

## APPLICATION

- Is there an area in your life where God is asking you to deny yourself and take up your cross? What can you do to follow Jesus in this area?
- Ask God to show you areas in your life that are not yet fully submitted to the Lordship of Jesus. Ask God for specific things you can do daily to grow in these areas.
- Do you have people in your life that you can turn to in moments when you need to be strengthened in your faith as you follow Christ? Think of three things you can do to be more intentional in staying connected with other believers. Commit to start doing them this week.

## PRAYER

- Thank God for sending Jesus, the true and perfect representation of what it means to completely surrender to God and His will. Pray for grace to continue to follow Jesus even when it gets difficult.
- Ask God for grace to carry the cross He is calling you to carry. Pray that you will be reminded of the gospel every day to help you live a life in light of Jesus' cross.
- Thank God for your friends in your church community. Take time to talk to them this week to thank them and pray for them.

## Cost of the Cross

## Denying Self

WEEK 3

## WARM-UP

- What is something you've had to do daily for some time to achieve a goal? Share what happened.
- Recall a time when you faced criticism or doubt in pursuing something important to you. How did you respond to it, and what did you learn?
- Have you ever been part of a supportive group or community that helped you stay on track with a personal goal? How did they encourage you?

**WORD** *<sup>23</sup>And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. <sup>24</sup>For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. <sup>25</sup>For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? <sup>26</sup>For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels."* **LUKE 9:23-26**

Jesus calls His followers to live a life of self-denial, where personal desires and comforts are set aside to align with God's will, even in the face of hardship or suffering. He warns against the futility of gaining worldly success at the expense of one's soul and cautions that being ashamed of Him or His teachings will result in separation from His glory. Today, we will look at the posture that Jesus is calling His disciples to have: denying ourselves, taking up our cross, and following Jesus.



## 1 | Let us deny ourselves completely.

*23And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it."* **LUKE 9:23-24**

Denying ourselves completely involves abandoning self-centered desires and ambitions to fully follow Jesus. It is not simply denying ourselves of certain things, but denying control of our own lives. This means setting aside personal convenience, surrendering every aspect of our lives to align with God's will. Jesus warns that those who strive to preserve their lives through self-reliance or worldly pursuits will ultimately lose what truly matters. In contrast, those who willingly let go of their own interests for Jesus' sake will find true and eternal life, both in this life and in the next. What are some of the things you had to give up completely to follow Christ?

.....

.....

.....

## 2 | Let us take up our cross daily.

*23And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. . . . 25For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?"* **LUKE 9:23, 25**

Crucifixion was the most horrifying, excruciating, and humiliating form of death during the time of Jesus. As His followers, we are to embrace God's will no matter what the cost, even if it leads to rejection, suffering, and even death. Jesus perfectly modeled this when He faced the cross, enduring suffering without defending Himself and fully submitting to God's plan. His sacrifice motivates us to live

like Him—humbly, sacrificially, and faithfully. We may not presently face the threat of death, but there are many costs that we are to pay to follow Jesus. What does taking up your cross daily mean for you?

.....

.....

.....

## 3 | Let us follow Jesus continually.

*23And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. . . . 26For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels."* **LUKE 9:23, 26**

Following Jesus is not a one-time decision but an ongoing journey of obedience to His words and commands. We are called to align every aspect of life with His teachings, regardless of situation or season in life. This reminds us that true discipleship involves steadfast devotion, boldly living out our faith, and obeying Christ wholeheartedly every day, knowing that our faithfulness will be honored in His kingdom. How have you seen the importance of staying connected with other believers?

.....

.....

.....

Motivated by Jesus' sacrifice and the promise of eternal life, we are invited to walk in His footsteps, surrendering our desires and trusting His plan. This journey with Christ is not a solo endeavor; it is something we share with fellow believers where we receive encouragement, accountability, and support. Together, we pursue a life that prioritizes God's kingdom, living boldly and unashamed for His glory and purpose.