GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

* **What is the most difficult decision you have ever made? Why was it so difficult?**
* **How do you usually make difficult decisions? Do you make a “pros-and-cons” list? Do you trust your instincts? Do you fly by the seat of your pants? Explain what this reveals about your personality.**

**Main Point**

Following Jesus means choosing to follow Him no matter the consequences or cost.

There is no foolproof way to make decisions, but there are consequences for the choices we make. Some consequences are immediate and temporary. Others affect us for years or even decades. Jesus’ teaching in Luke 13 and 14 reveals the results of choices that have eternal consequences. The eternal love of Jesus requires that we make decisions in light of certain eternal realities.

Have a volunteer read Luke 13:22-30.

* **Do we complicate the decision to follow Jesus? In what way might we do that?**
* **How do you know whether you are inside or outside the kingdom? How can you be sure?**

Here, as in His Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 7:13), Jesus emphasized that salvation requires effort on our part, but not the type of effort the Israelites had assumed. The wide door of the Pharisees made provisions for so many people who tried to carry out the tradition’s laws. It apparently paid little attention to the attitude of the heart as long as the ritual actions of the hands were clean. The only door to heaven, however, is narrow. There is only one way, and that is through the cross of Jesus. He took the wrath of God against sin on Himself, in our place, and through belief in Him we gain salvation. Rather than rules and rituals, salvation involves surrendering your life to Jesus and striving to follow Him whatever the sacrifice.

Have a volunteer read Luke 14:25-35.

* **What actions can you take to ensure that your relationship with Jesus takes precedence over all other relationships?**
* **What costs keep people from following Jesus today? What things in your life would you find most difficult to give up for the sake of following Christ?**
* **Read Hebrews 12:1-2, verses that give us additional insight into the cost of discipleship. What do these verses call us to cast aside in order to follow Christ? How does this encourage you in your effort to follow Jesus wholeheartedly?**
* **What does “a lifestyle of sacrifice in the name of Jesus” look like? What are some of the key characteristics of this lifestyle?**

In this teaching, Jesus emphasized that His followers were to love Him above everyone else, including their own families. Following Christ is giving Him primary allegiance. This truth is easier to understand than it is to practice. As disciples of Christ, we must understand and accept that our relationship with Him takes precedence over all other relationships.

Jesus’ point in these two stories about the builder and the king is aimed at those in the crowd who were considering becoming His disciples. They should count the cost of following Jesus before they embark on a life of following Him.

Similarly, a disciple who values his or her earthly possessions more than Jesus is really not a disciple at all. One enters into discipleship and continues in discipleship when he or she understands Jesus’ uniqueness and infinite worth and thus puts Him above all. Anything less is not true discipleship; anything less is like salt that’s salt in name only.

**Application**

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

* **Why does love require you have an undivided commitment to Christ’s kingdom? How might you daily remind yourself that surrender to Jesus is the right road to take?**
* **What would need to change in order for you to show a greater commitment to the spread of the gospel?**
* **Where have you seen the cost of discipleship in your life? Is there anything in your life right now that, if you gave it up, you would be better equipped to love people and point them to Christ? If so, what?**

**Pray**

Spend time reflecting on the cost of discipleship and any convictions God is revealing about making Him your highest priority. Recommit yourself to God and the ministry He has called you to during this prayer time.