

# LOSE YOUR LIFE

Luke 9:23-26

While we might romanticize giving up one's life for an important cause, we would likely recoil at the idea of being confronted with that reality in our daily lives. Sacrificial selflessness in great moments may not be hard to find, but it proves uncommon in daily life situations. Even Jesus' disciples were prepared to die for him (*cf. John 18:1-11*). Jesus responded to his disciples' willingness to die with a much harder challenge – rather than dying in battle for him, he asked them to lose their life for him in their day-to-day routines. We will therefore consider Jesus' teachings about losing one's life as we continue to explore what it looks like to follow him.

## Take up your cross daily

- Luke records Jesus' curious response to the "great crowds"<sup>1</sup> he attracted – rather than welcoming people who had an interest in following him, he instead warned them about the cost of being his disciple (*Luke 14:25-33*).
- The gospels emphasize Jesus' warning through the number of times they record him telling people that following him requires one to lose their life. Consider:

*Matthew 10:34-39*

*Matthew 16:24-25*

*Mark 8:34-37*

*Luke 9:23-27*

*Luke 14:25-27*

*Luke 17:33*

*John 12:25*

- Not only did Jesus often tell people to lose their lives for his sake, he characterized it as taking up one's cross (*Matthew 10:38; 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23; 14:27*).
  - Jesus use of "cross" would have surprised his Jewish audiences because it was Rome's strongest deterrence against insurrection and thus represented their power over the people they ruled, people like the Jews.
  - Even though he did not expect people to literally seek crucifixion (*cf. Luke 9:23*), his use of that image did, however, point to the radical nature of the selflessness he expected from those who followed him.
  - Furthermore, he warned people that an unwillingness to embrace the requirements of following him revealed one's unworthiness of citizenship in his kingdom (*Luke 9:57-62; 14:25-33*).

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<sup>1</sup> All quotes from the Bible come from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (ESV Permanent Text Edition, Crossway, 2016) unless otherwise noted.

- The Bible does more than merely record the challenging cost of following Jesus; it also gives us insight into its motivation and promises us help in meeting it. Consider, therefore:

*God's expectations for our lives build on our complete, selfless love for Him (Matthew 22:34-38; 1 John 5:3).*

*God requires selflessness because selfishness creates "disorder and every vile practice" (James 3:16).*

*Jesus models the love-motivated selflessness he expects from those who follow him and shows us that it focuses on how we treat people (Ephesians 5:2; Philippians 2:1-8).*

*Paul shows how the selflessness of being "crucified with Christ" should change our relationships to possessions, power, and prestige (Galatians 2:20; Philippians 3:7-11).*

*Jesus aids and empowers us when we try to embrace his expectation of selflessness (Philippians 4:10-13; 1 John 1:7-9).*

## **For the coming week:**

To help extend the lesson and to encourage you to make it personal, take time during the coming week to consider the following material:

*Read the passages where Jesus describes the cost of following him (Matthew 10:34-39; 16:24-25; Mark 8:34-37; Luke 9:23-27; 14:25-27; 17:33; John 12:25) and consider the following:*

- *In what ways do you think 'carrying one's cross' manifests itself in our culture?*
- *Devote time to prayer asking for God's help in accepting the responsibilities and costs that are a part of following Jesus.*
- *Identify one way that you can better shoulder the cross Jesus calls you to carry and commit yourself to doing it.*