

Did Jesus really say that? (Luke 14:25-33)

## **Surely he didn't mean I have to give up my books.**

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“None of you can be my disciple if you don’t give up all of your possessions,” Jesus says.

But did he really say that? Is this one of the handful of statements Jesus really said or one that was merely attributed to him? I hope the latter. I swivel in my chair to scan my bookshelves, looking for the commentary that will give me the answer I want.

I like my stuff. That’s why it’s my stuff. I like my books. I’ve read most of them but not all. I like how I have them organized on my shelves, fiction on one side and nonfiction on the other. They’re alphabetized by author. I have a shelf for books about writing and another for poetry. I have one shelf dedicated to books I haven’t yet read but are on the priority list to read. When that shelf gets too full I move a few to the correct shelf in the fiction or nonfiction section. I mine the books for stories and inspiration for sermons and teachings. They help me do my work as a disciple. Surely Jesus doesn’t mean my books.

I like the art I’ve purchased on trips—trips to Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala. I like the bright colors and the folky-artiness of it. I like what the art says about me—that I’m well-traveled and cool. Those purchases provided income to someone in a country with high unemployment. I helped them feed their kids and put food in their bellies. Surely Jesus doesn’t mean my art.

I like my clothes, especially that pair of super-soft comfy drawstring pants I wear on my day off before I have to go out in public. I like my red patent leather pumps that make me feel powerful. I wear them when I need to preach a tough sermon. Surely Jesus doesn't mean my red pumps.

I like my house. My office has a window on each of three sides. There are two fireplaces, one in the living room and one in the family room. It's a large house, much bigger than one person needs, but it's great for parties. I live in a parsonage, a home owned by the church I serve. It's technically not my possession. Surely Jesus doesn't mean my house.

I've been reading from the New Revised Standard Version. I pull the Common English Bible off my shelf and like it a lot better. "In the same way, none of you who are unwilling to give up all of your possessions can be my disciple."

I'm not *unwilling* to give up my possessions. It's just that I've never been asked. If Jesus asked me to give up all of my possessions I'd do it in a heartbeat. I nod confidently to myself.

I read [elsewhere](#):

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.... Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.

Did Jesus really say that? Or was it just attributed to him later? I swivel in my chair to grab the commentary that will give me the answer I want.