

RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP (LESSON 20)

THE KINGDOM FIRST PRINCIPLE (CONTINUED). Another man wanted to return home and say good-bye before following Jesus. He liked Jesus, but he loved his family. Jesus told him, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). This man could not go forward as long as he was looking backward. Jesus was letting the man know that the time to follow Him is now. If this man would not go now he never would. And it wouldn't do any good, because he would always be wishing he could go back home. This man could not choose between Jesus and home, so Jesus chose for him. Evans says that "to follow Jesus required severing one's self from one's family... Again the requirements for following Jesus are cast into the most radical of terms. Jesus made sure no one could misunderstand his terms when he said, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:26). This is an extreme statement. It is a radical requirement. Jesus' disciples must put the Kingdom before everything. But hating one's father and mother and wife and children? Ryrie says, "This saying does not justify malice or ill will toward one's family, but it means that devotion to family must take second place to one's devotion to Christ." By comparison, to hate someone means to love Jesus more than anyone else. A person who will not put the Kingdom first does not qualify to be Christ's disciple. He is not radically different from those who are content to like Jesus and love someone or something else.