A. The Path (vs. 34, 38):

1. Process for Setting up the GPS System:

   a) After challenging Peter for having wrong motives Christ once and for all beckons the crowd to come closer and listen to Him. It’s as if Christ is reaching out to a wider audience because the disciples, with Christ being extremely popular, are becoming more focused on self-made interest (Mark 10:28-31). They seem more committed to their way of thinking than Christ focus for them.

   b) Notice it says ‘His disciples’ – Christ still respects their willingness to listen to His teachings, surrendering their daily lives (Mark 10:28-31) to go with Him wherever He went, and humble themselves when corrected. So, Christ is not rejecting them; maybe just forcing them to listen.

   c) Anyone who continually, to the point that it becomes a habitual action, presses into action because they find pleasure in purposefully submitting to the will of Christ demonstrates a sincere desire to follow Christ. Submitting to Christ must be purposeful and with complete determination.

   d) To come to Christ is to have a sincere desire, for the sake of working out ones salvation, to experience an intimate relationship with Him as a result of a daily walk of faith. David was a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14).

2. The Steps to Making it Along the Path:

   a) Anyone who finds pleasure in having a purposeful walk with Christ must make a once and for all decision to not be controlled by their personal desires. This is a once and for all decision to totally surrender one’s life to Christ.

   b) To take up his cross is to willfully decide to personally do whatever it takes to submit to the will of God even if it seems like a burden sometimes (Matthew 11:28-30); and leads to suffering (Romans 8:18).
The cross symbolized hated Roman oppression and was reserved for the lowest social classes. It was the most visible and omnipresent aspect of Rome’s terror apparatus, designed especially to punish criminals and quash slave rebellions. In 71 B.C. the Roman general Crassus defeated the slave-rebel Spartacus and crucified him and six thousand of his followers on the Appian Way between Rome and Capua. A century later in Mark’s day, Nero would crucify and burn Christians who were falsely accused of setting fire to Rome.[1]

c) To have an intimate relationship with Christ is a continual process to the point that it becomes a habit. Anyone who takes pleasure in experiencing Christ must not just become a scholar of the word (1 Corinthians 8:1-3) but must also completely trust Him so that obedience to Christ is continual (1 John 2:2-5). This involves a commitment to suffer for Him both inwardly and outwardly (Philippians 4:1-11).

So, Jesus says, “let him be following me” and uses the usual word or the attachment of faith and faithfulness, which is quite the same as to come after Jesus. Let no one think of changing the course of Jesus, which leads to the cross, but only of following him with our cross. Godet says that three things are necessary in travelling: first, to say farewell (to self); secondly, to carry our baggage (the cross); thirdly, to proceed with the journey (follow me). The only question is our will to make this journey. The first two imperatives are properly aorists, for to deny self and to shoulder the cross are momentary acts; but the third is present, for to follow is a long and continuous course of action. This means that the first two acts are preparations for the third, and that they always come in this order. We need not add that all three are impossible for us, for no human power is able to bring about conversion and the new life. Christ’s Word and grace alone accomplish both.[2]

3. Things we Must Remember Along the Way (vs. 38):

a) Structurally this verse parallels and complements verse 35 by carrying the thought to its ultimate consequence.[1]

b) Anyone who feels shamed and disgraced because of all the things being said about Christ by the Jewish leaders and because of Calvary’s humiliating process will suffer lost.

To be “ashamed” of Jesus is to reject Him (cf. 8:34–35a) and to retain allegiance to “this generation” because of unbelief and fear of the world’s contempt. In return, when Jesus comes in glory as the
awesome Judge, He will refuse to claim those as His own (cf. Matt. 7:20–23; Luke 13:22–30), and they will experience shame (cf. Isa. 28:16; 45:20–25; Rom. 9:33; 10:11; 1 Peter 2:6, 8).[4]

c) To be embarrassed about the teachings of Christ in an environment that has forsaken God for other religions and is purposeful about violating the law causes us to suffer lose.

- “Adulterous” fits them as Jews who were unfaithful to the covenant God had made with them. In the Old Testament this covenant is described as a betrothal, yea, a marriage of Israel to God. But Israel was an adulterous bride and wife, faithless to her covenant obligations and vows.[5]

d) Christ will restrain Himself from bringing up the life we lived when we stand in God’s presence.

- Jesus is thinking not only of the Pharisees and the leaders who were so hostile to Him but also of the mass of people who, though they ran after Him, failed to believe Him and His words. [6]

e) To hide our convictions of Christ so that we fit in with the world is to cause Christ to deny us before God.

f) This is Christ in the full excellent presentation of the complete nature of God.

B. The Cost (vs. 35):

1. Anyone who continually, to the point that it becomes a habitual action, presses into action because they find pleasure in following Christ is a person who ‘works out their salvation’ for God’s glory and their blessing.

2. Anyone who purposefully, once and for all, finds pleasure in disobeying Christ in order to remain in their comfort zones.

3. The person who seeks to find their own pleasures, through their present circumstances, cannot control the future result (John 15:1-5).

a) Peter being tired of Roman oppression, looking forward to the salvation of Israel and the reestablishment of the Davidic throne (Mark 8:31-33; 10:35-45), wanted a powerful life on earth. Peter, however, cannot control the will of God which includes Christ death, soldiers arresting Christ, the actions of the high priest and Jewish leaders. So, if he seeks to preserve the life and popularity they have now he would lose the salvation Christ came to provide which is life and life abundantly leading to an eternal salvation with God.
4. On the account of a person’s surrender of their lives being directed by Christ, they like the disciples did, may suffer lost (Mark 10:28-31) of income, intense inner pain (Romans 8:18; Philippians 3:10), life the way it once was and even friends and family (Luke 14:26-27).

   a) The loss of life can take place for those who share the Good News of Jesus Christ (Mt. 4:23; 9:35; 24:14; 26:13; Mk. 1:1,14; 8:35; 10:29; 13:10; 14:9; 16:15; Acts 15:7; 20:24; 1 Pet. 4:17). Those who after Christ death and resurrection chose to deliver the message of a victorious new life to others can suffer much loss (Philippians 3:1-11).

5. In the future, those who suffered for the sake of the Gospel, will experience complete deliverance from all that inhibits their full experience of Christ. In heaven these individuals are rewarded for their faithful service (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). As a result, there is no earthly lost worth noting and the heavenly benefits are incredibly more valuable (Romans 8:18; Revelation 3:21-22).

   a) One who decides to maintain a self-centered life in this world by refusing Jesus’ requirements (Mark 8:34) will ultimately lose his life to eternal ruin. Conversely a person who will “lose” (give over, “deny himself”) his life (even literally, if necessary) in loyalty to Jesus and the gospel (cf. 10:29) by accepting His requirements (8:34) will actually preserve it forever. As a follower of Jesus, He is heir to eternal life forever with God (cf. 10:29–30; Rom. 8:16–17).

C. The Benefits (vs. 35):

1. Now Christ compares the lost to present gains.
2. What eternal advantages does a person continually receive from their earthly successes?
3. As a result of investments a person can gain a profitable life.

   a) What is the value of obtaining all that the world has to offer if a person dies and cannot enjoy it? Or, what is the good of amassing a world of earthly possessions for a few short years if it means the loss of eternal life.

4. The profits the person gains is based on the way the world leads the person to think of what makes life profitable (Luke 12:13-34).
5. The person who follows the world system in an effort to experience a wonderful life cost themselves spiritual and eternal loss (1 Corinthians 3:10-15; Ecclesiastes 2:1-11).
6. Christ went from discussing the day to day life of a person and now discusses their inner spiritual life and their eternal existence.
7. In the end a person’s soul lives forever. The benefits of earth only
9. A person who functions from a worldly standpoint does not experience spiritual growth or heavenly rewards (Matthew 6:19-24; 1 John 2:15-17).

10. This question is concerning what would a person, on an ongoing basis, permanently put in place for their eternal benefits once they come to realize, after gaining earthly blessings, that it cannot buy them eternal benefits. Even though they may have been busy servicing the world they were a lazy slave as far as God’s agenda is concerned so their reward is given to someone else who was faithful (Matthew 25:24-28).

11. Once a person realizes that earthly possessions does not provide inner spiritual and eternal rewards there is no end to the earthly achievements they would give up to gain it (Matthew 13:34).

12. A person, once and for all, would permanently put in place all the earthly achievements if they realize all they would gain spiritually and eternally.

13. When a person sees all that heaven has to offer what could they exchange for it? (Romans 8:18 for a person who saw the 3rd heavens – 2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

14. Saving one’s life for the purpose of experiencing spiritual maturity is priceless.

15. It is better to forsake, when necessary, earth’s benefits for a complete experience on earth and heaven (Psalm 37:4; 112:1-3; 128; Proverbs 24:3-5).


