



PART 1: The Moment of Choice

INTRODUCTION

We love to win. We love winning in our finances. We love winning power in our careers. We love winning in romance. We love winning in life. And we hate losing as much as we love winning. We even take it personally when our favorite sports teams lose, even though we're not actually on the teams.

But in the Gospels, Jesus introduced a counterintuitive principle: *In order to win, you have to lose.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Talk about a time in childhood when you lost at a game or a sport. What did you feel? How did you react?
2. America loves a winner. What are some of the cultural consequences of celebrating winning for its own sake and trying to avoid loss by any means necessary?
3. Read Mark 8:31–33. How much do you relate to Peter's reaction to what Jesus said? In what ways do you find yourself "rebuking" Jesus when he calls you to lose?
4. What tends to cause you the greatest concern in life—your reputation, your standard of living, or your future opportunities? Explain.
5. When following Jesus is difficult, what are some practical things you can do to identify what you'll lose if you follow him, remember that he warned you that you'd feel loss, and trust that the reward he offers is greater than what you'll lose?
6. In what area of your life do you need to choose to lose? What is one thing you can do this week to follow Jesus in that area? How can this group support you?

MOVING FORWARD

Following Jesus can feel like losing. Maybe there are people you've decided you won't date because you're following Jesus. Maybe someone else got the promotion you wanted because you prioritized following Jesus over spending long hours in the office. Maybe you worry that other people's kids will get ahead of your kids because following Jesus means prioritizing family relationships over involvement in lots of sports and activities.

Jesus warned us we'd experience these feelings of loss. But he also said that we only find life when we choose to lose and follow him. Will you choose to lose?

CHANGING YOUR MIND

"For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it."

Mark 8:35