



LIFE *On* MISSION

ADVENTIST CHURCH *in Sydney*

The Sacrifice

Whenever you make something a priority in your life, you have to give up something else. If you decide to study really hard, then you cannot spend as much time partying. Alternatively, if you want to party lots, then your studies or work may lose out.

When you think about your life right now, what would you really like to make the top priorities in your life? What do you think will you need to give up or sacrifice so that you can focus on what you feel is really important to you?

Digging into the Bible

People in the Old Testament were very familiar with the idea of sacrifices. They regularly had to sacrifice lambs and bulls as part of their worship service. When Jesus died on the Cross, this put an end to all of the animal sacrifices because God only used these animal sacrifices to point forward to what Jesus would do. I'm sure that the lambs and bulls would consider that Jesus' death on the Cross is good news for them too!

However, since the Old Testament sacrifices finished with Jesus' death on the Cross, some Christians think the whole concept of sacrifice is no longer part of following Jesus. Read what Paul said about how sacrifice is still an important part of the Christian life in **Romans 12:1,2**.

1. Why is Jesus' death on the Cross important to you personally? How does His example inspire you?
2. How can your life be a living sacrifice?
3. How is being a living sacrifice different from the way the world normally works?

Jesus also told us that following Him means we need to be willing to give up other things. Read about what He told His disciples in **Mark 8:31-38** and **Luke 9:57-62**.

4. What motivated Jesus to be willing to die on the Cross? Did He personally benefit in any way from doing this?
5. It sounds rather difficult to deny ourselves and take up our cross. What would motivate you to believe that actually doing this would be worthwhile?
6. What are some of the things in your life that may be holding you back personally from really following Jesus?
7. When someone who is not a Christian watches the way that you live, would they say it looks like you are ashamed of Jesus and talking about Him publicly?

Making It Personal

In the lead up to World War II, Dietrich Bonhoeffer watched with growing concern as the Nazi regime rose to power. It motivated him to write his famous book called *The Cost of Discipleship* in which he wrote:

When Christ calls a person, He calls them to come and die.

He points out how Christians can too easily think that grace is cheap:

Grace without price, grace without cost!... Cheap grace means grace as a doctrine, a principle, a system. It means forgiveness of sins proclaimed as a general truth, the love of God taught as the Christian 'conception' of God.... Grace alone does everything, they say, and so everything can remain as it was before.... Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the grace, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.

He then explains why grace is actually costly:

Costly grace confronts us as a gracious call to follow Jesus, it comes as a word of forgiveness to the broken spirit and the contrite heart. Grace is costly because it compels a person to submit to the yoke of Christ and follow him, it is grace because Jesus says: 'My yoke is easy and my burden is light.'¹

Dietrich personally experienced how costly grace really is. He was executed because of his belief that he should actively fight against Adolf Hitler's evil political system.

8. How would your life change if you allowed costly grace to transform your life?
9. Do you think that Jesus is calling you to give up your job and leave your family to follow Him? What is He actually asking you to do?
10. Are you willing to really take up your cross and join Jesus' mission?

Talking with the Master

Spend time praying conversationally as a group. Thank Jesus for the incredibly costly sacrifice that He was willing to make for you on Cross. Ask Him to show you through the Holy Spirit what sacrifice He is asking you to make so that you can really follow Him.

¹ Adapted slightly from *The Cost of Discipleship*, pp44,3-5