

*Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done. Matthew 16:24-27 (NIV)*

## **Cost**

**What will it cost you if you want to take up my cross and follow me?** Well, I know that my salvation is a gift. I cannot earn or merit my salvation. I know that you paid for my sins once and for all time. **Those are correct statements. But, I didn't ask you about your salvation. I asked you what it would cost you if you took my cross and followed me.** Well, I'm sure that it will cost me everything to be fully devoted to you. It will cost me everything to take up your cross and follow you. **That is true. Is it a big, unhappy burden for you to completely lose yourself in following and serving me? Is there someplace you would rather go? Is there something you would rather do?** No certainly not, it is not some big unhappy burden for me to lose myself in following and serving you. **Why is that the case?** You love me. You lived and died for me. You gave yourself completely for me. There is no greater gift that you could have given me, than the salvation, I have in you. Your love for me ignited my love for you. I now want to love you just like you love me. You gave yourself fully to me. I want to give myself fully to you. So, there is no place I would rather go than to where you lead me. There is nothing I would rather do than the work you have given me to do for you. Do I expect the work to be comfortable? Do I expect the tasks to be easy? Will I lead a life of comfort and ease because I want to love and follow and serve you? No, I will not. **How do you know that?** Well, so far following and serving you has not been comfortable and easy. You have stretched me far beyond my comfort level. You have asked me to do what I would have thought to be impossible. But, you have been with me to help me. You have strengthened and empowered me to do the work that you have given me to do. **Yes, my hand has been on you. My favor has rested on you.** Yes, I know, and it is my incredible joy and enthusiastic desire to do what is pleasing to you. It is no burden. I am doing what I want to do because I love you with all my heart and mind and soul and strength. I want you to work in and through me so I can bear fruit for your kingdom. I want to arrive in heaven knowing that I have gone and done your will. That is why I am willing to pay the cost of taking up the cross and following you. **That is very good.**

*Lord, I am fully devoted to you. I love you with all my heart and mind and soul and strength. It is my desire and joy to lose myself completely in serving you. I will deny myself completely. I will enthusiastically take up the cross so I can follow and serve you. Amen*



# Take Up His Cross

Year \_\_\_\_\_ Week \_\_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Becoming Like Christ** – Matthew 16:24-27

**In Context:** *Read Matthew 16*

**Begin With Prayer:**

***Here I am Lord. I Am Listening.***

**Meditating On God's Word:** ***(What is God speaking to your heart?)***

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**Considering The Words:** ***(What words speak to your heart?)***

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**Praying The Scripture:** ***(What prayer from your heart will you write?)***

Lord, I am fully devoted to you. I love you with all my heart and mind and soul and strength. It is my desire and joy to lose myself completely in serving you. I will deny myself completely. I will enthusiastically take up the cross so I can follow and serve you. Amen

**What It Means:** ***(What questions speak to your heart?)*** *(Suggested questions for small group discussion are in bold)*

How passionate is your desire to take up the cross as an act of loving, following and serving Christ?

**How are you denying yourself since you have taken up the cross to love, follow and serve Christ?**

How does daily taking up the cross of Christ impact the way that you live each day?

**Where has Christ led you to go and what has given you to do since you took up the cross to follow Him?**

How are you losing yourself completely in loving, following and serving Christ?

How have you found hope and joy and peace in being fully devoted to loving, following and serving Christ?

**Why can you be certain that the Lord will one day reward you for what you have done for Him?**

**Living It Out:** ***(What action step is God guiding your heart to take?)***

Daily take up the cross of Christ so that you can be fully devoted to loving, following and serving Him.

**Seeing It Happen:** ***(What are you trusting God for in your heart?)***

Have faith that the Lord will one day reward you for everything that you have gone and done for Him.

**Get Ready To Share:** ***(What can you share with others from your heart?)***

Share with another person or your small group how you are taking up the cross as you love, follow and serve Christ

**Close With Prayer:**

*Pause And Offer Prayers Of...*

***Quiet Yourself Before The Lord***

*With An Attitude Of Faith Listen To What The Lord Wants To Say To You*

Adoration... \_\_\_\_\_

Thanksgiving... \_\_\_\_\_

Confession... \_\_\_\_\_

Intercession... \_\_\_\_\_

Petition... \_\_\_\_\_

**Journal**

*As You Quiet Yourself Before The Lord*

**What Do You Want To Say To Me Lord?**

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**What Prayers Are You Praying Today?**

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**Prayer Of Blessing**

*(What Prayer Of Blessing Can You Pray For Another?)*

*May you take up your cross and follow Jesus Christ.*

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**Prayer To Carry**

*(What Prayer Would You Like To Carry Throughout Your Day?)*

*Lord, I will take up my cross and follow you.*

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**What Do You Want To Remember About Today?**

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**A Question To Ask God**

*(What Would You Like To Ask God?)*

*Lord, how can I take up my cross and follow you today?*

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