

Extreme Faith

Like extreme Sports





Action sports, adventure sports or extreme sports are [activities](#) perceived as involving a high degree of risk.^{[1][2][3]} These activities often involve speed, height, a high level of physical exertion and highly specialized gear.^[1]

The definition of extreme sports is not exact and the origin of the terms is unclear, but it gained popularity in the 1990s when it was picked up by [marketing](#) companies to promote the [X Games](#) and when the [Extreme Sports Channel](#) and Extreme International launched. More recently, the commonly used definition from research is "a competitive

(comparison or self-evaluative) activity within which the participant is subjected to natural or unusual physical and mental challenges such as speed, height, depth or natural forces and where fast and accurate cognitive perceptual processing may be required for a successful outcome" by Dr. Rhonda Cohen (2012).[\[4\]\[5\]](#)

Last week we talked about being a follower of Christ and what that meant

At the end everyone stood and declared that you wanted to be a follower of Jesus

While in sports the definition of extreme suggests something beyond the normal, I believe that Bible calls us into a relationship with God that is anything but normal. In fact I believe that over the years we have tried to normalize what God always intended to be extreme, which in effect leaves us with a weak and watered down version of a true relationship with God.

Over the next few weeks we will examine several aspects of our faith that you may find to be extreme but which God's Word tells us are just the normal experience of a true follower of Christ

The first extreme characteristic of our faith that I would like to explore is...

COMMITMENT

Luke 14:15-33

The Parable of the Great Banquet

¹⁵ When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God."

¹⁶ Jesus replied: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. ¹⁷ At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.'

¹⁸ "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.'

¹⁹ "Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.'

²⁰ "Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'

²¹ "The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.'

²² "'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.'

²³ "Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. ²⁴ I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.'"

The Cost of Being a Disciple

²⁵ Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: ²⁶ "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

²⁸ "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? ²⁹ For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, ³⁰ saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.'

³¹ "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? ³² If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. ³³ In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.

1. EXTREME COMMITMENT puts God First

Exodus 20:3

³ "You shall have no other gods before me.

. "The Hebrew, often translated as 'besides me' or 'before me,' means 'in my presence,'" [J.D. Greear](#) wrote. "The point is that nothing else can qualify as god in your life. The true God is not only to be number one but the only one."

2. EXTREME COMMITMENT Believes it and Lives it out

You can't just believe it. You need to Live it out.

The guest at the table, who prompted Jesus' parable with his statement, believed in the kingdom of God. Those who were invited believed in the invitation. The last two verses first describe those who believe and then those who live it out.

3. EXTREME COMMITMENT Never Turns Back

Again the emphasis of verse 26, 27 and 33 (follow) leaves no room for changing our minds and turning back. In fact, a verse we read last week makes that extremely clear (emphasis intended)

Luke 9:57-62

The Cost of Following Jesus

⁵⁷ As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go."

⁵⁸ Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

⁵⁹ He said to another man, "Follow me."

But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

⁶⁰ Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

⁶¹ Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family."

⁶² Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

4. EXTREME COMMITMENT Makes No Excuses

What excuses are you making each week when it comes to your commitment to your relationship with God?

5. EXTREME COMMITMENT Isn't Based On What You Have to Offer

Luke 14:21

²¹ "The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.'

Take special notice of who the invitation is given too.... The crippled, the blind, the lame. These weren't given the invitation because of what they could bring; but because the master wanted his house to be full.

Gods' invitation is given to everyone. Salvation is the free gift of God, but in response, he wants you to be committed

Commitment isn't based upon your skill level or how much you have to offer. In fact, sometimes that skill or giftedness becomes the very thing that keeps you from being committed. The master only wants you to rely on the gift of his invitation.

You can be greatly skilled but have no commitment. You can have no skill at all but have extreme commitment.

6. EXTREME COMMITMENT Focuses On Kingdom Work

One of the characters that gets lost in this parable is the servant. We focus on the master of the banquet, the guests who made excuses, the guests who were crippled blind and lame, the guests who would be compelled to come in that the

house would be filled. We focus on Jesus' words regarding the cost of discipleship later in the chapter. We focus on the desire of the master to have his house full. But rarely, if ever, have I heard a sermon that focused on the servant in this parable. He was obedient. He was passionate. He carried out the masters orders without hesitation. In fact he anticipated the masters second set of orders and carried them out before being told. He was the primary reason why the masters desires could be fulfilled. He was committed and he stands as an example of what Jesus wants from his disciples - extreme commitment. Commitment to his Kingdom Work

Can you imagine the story if the servant wasn't fully committed to the masters' desires.

"Ill get to that when I can. There're some other things I need to do first. Someone else will surely volunteer."

We have tried to replace the need for personal commitment from the individual with professional commitment on behalf of the crowds

This is what happens in many churches. No one can be committed for you

As we transition from this parable of Jesus to his words about following him, we read these words

Luke 14:21

²¹ "The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.'

Large crowds were Following him, but they weren't committed to him. In essence he was saying "I can't be committed for you... I invite you to follow me, but you have to do the work of following. "