



DENYING YOURSELF

AUGUST 18, 2025

READ MATTHEW 16:24-28 - Jesus taught that to be His disciple (His follower), the spiritual discipline of self-denial is required: "Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me'" (**Matthew 16:24**).

Denying yourself is an essential part of the Christian life. Jesus called upon those who wish to be His followers to ***reject the natural human inclination toward selfishness***. The Lord Himself exemplified self-denial (**John 13:1-17**).

When a person carried a cross in Jesus' day, no one thought of it as a persistent annoyance or symbolic burden. To a person in the first century, the cross meant one thing and one thing only: death by crucifixion. To carry a cross was to face the most painful and humiliating means of death human beings could develop.

God seeks "true worshipers [who] will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth" (**John 4:23**). Jesus' call to "take up your cross and follow Me" serves to screen out the misleading, double-minded, and dissembling.

Commitment to Christ means taking up your cross daily, giving up your hopes, dreams, possessions, and even your very life if need be for the cause of Christ. Only if you are willingly take up your cross may you be called His disciple (**Luke 14:27**). The reward is worth the price.

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 PETER 4:1-2

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life.