

Luke 9:23-26 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

²³ And He was saying to *them* all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. ²⁴ For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. ²⁵ For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? ²⁶ For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and *the glory* of the Father and of the holy angels.

Here Jesus lays down the conditions of service for those who would follow him.

(1) A man must deny himself. What does that mean?

- Peter once denied his Lord. That is to say, he said of Jesus, "I do not know the man." To deny ourselves is to say, "I do not know myself." We must first say no to ourselves—not simply to pleasures or possessions, but to *self*.
- The questions are not, "How much can I get?" but, "How much can I give?"
Not, "What is the safe thing to do?" but, "What is the right thing to do?"
Not, "What is the minimum permissible in the way of work?" but, "What is the maximum possible?"
Our motive should be to glorify Christ.

(2) A Believer must take up his cross daily. Jesus understood crucifixion well.

- In the Roman world, the cross was a symbol of shame, guilt, suffering, and rejection. There could be no more despicable way to die. Crucifixion was not mentioned in polite conversation, and people would no more think of wearing crosses than we would think of wearing gold electric chairs.
- This means to be identified with Him in surrender, suffering, and sacrifice. You cannot crucify yourself; you can only yield your body to God. **Rom. 12:1 - 2** 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. ²And 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.*

(3) A Christian must follow Jesus. Become a disciple of Christ.

- The closest contemporary word to "disciple" is probably "apprentice." A disciple is more than a student who learns lessons by means of lectures and books. He is one who learns by living and working with his teacher in a daily "hands on" experience. Too many Christians are content to be listeners who gain a lot of knowledge but who have never put that knowledge into practice.

- Discipleship is a daily discipline: we follow Jesus a step at a time, a day at a time. Someone once grumbled a complaint, “The trouble with life is that it’s so daily!” But they were wrong. One of the *best* things about life is that we can take it a day at a time. **Psalms 118:24 (NASB)** This is the day which the LORD has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

John 8:31 (NLT)

³¹Jesus said to the people who believed in him, “You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings.

Monday Morning Moment:

“We are not saved from our sins because we take up a cross and follow Jesus, but because we trust the Savior who died on the cross for our sins. After we become children of God, then we become disciples.”

Romans 10:9 - 10 (NLT)

⁹If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

¹⁰For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved.