

Witness-2

It's amazing how remarkably well God's grace works! I guess you could call it a mystery and a miracle. The idea is definitely out of this world. No human mind could ever have conceptualized such a unique plan of salvation.

But the main thing is that it works. It works because it confronts and resolves the problem of human nature and of sin. It meets God's and Satan's moral and legal requirements for ransom, reconciliation and renewal. It brings bone fide peace with God. It removes guilt, gives forgiveness, implants supernatural strength, joy and satisfaction that this world cannot give. It reroutes us from the road to hell to the way to heaven.

Without a doubt, the personal cost of becoming a disciple of Christ is worth it. But, to the unregenerate heart, at first glance, the cost could be considered too high. Let's consider the expectations, the demands of living the Christian life from a purely human point of view.

Jesus Christ asks us to do a number of things that are clearly radical and revolutionary. Pride of nationality, heritage and culture; pride of education, IQ and intellect; pride of accomplishment, social and business success; pride of position and power – all of this pride needs to be traded in for things like self-denial, self-crucifixion, surrender, obedience, holiness, humility – everything that is contrary to the human ego. And yet, in God's family, in the Body of Christ, there is no room for conceit and egocentricity.

However, all this background is primarily for you – the personal worker. *You* may need to be reminded of what the unregenerate, unsaved soul is up against – not that *she or he* needs to be confronted – in advance – with these drastic differences. Some of them need to be shared early on; others can and should wait until later.

There are concerns and costs that the potential convert needs to be aware of only *after* conversion. *Some* of the costs need to be shared up front. For example, the prospective follower of Christ should be told the following early on:

- It is inevitable that you will experience criticism from society for believing the Gospel, which is "foolishness" to the natural mind.
- Your family and friends might persecute and ostracize you (or worse) for having chosen to follow Christ.
- God will allow big and small trials into your life to test your beliefs, to help you grow spiritually, and to prove how much you love and trust him.
- The enemy of your soul – Satan – will make persistent efforts to neutralize your effectiveness as a representative of Christ.
- Finally, there will be the daily, on-going task of denying the old sinful self and living to please God in thought, word and conduct. But, with God's presence and power, you will overcome! ◇◇◇