

YOU DO NOT WANT TO LEAVE TOO, DO YOU?

John 6:60-71

You've seen it happen. A new program begins in your church, club, school, or community. At first a lot of people get on board and enthusiastically dive into the work. Things go well for a while. The program is successful.

Then something changes. The program doesn't turn out to be what some people expected, and they stop showing up. Others run out of steam. The committed complain that 10 percent of the people are doing 90 percent of the work. Discouraged leaders try valiantly to keep things going and get others interested, while they wonder, *Why do people start out gung ho and then quit?*

Jesus saw the backs of many of his admirers when his words became too difficult. His response to their rejection showed his absolute confidence in his own identity.

Group Discussion. How do you feel about quitters?

Personal Reflection. When have you started something enthusiastically and then quit? Are you sorry now that you quit, or glad you did?

Jesus had recently multiplied a small amount of food to feed a crowd of thousands. Later he taught that he was “the true bread from heaven,” the “bread of life,” and the “living bread” (John 6:32, 35, 51). His hearers resented such an audacious claim, but Jesus made his point even more graphically: this living bread is his own flesh, and “unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will

raise them up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them" (John 6:53-56). His shocking words led some of his followers to turn away from him. *Read John 6:60-71.*

1. What is the conflict in this passage?
2. Meeting criticism of their words, many people would back down and try to soften what they had said. Instead, how did Jesus defend his claims (vv. 61-65)?
3. Why do you think Jesus was willing to lose followers over the issue of his being the true bread from heaven?
4. Why do people lose their enthusiasm for Christ? Think of as many reasons as you can.

5. What keeps you going as a faithful Christian?
6. What would you tell a person (or what have you told a person) who said they doubted whether being a Christian was worth it?
7. When some of Jesus' followers left him, he pointedly asked the Twelve if they were going to leave also (v. 67). Though his question sounds plaintive, the original Greek indicates that he expected them to answer no. Why do you think he singled out the Twelve (including Judas) to ask this question?
8. What connection do you see between Jesus letting some of his followers go and the fact that he knew people's hearts (vv. 64, 70-71)?

9. Almost all of us have realized, probably with surprise, that our devotion to Christ was not what it once was. What, if anything, did you do about that realization?

10. In what areas of your life would you like to have greater stamina and perseverance in faith?

11. As you consider areas where your faith falters, what encouragement do you find in Peter's response to Jesus' question (vv. 68-69)?



Simon Peter said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God" (vv. 68-69). Make Simon Peter's words your own prayer, acknowledging that Christ is the Son of God and that he is your only hope of eternal life.

NOW OR LATER

Study Jesus' approach to three would-be followers in Luke 9:57-62.

Study Hebrews 6:1-20, which combines a strong warning about falling away with warm assurance of God's faithfulness.