

The Daily Cross

Luke 9:23 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.

This scripture offers us at least five things that are profitable to consider:

First, since Jesus said, “ANY man,” and, “HIS cross,” we realize that we each have our **own cross** to pick up. This is not talking about one single cross that we all share. One person can be picking up his cross while another person is letting it lay there. Each one of us has a cross somewhere, waiting to be picked up.

Second, we must realize that simply “denying ourselves” is not our cross. We have to deny ourselves **before** we can take up our individual crosses.

Third, Jesus calls it a DAILY cross. This means He expects us to pick it up each and every day (no rest days - no holidays - no vacations!) We cannot take up our cross just one time for the rest of our lives! This also means He expects us to **lay down** our cross sometime during the same day or we can’t take it up again the NEXT day.

So, when do we regularly lay it down? It must be when we go to sleep. If so, this means we pick up and carry our daily crosses, whatever they are, **WITH OUR CONSCIOUS MINDS**. Jesus is certainly not referring to a literal cross, therefore this “daily cross” must be an attitude of some kind that we carry with our conscious minds.

Fourth, what IS my cross? There are a lot of different opinions out there. And each one is always right, of course! (This should tell us that if there is THAT much confusion about what our crosses are, it is obvious that not many of us are carrying one! After all, I can recognize my own shoes - even if I see them on someone else - and I don’t even wear the same pair every day! But if I cannot recognize my own cross... Let’s be honest. If we don’t KNOW FOR SURE (before God) EXACTLY what OUR cross is, it would

benefit us to be a little more open-minded about it - just in case God might want to show us WHAT it is. Don’t you agree?

It might be easier and wiser to clean our own ideas off our foundations so we can be taught by God. Otherwise, we might be found opposing Him without knowing we are doing it.

- **Is my cross my relations or relationships?** (parents, wife, husband, children, mother-in-law, etc. etc.) No. We can’t be carrying someone else around every day. The answer has to be closer to “home” than that.
- **Is my cross my circumstances?** (sicknesses, disabilities, etc. etc.) Couldn’t be. - We can’t choose to let those things lay and **not** pick them up if we wanted to do so.
- **Is my cross my past?** (personal histories - how we were raised or not raised whether right or wrong, mistakes, sinfulness, sorrows, etc. etc.) No again. - The past is past. It is true we can accept or reject it in our minds, but the scriptures tell us that if it is “under the blood” then we are to “forget” what is behind and press forward into the things of God.
- **Is my cross myself**, my own will that is contrary to God’s will, my shortcomings, my own carnal nature? The answer has to be “no” again because we can’t choose to let these things lay quiet for a day - we carry them around with us whether we want to or not.

Whatever the personal daily cross is, it has to fit certain scriptural guidelines. Let’s leave the question on WHAT it is and continue with the things ABOUT the daily cross that are profitable to consider:

Fifth, we should ask ourselves, “What is the PURPOSE of a cross?” Crosses are for the work of crucifixion, and not decoration. Obviously something should be crucified, but what should it be? We have three choices:

1. - My new man (spirit) crucifying my old man (flesh).

The Daily Cross

2. - My old man crucifying my new man.
3. - A standoff, and another day wasted.

Sixth, according to the scriptures, unless we are carrying our cross for TODAY, we have no guarantee that we will really be following the Lamb of God wherever He would lead us TODAY. We are simply left with packing our heads with more information and living off our daily benefits from God. We would be treading water rather than swimming. We would think we are making more progress than we really are. The daily benefits, the daily compassion and mercy, the daily bread and the daily choice of masters are ONLY MAINTENANCE of our spiritual lives. It is when we are carrying our DAILY CROSSES that we attend the school where Jesus teaches. Remember what He said?

Luke 9:23 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.

Is it possible to follow Jesus **without** picking up your cross? Yes, up to a point. You can attend a class in school and yet not learn what you need to know for the test ahead. If this becomes your daily habit, then you will certainly not pass into a higher grade. You will remain in the same grade for yet another year. In bible language, we call this “going around the mountain one more time.”

Another good question to consider is, “WHERE will Jesus lead those who DO deny themselves and pick up their crosses every day?” Jesus told us:

John 16:16 A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.

John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, [there] ye may be also.

4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

Jesus has been here; he had his own daily cross to carry. He knows what it is for and how to use it to good advantage. If we are following Him in the manner, he told us to, one of the things we can expect is to be succored or helped by Him.

Heb. 2:18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

Telling a young man to die daily would be hard for that young man.

Could I lay down and nail myself to a cross? No, because I would always have one free hand. Therefore, if we can't nail ourselves to a cross, then it must be someone else nailing me to my cross to die daily. It might be my spouse, one of my children, my boss at work, someone on the freeway, somebody at church.... SOMEBODY was going to **do it to me**. I then must get ready and be willing to let them do it. But remember, we have our old man and our new man! We COULD crucify ourselves!

Gal. 5:24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

The words “have crucified” which are here in the past tense are actually a mis-quote. It should be PRESENT tense. In other words, “crucify.”

Strong's # 4717 stairoo (stow-ro'-o) from #4716

1) to stake, drive down stakes

2) to fortify with driven stakes, to palisade

3) to crucify

3a) to crucify one

3b) metaphor. to crucify the flesh, destroy it's power utterly

The Galatian church was actually being taught...

Of course, anyone can put it to the test. You can always check to see if your fleshly nature with

The Daily Cross

it's affections and lusts is ALREADY CRUCIFIED and NAILED DOWN, or if it is still walking around from time to time.

I know what mine is doing, and I thank God for the opportunity to have a cross of my own now that I have a better understanding of it's purpose. But what good is the cross (whatever it is) if you know what you should crucify on it, but you don't have any nails to nail down the flesh with it's affections and lusts? What are the nails?

God supplies the nails:

Ecc. 12:11 The words of the wise [are] as goads, and as nails fastened [by] the masters of assemblies, [which] are given from one shepherd.

The nails are God's words because He is the wisest of all. His Son is the Great Shepherd and gives God's words/nails to the masters or ministers of our assemblies. You and I have been getting the nails every service!

Look how Jesus used the nails when he was crucifying his flesh with its affections and lusts:

Luke 4:1-13

Jesus used three "nails:" "It is written..." "It is written..." and "It is said...!" He put his flesh between his nails and his cross and pounded the nails into his daily cross. Three and a half years later he made it all visible on Golgotha.

If we use the nails God gives us but we have not picked up our daily cross, we just goad or poke at the flesh with the scriptures, keeping the flesh with its affections and lusts at a distance. When we nail something down, it stays there. It can't get loose. If we just goad or poke it away, keeping it at bay, it bothers us continually by keeping us busy throughout the day. Look at the scripture again...

Ecc. 12:11 The words of the wise [are] as goads, and as nails fastened [by] the masters of assemblies, [which] are given from one shepherd.

God, who is wise, knows not all of His children pick up their crosses daily so he lets His words be used as goads as well as nails.

If we have the same attitude or mind as Jesus did, those nails from God's mouth have something solid to nail the flesh upon. Consider that mind...

Php. 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Here is that mind in a nutshell:

LIFE:

1. *It is not robbing God to partake of and participate in His nature.*
2. *I don't need to have any other identification or reputation.*

TRUTH:

3. *I am on this earth to worship and serve the ONLY TRUE GOD.*
4. *I am also human, just like other humans, with an earthly nature.*

WAY:

5. *I need to humble myself and stay humbled.*
6. *The way to true obedience to God is through humility.*

Each day when we have denied ourselves, picked up our daily crosses and started to follow Christ, we are ready to fulfill the next daily step.