

Counting the Cost: The Early Years

Volume III: February/March 2000 – December/January 2001

Nancy Twigg, Editor and Compiler

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The information and ideas in this compilation of newsletters are offered as general suggestions only. The publisher has taken precautions to ensure that the content is accurate and trustworthy. Readers should exercise judgment in deciding whether a particular piece of advice is appropriate and applicable for use in their own circumstances.

Introduction

In case you've not yet read Volumes I and II of this series, let me take a moment to share with you a little about this e-book. At first glance, it may appear to be only a collection of back issues of a newsletter. However, to me and my family, *Counting the Cost: The Early Years* is much, much more.

In a way, making these issues widely available is sort of like tearing pages out of your journal and posting them on a community bulletin board. These pages chronicle the journey my family made (and continues to make) into a simpler, more meaningful way of life. Throughout the newsletter, you'll see strengths and weaknesses, victories and disappointments, security and sometimes overwhelming insecurity. These pages contain more than just helpful hints and money-saving ideas; the pages tell the story of how we have faithfully and obediently tried to carry out what we feel God has called us to do.

A Bit of History

For three years, *Counting the Cost* was a subscription-based printed newsletter. After three years, we discovered that the economics of printing and mailing a newsletter were not cost-effective. Around that same time, we also found (much to our surprise) that our first child was on the way. Soon thereafter *Counting the Cost* became the free, advertising-supported e-mail newsletter that it is today. At the time of this writing, the email newsletter has 6000 subscribers.

From a financial standpoint, *Counting the Cost* has never been very successful, but from a personal point of view, it has been a smash hit. Besides making many wonderful online friends, we were also afforded many unique opportunities. This little publishing enterprise has been a stepping stone to bigger and better things in many areas of our lives. We thank God for every bit of adventure we've encountered along the way.

How This Volume Is Different from Volumes I and II

As could be expected, the printed version of *Counting the Cost* was at its prime by the third year of publication. I was getting pretty good at mastering the quirky desktop publishing program I was using and I'd learned a lot more about making the newsletter visually appealing.

In the third year, our lives changed drastically and *Counting the Cost* changed in major ways, too. I became a full-time student that year and we moved almost 400 miles away from the place we'd always called home. As a student, I was concerned about not having enough time to do a monthly newsletter, so in the year 2000, *Counting the Cost* went to a bi-monthly format and increased to 12 pages in length rather than just eight.

I also began using even more guest contributions. I continued to write the regular features and the cover article myself, but depended heavily on online friends to provide the rest. I even got my husband, Michael, involved by getting him to do a regular do-it-yourself, handyman kind of feature called, "Dr. Michael" (a play on the fact that he has his Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering). This column was an attempt to appeal to the male readers in our audience.

By the third or fourth issue in this volume, we had decided that year 2000 would be the last year for the printed newsletter. By that time, we learned we had a baby on the way, and I felt certain I could not continue the printed newsletter with an infant in tow. You can hear a touch of sadness in my writing as I prepared myself and my readers for the final issue.

As I did in the previous volumes, I should note that many of the websites and mailing addresses mentioned in this volume have changed in the years since 2000. Some of these businesses have just moved around; others have gone belly-up. Rather than going back and updating each one, we left all the addresses as is to maintain the integrity of the newsletter in its original state. If you find a link that no longer works or an address you'd like to verify before sending correspondence, I suggest you use an Internet search engine to look for current contact info.

You'll also notice that there is not an index to this e-book because the PDF document is searchable using the "Find" command. If you want to know if a particular topic has been covered in this volume, use the "Find" command under the "Edit" menu in Adobe Reader. You can also access the "Find" command by pressing CTRL-F on your keyboard. For additional help, we've included a very thorough Table of Contents to assist you in finding the information you're looking for.

I hope you find this volume as inspirational and informational as the previous two. I believe that you will.

Enjoy!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy". The script is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial 'N'.

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