***THE COST OF FOLLOWING JESUS*** *- "As they were going along the road, someone said to him, 'I will follow you wherever you go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.' To another he said, 'Follow me.' But he said, 'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.' And Jesus said to him, 'Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.' Yet another said, 'I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home.' Jesus said to him, 'No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God'" (Luke 9:57-62).*

A person holding their hands together

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

Excuses. We all have them—some good, some bad. They represent the choices we make by justifying the reasons behind our actions.

More often than not, we view excuses in a negative light, but they can be positive as well. Here in Luke 9:57-62, we are faced with the dilemma of how reasonable excuses are challenged by Jesus for their superficial nature because they mask true heart desire.

In each of the three examples provided, we see potential Christ-followers blinded by fear, insecurity, and lack of understanding. The Bible does not disclose their final outcome. It only focuses on their initial gut reaction because what comes to mind first typically exposes the heart.

Scripture reminds us, *"As in water face reflects face, so the heart of man reflects the man" (Proverbs 27:19).* Therefore, we are wise to quickly discern what our true heart reflects in order to discern whether we fall victim to rationalizing our lack of Biblical application, or whether we have learned to die to excuses and obey the teachings of our Lord and Savior.

*"Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?'" (Matthew 16:24-26).*

Make no mistake, the path of righteousness is a hard and narrow road. But to the one who is willing to trust in God's sovereignty, heart-transformation is both possible and probable to ensure we answer, "Yes, Lord," by faith rather than default to excuses which bind our hearts and reveal our lack of trust in Jesus.

The challenge many have with Luke 9:57-62 is that it feels abrasive, cold and unloving. On the surface, all three excuses are relatively reasonable and provide just enough temptation to quickly brush past them without the slightest consideration.

Yet when we dig deeper into Jesus' response to each potential follower, we realize we are similarly guilty of rationalizing our own behaviors in order to sidestep personal responsibility and sacrifice.

In no way were the superficial desires of these followers' hearts disingenuous. It would appear they sincerely desired to follow Jesus. However, their superficiality became front and center when Jesus abruptly confronted them with not so much ultimatums, but accountability.

In a time where faith was needed most, many people shudder under the weight of uncertainty and fear rather than embraced the freedom God provides to those who trust in His name. Therefore, let us ask ourselves:

* How tight a grip do we hold to our past which blinds us from looking forward?
* Are we struggling to forgive ourselves of past sins we have already repented for and sought reconciliation with God and those we sinned against?
* Adapted from - [DANIEL PLOOF](https://www.journeyintothewilderness.com/blog?author=602ca1650584116c94397741) NOVEMBER 11, 2017