

## LESSON TWO THE WAY OF THE CROSS

As Jesus spent time with His disciples, He began to reveal to them His mission. In Matthew 16:21, Jesus told them He had to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things. In addition, we find Him saying in Matthew 20:18-19 that He would be crucified, which would be the means of His death. Jesus introduced lessons to His disciples concerning the cross and we will examine the importance of these lessons and why they are relevant to us today as we learn more about discipleship.

Henry Blackaby states in his book, *Experiencing the Cross*: “*The cross is not just His; the cross is mine, and the cross is yours. It’s an unconditional and incontestable requirement if we would follow Him as a disciple.*” These are not easy words to read, but they are even more difficult to practice as we learn there is much that is required from us. Let us seek to apply these words to our lives as we study the way of the cross.

### Day One – Jesus and the Cross

1. Let’s begin with a basic question; what does a cross signify to you?

In order for us to have a clear picture of the way of the cross, we need to take a look first at Jesus and the cross.

2. Read each of the following scripture passages and record what His suffering the cross literally meant for Him.

Matthew 27:26-31

Mark 15:29-34

Luke 22:47-53

Luke 23:44-46

3. It is extremely important that we be familiar with the sufferings and death of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Thoughtfully read the following passages and record what you further learn about what Christ experienced.

Isaiah 52:14, 53:1-12

4. The horrific cross that Christ bore was done in obedience to the Father's will. Read Luke 22:39-46 and write what you learn about Jesus, His heart and God's response. Include any emotions you think He might have experienced.

5. Write a prayer below thanking Him for what He did and the incredible salvation it brings.

6. After your examination of the scriptures in this day's lesson, has your understanding of the cross and what it signifies changed since you answered question one? In what way(s)?

*Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines cross as: suffering of Christ by crucifixion; doctrine of Christ's sufferings and atonement or salvation by Christ. Anything that obstructs, perplexes, hindrance, misfortune, opposition. "To take up the cross is to submit to troubles and afflictions from love to Christ."*

7. In light of what we've studied, what kind of cross might we have to take up for the sake of Christ? Be specific.

## Day Two – Deny Yourself

1. In Matthew 16:24, Jesus speaks words that for most of us, are difficult to hear. Please write out this verse below. Consider memorizing this verse.

a. List the three commands that Jesus gives us in this verse.

In the remainder of this lesson we will take a closer look at what each of these commands mean.

2. Matthew 16:24a “...let him deny himself.” Why would Jesus say that to us? What do you think this means?

3. Webster’s dictionary says to deny oneself is to decline the gratification of appetites or desires, to refrain from, to abstain. The scriptures teach us some of the things we must learn to deny. Look up the following scriptures and record what areas we are to deny. (The word deny may or may not be used, but it is implied.)

Romans 6:12

1 Thessalonians 4:3b-5

Titus 2:12

4. Read Matthew 16:24a in the Expanded Translation and Amplified Bible below.

*“Then Jesus said to His disciples, if anyone is desiring to come after me, let him forget self and lose sight of his own interests...”* Expanded Translation.

*“Then Jesus said to His disciples, if anyone desires to be My disciple, let him deny himself (disregard, lose sight of and forget himself and his own interests) ...”* Amplified Bible.

Share your thoughts about what it means to deny yourself.

5. As you read the following verses, use them to help you understand some of the things you can put into practice in order to know how to deny yourself. Record what you learn.

Romans 6:13

2 Corinthians 10:5

Galatians 5:16

6. Thoughtfully read 2 Corinthians 5:9, 15. How do these verses relate to this command of denying self?

7. In reality, how easy or difficult is it to deny self? Share your thoughts.

a. What would keep you from denying yourself?

8. When we learn to deny ourselves, what do you think the result will be in our lives? Please explain.

*“And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.” Luke 14:27*

## Day Three – Suffering

There are two aspects of the cross, both of which are difficult, yet necessary for us to understand: suffering and death. As we study these two topics, we will seek to understand how we are to apply them in our lives.

1. As we read in Matthew 16:24, Jesus tells us to take up our cross. Explain what this looks like from these scriptures.

Matthew 5:10-12

Philippians 1:29

a. Share some ways this could happen in our lives.

2. One of the themes for the book of 1 Peter is suffering. He gives us some reasons for our suffering. Write what you learn.

1 Peter 2:19-21

1 Peter 3:14, 16-17

3. None of us like to suffer and most of us don't suffer very well. But God expects us to have a certain mind-set toward our suffering. What do the following scriptures tell us?

Matthew 5:11-12

James 1:2

1 Peter 3:14, 4:12

4. If we are to take up our cross, that which represents the idea of suffering, let us examine God's purpose in the area of suffering. How do the following verses help you to understand why we experience suffering and hardships?

Deuteronomy 8:1-6

John 9:1-3

Philippians 3:10

James 1:3-4



5. Job was a man who suffered much yet was a godly man in his sufferings. Read Job chapters 1 and 2 and list the ways in which he suffered.

a. Re-read Job 1:20-22 and 2:10. How is his attitude in suffering an example to you? How do you think he was able to respond as he did?

6. As we look to Jesus, we find the perfect example concerning the topic of suffering. In what ways do the following verses explain why He had to suffer?

Hebrews 2:17-18

Hebrews 5:7-8

a. In what ways ought we to follow His example? 1 Peter 2:21-24

7. How can the following verses help you in your times of suffering?

Psalm 119:49-50

John 16:33

Romans 8:28-29

8. Part of being a disciple of Christ will be to experience suffering. Amid suffering, we are to be a particular way and to have a certain mindset. What do you learn in these verses?

2 Timothy 1:12

1 Peter 4:19

9. Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 and Hebrews 12:2-4. How can we get to the place where we don't focus on the "agonies" of our cross (suffering), but instead on the crown (reward)?

*"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."*

*Romans 8:18*

## Day Four — Death

Christ experienced suffering on the way to the cross as well as while on the cross. Ultimately, the cross led to His death.

*Death* as defined by Webster's 1828 dictionary: the state of a being in which there is total and permanent cessation of all the vital functions and having lost the susceptibility of renewed action. Keep this definition in mind as you answer the questions for today.

1. As it was with Jesus, taking up the cross can literally mean to go to die. According to the following scriptures, what are we to be dead to?

Romans 6:6

Galatians 5:24

Galatians 6:14

2. Explain how we are to be dead to these things when we are yet a living person.

3. What kind of things in your own life do you still need to die to? Be specific (and humble), recording them below.

4. Although the cross can result in a physical death, there is another principle at work through the cross. There is power in the cross which is to result in something else within us. What do you learn from these verses that should be in effect in our lives?

Romans 6:4, 11

Galatians 2:20

5. The apostle Paul makes a profound statement to us in Philippians 3:10: *“that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.”* Look up the word conformed in the dictionary and write its definition.

a. What do you think it means to be conformed to His death?

b. How does Luke 22:42 help you to understand this better?

6. Read the following and share your thoughts as to its meaning and application in your life. A missionary from Africa once said this: *“The cross is the key to all situations as well as to all scripture. If I lose that key, I miss the road, not only in the Bible, but also in the whole of my life.”*



John 10:4, 27

John 13:14-15

a. How can you practically apply these words of Jesus to your daily life?

10. Read Luke 9:57-62. We too, like these people, might say: “Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.” But is this true? What path did Jesus ultimately have to follow, and would you be willing to follow Him there?

a. In light of these verses, what is Jesus trying to help us understand by His reply to these people?

11. As we conclude this lesson on the way of the cross, what is one thing the Lord has shown you that you need to apply to your life and how will you do it?

*“Jesus, I my cross have taken, all to leave and follow Thee;  
Destitute, despised, forsaken, Thou, from hence, my all shall be!  
Perish every fond ambition, all I’ve sought and hoped and known;  
Yet how rich is my condition, God and heaven are still my own!”*  
*Author Unknown*





