



## *Take Up Your Cross Daily*

*Luke 9:22-26; 14:25-33*

### Study Helps and Application

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Again there is more here than you will likely be able to (or want to) cover. This is intended as material for you to draw from as you discern appropriate for the group entrusted to you. Understanding the privilege and responsibility of your calling as a leader, pray for wisdom, discernment, and faithfulness.

***Discussion 1:*** Implications I --A call to die. [Leaders--it is important for you to lead out in genuine confession and repentance. You have plenty to repent of. Also, where you have people in your group who are demonstrating “dying to self” in some area of their lives, commend and encourage them and thank God for it. Yet even these will have more to repent of (and will likely say so)]

- *Be Willing to Literally Die for Him* --Are you?

[Let's be careful with this one as we won't know until we face death. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. (1 **Corinthians 10:12**). The very ones who doubt that they would be found faithful may be the most willing to die because they are not trusting in their own “ginned up” courage.]

[Consider Peter in Gethsemane (draws the sword and attacks when outnumbered... willing to die ... only shortly later to deny Jesus!. Could it be that in some sense it is easier to (physically) die for Jesus than to live for him?]

- *Die to Your Wants & Comforts* --Can you?

<sup>ESV</sup> **Galatians 5:24** And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Galatians 6:14** But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

[Have you as a parent ever put your child's wants, comforts, needs, etc. ahead of your own? ... similarly for a spouse or even a good friend? Why did you do it? Compounding those reasons and applying them to Christ and His Kingdom is what we are talking about.]

- *Do you love yourself more than Christ?* [Other areas of the discussion may prove useful to reveal the answer to this...]

– *Die to Your Autonomy* --Who? Me?

[Hopefully we are all beginning to figure out that the gospel isn't about "me." It is about God and His glory, about Jesus Christ the Savior/Redeemer, it's about the Church His Body (singular)/Bride (singular). We often emphasize the one-anothers of Scripture. **How often do you still make your decisions based on "What's in it for me?"** *It often takes a deep look to get past our self-righteousness and the sin-justifying fronts we put up.*]

– *Die to Your Relationships*--A call to hate?

[Scripture is calling for us to "hate" those we tend to love most. Rather than avoiding or dismissing it, let's seek to understand it. One cannot read Scripture without encountering the clear call to love one another (Jn 13:34), our enemies (Lk 6:35), and yes, "even" our wives (Eph 5:25). It isn't as simple (and paradoxical) as "love those you would hate and hate those you would love" that Jesus is teaching. We get both with respect to husbands for wives.

Luke 14:26 If anyone comes to me. Cf. 9:23–24. Those who would be Christ's disciples must (1) love their family less than they love Christ (14:26); (2) bear the cross and follow Christ (v. 27); and (3) relinquish everything (v. 33). These are complementary ways of describing complete commitment. The first condition for discipleship is to hate one's father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, and life (cf. 18:29; see 6:20–22). **"Hating" is a Semitic expression for loving less** (cf. Gen. 29:30–31; Deut. 21:15–17; Matt. 10:37).

[ESV Study Bible--Luke 14:26 Notes--emphasis added]

Matthew records Jesus' teaching with 'loving less' as the meaning, but still reveals a radical "family plan" for His Kingdom:

<sup>ESV</sup> **Matthew 10:34** "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. <sup>35</sup> For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. <sup>36</sup> And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. <sup>37</sup> **Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.**

Matt. 10:34–37 **Sword is a metaphor for the inevitable separation between those who believe in Christ and those who do not, even within a family** (i.e., faith in Christ may set a man against his father). Jesus' own family opposed him before they came to recognize his true identity (13:53–58; Mark 3:21; John 7:3–5). Thus, whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. Jesus asked for unqualified allegiance, something even the most esteemed rabbi did not demand. The central point of Matt. 10:34–37 is that love of God and his kingdom must take precedence over every other human relationship.

[ESV Study Bible--Matt 10:34-37 Notes--emphasis added]

- *Do you love any earthly person (or anything else) more than Christ?*

[Leaders--This is another good opportunity to lead out in confession and repentance.]

***Discussion 2:*** A call to suffer. Christianity has often been marketed/sold as a path to a better life now, prosperity, health, and lasting happiness rather than the one and only way for sinners to be reconciled to God (who is Holy). Not only do the Scriptures teach us to expect suffering, but that we have been chosen for it *and* are to rejoice in it!

<sup>ESV</sup> **Philippians 1:29** For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake,

<sup>ESV</sup> **1 Peter 4:19** Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

<sup>ESV</sup> **James 1:2** Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, <sup>3</sup> for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Matthew 5:12** Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Below are implications about our suffering from our texts. If you know of examples of God glorifying suffering, share those with one another. There are additional texts given to aid in discussion--can you think of more?

- **Know His Suffering** [not just "know about" but experience...]

<sup>ESV</sup> **Philippians 3:10** that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

<sup>ESV</sup> **1 Peter 2:21** For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.

<sup>ESV</sup> **1 Peter 4:12** Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup> But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

<sup>ESV</sup> **John 15:20** Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.

<sup>ESV</sup> **2 Timothy 3:12** Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

- **Suffer for Others**

<sup>ESV</sup> **1 John 3:16** By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. <sup>17</sup> But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?

<sup>ESV</sup> **Philippians 2:3** Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

<sup>ESV</sup> **1 Corinthians 12:26** If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

– **Suffer for the Mission**

<sup>ESV</sup> **Matthew 5:11** "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

<sup>ESV</sup> **2 Timothy 2:10** Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

– **Suffer to Know Him** (see Matt. 10:34-37 above)

– **Suffer to Obey**

<sup>ESV</sup> **Hebrews 12:3** Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. <sup>4</sup> In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Romans 13:14** But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

<sup>ESV</sup> **Galatians 5:16** But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

***Discussion 3: Application--Self inspection. How do we apply this to ourselves? You will do what you want. What do you want? Are your wants being transformed?***

- Maybe you need to give more. *Is your giving recreational or radical?*
- Maybe you need to serve more. *Are you looking to serve or be seen serving?*
- Maybe you need to love more. *Ouch?* [Ask God for love for others, it comes from no other source!]
- Maybe there's something – some person, some need – that's recently crossed your path, and you thought about doing something about it for a split second, but quickly got "realistic" or "reasonable" and put it behind you. Maybe you need to go back to it and do something radical about it. *Does your heart ache over the ones you've already forgotten about?*

***Discussion 4: Baptism.***

- *Have you taken this step of obedience and publicly identified yourself with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ?*

[For those who have not, this is no small thing. It is an act of obedience rather than something you might consider optional. Too embarrassed? Too busy? Root out the source of your fear. Whatever it is you have to lose ... lose it for the rubbish it is.]

<sup>ESV</sup> **Philippians 3:8** Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

- We all probably tend to focus more on the “coming out of the water” aspect of the picture baptism represents. *Why is it so important for us to focus on the “going down into the water” aspect of baptism?*

[Becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ is not an *addition* to your life. It is the end of one life and the beginning of another. Baptism is a clear picture of both.]

<sup>ESV</sup> **Romans 6:6,11** We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin....<sup>11</sup> So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

### ***Discussion 5: Counting the cost. As we seek to obey the Great Commission, how important is it that we tell the truth when we evangelize?***

[Telling the truth with respect to suffering and the cost of discipleship is counter-cultural. Rather than promises of their “best life now” people need to know about sin, judgment, and the one way God has provided for reconciliation with Himself. They also need to know there will be trials, tribulations, temptations, and persecutions, or we risk creating false converts or nominal (“in name only”) Christians who are arguably the toughest to reach with the true Gospel. “Easy believism” can tend to inoculate people to the true count-the-cost Gospel. Let’s do something radical. Let’s proclaim the unadjusted Gospel even when we don’t think it will sell! Then let’s stand in awe as God reaps a glorious harvest of souls.]

### ***Memory Verse***

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<sup>ESV</sup> **Philippians 1:29** For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake,

### ***Additional Resources***

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- *Don’t Waste Your Life* by John Piper -- *get a stack of these to give away!*
- *The Radical Disciple: Some Neglected Aspects of Our Calling* by John Stott
- *Living the Cross Centered Life* by C. J. Mahaney



## *Take Up Your Cross Daily*

*Luke 9:22-26; 14:25-33*

A number of times each year we get the privilege as a church of seeing the evidence of God's grace, of changed hearts in the sacrament of baptism. Today, three people will be baptized in each service. Baptism is a public testimony – to the church and to the world – that those being baptized overtly and forever identify themselves with Jesus and his gospel.

### What does it cost to be baptized?

In one sense, nothing

In another sense, it costs you everything.

- > In one sense, becoming a Christian costs nothing – it is completely free
- > On another sense, becoming a Christian costs you everything

### What do you mean? - Cost or No Cost?

- It's like being a child in a loving-yet-disciplined home.
  - Acceptance is based on position, not performance.
  - But there are responsibilities when living in the home.
- Spurgeon illustrates this with a blind man healed (not expected to continue sitting on the corner begging).
- Eph 2:8-10 – not saved by works but by grace. But we're saved *unto good works* – to be his *poema* (workmanship/work of art).

→ Does it feel like there is a cost to your Christianity anymore?

If so, what word picture would you use to describe that pain, that cost, that commitment?

Baptism is a picture. It is a picture of death, burial, and resurrection.

- It is identifying with Christ, and specifically identifying with his death and resurrection
- It is also a picture of God's work in those who believe in Christ and follow him – the old self of sin and rebellion is laid to death and a new man or righteousness is raised up.
- You see the latter in Rom 6:1-4

*Romans 6:1-4 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? <sup>2</sup> May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup> Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup> Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.*

The LANGUAGE of DISCIPLESHIP is SHOCKINGLY RADICAL

Six Phrases in Luke 9:23-26

1. *Come after him (23)*
2. *Deny yourself (23)*
3. *Take up your cross (23)*
4. *Follow him (23)*
5. *Lose your life (24)*
6. *Proclaim Him (26)*

Six Phrases in Luke 14

1. *Hate family (26)*
2. *Hate your own life (26)*
3. *Carry your own cross (27)*
4. *Come after me (27)*
5. *Calculate the cost (28-32)*
6. *Give up your possessions (33)*

Note the large crowd (14:25) and how Jesus handles them

Take up your cross – Jesus likens following him to the worst form of execution known to man.

A symbol of suffering, rejection, shame, and death.

What I Talked About on Wednesday's Lord's Supper Service

The cross in the New Testament is talked about two different ways

- A Payment and a Path
- Salvation and Imitation
- Life-giving and Life-directing

It's not just that the cross saves and then those who believe are supposed to obey the one that died to save them. The cross is used as the symbol for our obedience, for our life, for our following of Jesus.

- Yes, the cross is the symbol of our salvation
- But it's also to be the tenor of our life.

I mentioned the great title of a book by Michael Gorman called "Cruciformity" – being conformed to image of the crucified Christ. The author shows that, in about half of the New Testament ref's to the cross of Christ, the symbol of the cross represents something about our life, our Christian living.

→ Isn't this a neglected aspect of cross language? We don't talk enough about this.

Let's NOT SOFTEN what JESUS is SAYING

Yes, he isn't saying that everyone has to sell their house in order to go to heaven. But that can't lead us to take all the meaning out of these verses ...

...or even to take the force or the shock or the seriousness out of these verses.

- It's easy to QUALIFY Jesus' discipleship language ("*he doesn't really mean...*")
- or to THEORIZE his discipleship language ("*hypothetically we have to be willing to give up all, but don't worry - he doesn't ask us to*")
- he or to CONTEXTUALIZE his disc language ("*persecution was more prevalent in the 1<sup>st</sup> C, so this was more for them than for us*")

WHAT these SAYINGS IMPLY: (I can think of at least 10 things)

### 1. Be Willing to LITERALLY DIE for Him

- > For many of the 1<sup>st</sup> C disciples, this became reality.
- > And for many today in other parts of the world, this is reality.
- > It could one day, perhaps in our lifetime, become reality in the west.

### 2. Die to Your WANTS

Let his wants be your wants. He said "hate your own life."

**Galatians 5:24** *Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

### 3. Die to Your COMFORTS

Ease, peace, safety are common idols in our culture.

How much of our safety and peace of mind is rooted in a million things that are not him?

**Galatians 6:14** *But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*

### 4. Die to Your AUTONOMY

Basically we do what we want....including the little religion bits here and there.

We don't give him "his part" - it's all his.

### 5. Die to Your RELATIONSHIPS

Sacrifice your reputation  
Sacrifice the idol of acceptance from others



Be willing to sacrifice the comfort even of parents, spouse, and children  
“he must hate...” (comparatively)  
= no rivals  
Good things cannot be ultimate things, so Jesus tests us.

The Q is, which is better – Jesus or mom? Jesus or wife? Jesus or kids?  
If all else is taken away, is he enough for you?  
If others turn against, is Christ your “portion”?

## 6. Know His SUFFERING

*Phil 3:10 – I want to share in his sufferings and be conformed to his death.*

*1 Peter 2:21 Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,*

*1 Peter 4:12-13 ...do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; <sup>13</sup> but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing...*

Suffering shows us what’s important; it gives us tunnel vision on what’s important and real.

Suffering produces patience and perseverance.

Do we really want to be shaped by the cross? Do we really want to look like Jesus?

*Do we just want to be free... and then just ‘like’ the cross?*

## 7. Suffer for OTHERS

He suffered for others, and he calls us to follow him in this.

*1 John 3:16-17 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. <sup>17</sup> But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?*

## 8. Suffer for the MISSION

Jesus first called the disciples with the words “follow me and I will make you fishers of men.” Each of the four gospel accounts end with him reiterating the mission once again.

## 9. Suffer to KNOW HIM

*“Come after him” (9:23; 14:27)*

- not just geographical; (it is geographical, but not that alone)
- not just about following his model (it is about being like him, but not that alone)
- but “coming after him” is also communal, relational.

*“That I may know him” (Phil 3)*

→ For us, this means going to the Word over and over and over (2 Cor 3)  
Take pains to see him and to commune with him.

## 10. Suffer to OBEY

Deny ourselves of the momentary, fleeting pleasures of sin.

*Hebrews 12:3-4 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. <sup>4</sup> You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin;*

## CALCULATE the COST

Explain 14:28-31

Not a Christian? Calculate the cost. Three times in Lk 14 Jesus says “you cannot be my disciple.”

Christian, do you need to RE-calculate the cost?

## How will you apply all this?

You want me to tell you what to do next, don't you? I can't.

For some it might mean that part of dying to self and being strategic for the mission is that they get out of debt, or quit that 80 hr/wk job.

Maybe you need to give more. Maybe you're giving is recreational, not radical.

Maybe you need to serve more.

Maybe you need to love more.

Maybe there's something – some person, some need – that's recently crossed your path, and you thought about doing something about it for a split second, but quickly got “reasonable” and put it behind you. Maybe you need to go back to it and do something radical about it.

Maybe you need to think about suffering differently.

Back to Baptism...

Baptism is a costly identification with Christ

Baptism is a vivid picture of where our hope lies – in his death and res

Baptism is a radical picture of what he's doing in us – so it implies serious responsibility

I'm going to pray, then we'll sing a song before Pastor Ron comes out and leads those being baptized.

As you watch, thank God for them and ponder your relationship with Christ.

*Next Week's Passage*

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*Proverbs 4:23 "Guard Your Heart" --Dr. Wayne Grudem (Clarus)*



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### Discussion 1: Implications I --A call to die.

- *Be Willing to Literally Die for Him* --Are you?
- *Die to Your Wants & Comforts* --Can you? (Gal 5:24; 6:14)
  - *Do you love yourself more than Christ?*
- *Die to Your Autonomy* --Who? Me?
  - *How often do you still make your decisions based on “What’s in it for me?”*
- *Die to Your Relationships*--A call to hate? (Matt 10:34-37)

Luke 14:26 If anyone comes to me. Cf. 9:23–24. Those who would be Christ's disciples must (1) love their family less than they love Christ (14:26); (2) bear the cross and follow Christ (v. 27); and (3) relinquish everything (v. 33). These are complementary ways of describing complete commitment. The first condition for discipleship is to hate one's father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, and life (cf. 18:29; see 6:20–22). **“Hating” is a Semitic expression for loving less** (cf. Gen. 29:30–31; Deut. 21:15–17; Matt. 10:37).

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- **Know His Suffering** (Phil 3:10; 1 Pet 2:21; 4:12-13; Jn 15:20; 2 Ti 3:12)
- **Suffer for Others** (1 Jn 3:16-17; Phil 2:3-4; 1 Co 12:26)

- **Suffer for the Mission** (Matt 5:11; 1 Ti 2:10)
- **Suffer to Know Him** (Matt. 10:34-37)
- **Suffer to Obey** (Heb 12:3-4; Rom 13:14; Gal 5:16)

***Discussion 3: Application--Self inspection. How do we apply this to ourselves? You will do what you want. What do you want? Are your wants being transformed?***

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