



masterwork[®]

S P R I N G 2 0 2 6

HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

In your opinion, what does it take for a person to get to heaven and have eternal life?

The Bible answers this question in one word—**FAITH**.

F is for FORGIVENESS

- Everyone has sinned and needs God's forgiveness: "*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23).
- God's forgiveness is in Jesus only: "*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace*" (Ephesians 1:7).

A is for AVAILABLE

- God's forgiveness is available for all: "*God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life*" (John 3:16).
- God's forgiveness is available but not automatic: "*Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the kingdom of heaven*" (Matthew 7:21).

I is for IMPOSSIBLE

- It is impossible to get to heaven on our own: "*You are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast*" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

T is for TURN

- Turn means repent. Turn away from sin and self and turn to Jesus alone as your Savior and Lord: "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me*" (John 14:6); "*If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation*" (Romans 10:9-10).

H is for HEAVEN

- Here . . . Eternal life begins now with Jesus: "*I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance*" (John 10:10).
- Hereafter . . . Heaven is a place where we will live with God forever: "*If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also*" (John 14:3).
- How . . . How can a person have God's forgiveness, eternal life, and heaven? By trusting Jesus as your Savior and Lord. You can do this right now by praying and asking Jesus to forgive you of your sins and inviting Jesus into your heart.

Accepting Christ is just the beginning of a wonderful adventure with God! Follow Christ's command in baptism. Join a church where you can worship God and grow in your faith. Get involved in Sunday School and Bible study. Begin a daily personal worship time in which you study the Bible and pray.

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MasterWork: Essential Messages from God's Servants

Spring 2026

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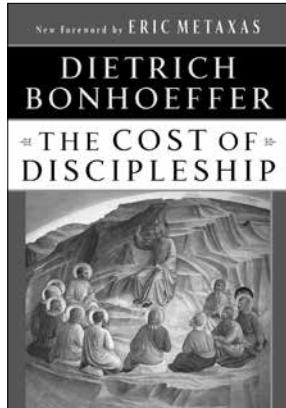
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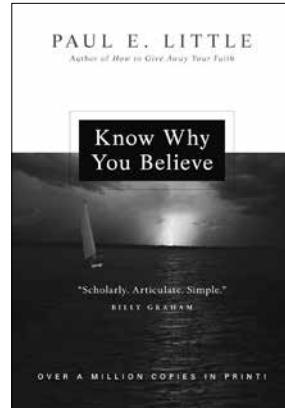
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The Cost of Discipleship

Dietrich Bonhoeffer



Know Why You Believe

Paul E. Little

InterVarsity Press

ISBN: 978-0-8308-3422-8

How to Use

Here are a few suggestions to help you get the most out of this resource:

Group Members

1. Read Day 1 through Day 5 prior to attending the group time. Complete the personal learning activities in bold type. Record your notes and questions.
2. Review your notes and questions a few moments prior to the group time as a means of preparing to be an active part of the group.
3. In the margins of this book, record insights gained during the group time.

Group Leader

1. Complete step 1 above.
2. Identify the one main idea and goal for the session. The main point of the session and the goal are printed on the leader guide pages at the end of each session. (See p. 18.) Focus on the session goal as you lead the session.

The main point of this session is: God's grace through Jesus's sacrifice transforms our spiritual ruin into righteousness through faith.

Focus on this goal: Salvation is not earned by works but is a free gift available to all through faith in Christ.

Key Bible Passage: Romans 3:23-24

Leader Guide

3. Read and study the key Bible passages listed at the top of the teaching plan.
4. Develop a group time plan. Two options are offered in this book.
 - One option is to follow the leader guide at the end of each session.
 - A second option is to use the discussion questions in the margins of the session. Some group leaders use a combination of both group time plans.

written by forty authors over 1,600 years. Six books tell one seamless story about God's love for us, and has a future for us. Let's look at the story of Scripture. Successfully fitting in with Christians was

DISCUSS

When might a visit to a library be overwhelming? When might it be exciting?

Discussion Questions

5. Customize the electronic versions of the suggested teaching plans, available on the Internet at masterwork.lifeway.com to fit your group.
6. Review and refine your teaching notes as you move toward the group time.
7. Arrive early, praying for the group time.

LEADER GUIDE

The main point of this session is: God's grace through Jesus' sacrifice transforms our spiritual run into righteousness through faith.

Focus on this point: To help adults realize that salvation is not earned by works but is a free gift available to all through faith in Christ.

Key Bible Passage: Romans 3:23-24

Before the Session

1. You'll continue to use the large plastic "Master" graphic throughout this series. If you don't have one, add it to the Step 1 box.

2. Bring an item from home that has been restored or refurbished. If the item is too large, take a photo and be ready to share that with your class. You might also bring a small item.

3. Bring hymns to class again, or have lyrics to "Nothing But the Blood of Jesus" ready for Step 7.

During the Session

STEP 1 - Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

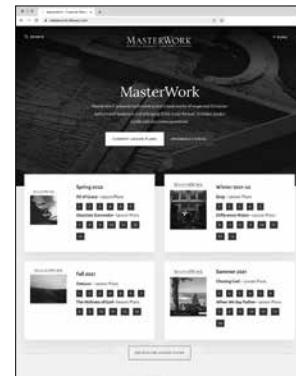
Open class by directing everyone's attention to the restored item (or photo of the item) that you brought. Ask the group to share what they know about the item. If the item was accomplished, how long did it take, and so on.

Step 2

With exaggeration, point out that the item itself did not do any of the work. It was you (or your spouse, whomever) took on the project that is 100% responsible for the transformation.

Point to the large "Master" poster you wrote on last week and briefly review what you discussed.

Leader Guide



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masterwork

Study Series: **Seamless**
Author: Angie Smith

Lesson Title: "The Beginning" (pp. 6-11)
Session 1
September 4, 2022

The main point of this lesson is: God begins to weave the seamless tapestry of his plan from the opening of the Bible.

Focus on this point: To help adults offer the importance of the beginning in their walk with God.

Key Bible Passage: Genesis 1:1-11

Before the Session

1. Prepare TSD (Step 1)
2. Gather TSD (Step 1)

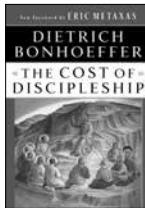
During the Session

Step 1. Title

Some adults do indicate if they've ever read books or watched movies that were part of a series, it's difficult to read the books or watch the movies out of order and still enjoy them. That's why it's important to read them in order.

Note: reading or watching serial stories in order gives us a better grasp of the overall story arc and a deeper understanding of the characters, and it helps us see how all the stories fit together. **Master**: That's how it's supposed to work! We can learn and live intentional life.

Customizable Teaching Plan



ABOUT THE WRITERS

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

(1906–1945) was a German Lutheran pastor and theologian who helped lead the anti-Nazi Confessing Church. Author of *The Cost of Discipleship* and *Life Together*, he championed “costly grace” and faithful Christian community. Involved in resistance efforts against Hitler, he was arrested in 1943 and executed at Flossenbürg concentration camp on April 9, 1945.

Amy Summers

contributed learning activities, discussion prompts, and teaching plans for this study. She graduated from Baylor University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

COST OF DISCIPLESHIP



Revival of church life always brings in its train a richer understanding of the Scriptures. In the end, what we want to know is not what would this or that man or this or that Church have of us, but what Jesus Christ Himself wants of us.

When we go to church and listen to the sermon, what we want to hear is His Word and that not merely for selfish reasons, but for the sake of the many for whom the Church and her message are foreign. The real trouble is that the pure Word of Jesus has been overlaid with so much human ballast, burdensome rules and regulations, false hopes and consolations that it has become extremely difficult to make a genuine decision for Christ.

So many people come to church with a genuine desire to hear what we have to say, yet they are always going back home with the uncomfortable feeling that we are making it too difficult for them to come to Jesus.

But perhaps it would be just as well to ask ourselves whether we do not in fact often act as obstacles to Jesus and His Word. It is no use taking refuge in abstract discussion, or trying to make excuses, so let us get back to the Scriptures, to the Word and call of Jesus Christ Himself.

We propose to tell how Jesus calls us to be His disciples. When the Bible speaks of following Jesus, it is proclaiming a discipleship which will liberate mankind from all man-made dogmas, from every burden and oppression, from every anxiety and torture which afflicts the conscience.

Only the man who follows the command of Jesus single-mindedly and unresistingly lets His yoke rest upon him, finds His burden easy, and under its gentle pressure receives the power to persevere in the right way. Only Jesus Christ, who bids us follow Him, knows the journey’s end. Discipleship means joy.

COSTLY GRACE

Day 1

Cheap Grace

Cheap Grace is the deadly enemy of our Church. We are fighting today for costly grace. Cheap grace means grace sold on the market like cheapjacks' wares. The sacraments, the forgiveness of sin, and the consolations of religion are thrown away at cut prices. Grace is represented as the Church's inexhaustible treasury, from which she showers blessings with generous hands, without asking questions or fixing limits. Grace without price; grace without cost! The essence of grace, we suppose, is that the account has been paid in advance; and, because it has been paid, everything can be had for nothing. Since the cost was infinite, the possibilities of using and spending it are infinite. What would grace be if it were not cheap?

1. Read Matthew 16:25-26. Based on Jesus's words, describe the desire and destination of someone who lives by:

Cheap grace:

DISCUSS

What would you say are the church's most dangerous enemies and why?

Costly grace:

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. An intellectual assent to that idea is held to be of itself sufficient to secure remission of sins. The Church which holds the correct doctrine of grace has, it is supposed, *ipso facto* a part in

that grace. In such a Church the world finds a cheap covering for its sins; no contrition is required, still less any real desire to be delivered from sin. Cheap grace therefore amounts to a denial of the living Word of God, in fact, a denial of the Incarnation of the Word of God.

Cheap grace means the justification of sin without the justification of the sinner. Grace alone does everything, they say, and so everything can remain as it was before. The world goes on in the same old way, and we are still sinners "even in the best life" as Luther said. Well, then, let the Christian live like the rest of the world, let him model himself on the world's standards in every sphere of life, and not presumptuously aspire to live a different life under grace from his old life under sin. That was the heresy of the enthusiasts, the Anabaptists and their kind. Let the Christian beware of rebelling against the free and boundless grace of God and desecrating it. Let him not attempt to erect a new religion of the letter by endeavoring to live a life of obedience to the commandments of Jesus Christ.

The world has been justified by grace. The Christian knows that, and takes it seriously. He knows he must not strive against this indispensable grace. Therefore, let him live like the rest of the world! Of course he would like to go and do something extraordinary, and it does demand a good deal of self-restraint to refrain from the attempt and content himself with living as the world lives. Yet it is imperative for the Christian to achieve renunciation, to practice self-effacement, to distinguish his life from the life of the world. He must let grace be grace indeed, otherwise he will destroy the world's faith in the free gift of grace.

Let the Christian rest content with his worldliness and with this renunciation of any higher standard than the world. He is doing it for the sake of the world rather than for the sake of grace. Let him be comforted and rest assured in his possession of this grace, for grace alone does everything. Instead of following Christ, let the Christian enjoy the consolations of his grace! That is what we mean by cheap grace, the grace which amounts to the justification of sin without the justification of the repentant sinner who departs from sin and from whom sin departs. Cheap grace is not the kind of forgiveness of sin which frees us from the toils of sin. Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves.

2. What indications of a reliance on cheap grace do you see in:

The 21st century church?

Youself?

Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.

DISCUSS

Why is cheap grace so attractive to the church?

Day 2

Costly Grace

Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a man will gladly go and sell all he has. It is the pearl of great price, to buy which the merchant will sell all his goods. It is the kingly rule of Christ, for whose sake a man will pluck out the eye which causes him to stumble, it is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows Him.

Costly grace is the gospel which must be *sought* again and again, the gift which must be asked for, the door at which a man must *knock*. Such grace is *costly* because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow *Jesus Christ*. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is *costly* because it cost God the life of His Son: "ye were bought at a price," and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us. Above all, it is *grace* because God did not reckon His Son too dear a price to pay for our life, but delivered Him up for us. Costly grace is the Incarnation of God.

DISCUSS

Why should we consistently seek the grace of the gospel if it's so costly?

1. Read 1 Peter 1:13-19.

What did costly grace cost Jesus?

What will costly grace cost you?

Will it be worth the cost? Explain.

Costly grace is the sanctuary of God; it has to be protected from the world, and not thrown to the dogs. It is therefore the living word, the Word of God, which He speaks as it pleases Him. 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 man 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."

On two separate occasions Peter received the call, "Follow me." It was the first and last word Jesus spoke to His disciple (Mark 1:17; John 21:22). A whole life lies between these two calls. The first occasion was by the lake of Gennesareth, when Peter left his nets and his craft and followed Jesus at His word. The second occasion is when the Risen Lord finds him back again at his old trade. Once again it is by the lake of Gennesareth, and once again the call is: "Follow me." Between the two calls lay a whole life of discipleship in the following of Christ. Halfway between them comes Peter's confession, when he acknowledged Jesus as the Christ of God. Three times Peter hears the same proclamation that Christ is his Lord and God—at the beginning, at the end, and at Caesarea Philippi. Each time it is the same grace of Christ which calls to him "Follow me" and which reveals itself to him in his confession of the Son of God. Three times on Peter's way did grace arrest him, the one grace proclaimed in three different ways.

This grace was certainly not self-bestowed. It was the grace of Christ Himself, now prevailing upon the disciple to leave all and follow Him, now working in him that confession which to the world must sound like the ultimate blasphemy, now inviting Peter to the supreme fellowship of

martyrdom for the Lord he had denied, and thereby forgiving him all his sins. In the life of Peter grace and discipleship are inseparable. He had received the grace which costs.

2. Briefly describe three times in your life when God's grace arrested you.

1.

2.

3.

If you cannot think of any times when you were called by the grace of Christ, will you today confess that Jesus is Lord and heed the call to follow Him?

Day 3

Efforts to Restore Costly Grace

As Christianity spread, and the Church became more secularized, this realization of the costliness of grace gradually faded. The world was Christianized, and grace became its common property. It was to be had at low cost. Yet the Church of Rome did not altogether lose the earlier vision. It is highly significant that the Church was astute enough to find room for the monastic movement, and to prevent it from lapsing into schism. Here on the outer fringe of the Church was a place where the older vision was kept alive. Here men still remembered that grace costs, that grace means following Christ. Here they left all they had for Christ's sake, and endeavored daily to practice His rigorous commands. Thus monasticism became a living protest against the secularization of Christianity and the cheapening of grace. But the Church was wise enough to tolerate this

protest, and to prevent it from developing to its logical conclusion. It thus succeeded in relativizing it, even using it in order to justify the secularization of its own life. Monasticism was represented as an individual achievement which the mass of the laity could not be expected to emulate. By thus limiting the application of the commandments of Jesus to a restricted group of specialists, the Church evolved the fatal conception of the double standard—a maximum and a minimum standard of Christian obedience.

DISCUSS

What examples do you see of a belief in maximum and minimum standards of Christian obedience in the church?

1. Do you see discipleship as something all believers are equally responsible for or do you expect some believers (such as pastors) to be more committed to a life of discipleship? If the latter, what can you do to correct this misunderstanding in your own life? Explain.

Whenever the Church was accused of being too secularized, it could always point to monasticism as an opportunity of living a higher life within the fold, and thus justify the other possibility of a lower standard of life for others. And so we get the paradoxical result that monasticism, whose mission was to preserve the primitive Christian realization of the costliness of grace, afforded conclusive justification for the secularization of the Church. By and large, the fatal error of monasticism lay not so much in its rigorism (though even here there was a good deal of misunderstanding of the precise content of the will of Jesus) as in the extent to which it departed from genuine Christianity by setting up itself as the individual achievement of a select few, and so claiming a special merit of its own.

When the Reformation came, the providence of God raised Martin Luther to restore the gospel of pure, costly grace. Luther passed through the cloister; he was a monk, and all this was part of the divine plan. Luther had left all to follow Christ on the path of absolute obedience. He had renounced the world in order to live the Christian life. He had learnt obedience to Christ and to His Church, because only he who is obedient can believe. The call to the cloister demanded of Luther the complete surrender of his life. But God shattered all his hopes. He showed him through the

Scriptures that the following of Christ is not the achievement or merit of a select few, but the divine command to all Christians without distinction.

2. Read Romans 1:16-17.

Why are these truths revolutionary for any person who is living by cheap grace?

Monasticism had transformed the humble work of discipleship into the meritorious activity of the saints, and the self-renunciation of discipleship into the flagrant spiritual self-assertion of the “religious.” Luther laid hold upon grace. Just as the whole world of monasticism was crashing about him in ruins, he saw God in Christ stretching forth His hand to save. He grasped that hand in faith, believing that “after all, nothing we can do is of any avail, however good a life we live.” The grace which gave itself to him was a costly grace, and it shattered his whole existence. Once more he must leave his nets and follow. The first time was when he entered the monastery, when he had left everything behind except his pious self. This time even that was taken from him. He obeyed the call, not through any merit of his own, but simply through the grace of God. Luther had to leave the cloister and go back to the world, not because the world in itself was good and holy, but because even the cloister was only a part of the world.

Day 4

The Price of Costly Grace

Luther’s return from the cloister to the world was the worst blow the world had suffered since the days of early Christianity. The renunciation he made when he became a monk was child’s play compared with that which he had to make when he returned to the world. Now came the frontal assault. The only way to follow Jesus was by living in the world. Hitherto the Christian life had been the achievement of a few choice spirits under the

exceptionally favorable conditions of monasticism; now it is a duty laid on every Christian living in the world. The commandment of Jesus must be accorded perfect obedience in one's daily vocation of life. The conflict between the life of the Christian and the life of the world was thus thrown into the sharpest possible relief. It was a hand-to-hand conflict between the Christian and the world.

1. How does the statement, “The only way to follow Jesus was by living in the world” challenge you?

It is a fatal misunderstanding of Luther's action to suppose his rediscovery of the gospel of pure grace offered a general dispensation from obedience to the command of Jesus, or that it was the great discovery of the Reformation that God's forgiving grace automatically conferred upon the world both righteousness and holiness. On the contrary, for Luther the Christian's worldly calling is sanctified only insofar as that calling registers the final, radical protest against the world. Only insofar as the Christian's secular calling is exercised in the following of Jesus does it receive from the gospel new sanction and justification. It was not the justification of sin, but the justification of the sinner that drove Luther from the cloister back into the world. The grace he had received was costly grace. It was grace, for it was like water on parched ground, comfort in tribulation, freedom from the bondage of a self-chosen way, and forgiveness of all his sins. And it was costly, for, so far from dispensing him from good works, it meant that he must take the call to discipleship more seriously than ever before. It was grace because it cost so much, and it cost so much because it was grace. That was the secret of the gospel of the Reformation—the justification of the sinner.

DISCUSS

Why will a fuller understanding of costly grace compel Christ's followers to take the call to discipleship more seriously?

Luther had said that all we can do is of no avail, however good a life we live. Nothing can avail us in the sight of God but “the grace and favor which confers the forgiveness of sin.” But he spoke as one who knew that at the very moment of his crisis he was called to leave all that he had a second time and follow Jesus. The recognition of grace was his final, radical breach with his besetting sin, but it was never the justification of that sin.

By laying hold of God's forgiveness, he made the final, radical renunciation of a self-willed life, and this breach was such that it led inevitably to a serious following of Christ. He always looked upon it as the answer to a sum, but an answer which had been arrived at by God, not by man. But then his followers changed the "answer" into the data for a calculation of their own. That was the root of the trouble. If grace is God's answer, the gift of Christian life, then we cannot for a moment dispense with following Christ. But if grace is the data for my Christian life, it means that I set out to live the Christian life in the world with all my sins justified beforehand. I can go and sin as much as I like, and rely on this grace to forgive me, for after all the world is justified in principle by grace. I can therefore cling to my bourgeois secular existence, and remain as I was before, but with the added assurance that the grace of God will cover me. It is under the influence of this kind of "grace" that the world has been made "Christian," but at the cost of secularizing the Christian religion as never before. The Christian life comes to mean nothing more than living in the world and as the world, in being no different from the world, in fact, in being prohibited from being different from the world for the sake of grace. The upshot of it all is that my only duty as a Christian is to leave the world for an hour or so on a Sunday morning and go to church to be assured that my sins are all forgiven. I need no longer try to follow Christ, for cheap grace, the bitterest foe of discipleship, which true discipleship must loathe and detest, has freed me from that. Grace as the data for our calculations means grace at the cheapest price, but grace as the answer to the sum means costly grace.

2. Read Romans 5:20.

How might a misunderstanding of that verse result in cheap grace?

Now read Romans 6:1-15. What is the price of costly grace for the follower of Jesus?

Why is costly grace worth the price?

Day 5

The Poverty of Cheap Grace

The only man who has the right to say that he is justified by grace alone is the man who has left all to follow Christ. Such a man knows that the call to discipleship is a gift of grace, and that the call is inseparable from the grace.

1. Read 1 Corinthians 15:10. Is this the declaration of a person who lives by

Cheap Grace? OR Costly Grace?

Circle your response and explain your reasoning below.

We have gathered like eagles round the carcass of cheap grace, and there we have drunk of the poison which has killed the life of following Christ. We have paid the doctrine of pure grace divine honors unparalleled in Christendom, in fact we have exalted that doctrine to the position of God Himself. But its truth perverted into self-deception. So long as our Church holds the correct doctrine of justification, there is no doubt whatever that she is a justified Church! So they said, thinking that we must vindicate our heritage by making this grace available on the cheapest and easiest terms. Cheap grace had won the day.

But do we also realize that this cheap grace has turned back upon us like a boomerang? The price we are having to pay today in the shape of the collapse of the organized Church is only the inevitable consequence of our policy of making grace available to all at too low a cost. We gave away the word and sacraments wholesale, we baptized, confirmed, and absolved a whole nation unasked and without condition. Our humanitarian sentiment made us give that which was holy to the scornful and unbelieving. But the call to follow Jesus in the narrow way was hardly ever heard. What had happened to all those warnings of Luther's against preaching the gospel in such a manner as to make men rest secure in their ungodly living? With us it has been abundantly proved that the sins of the fathers

are visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generations. Cheap grace has turned out to be utterly merciless to our Evangelical Church.

This cheap grace has been no less disastrous to our own spiritual lives. Instead of opening up the way to Christ it has closed it. Instead of calling us to follow Christ, it has hardened us in our disobedience. Perhaps we had once heard the gracious call to follow Him, and had at this command even taken the first few steps along the path of discipleship in the discipline of obedience, only to find ourselves confronted by the word of cheap grace. Was that not merciless and hard? The only effect such a word could have on us was to bar our way to progress, and seduce us to the mediocre level of the world, quenching the joy of discipleship—all of which was not merely useless, but extremely dangerous. Having laid hold on cheap grace, we were barred forever from the knowledge of costly grace. Deceived and weakened, men felt that they were strong now that they were in possession of this cheap grace, whereas they had in fact lost the power to live the life of discipleship and obedience. The word of cheap grace has been the ruin of more Christians than any commandment of works.

We must therefore attempt to recover a true understanding of the mutual relation between grace and discipleship. It is becoming clearer every day that the most urgent problem besetting our Church is this: How can we live the Christian life in the modern world?

Happy are they who have reached the end of the road we seek to tread, who are astonished to discover the by no means self-evident truth that grace is costly just because it is the grace of God in Jesus Christ. Happy are the simple followers of Jesus Christ who have been overcome by His grace, and are able to sing the praises of the all-sufficient grace of Christ with humbleness of heart. Happy are they who, knowing that grace, can live in the world without being of it, who, by following Jesus Christ, are so assured of their heavenly citizenship that they are truly free to live their lives in this world. Happy are they who know that discipleship simply means the life which springs from grace, and that grace simply means discipleship. For them the word of grace has proved a fount of mercy.

DISCUSS

Why is cheap grace such a deadly enemy of the church and of individual Christians?

DISCUSS

How can costly grace empower us to battle the enemy of cheap grace?

2. Read 2 Corinthians 6:1. What would it look like in your life to not receive the grace of God in vain?

LEADER GUIDE

The main point of this session is: Cheap grace avoids the need for discipleship; costly grace recognizes the cost to both Jesus and the recipient of grace.

Focus on this goal: Distinguish between cheap grace and costly grace.

Key Bible Passage: Matthew 16:25

During the Session

STEP 1 - Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Ask adults to consider recent purchases and identify something they bought that was cheap and something that was costly. **Ask:** *What do you think costs too much these days? What do you think is worth the cost and why?*

Point out this study's title is "The Cost of Discipleship."

State: *Throughout this study we will see that discipleship is costly but is worth the cost. Today's session compels us to distinguish between cheap grace and costly grace and determine which grace we are living by.*

STEP 2 - Cheap Grace

Read the first line of Day 1. **Discuss** Day 1, activity 1.

Use Day 1 remarks to examine what cheap grace teaches about forgiveness and justification, and to explore how Christians bestow cheap grace on themselves. **Evaluate** why cheap grace is a denial of the Word of God.

Invite a volunteer to read Ephesians 2:1-10. **Consider** how some might interpret these verses to promote cheap grace.

Consider how the Day 1 statement, "*Grace alone does everything, they say, and so everything can remain as it was before*" is different from what Paul said about grace in Ephesians 2:1-10.

Invite responses to Day 1, activity 2.

Read the last paragraph of Day 1. **State:** *In contrast to that cheap grace is costly grace that is described in Day 2.*

STEP 3 - Costly Grace

Invite someone to read Matthew 11:28-30.

Use Jesus's words from those verses to **evaluate** why costly grace is costly and why it is grace.

Discuss Day 2, activity 1. **State:** *Peter could write those words with integrity because he paid the price and received the benefits of costly grace.*

Request adults identify from Mark 1:17 and John 21:22 the first and last words Jesus spoke to Peter.

Invite someone to read Matthew 16:13-16.

Analyze how Peter was arrested by grace in all three interactions with Christ.

Consider how that was costly grace rather than cheap grace Peter bestowed upon himself.

STEP 4 - Efforts to Restore Costly Grace

Guide the group to consider why costly grace became cheapened as Christianity spread across the world.

Explain how the monastic movement was one effort to restore costly grace and how it evolved into a double standard of maximum and minimum standards of Christian obedience.

Discuss Day 3, activity 1.

Use Day 3 content to **relate** how God raised up Martin Luther to restore costly grace. **Explain** God's grace arrested Luther with the truth of Romans 1:17.

Discuss Day 3, activity 2.

Explain that Paul could write those revolutionary truths because they had arrested him as well.

Invite someone to read Philippians 3:8-14.

Ask: *What did grace cost Paul? Was it worth it to him? Explain.*

STEP 5 - The Price of Costly Grace

Explain that Luther also paid the price of costly grace.

Request a volunteer read the first paragraph of Day 4. **Discuss** Day 4, activity 1.

Explore why it's a challenge to live costly grace in a world that demands cheap grace from the church. **Consider** why many professing Christians feel "prohibited from being different from the world for the sake of grace."

Guide the group to describe the "Christian" lifestyle that results from a reliance on cheap grace.

Discuss Day 4, activity 2.

STEP 6 - The Poverty of Cheap Grace

Read the first paragraph of Day 5.

Discuss Day 5, activity 1.

Note: *Paul didn't say, "By the grace of God I am what I am so I see no need to change or pay the price for discipleship." Paul worked hard to follow Jesus, always recognizing it was God's grace that empowered him to work hard. It's worth it to pay the price of costly grace because cheap grace will impoverish us.*

Relate from Day 5 the author's description of how cheap grace had impoverished the church.

Ask: *How are these descriptions more chilling when we realize they were written in Germany in the 1930s?*

Analyze how cheap grace impoverishes individual believers.

Invite responses to Day 5, activity 2.

STEP 7 - Practical Application – Live Out the Session

Ask: *Why is it vital that we know how to distinguish between cheap grace and costly grace? How can we determine what kind of grace we're living by? What is our challenge and our hope if we realize we're bestowing cheap grace on ourselves?*

Read Matthew 16:25 and **urge** adults to keep those truths in mind this week as they follow Jesus by living in the world.

Close in prayer.