



Matthew 16:24-25

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.

whoever wants to be my disciple

Question: Do I want to be a disciple of Jesus?

must deny themselves

deny- ἀπαρνέομαι ä-pär-ne'-o-mī (verb) : to forget one's self, lose sight of one's self and one's own interests

Question: When was the last time I denied myself something for the cause of Christ?

and take up their cross

save- σώζω sō'-zō (verb) : to save, keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction

Acts 20:24

However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.

Question: In what ways have I been holding on to my life, trying to keep it safe, instead of letting go and surrendering to Christ?

and follow me

Question: In what specific way can I follow Jesus by obeying Him this week?

Vince Antonucci
At first I didn't know if the stories in the Bible were true, but if they were, I knew I had hit the mother lode when I encountered Jesus. There never was, and never would be, anyone like Him. He was perfect and amazing in every way, and (again if it was all true) I wanted to know Him, follow Him, and be as close as possible to Him for the rest of my life.

John 3:30
He must become greater; I must become less.

Paul Powell in The Complete Disciple
...if we are going to be disciples of Jesus, we must begin by denying ourselves.

²⁵ **For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.**

Deitrich Bonhoeffer in The Cost of Discipleship
The cross is there, right from the beginning, [the disciple] has only got to pick it up: there is not need for him to do out and look for a cross for himself, no need for him deliberately to run after suffering. Jesus says that every Christian has his own cross waiting for him, a cross destined and appointed by God.

Mike Erre in The Jesus of Suburbia
The revolution of Jesus isn't for the faint of heart or the middle-of-the-road. It isn't safe. It isn't comfortable. It costs us a great deal to say yes. We take hold of the revolution by abandoning ourselves to Jesus and letting go of everything else.



Taking up the Jesus challenge
of selfless obedience
Life group study

RELATE

What's the most you've paid or the furthest you've gone to see a person, place or event you're a fan of?

What kinds of things did (or do) you do when you had a crush on someone?

Have you had an employer, friend, coach or teacher for whom you'd eagerly do whatever they asked? What was it about them that encouraged you to do that?

What principle, insight or idea from this sermon was especially important for you?

READ

Psalms 119:1-32 David's Devotion to God

How would you describe the emotional state of David as he writes this psalm? What is the source of his strong feeling? To whom are his words addressed?

What does David most fear according to this psalm? What is his greatest desire? Do you share either of these? How?

How does David view God's laws and decrees? Are any of the ways he describes God's law surprising ways to you? How? Can you think of any laws you feel that way about, whether God's or the government's?

Do you think that David is more devoted to God's law than he is to God? How can a person love God's Word without being a legalist? Share an example from your experience.

Have you in the past resented or rebelled against a law of God that you now accept and obey? What happened to change your view?

David writes that he "runs in the paths of your commands, for you have set my heart free." In what ways has obeying God's law freed you?

REFLECT

Is devotion, obedience, or self-denial valued today? Why or why not? Do you see these expressed towards things that are less deserving than God? Do humans need to be devoted to something?

RESPOND

Write a love letter or poem to God, expressing your love for Him in your words, for your own specific reasons.

