

What in your life is so important that you would ask for a bit of time so that you could tie up loose ends? For myself, I might ask for more time to make sure Heidi was taken care of before heading off to do something. I am usually calling two people to be on call for Heidi before I leave for a church function where I will be gone for a few days. So that sounds like it would be a very real possibility.

There are times where I would wish that I had more time to do things before starting another project but rarely do I get extra time to finish what I am already doing. But that doesn't mean that I would not ask for that time.

So how would we respond if we were asked to do something specific that was very important in life.

In our gospel reading, Jesus gave some very harsh words to people who wanted to follow him. In the first example, Jesus must have known that the person had no idea about the challenges arise just by being a disciple of Jesus. Jesus makes it perfectly clear that his followers have no place to call home where they would be taken care of and where they could rest.

I think I struggle the most with the second individual that Jesus met because the individual wanted to bury his father and Jesus said to let the dead bury the dead. Really!? And then there is the third individual who wanted to go home and say goodbye and Jesus said that anyone who looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God.

Jesus is not necessarily attacking the people for what they want to do, but he is making the point that God must be first in your life. If something or somebody else is more important than God, then there will be times where God is replaced by whatever that may be. Instead of being devoted to God, you would be devoted to whatever else is important to you. This is why Jesus responded the way he did.

Each one of those individuals either did not truly understand what it meant to be a disciple or they wanted to move some things higher on the priority list in their lives. Today, we are faced with the same issues. We are pulled in a variety of directions and have no idea on which way to go.

Jesus was pretty clear in what God expects of us. God is to be first in our lives: no ifs, ands or buts. Once we are willing to say that God is first but with a few exceptions, then there is room for us to stumble.

This expectation of God being first in life is the true cost of discipleship. God must be first above all else. Sometimes that is hard for us to understand or even accept, especially when our loved ones are sick or hurting. But God must still be first.

But when we do make God first, then all the challenges and obstacles of life are easier for us to handle because we are not going through them by ourselves. God is with us to give us strength so that we are able to overcome.

There is a cost to discipleship. God expects to be first and that is the only cost. Everything else which we receive or give back to God is done as a response to God's love for us and our acceptance of that love.