I can pray for this dear pastor and his people and be reminded of how precious to God are His people in every local church.

Review today's lesson. Pray and ask God to identify one or more statements or Scriptures He wants you to understand, learn, or practice. Underline them. Then respond to the following.

What was the most meaningful statement or Scripture you read today?

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Reword the statement or Scripture into a prayer of response to God.

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What does God want you to do in response to today's study?

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# ADJUSTING YOUR LIFE TO GOD

## SESSION 8

### VIDEO TEACHING NOTES

1. If we're going to join God in His activity, it's going to require adjustments.
2. If we refuse to make adjustments in our lives, we will never be ready to join God in His activity.
3. In order to move forward, you're going to have to leave something behind. In order to follow Jesus, you're going to have to adjust to follow where He leads. Settle the issues of lordship today so that you'll be prepared to follow where He leads.
4. Adjustments separate those who are ready to go with God from those who aren't.
5. If we never become the person of God that He wants us to be, it doesn't just cost us. It also costs others because we never did what God wanted to equip us to do.

### YOUR NOTES

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### UNIT REVIEW

Fill in the blanks to complete the statements we studied in this unit (p. 163).

1. You cannot \_\_\_\_\_ where you are and \_\_\_\_\_ with God at the same time.
2. Obedience is \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ and to those around you.
3. Obedience requires \_\_\_\_\_ on God to work through you.

Which of the following is the best way to find God's directions for your life or your church? Check only one (p. 173).

- ☐ a. A good book                      ☐ c. God  
☐ b. Other people                      ☐ d. A denominational agency

Answer the following.

1. Why must you totally depend on God to work through you to accomplish Kingdom purposes (activity 2, p. 172)? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
2. Why should you "wait on the Lord" (activity 5, p. 174)? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Check your answers, using the pages cited in parentheses.

1. David and Naomi Shibley, *The Smoke of a Thousand Villages* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), 11.
2. Elisabeth Elliot, *Shadow of the Almighty: The Life and Testament of Jim Elliot* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1958), 247.
3. Franklin Graham with Jeanette Lockerbie, *Bob Pierce: This One Thing I Do* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1983), 220.
4. Shibley, *Smoke*, 90.
5. Ibid., 98.
6. J. Hudson Taylor, *A Retrospect* (Philadelphia: The China Inland Mission, n.d.), 39–40.

### Scriptures Referenced

Isaiah 55:8  
 Matthew 16:24

### Sharing Time

- One of the most meaningful statements or Scriptures from this unit's lessons and your prayer response to God. Choose one from pages 159, 163, 167, 171, and 176.
- Adjustments you have made in your thinking during this course (activity 5, p. 161)
- The quotation that was most meaningful and why (activity 7, p. 162)
- An experience in which costly adjustment or obedience was required (activity 7, p. 166)
- How your church would be seen in regard to prayer and what God may want you to do regarding prayer in your church (activities 9–10, p. 176)

Streamable session videos are included with the purchase price of this book. Look for your access code on the insert attached to the back of this book.



- 2** Read Acts 9:1-25 and describe the adjustment Saul had to make. Describe the cost He had to pay to follow Christ. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

- 3** Why do you think a cost is often required to follow Christ? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Saul (later named Paul) had to make a total about-face in his life direction. He went from persecuting Christians to proclaiming that Jesus was the Christ. He went from being esteemed by the religious establishment to being despised. God will ask you to follow Him in ways that will require adjustments in your plans and directions. For Paul the adjustment was costly. It even put his life at risk. Are you prepared to pay any price to follow Christ?

### THE COST: ENDURING OPPOSITION

- 4** As you read the following paragraphs, underline some of the costs of obedience. I have underlined one for you.

In Saskatoon our church clearly sensed God was calling us to start new churches all across our province. Not everyone understood or agreed with what we were doing. Some actively opposed us at almost every mission church we started. Though we were totally convinced of the awesome spiritual darkness in Canada, some people did not see it that way. In Regina, the capital of our province, a full-page article appeared in the paper condemning us for daring to start a new church in this city of 150,000. In our efforts to have a Bible study in Humboldt, a delegation of leaders from another church delegation came to my office and demanded that we stop. They said our efforts were of the devil and they would oppose the Bible study. In Deschambault our pastor was met on the street and cursed by a witch doctor. From Prince Albert I received letters condemning our efforts. In Blaine Lake we were told our prayer meetings would fail.

Some in our own denomination felt we were foolish to attempt new mission churches when we were so small ourselves. We were told not to ask the denominational office for help if we got into trouble with salary support for mission pastors or other staff workers. Those who had not been with us when God spoke to us saw our efforts as presuming on God. I soon discovered that every step of faith could be interpreted as presumption by others. Only obedience and God's affirmation of our obedience would reveal that we were doing God's will.

Later, as mission churches grew, flourished, and became self-supporting, some of our critics realized this work was indeed of God. Some were even encouraged to take these same steps of faith in starting new work themselves. God helped us remain faithful to Him, with a heart full of love toward others, but that was costly.

- 5** What types of costs might be involved for someone to obey what God asks them to do today? \_\_\_\_\_
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- 6** Read 2 Corinthians 11:23-33 on the following page and underline some of the costs Paul had to pay for following and obeying Christ. I've underlined one for you.