

die to self



Goal: To understand that Christ does not call disciples to Himself to make their lives easy and prosperous, but to make them holy and spiritually productive.

ESV **Matthew 16:24** Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

NLT **Matthew 16:24** Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me. ²⁵ If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.

"If anyone would come after me..."

- This means **ANYONE/ EVERYONE** who will be a follower of Christ

"Let him *deny* himself..."

- **DENY** ἀπαρνέομαι - 'refuse to recognize or acknowledge', *deny, reject, disown, repudiate*
- Don't let the words "*let him deny himself*" fool you ... is this an option or a command? _____
- As you read the definitions of "deny self" above, this is not meaning that one must say *no* to some kind of pleasure occasionally ... its **DEATH TO SELF**. What do you think it looks like to **DIE TO SELF**?

"Take up his cross..."

Taking up one's **cross** is not some mystical level of selfless "deeper spiritual life" that only the religious elite can hope to achieve. Nor is it the common trials and hardships that all persons experience sometime in life. A cross is not having an unsaved husband, nagging wife, or domineering mother-in-law. Nor is it having a

physical handicap or suffering from an incurable disease. **To take up one's cross is simply to be willing to pay any price for Christ's sake. It is the willingness to endure shame, embarrassment, reproach, rejection, persecution, and even martyrdom for His sake.**¹

For a disciple of Christ to **take up his cross** is for him to be willing to start on a death march. **To be a disciple of Jesus Christ is to be willing, in His service, to suffer the indignities, the pain, and even the death of a condemned criminal**²

- So ... what does this look like for you in the circumstances God has you in right now? What will it cost you to follow Christ?

“Follow me...”

True discipleship is submission to the lordship of Christ that becomes a pattern of life. *“The one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked”* (1 John 2:6)³

God expects us to pattern our lives after His.

- What are some things you KNOW God wants you to stop doing now?

- What are some thoughts, motives and desires you KNOW God wants you to change?

- What are some things you KNOW God wants you to START doing now?

¹ MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew* (Vol. 3, pp. 48–49). Chicago: Moody Press.

² MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew* (Vol. 3, p. 49). Chicago: Moody Press.

³ MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew* (Vol. 3, p. 50). Chicago: Moody Press.

“Lose your life ... or find it ...”

25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

This second verse may seem a bit tricky, but its just the natural outflow of what was said before and many other places in scripture:

- It's the rich young ruler who went away sorrowful because he had “much stuff” and it was more valuable than God (Matt. 19:16-24).
- It’s the “would be disciple” who wanted to follow but not until his dad died so he wouldn't lose his inheritance (Matt 8:21-22).
- It's the very bold claim ... YOU CAN'T HAVE TWO MASTERS!

ESV Matthew 6:24 "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

What are the reasons that make it hard to DIE TO SELF? What are the things you don't want to let go of, deny or give up for God?

What would you have to do or let go of TODAY to die to self and have God rule your life?
