

Small Group & Personal Bible Study Lesson

Pastor Dennis Hadley

Memory Verse: Luke 9:23

Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

Daily Reading Plan:

- Day 1: Luke 9:18-27
- Day 2: Luke 6:43-49
- Day 3: Matthew 10:37-39
- Day 4: Romans 12:1-2
- Day 5: Colossians 1:3-14

Lesson: Following Jesus Requires Denial of Self

1. Read Luke 9:23, then answer what are three actions a follower of Christ is called to do? Write out what that means in your own words.

Go around the room and ask people to share what this means in their own words. You may want to first give them time to work on this alone.

ACTION TO TAKE

WHAT THIS MEANS IN MY OWN WORDS

1. *Deny Self*

I must choose to let go of the desires of my heart that are self satisfying and self serving. I must turn away from my own pursuits and self made idols

2. *Take Up Cross Daily*

Each day I must decide that no matter what I face in life I will consider it pure joy as I serve the Lord. I must trust that God is at work in all things (James 1:2-4, Hebrews 12:1-3, Romans 8:28)

3. *Follow Jesus*

The act of following indicates that I have chosen a leader. He is my leader, He is my master and I do not have the option to say no I won't. Henry Blackaby says two words that can never be used together are "No Lord". I can only say yes Lord. Another thought about following is this; you cannot follow Jesus and stay where you are. Following indicates moving, either physically, mentally, emotionally or spiritually but we must be moved. I cannot stay where I am, I cannot stay the way I am, I must be changed. We do the following, He does the transforming. And the road is not always easy!

2. When we trust and declare Jesus as our Lord, our life will show it. According to Luke 6:46, what is a good way to evaluate if Christ is truly the Lord of our life?

Obedience is the truest test of love for Jesus and His Lordship in our life. Jesus taught over and over again that if we love Him we will obey Him. John 14:21 says, "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me..." and in verse 23 He says, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching." The more I read the gospels the more I am convinced that Jesus expects obedience as a part of our life under His Lordship.

3. Read Matthew 10:37-39 and then reflect on Romans 12:1, Jesus wants us to submit our lives completely over to Him, Yet for many of us we hold tight to the reasons why we are reluctant to give Christ access to every area of our lives. What might you be holding on to?

Let everyone share what God is revealing to them. Encourage people to speak up. The best way to overcome our barriers to following Jesus is to acknowledge them and lay them at the feet of the one who knows and understands and the only one who can help us. The rest of us can pray!

A quote to ponder, "Christ is present in all Christians, Christ is prominent in some Christians. But in only a few Christians is Christ preeminent."

Consider leading a discussion around this quote. You might even want to start here. See if people agree or disagree. Ask, how would you describe the difference between a Christian with Christ prominent compared to preeminent?