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Luke 9:23-25

And He said to them all,
If any man will come after Me,
let him deny himself,
and take up his cross daily,
and follow Me.

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it:
but whosoever will lose his life for My sake,
the same shall save it.



For what is a man advantaged,
if he gain the whole world, and lose himself,
or be cast away?

To deny self is to
renounce self-centeredness.

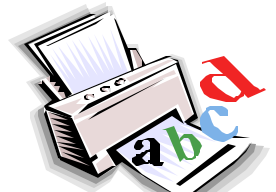
Self-centeredness is something people like to hang on to. They're all taken up with self, with what is going to be good for self, with what self wants to do.

This Scripture in Luke is not a one-time thing. It's progressive:

as we take up our cross and follow Jesus,
we're moving on:

continuously moving forward ⇨ ⇨ ⇨

Realize that there are **no red lights** in following Jesus. There is **only a green light**. A constant moving ahead.



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There is only one direction to go; and there is no stopping after you start.

Denying self, taking up one's cross, and following Jesus is a daily thing of advancing every day, moving forward each day in what God would have us to do.

There are **no red lights**, no stopping places, just a continuous moving forward day by day by day.

But I'm getting tired of this. I don't feel like taking up my cross today. I just don't feel like it. I'll take it up again tomorrow.



Oh, no! you can't do that. You have to advance day by day.

Remember, now, there are no red lights, no stopping places. Once you start this way, it's

a going on to the end of the journey.

Luke 9:62

**And Jesus said unto him,
No man,
having put his hand to the plow,
and looking back,
is fit for the kingdom of God.**

In order to fulfill the Scriptures - denying yourself, taking up your cross daily, and following Jesus - you have to have a surrendered life.

It can't be done unless you surrender your all. There's no way you can do what God wants you to do unless you surrender yourself completely unto Him.

It takes a full dedication to the Lord, a genuine consecration.

You can't just play games: taking up your cross today to follow Him today - but tomorrow , , , laying it down to do your own thing.

Romans 12:1, 2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

This is quite a Scripture: *present your body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.*

A living sacrifice! Sacrifice your life while you're still alive - living a sacrificial life.

Give yourself totally unto God, and let Him do whatever He wants with your life - even if it means denying what you want.

Christ suffered and died on the cross.

When it talks about the cross in Luke 9, it is speaking of suffering and death to self.

Suffering and death go together here: death to the things we might want in this life, dying out to our plans and ideas, our ambitions and goals, denying self.

So many have goals that they are striving for, what *they* want to do.

They never think of asking God what *He* wants for their lives.

The first thing we're to do is here in Luke: If we're going to follow the Lord, we have to deny ourselves and take up our cross daily.

We can't always follow those things that we have planned for our lives. We may have planned some of those things for years: **But what is God's plan for our lives?**

If we want to really follow the Lord, serving Him in the capacity that He is calling us to, we have to deny self and take up our cross daily, going on to follow Him.

We're going to have to die out to those things that we desire, those things that we want for our lives, those things that conflict with what the Lord wants of us.

It's not a matter of what we want, not what we desire for our lives.

If we're a child of God, we have no business saying what want or what we're going to do: *I'm going to do this!!!*
regardless of what the Bible says,
regardless of what God wants me to do.

I Corinthians 6:19, 20

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

We are not our own. We have been bought by God. Yes, bought with a price!

And what a great price that was!

Who are we to say what we're going to do or not going to do? God is displeased when He hears us talk that way.

Many years ago, my husband was sent by the Lord to various countries for weeks at a time: he went to Africa for about three weeks, St. Thomas and St. Croix for a season, and several other places.

Each time, I remained back home while he went. Then, one time, I decided I was going to go with him, rather than stay home.

And, do you know, the Lord stopped me right then and there. He let me know that I had no right to say what I was going to do or not going to do.

He gave me a clear lesson on that.

He let me know that I had no right to say what I was going to do with my life, no right to say I wasn't going to let my husband go alone.

And neither do you have any right to say what you're going to do with your life. You're not your own. You were bought with a price.

Your heart and mind should be in the place where you're seeking the will of God in the decisions you make.

Later on, when my husband went to India, God wanted me to go with him. This time, it was His will for me.

Romans 12:1

I beseech you therefore, brethren,

by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Give yourself totally unto God. Be fully surrendered unto His will.

You'll never take up your cross and follow Him if you don't deny yourself.

You're going to have to surrender - everything. You have to surrender all, and let Him completely have His way in your life.

Some would scorn that. They don't understand how that could be.

But if they had a deep love for God, and desired what He wanted for their lives, they wouldn't shrug it off, saying it can't be done.

It can be done! Don't say it can't be done. You can fully surrender your life unto God, putting Him first in your life, doing His will. Yes, you can do it.

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Don't try to do it in your own strength, but do it through Christ - in the strength which He gives to you.

First of all, we have to have a heart that loves God, a heart that desires His will for our lives above all things.

We have to renounce self-centeredness.

Self-centeredness has taken hold of many of God's people, hindering God's will.

Romans 12:2

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

This world has a mold.

Do you know what a mold is? You pour batter into a mold to make a cake in some shape, such as a star, or a heart.

Did you ever make anything in a mold with plaster of paris? Every time you fill the mold with plaster and it hardens, it's in the shape of the mold.

Well, this world has a mold. And many want to fit into that mold.

Some have one foot in the church, and the other foot in the world. They profess to be Christians, while conforming to the world and its ways.



When they go to church they look like holy Sue, or holy Joe.

But when they are away from the church! that's another story - dressing - or undressing - like the world.

There's more undressing than dressing in the world today, showing as much of their bodies as they can while still getting away with it.

There's a mold. And many of God's people adapt to that mold, not wanting to be different - at church, or in the world. They want to fit in wherever they are.

They dress according to who they're with - having two standards: a standard that fits at church and a standard that fits the world.

Of course, today there are some churches where you don't have to discard your worldly mold - because there's no difference. The world is in the church. There's no difference!

They wear skirts so short that when they sit down there's nothing to cover their legs! Or slits that are windows to show off their legs as they walk.

Now, there's a purpose for all that. They want the men to see their legs.

What a thing to do - come into the house of God to draw attention to your body.

There's a mold. Yes, the world has a mold.

And if you're not careful, you will find yourself conforming to the worldly standards, fitting in with the worldly mold, because you're not keeping the right type of fellowship.

Get caught up with going the way of the world, and you'll never get down to the business of denying yourself and taking up your cross to follow the Lord.

You never will - as long as you continue to flirt with the world.

Yes, the Christian life is a surrendered life. It should be a life that is consecrated and dedicated unto the Lord.

Don't say it can't be done. It can be done. You can wholly serve the Lord - if you want to.

There are examples in the Word of God to prove that we can deny self and wholly follow the Lord:

Numbers 32:12

Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed the Lord.

Here we see two men who really loved God: Joshua and Caleb. These two men had the testimony that they wholly followed the Lord.

And if they could do it, then you and I can do it. Don't think that we can't deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow the Lord. These two men prove that we can.

We're talking about giving up our own plans and ambitions, giving up our goals and desires - renouncing all these things.

Yes, renouncing self-centeredness to wholly follow the Lord and His plans for our lives.

Philippians 3:7

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

Paul had been a Pharisee, a well educated man; yet he counted all he had gained in this life as loss for Christ.

Philippians 3:8

Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ

Paul wanted all he could get of the Lord. He wanted the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus, counting all he had gained as loss,

that he might win Christ:

Philippians 3:9-11

And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Back in the book of Romans, we saw that we are not to be conformed to the world; and here Paul is saying we should be conformed unto the death of Jesus Christ.

Paul died daily to self. And we, too, need to die out to self - daily.

I Corinthians 15:31

I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

We need to die out to self, and let Christ take over. That's when the blessings of God will come.

Yes, the blessings will come when we obey God, loving Him so much that we wouldn't have it any other way than the way of obedience.

In the Scriptures we find examples of those who chose this way and were greatly blessed. And, if we put God first in our lives, you and I can be blessed, too.

Surrender! that's the word we need to hear - surrendering all to the Lord, whatever He asks of us.

You may not be asked to sell your home or give up your job. But if He asks you to, then be willing to say yes.

Be obedient to whatever He calls you to do.

If you surrender all to God, then you'll be quick to answer yes to whatever He asks of you.

Luke 5:27

And after these things He went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and He said unto him, Follow Me.

Levi, also known as Matthew, was at work collecting taxes when Jesus came along and called him, saying, *Follow Me*.

Luke 5:28

And he left all, rose up, and followed Him.

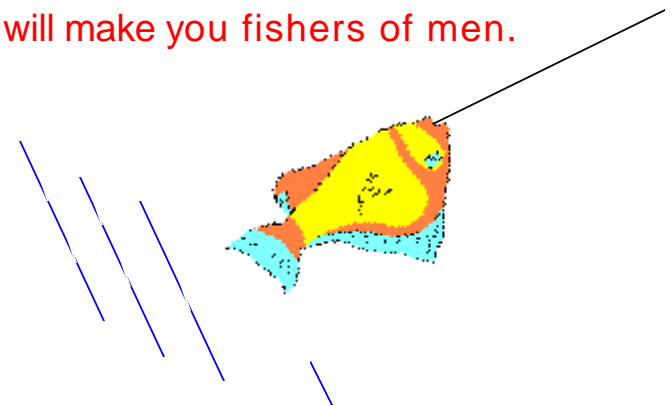
Who would want to get up and leave their business behind?

Who? someone who loves God. If God asked him to do that in order to take up His call on his life. Yes, someone with a great love for God would do it.

He would be willing to deny self, take up his cross, and follow Him - because he loves the Lord more than he loves self.

Matthew 4:19

And He saith unto them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.





Let your light so shine before men,
that they may see your good works,
and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

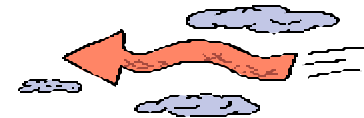
Matthew 5:16

My Dear Friend

Be of good courage, my friend,
Do not follow the worldly trend.
Let your light shine before all men,
So others may see and want Him.

Doing always your part to win
those who are lost,
Regardless the time or the cost.
Always loving and serving the Lord.
Praying, witnessing, and
obeying His Word.

Patricia Dailey
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