

Count the cost

"For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'" (Luke 14:28-30, ESV)

When one starts to build a marriage, or any endeavor of import, one should proceed carefully with a prearranged plan. Christ uses this above illustration of building a tower for those who would follow after him, that they should count the cost of discipleship before they commit to become Christian and lead a Christian life. (cf. Luk. 14:27) In summary, the time to reflect is before a commitment is made, not after. Christ then continues with the case of a king going to war: If a leader will take his country to war, he should take account of his provisions and the guidance of many advisors to ensure victory before those weapons of those troops engage that enemy. (Luk. 14:31) This is because wisdom is better than weapons of war. (Eccl. 9:18) As the Proverbist wrote, "Plans are established by counsel; by wise guidance wage war." (Prov. 20:18) Also, "For by wise guidance you can wage your war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory." (Prov. 24:6) Scripture says that if I start a war that I didn't plan well for, I am responsible for my own defeat. If this is true in physical warfare, it is more so true in spiritual warfare. It is a prideful spirit which rejects this counsel of Christ.

With this in mind, here are Jesus's three steps given to help disciples make their plans.

1. Sit down. Before I act, I want to listen to wise guidance. My plan can fail from the beginning if I do not seek wisdom from those older and more experienced.
2. Count the cost. Ask yourself, "Do I have what I need to complete this?" Make a blueprint. Write a list. I want to ask questions that will help me develop a plan to succeed. What is God's plan of salvation? How can I lead my family to Christ? What are the consequences of my actions?
3. Get up and start the work. Follow the plan, lay the foundation, marry your bride, build your house on God. Now that you know you will have what you need to build, you may confidently work. Since faith comes by hearing, renew your faith by listening again to the plan.

Now, mistakes happen, and all things are subject to time, chance (Eccl. 9:11), God's will, providence (Rom. 1:10), and the consequences of my actions and those of others (Ezek. 23:35). But, in word and principle the truth of Christ's words ring true to our own day and on them we may confidently rise and build! When we make disciples, let us stress the importance of each step.