

THE GOSPEL OF MARK "deny"

Can you be a Christian and not a Disciple?

Mark 8:34-38 (NIV)

⁽³⁴⁾ Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ⁽³⁵⁾ For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. ⁽³⁶⁾ What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? ⁽³⁷⁾ Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? ⁽³⁸⁾ If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

DENY

*"disavow any connection with something, to state that you are not connected in any way with whatever is in view."

*Same word used when Peter denied Jesus

*Not "self-denial" like not watching TV for a month.

*It means to act contrary to his own nature, to cease to be God. It is a call to a radical abandonment of one's own identity and self-determination and a call to join in the march to the place of execution of self.

**"Keep on denying yourself,
keep on taking up your cross,
keep on following me."**

TAKE UP YOUR CROSS

*"The Cross" imagery implies both death and shame. Hebrews 12:2, Galatians 2:20

*In the first century the cross was an instrument of cruelty, pain, dehumanization and shame. The cross symbolized Roman oppression and was reserved for the lowest social classes. It was the most visible aspect of Rome's terror apparatus, designed especially to punish criminals and to quash slave rebellions.

FOLLOW ME

*Jesus is calling us to absolute obedience and surrender. From anyone else, such a call is outrageous, but the one who calls here is not just anyone. He is Jesus Christ, the son of God. So where is Jesus taking you?

**You will find that you
have everything you
want, but you will not
want anything you have.**

SAVE OR LOSE?

*This is not platitude or a mere saying; it is a fundamental law of life. It is absolutely unbreakable.

Nobody can break this law. If you save your life, says Jesus, you will lose it.

*To lose your life indicates that the disciples are to play an active role in mission rather than merely privately following the teachings of Jesus. That they are likely to meet with persecution and death.

Matthew 7:22-23 (NIV)

⁽²²⁾ Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' ⁽²³⁾ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

ASHAMED

*The term 'ashamed' is only used here in Mark. It refers not so much to internal emotions, such as feeling embarrassed with respect to the person of Jesus and his teachings, but rather one's actions. But the seriousness is that Jesus will be ashamed and deny us. WOW!