COUNTING THE COST

Preliminary Considerations:
1. We need to understand the benefits of effectively counting the cost with candidates for baptism.
   1) It will make them into stronger disciples.
   2) It provides a way to check up on the quality of the personal Bible studies being done.
   3) It will make you into a stronger leader.
   4) It will renew the commitment of the Christians who are also participating in the cost counting process.
2. When counting the cost with a future disciple, be sure to listen to his/her heart. If you have a funny feeling about a response or statement, explore this with him/her. This is the time to talk about anything about which you may have concern. Don't let a counting of the cost be merely a mechanical checklist. Prior to the cost counting study you should prepare by praying that God will help you to be wise and everyone in the session to be humble and open. Pray that if anything else needs to come out and be talked about that it will. Ask the other disciples to have input whenever they feel it helpful. Remember that conversion must be in the heart as well as in the mind. Go after the heart. Follow this outline when counting the cost.

Prayer:
Opening Questions:
- How are you feeling?
- How are you feeling about your studies in the Bible?
- How are you feeling in your heart about being a Christian?
- Why do you want to be a Christian?
- Why do you want to be a follower of Jesus? Why do you want to love God?

1. Illustration: Explanation of why denominations and cults don't count the cost.
   a. Denominations - there is no cost in being a member.
   b. Cults - they conceal the cost in being a member.
2. Only true disciples count the cost of being a Christian. Only true disciples have a cost that needs to be considered.

Vs.35
Do not disclaim the cost. Jesus says these things will be a cost. All of them will be at various times in your life. The devil will use these things to try to pull you away from God. Let's be honest and not count the cost in merely an intellectual way.

John 8:32
- Are you reading your Bible daily?
- Describe your Quiet Times.
- Do you believe the Bible is the Word of God?
- Are you willing to go by the Bible as standard?
Luke 14:26  Relationships
What do you understand this verse to mean?
This is a hyperbole (extreme exaggeration). Jesus used this method of teaching frequently. Other examples: Matthew 5:28-29; 7:3; 19:24.
What relationships will be your biggest challenges to your love for God?
What do you need to change to be a better husband, wife, son, daughter, etc?
Have you talked with family, boyfriend, spouse about the changes you are making?
What are their feelings? What do you feel about that?
What will you do if someone offers an ultimatum - Jesus or me?

II Corinthians 6:14-18. (Read and discuss this passage if your counting the cost with a single, college student or teen.)
What decisions have you made about boyfriend/girlfriend and/or dating? non-Christians? Yourself - (Luke 14:26) What is it in you that you must stop loving? (Time, Hobby, etc.)

What do you think this verse means? (Two Points).
1) Crucify your sinful nature. (Self-sacrifice).
   Do you have any unconfessed sin in your life?
   Is there any part of your life you are not willing to sacrifice?
   What will be the most difficult sins for you to change?
   What does it take to become a Christian?
   Acts 2:36-37 Have you been cut to the heart over your sins and over the cross?
   Acts 2:38-41 What does it take to become a Christian? (It is essential that the person you are counting the cost with knows who is and who is not a Christian. )
   Who is not a Christian?
   What are the implications of this for your family, friends, and former church?

2) Persecution
   It is inevitable. They persecuted Jesus and the disciples in the early church; they will persecute his followers today.
   How will you react when ...
   a) Friends/family turn against you?
   b) People accuse you of being a cult?
      (Religion in America is so subnormal that when someone finally becomes normal they think he is abnormal. I Peter 4: 1-4)

Everything: What is "everything" for you?
What does Jesus expect your attitude to be about following? Job - career - school-
Giving (see below)

Hebrews 10:24-25 Participation in church
Every disciple is to be at all services.
This verse, also, relates to Retreats, Seminars, etc.
Come to church to give to others, to encourage.
**Hebrews 3:12-13; John 13:34-35 — Relationships**

You will have a discipling partner after you are baptized.
Do you want these kinds of relationships with other disciples?
We will continue to disciple you after baptism. This is not an option.

**Hebrews 13:17 Submission to leaders in the church.**

Explain this verse.
Explain who are the present leaders of the church and what their role is.
If you have questions or disagreements, express those to your leaders, but always be in a submissive frame of mind.

**Matthew 28:18-20 Evangelism**

Are you eager to make disciples?
Have you been sharing your faith consistently? With who? What results have you had?
Why do you share your faith?

**II Corinthians 8: 1-7 Giving** (Don't apologize for this.)

1) Generously, start by giving a tenth, a tithe.
2) Every week.
3) Cheerfully.
4) In addition each year we have a special contribution in which we have the opportunity to sacrifice for world missions.

Giving is one of our greatest privileges.
1) It allows our character to develop.
2) It enables us to become like God.

**Luke 19:10 Your purpose.**

Do you want this as your purpose?

**Conclusion:**

Does anyone else have anything else to add, ask?
Is there any reason why you should not become a Christian?
When do you want to be baptized?

**Prayer**