

the cost of discipleship

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

SCM Press; new edition (Nov 2001)

£14.99 RRP

Medical students are overwhelmed by opinions - from professors, consultants, peers, family and the media. These voices may be valuable and well meaning, but they threaten to drown out Christ's call to discipleship. Dietrich Bonhoeffer recognised that Christians through all generations have been tempted to compromise.

Disturbed by how the German Church turned a blind eye to Hitler's atrocities, he spoke out courageously and was martyred for his faith.

In the introduction to his book, Bonhoeffer explains the difference between cheap and costly grace. Cheap grace is forgiveness without repentance, hardening hearts against obedience and depriving churches of true salvation. Costly grace demands we leave everything to follow Jesus.

It is Jesus who calls us to discipleship, practical obedience and faith. So we must not excuse ourselves with cheap grace, from simple single-minded obedience to God's Word. Discipleship involves sharing Christ's suffering and rejection on the cross, whether dying to self in fighting temptation or even martyrdom. Christ demands our complete and exclusive allegiance; a willingness to separate ourselves from everyone for him and to relate to everything through him as our mediator. In his mercy, Jesus gives us strength to follow him.

In the second section of the book, Bonhoeffer expounds the Sermon on the Mount, helping us to understand what Jesus teaches about practical Christian living. The Christian community should stand out from the world because of its extraordinary values. At the same time this righteousness is hidden, as disciples aim to please God rather than man. It is Jesus who will judge all in the end, believers and unbelievers; our duty is to love our neighbour as ourselves.

The third section, based on Matthew 9:35-10:42, describes Jesus' instructions to his disciples on preaching the gospel. Bonhoeffer explains how these apply to us as Christ's messengers today. Those commissioned by Jesus must preach faithfully, relying on God in the face of hostility, for the cross is divisive. Men must choose in this life to trust or reject Jesus. Salvation of men is the reward for God's messengers, while those who receive these messengers will be blessed.

In the final section, Bonhoeffer explains how Paul's teachings (of living by faith in Christ) are consistent with the *call* to follow Jesus (in the synoptic Gospels). The equivalent of this *call* is baptism: justification from sin through sharing Christ's death in a public act of obedience. Jesus' presence is manifest today through the Body of Christ, the Church, which suffers for him. The Church witnesses to the world by living in stark contrast to it. It comprises sinners who are justified and sanctified by Jesus, reflecting Christ's image through grace and discipleship.

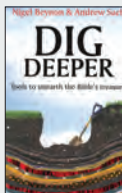
Hugh Ip is an academic core medical trainee in London

Dig Deeper

Nigel Beynon & Andrew Sach

IVP 2005

£9.00 RRP (but £4.00 on 12-12 scheme)



Reading the Bible is at the centre of Christian living, and this set of tools to help dig up its gems is something that will benefit every Christian. *Dig Deeper* is written both for personal and group study. Filled with activities and Bible passages, this book highlights different depths of the Bible that are not obvious at first glance.

Various tools are suggested to help with reading - with examples of when they are (and are not) useful.

Sometimes, because of the way the modern Bible is sectioned, it becomes relatively harder to see the Bible themes. *Dig Deeper* shows us how to identify the themes running not only through a particular chapter, but also throughout the whole Bible, and encourages us to be Bible students in a way that isn't academic, but personal.

This book encourages structured Bible reading and highlights resources that can be used to aid study. After reading it once, I realised it's a book you need to buy instead of borrow; use it as a reference that you can access any time!

(There is now a sequel, Dig Even Deeper that looks specifically at the Old Testament.)

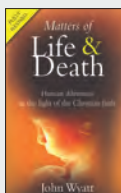
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Matters of Life and Death (2nd Edition)

John Wyatt

CMF / IVP 2009

£10.00 RRP (but £4.00 on 12-12 scheme)



Informative, insightful and personally challenging, this book will cause you to reflect on your own beliefs and the reasoning behind them. It will make you question the values society has placed on life, and how that has affected current medical ethics and practice.

John Wyatt is Emeritus Professor of Ethics and Perinatology at University College London. He writes from a wealth of clinical experience and research, and discusses very complex issues with utmost sensitivity and delicacy, reflecting on biblical concepts and drawing examples from his personal experience. His approach is systematic and easy to follow.

He brings a fresh perspective to the domain, combining his strong Christian values and his experience as a practising doctor. During his deep exploration of each issue, he reflects on biblical concepts and applies them to each situation.

Reading this book has increased my knowledge of medical ethics and strengthened my personal convictions regarding issues such as euthanasia and embryonic stem cell research. It is without doubt a must-read for any Christian medical student and I could not recommend it enough.

Christi Brasted is a medical student at UEA