

# The Cost of Following Jesus

Following Jesus is the greatest decision we can ever make, but it comes with real costs. Discover the daily choices of discipleship—denying yourself, taking up your cross, and living faithfully for Christ—that lead to eternal reward.



## Introduction

Every worthwhile decision in life carries a cost. Parents know this when raising children. Each child is unique, requiring love, sacrifice, and wisdom. In the same way, our relationship with God requires dedication and obedience. Following Jesus is not about convenience; it is about surrender.

When Jesus called His disciples, He made it clear that following Him would require sacrifice, commitment, and courage. Today, we will look at three aspects of the cost of following Jesus, and how choosing Him transforms everything.

## Denying Ourselves

Jesus said in Luke 9:23:

Luke 9:23

(23) Then he said to them all: **"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."**

To deny ourselves means setting aside our selfish desires, ambitions, and comforts so that God's will becomes the priority. In a world where everything tells us to "put yourself first," Jesus calls us to put Him first. This does not mean we lose our identity; it means our true identity is found in Him.

Ask yourself daily, "Am I seeking my will, or God's will?" That may look like choosing patience with a difficult coworker, giving generously even when it stretches your budget, or forgiving someone who has hurt you. Denying ourselves is not just about what we give up, but what we gain in Christ's presence and peace.

Think of one area of your life where you need to say, "Not my will, but Yours, Lord." Share in the comments below one step you are taking to put Jesus first this week.

## Taking Up Our Cross

Having looked at what it means to deny ourselves, let's go deeper into what Jesus meant when He told us to take up our cross.

To take up our cross means embracing sacrifice and being willing to endure hardship for the sake of Christ. In the Roman world, the cross symbolized suffering, shame, and death. When Jesus says, **"take up your cross,"** He is not inviting us to a comfortable life, but to a life of commitment, even when it costs us something.



Jesus reminds us in Matthew 16:24-25:

#### Matthew 16:24-25

(24) Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. (25) For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.

Sometimes following Jesus means we may lose status, relationships, or opportunities. But the reward of knowing Him and walking in eternal life far outweighs the cost.

Carrying your cross might look like standing firm in your faith when others mock or misunderstand you. It could be choosing honesty when dishonesty seems easier. It may be holding onto your integrity in business, even if it costs you financially.

What "cross" are you carrying right now? How has God helped you stay faithful in hardship? Share in the comments below to encourage someone else walking through a similar season.

#### Living Faithfully to the End

Finally, following Jesus is not just about a single moment of decision; it is about staying faithful day by day, year after year, until the end.

The Apostle Paul, at the end of his life, wrote in 2 Timothy 4:7-8:

#### 2 Timothy 4:7-8

(7) I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. (8) Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Following Jesus is not just about a single moment of decision; it is about staying faithful day by day, year after year, until the end. The cost of discipleship is a lifelong journey of faith, endurance, and perseverance.

Living faithfully means remaining rooted in prayer, Scripture, and fellowship. It means choosing not to walk away when life gets tough, but instead holding onto Christ and His promises. Surround yourself with people who encourage you to keep going and remind you of the eternal reward waiting for those who endure.

Share in the comments below one way you are staying faithful to Jesus right now, whether through prayer, worship, serving, or encouraging others. Your story can inspire someone else to keep pressing on.

#### Conclusion

The cost of following Jesus is real: denying ourselves, taking up our cross, and persevering in faith. But the eternal reward of walking with Christ makes every sacrifice worth it. And remember, you are not walking this path alone. The Spirit of God strengthens you, and the Body of Christ stands alongside you.



### This Week

Take time each day this week to reflect on what it means to deny yourself, carry your cross, and live faithfully. Ask the Lord to show you one specific step to take in each of these areas. Then, put it into practice, and share your experience in the comments below so we can encourage one another as we follow Jesus together.

