

Short Answer Series #13

What does it mean to take up your cross daily?

'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.' Luke 9 v 23-24. To 'take up your cross,' describes the Prisoner who is condemned to be crucified. They had to carry the cross-beam on their shoulders to the place of execution. Once they 'took up' that beam there was no going back, and no way out; they were on their way to the hereafter. They no longer concerned themselves with the affairs of this life, or what tomorrow may hold, because there was no tomorrow for them. Their earthly future was over, and their coming death would separate them from this world completely.

Jesus was saying, 'If anyone wants to follow me, there are three things you have to do. Deny yourself, and take up your cross daily, and follow me.'

To deny yourself is to deny your rulership of your own life. When self doesn't rule, the freedom that self had to rule is given up, and the ambitions self had can't be fulfilled. To 'take up your cross' is to see this world the way the condemned man on his way to execution sees it. There is no future for you here.

To 'follow Him,' is to be His shadow. You move when He moves, and stop when He stops. So you go where He goes, when He goes there. You don't choose where you go. He chooses, and you follow.

To 'save (keep) your life,' is to keep your personal freedoms to choose where you will go, what you will do there, and what your future will be.

To 'lose (give up) your life,' is to surrender your personal freedoms and ambitions, and decide 'not my will but Yours be done.' Once we make the choice to follow Him, we still have to take up our cross every day; that's a course we must take every morning for that day, because life is lived one day at a time.

We accept every day from Him, and give it back to Him, in His service. We invite Him to step into our shoes and live through us every day, in whatever way He chooses to.

When we 'follow Him,' we will be in the right place, at the right time, for Divine appointments. Only He knows what each day will hold for us, and he can prepare us for it beforehand, because 'His way is perfect.' 2 Sam 22v31.

We don't lose anything we give up. Our future is brighter, safer, and secure. He knows what pleases us, and he will see that we enjoy it in ways that we never thought possible before.

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