

Counting the Cost: Taking the Risk

By Donna Streufert

Opening Hymn: “Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus”
(LSB 685; LW 381; TLH 409)

Introduction: In many modern households women are in charge of the purse strings. Women business owners make their own financial decisions. LWML leaders manage offerings that total millions of dollars.

In each case women make choices, deciding if the investment or expenditure is worth the risk: will the money, time and energy spent be profitable and result in a blessing for all involved?

Women must count the cost before taking the risk.



Women Who Counted the Cost and Took the Risk

Scripture names three women specifically who counted the cost and took the risk to defy convention in their devotion to Jesus, their Savior. Read about these women in **Luke 8:1–3**.

1. Name the women. Why was it unusual for these women to travel with Jesus and the 12 apostles?
2. What did the women risk by accompanying Him? (Note **Luke 14:25–35**.)
3. What do you think motivated the women to leave their homes and follow Jesus? (Note also **Luke 7:36–50** which just precedes this account as well as **1 John 4:19**.)

Remember: God’s great love for sinners moved Him to send His Son to buy us back from sin and death. When we are baptized in Him, the Holy Spirit works saving faith in our hearts, sealing us to the Savior forever.

4. What do you think the women would receive or experience that would make their risk worthwhile? (See also **John 6:35, 37–40**.)
5. How did the women express their devotion to Jesus?

Not all those Jesus healed were allowed to follow Him. He sent some home. But He allowed Mary Magdalene and the others to come with Him. He wanted them in His group. They became His disciples. Perhaps the most counter-cultural aspect of Jesus’ earthly ministry was His willingness to teach women. He taught them along with the male disciples. They heard the stories, the lessons; they witnessed the miracles. Surely, the women wanted the opportunity to hear and share the truth Jesus taught them.

Notice that Mary Magdalene is not identified as someone’s wife or mother. Perhaps she was a widow or maybe her family had turned her out because of the demons. She

had no family to fret over her or complain about her following Jesus. This would likely be the only family she would have. No wonder she was so loyal to Jesus.

Joanna, unlike Mary, had a family. She probably didn't break totally with her family, but she did leave the royal court. Her husband's position meant she ranked higher socially, economically, politically.

Susanna is mentioned by name several times in the New Testament, but we don't know much about her.

These women walked with Jesus, followed Him, learned from Him, served Him, supported Jesus and the others from their own resources. They wanted to be close, to hear Jesus' teachings directly from the Teacher. They loved Him with their purses and their presence, counting the cost and willingly taking the risk. Surely, they felt safe in Him.

True to the End

6. Notice how the women followed Jesus to the end. Where do we find them in **Matthew 27:55–56**?
7. It was dangerous for family and friends of the crucified to be seen near a cross. It was just as dangerous to be near the tomb of an enemy of the state. Yet, here they are. Read **Matthew 27:57–61** and **Luke 23:55–56**. Why would they take such a risk?
8. Read **Matthew 28:1–10** and **Luke 24:1–11**. What great victory, what great reward did Christ win for all who risk being His disciples and following Him by faith? (See also **John 3:16; 6:40; 11:25–26**.)

Jesus Leads; I Follow

9. At what times and in what ways has your Lord Jesus invited you to follow Him?
10. Tell about a time when you realized the true cost of discipleship.
11. Share with others in your group the blessings of discipleship you have experienced during your life with Jesus.
12. How can you express your love and gratitude to your Lord Jesus? What gifts has God given you to share in service to Him and others?

Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus, Precious Savior, You bought us with a price. Did You count the cost, Lord? Did You willingly come to this hostile world of sin and grief just to save us? Were You ready to suffer rejection and death so we might live? Surely You did it all for us sinners, reclaiming Your children and making us heirs of heaven. For all this we thank and praise You with our whole lives. Empower us by Your Holy Spirit to walk with You daily, sharing Your love with all we meet. Amen.

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