

➤ **Review Luke 14:1–6 to get the setting for the verses that follow.**

➤ **Now read Luke 14:7–14.**

1. At this meal, the Pharisees are “carefully watch[ing]” Jesus (v. 1)—and he is watching them. He notices “how the guests picked the places of honor at the table” (v. 7).

What do you think the Pharisees’ behavior reveals about their motives and desires? (📖\* Lk. 11:43; 20:46)

2. How does Jesus sum up the point of his little parable? (v. 11)

“In [Jesus’] time the guests at a formal dinner reclined on couches, several on each one, leaning on their left elbows. The seating was according to status. ... The important places, the places of ‘honor’ (v.8) were those nearest the head couch position. If an important guest came late, someone might have to be displaced to make room for him (v.9).”<sup>1</sup>

3. For the Christian, humbling oneself is not just a nice, admirable thing to do.
  - a. Why is humility essential for entry into the Kingdom of God? (Lk. 18:13–14; Acts 2:37–38)

- b. Why is humility a necessary characteristic of someone who has already been saved? (Eph. 2:8–10; 1 Cor. 4:7)

- c. How does Christian humility work itself out? (Phil. 2:3–4)

4. Reread Luke 14:12–14.

- a. Why does Jesus tell his listeners, “Do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors” to luncheons or dinners (v. 12)? (v. 12b; compare Lk. 6:32–34.)

“It scarcely needs pointing out that Jesus is not forbidding normal social life; but He is emphasizing that there is no generosity in giving to people who will [pay you back].”<sup>2</sup>

- b. What does Jesus promise if they instead invite “the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind” (v. 13)? (v. 14; Mt. 6:3–4)

- c. How does doing as Jesus commands in these verses also require a person to be humble? (📖 Rom. 12:16)

► **Read Luke 14:15–24.**

*Commentator Darrell L. Bock points out that “This is the last time in Luke that Jesus dines with the Pharisees.”<sup>3</sup> The parable Jesus delivers in these verses is a pointed warning to them.*

When the guest at the dinner refers to “the feast in the kingdom of God” (v. 15), he is referring to “the future messianic banquet, to which the people of Jesus’ day would have understood only godly Jews would be invited.”<sup>4</sup> This guest seems pretty confident that he will be one of the people there.<sup>5</sup>

“In Jesus’ day when you invited guests to a dinner, you told them the day but not the exact hour of the meal. A host had to know how many guests were coming so he could butcher the right [number] of animals and prepare sufficient food. Just before the feast was to begin, the host sent his servants to each of the guests to tell them the banquet was ready and they should come... In other words, *each of the guests in this parable had already agreed to attend the banquet.* The host expected them to be there.”<sup>6</sup>

5. The servant first visits those who have already been invited to the banquet and is given weak excuses rather than valid reasons for why the invitees cannot come. Buying fields and oxen and getting married are obviously not bad activities in themselves. But this is not any old banquet. The banquet in Jesus’ parable represents “the feast in the kingdom of God” (v. 15) or “the wedding supper of the Lamb” (Rev. 19:9)—the great gathering of all those God has saved—and Jesus in his ministry is announcing that the time to come is *now*. What do you think it means, then, that these normal human activities have caused the original invitees to miss out on the banquet (v. 24)? (📖 You may wish to compare the Parable of the Sower, especially Lk. 8:14 and Mt. 13:22.)

6. Next, the master—who represents God—sends the servant to “the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame” (v. 21). Note that this list of people brought into the feast corresponds with the list of people Jesus gives in verse 13. What does this repeated list say about God’s heart? (📖 Lk. 4:18–19; 6:20; 7:22)
  
7. The master sends the servant out a third time. Where and to whom is he to go now? (v. 23)
  
8. The invitation to the kingdom of God goes out first to Israel. While established authority figures like the Pharisees reject Jesus and the news of the kingdom, many who are poor or sick or rejected by polite society turn to him and are saved. Who else is welcomed into the kingdom, like those the servant brings in from “the roads and country lanes” (v. 23) outside the town? (Acts 13:46–47; 📖 Lk. 13:28–30)

“The point [of the parable in vv. 15–24] is that those who seemed to be in line will miss out, and others who do not seem even close at the time of initial promise will end up at the meal.”<sup>7</sup>

➤ **Read Luke 14:25–35.**

9. In these verses we have a new scene and audience: Jesus is now traveling, and “large crowds” accompany him (v. 25). We also have a new topic: requirements for being a disciple of Jesus. What requirement does Jesus mention in verse 26? (Mt. 10:37; Compare this with verse 20.)

10. What requirement does Jesus mention in verse 27?

What do you think this means?

11. What requirement does Jesus mention in verse 33? (Contrast this with verses 18–19.)

When Jesus speaks of “hating,” he is using an expression that means “loving less”<sup>8</sup>—“but this point hardly diminishes the offensiveness of this saying in a society where honor of parents was considered virtually the highest obligation and one’s family was usually one’s greatest joy. Teachers regularly demanded great respect and affection, but in Jewish tradition only God openly demanded such wholesale devotion as Jesus claims here (Deut. 6:4–5).”<sup>9</sup>

12. Although there are differences between the examples Jesus gives in verses 28–30 and 31–32, what lesson do they both convey?

What do you think it means to count the cost of following Jesus?

Why do you think Jesus emphasizes this? (Consider the picture Jesus gives of following him in verses 26, 27, 33; 9:57–62.)

13. Jesus' concern in verses 34–35 is not actually salt itself. He is concerned about disciples who lose their "saltiness" (v. 34). What do you think it means for a disciple of Jesus to lose his or her saltiness?

14. This week's passage has a lot to say about responding to the call to follow Jesus. We often think that becoming a Christian means praying the sinner's prayer and then entering into a life of freedom and blessing.

Read back through the last section of this week's passage (verses 25–35).

a. How do these verses round out your understanding of what it means to be a Christian?

b. How do they challenge the way you are living?

c. The way these principles work themselves out in life will differ for everyone. Pray that God would (continue to) guide and strengthen you in your unique journey of discipleship with all of its costs and sacrifices—and joys.

\*📖 For further study

<sup>1</sup> Frank E. Gaebelin, Gen. Ed. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary with the New International Version of the Holy Bible in Twelve Volumes*. Vol. 8 (Matthew, Mark, Luke) (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 976.

<sup>2</sup> Leon Morris. *The Gospel According to St. Luke: Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980), 233.

<sup>3</sup> Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: Volume 2: 9:51–24:53*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996), 1268.

<sup>4</sup> Lane T. Dennis, exec. ed., and Wayne Grudem, gen. ed., *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1987, note on 14:15.

<sup>5</sup> Bock, 1272; Morris, 233.

<sup>6</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe. *An Exposition on the New Testament Comprising the Entire "BE" Series: The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton: SP Publications, Inc., 1989), 230.

<sup>7</sup> Bock, 1278.

<sup>8</sup> *ESV Study Bible*, 1988, note on 14:26.

<sup>9</sup> Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014), 219.