

## 5. Burn Bridges & Ships

Hernando Cortez had a plan; he wanted to lead an expedition into Mexico to obtain its many treasures. He presented his plan to the Spanish governor, who was so excited that he gave him eleven ships and seven hundred men. Cortez did not tell the men or the governor the complete plan. After months of travel the eleven ships landed in Veracruz in 1519. Cortez had the men unload everything from all eleven ships. As they headed into their new adventure the men turned back and saw all eleven ships burning!

Their reaction was to fight back, as surely an enemy had initiated such an attack. Cortez halted the men, as this was in his plan; he had ordered the ships to all be burned. Cortez did not know what he and his men would encounter in their expeditions. What he did know was that by "Burning the Ships" he had completely eliminated their option of going back - at the same time creating an intensely powerful motivation to move ahead on their mission and succeed.

Sadly today, many refuse to commit themselves to anyone or anything, and more and more people are proving unfaithful to promises they have already made. Unwilling to "*burn their ships*" behind them, many enter into agreements or "*covenants*" without any REAL commitment, always making sure to leave the door open so they can return to their former conduct or way of life should the going get tough or something better or more attractive comes along.

What ship(s) do you have to burn?

### Burn Bridges & Ships Daily Quiet Times

| Date   | Week 5              |
|--------|---------------------|
| 18-Jun | Luke 9:62           |
| 19-Jun | Galatians 6:7       |
| 20-Jun | Luke 9:23           |
| 21-Jun | Ruth 1:15-17        |
| 22-Jun | Luke 18:22          |
| 23-Jun | Philippians 3:13-14 |
| 24-Jun | Luke 14:25-27       |

# Burn Bridges & Ships

## PART 1

### Passage(s) to Study

Great numbers of disciples do not guarantee great impact. It is not the sheer number of disciples that matters, but it is their distinctness, their utter differentness from the world. The world will take little note of a large group of people who think, feel, and act like them. The world will take note of a very few “disciples” who are Christ-like, whose lives are distinctive and are marked by sacrificial service to their King.

**Read:** Read Luke 14:25-33 and write down 5-10 observations that you make about what type of cost Christ is calling His followers to make in following Him. What was the outcome for the builder and the King? What should they have done differently, if anything? How might knowing and meditating on what Christ is actually calling you to help you make a decision to become His disciple? Do you think this cost is too steep or is worth it? Why or why not?

## PART 2

### Questions to Ponder

**[Q]** Have you ever considered the true cost in following Christ? According to the following verses what types of things are promised for the follower of Christ? What are the thoughts that stick out to you from these verses?

**Read:** 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 4:12-19

**[Q]** According to Philippians 3:1-16, How did the Apostle Paul “burn his ships” in order to follow Christ? What accomplishments did he leave behind to follow Christ? How does this provide a model for us to do the same (v. 15-16)?

**[Q]** Do you think it is necessary for us to ‘burn our bridges and ships’ with no path of retreat to follow Christ? Why or why not? Can you think of any examples in your life where you need to burn a bridge or a ship?

**For further study:** In Luke 9:51-62 Jesus used the farming occupation to illustrate the commitment that is required in following Him. With this verse in mind, read the story of Elisha making a decision to follow Elijah (1 Ki. 19:19-21). How does Elisha deal the things that could draw him away from his commitment?

## PART 3

### Making it Stick

**Write out 1-2 of the main things that God impressed upon you this week from your time reading the daily devotions on Burning Bridges & Ships.**

**Write out in your own words a prayer to God asking him to help you live solely for Him with no avenues of retreat. A sample has been provided below:**

**Prayer:** *O God, forgive us if we have failed to remove paths of retreat in our lives that may keep us from living solely for you. Please create in me a deep trust that will not choose any avenue of retreat, even in light of persecution or opposition. In Jesus' Name. Amen.*

**Recommended resources:** *‘The Discipline of Grace’ by Jerry Bridges*