

Advertisements abound today that claim to bring instant results without any effort or work on your part. "Just take a pill and lose weight, there's no need to exercise and bum off that fat."

Now, those false advertisements don't bother me that much, because I know better than to believe them. But that "no sweat" mentality is sometimes seen in some of the members of the Lord's church. Too many are trying to make the Christian life as easy and painless as possible. Religious bookstores are filled with quick-fix theology books that claim to unlock the secret to a mature faith, without much effort on your part. That's not what the Lord said! Notice what true discipleship really involves:

1. True Discipleship Involves Seeking. "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Mt. 6:33). To "seek" here means to give all of your effort. It implies dedicated, determined activity. Seeking the kingdom is not easy, nor is it painless, but it is certainly necessary.
2. True Discipleship Involves Suffering. "Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy" (1Pet. 4:12,13). Suffering is frequently connected with the Christian life. Jesus never preached "good health" and "lots of wealth" message if you become a Christian; like you hear so much today. Suffering is never easy, but suffering is sometimes necessary --especially in the area of Christian growth.
3. True Discipleship Involves Striving. "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able" (Lk. 13:24). The Greek word translated "strive" is where we get our word "agonize!" This means that we are to be diligently using every effort and the maximum expenditure of resources and concentration.

Discipleship is costly - it involves crosses, denial, struggle, and sometimes even suffering. It will always remain a fact that you won't be a disciple without some sweat!

- Dave Ridenour

See you Sunday! -gls