



May 2023

We need to be willing to give up everything to follow Jesus.

“He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” - Philippians 1:6

Have you ever been camping? Do you love camping?

For some people nothing compares to camping. Being in the woods, being close to nature, eating off the land and exploring God’s creation is the greatest escape they could ever ask for. They live for tents, for campfires, for s’mores. They love fishing, hiking, horseback riding, laying on the ground in a sleeping bag, and all the fun things people do in the woods.



So why doesn’t everyone camp? Why doesn’t everyone sleep in sleeping bags? How come there are other places to stay besides campers and tents like... like hotels? Because not everyone wants to go camping. Going camping is a rough experience at times, and not everyone enjoys that. Some people don’t want to give up modern conveniences like microwaves, coffee makers, television, and the Internet. And let’s not forget all the other conveniences of hotels, like beds, pillows, hot and cold running water, private showers, private toilets, and free continental breakfasts.

Some people aren’t cut out for camping, and that’s okay. You can find hotels and other places to stay on vacation without giving up indoor plumbing and electricity. But when it comes to following Jesus, sacrifices are part of the deal.

Many people wanted to be Jesus’ followers while he was on Earth, but many times the people who wanted that found out they didn’t have what it took to truly be a follower.

MATTHEW 8:18-22

People Want to Follow Jesus

¹⁸ When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he told his followers to go to the other side of the lake. ¹⁹ Then a teacher of the law came to Jesus and said, "Teacher, I will follow you any place you go."

²⁰ Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes to live in. The birds have nests to live in. But the Son of Man has no place where he can rest his head."

²¹ Another man, one of Jesus' followers, said to Jesus, "Lord, let me go and bury my father first."

²² But Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and let the people who are dead bury their own dead."

MAIN POINT

This is just one of many passages where Jesus asks people to give up things that are important to follow him. To the first man, he asks if he is willing to give up living in a home. To the second, he says the man must forsake his family. It's not the only time in the gospel that Jesus tells someone they must leave their father, mother, and family behind if they want to be his follower.

Many people don't like these scriptures. They think it's unfair of Jesus to demand that we give up even our families to follow him. Who is this guy? What gives him the right to tell us to give these things up?



He is Jesus, the Son of God. He gave up his throne in Heaven to be born like an ordinary baby. He lived the life of a poor carpenter who had no home, and he died a cruel death so that he could give us eternal life.

That's the man who says we must be willing to give up everything for his sake. When we realize all he did for us, how can we not be willing to sacrifice for him?

Those of you who are nervous right now, relax. Jesus is not asking anyone here to leave their home and their families right now. God has blessed you with a family that cares for you and brings you to church to learn about him, and that's something to be thankful for. But we should all be mindful that God has a plan for every one of us. That plan might involve leaving home one day to serve on the mission field. It might mean giving up a high paying career to take a lower paying job to serve God full time. It might mean being a doctor or a dentist who gives up the opportunity to make more money and chooses instead to offer his or her services to the poor and needy.

Following Jesus also means giving up the sinful things in our lives. Maybe you hang with a group of friends who curse and misbehave – you go along with it because you don't want to seem weird. But following Jesus means going a different way. Maybe you have a problem with being truthful. We need to give up our lying ways if we want to follow Jesus. But don't worry, he will give you the strength and power to do it.

Jesus doesn't ask everyone to make the same sacrifice, but when he asks, he expects us to do it. He has a plan, and sacrifice is part of that plan, just as it is part of camping. If we are unwilling to obey, God cannot complete the work he plans to do through our lives - a work that begins with our act of sacrifice.



Jesus gave up everything for us. He did it because he knew we could not save ourselves. How can we refuse to sacrifice for him after all he has done for us?

Whatever Jesus calls you to do, whatever he asks you to sacrifice, do it. Do it knowing that Jesus sacrificed everything for you. Do it knowing that whatever you give up, it is nothing compared to what Jesus has already given for you.





Answer the questions and mail to: SIMCamps | 14202 N 73rd Ave | Peoria, AZ 85381.

Please print legibly.

Camper's Name:

Mailing Address:

Text #:

E-mail:

1. What did Jesus say to the people who wanted to follow him?
2. How do you think the people reacted when they heard they had to give up some things for Jesus?
3. What did Jesus give up for us, and why?
4. What has Jesus given to us?
5. Why should we be willing to give up anything for Jesus?