

The Call to Discipleship

Luke 9: 23.



"Then He said to them all, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me'
Luke 9: 23



I. Introduction

One of the essential aspects of the Christian experience is to become the disciple of Jesus. This is not a pinnacle for the follower of Jesus, but it is a never ending task. One cannot be a Christian without being disciple.



For God's child there are several levels in the relationship with Jesus. The introduction of the Book Song of Songs is underlining this reality:

"Let him kiss me," she says, "with the kiss of his mouth" (Songs 1:2). Who is speaking? The Bride. But why "Bride"? She is the soul which thirsts for God. I set out the different affections so as to make it clearer which properly belongs to the Bride. If someone is a slave, he fears his master's face. If he is a hireling, he hopes for payment from his master's hand. If he is a disciple, he bends his ear to his master. If he is a son, he honors his father. But she who asks for a kiss feels love. She is the spouse."

Bernard de Clairvaux, Sermons on the Song of Songs, #7.

Slave

Fear of God

Servant

Service

Disciple

Listening and following

Friend

Attachment, closeness

Son

Filiation (Adoption)

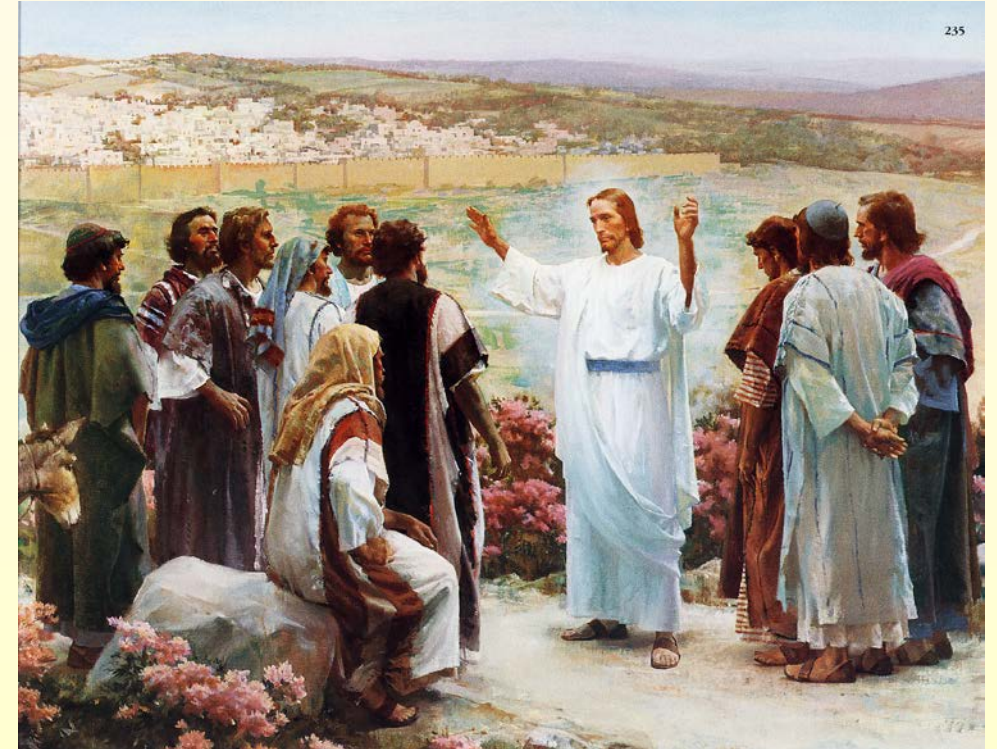
Spouse

Intimate love

Witness (MARTYR)

Yes, to become son is a higher, superior experience than to become disciple. But a true son will never cease to be the disciple himself. He will always do the will of his Father.

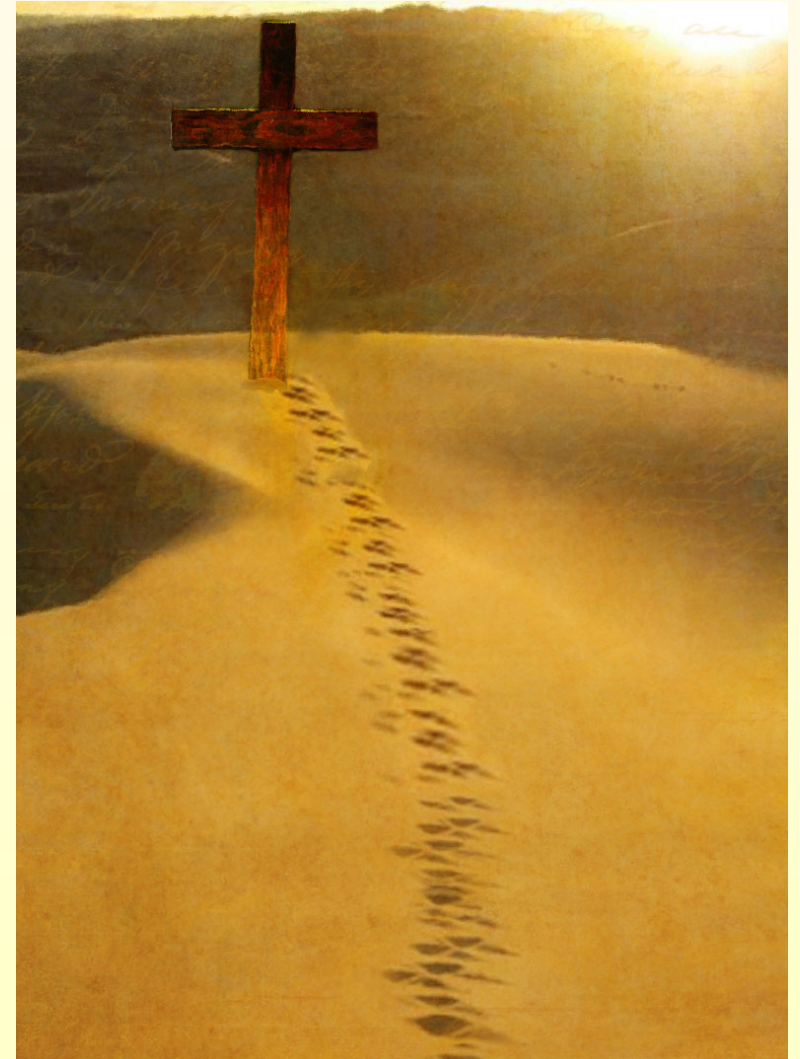
Cf. John 15: 15. The status of disciples is changing. They spend more time with the master and they become his friends.
"No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you."



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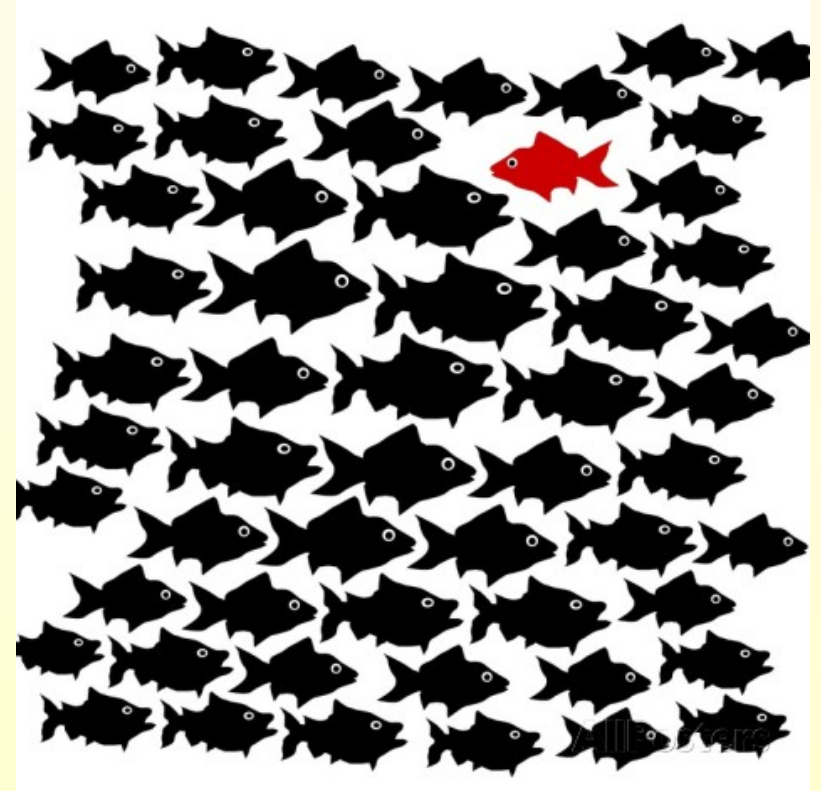


"Christianity without discipleship is always
Christianity without Christ."
Dietrich Bonhoeffer



Discipleship is to follow Jesus exclusively

"Many Christians have what we might call a "cultural holiness". They adapt to the character and behavior pattern of Christians around them. As the Christian culture around them is more or less holy, so these Christians are more or less holy. But God has not called us to be like those around us. He has called us to be like himself. Holiness is nothing less than conformity to the character of God."
Jerry Bridges



"Jesus of Nazareth always comes asking disciples to follow him--not merely "accept him," not merely "believe in him," not merely "worship him," but to follow him: one either follows Christ, or one does not. There is no compartmentalization of the faith, no realm, no sphere, no business, no politic in which the lordship of Christ will be excluded. We either make him Lord of all lords, or we deny him as Lord of any."

Lee Camp, *Mere Discipleship: Radical Christianity in a Rebellious World*



“Christ did not appoint professors, but followers. If Christianity ... is not reduplicated in the life of the person expounding it, then he does not expound Christianity, for Christianity is a message about living and can only be expounded by being realized in men's lives.”

Soren Kierkegaard



"[Jesus] plan called for action, and how He expressed it predicted its success. He didn't say "you 'might' be my witnesses," or "you 'could' be my witnesses," or even "you 'should' be my witnesses." He said "you 'will' be my witnesses."
Charles R. Swindoll



"Discipleship in eight simple words:
'When God asks you to do something,
say yes'"

Malcolm Duncan



"There is no peace in the border lands.
The halfway Christian is a torment to
himself and of no benefit to others."
Earnest Worker



II. Context



The analysis of the Gospel of Luke Structure shows the capacity of the author to collect the texts and to arrange them to highlight the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Everything is leaning toward the crucifixion and the victory over death.



The structure of the Gospel of Luke

In	1: 1 – 4	Search for Authentic Narrative about Jesus
1	1: 5 – 2: 50	Incarnation (Prophecies, John the Baptist and Jesus)
2	2: 50 – 4: 30	Nazareth (Baptism, Temptation, and Ministry in Nazareth)
3	4: 31 – 7 : 50	Capernaum (Headquarters of Jesus for his Ministry in Galilee)
4	8: 1 – 9: 50	Every City and Village
5	9: 51 – 19: 27	Trip to Jerusalem (Jesus' Ministry on the road, Samaria and Judea)
6	19: 28 – 21: 38	Jerusalem (Fulfillment of Jesus' Mission)
7	22: 1 – 23: 56	Jesus' Passion, Death, and Burial
8	24: 1 – 24: 53	Jesus' Resurrection, Post-resurrection Teaching, and Ascension

The Narrative of the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts

Jesus' Birth (Decree of Caesar Augustus, Roman Empire)	Jesus in Galilee (Country of Gentiles, with important Jewish presence)	Jesus in Samaria and Judea	Jesus In Jerusalem	Passion, Death, Burial, Resurrection and Ascension	Church in Jerusalem	Church in Judea and Samaria	Church among the Gentiles	Church in Rome
Luke 1 - 2	Luke 3 - 9	Luke 10 - 18	Luke 19 - 21	Luke 22 - 24	Acts 1 - 7	Acts 8 - 10	Acts 11 - 26	Acts 27 - 28

The structure of the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 8 and 9

	8: 1 - 3	Introduction: In every Village
A	8: 4 - 21	Jesus and Teaching about Kingdom
B	8: 22 - 25	Jesus and Nature
C	8: 26 - 56	Jesus and Transformation of those who are sick
D	9: 1 – 6	Jesus and Disciples
X	9: 7 - 22	Jesus and His Identity
D'	9: 23 - 27	Jesus and Disciples
C'	9: 28 - 36	Jesus and Transfiguration
B'	9: 37 - 42	Jesus and Demons
A'	9: 46 - 50	Jesus and Teaching about the members of his Kingdom

III. The reality of Discipleship from Jesus' Perspective



1. Personal Aspiration

"If anyone desires to come after Me"

Those who desire to follow Jesus should know the cost of their choice

"Salvation is free, but discipleship costs everything we have."

Billy Graham



Jesus is the ultimate goal for His followers. In His presence we find answer to all our questions.

“There is no authority on earth that can call the will of Jesus into question. And no power on earth or in heaven can frustrate his will when he exerts all his power to achieve it.”

John Piper



By coming freely to Him we
secure our freedom

“The cause of Freedom is
the cause of God!”

William Lisle

Bowles, *Edmund Burke*



“To our ministers, physicians, teachers, and all others engaged in any line of service for the Master, I have a message to bear. The Lord bids you to come up higher, to reach a holier standard. You must have an experience much deeper than you have yet even thought of having... Give to Jesus the heart’s best and holiest affections. Treasure every ray of light. Cherish every desire of the soul after God. Give yourselves the culture of spiritual thoughts and holy communings. You have seen by the first rays of the early dawn of His glory. As you follow on to know the Lord, you will know that His going forth is prepared as the morning. ‘The path of the righteous is as the light of dawn, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.’”

Ellen G. White, Christian Service, p. 24.

2. Self-Denial

“Let him deny himself”



“Until you have given up your self to Him you will not have a real self...”
C.S. Lewis

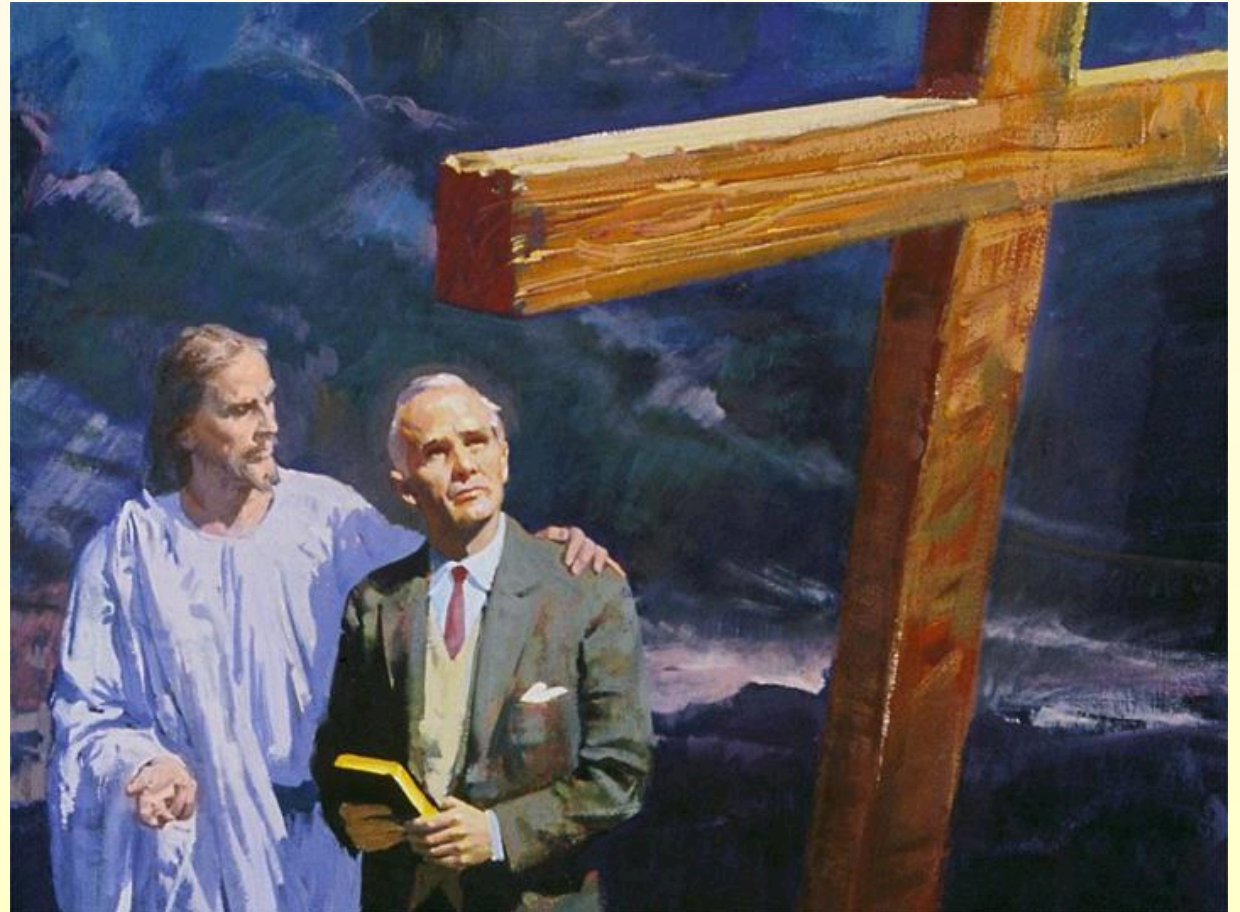


“Let no one imagine that he will lose anything of human dignity by this voluntary sell-out of his all to his God. He does not by this degrade himself as a man; rather he finds his right place of high honor as one made in the image of his Creator. His deep disgrace lay in his moral derangement, his unnatural usurpation of the place of God. His honor will be proved by restoring again that stolen throne. In exalting God over all, he finds his own highest honor upheld.”

A.W Tozer



“Do you talk about self-denial? What did Christ give for us? When you think it hard that Christ requires all, go to Calgary, and weep there over such a thought.”
Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 27.



“It is only by a total
death to self we can
be lost in God.”
Jeanne Guyon



“Attack sin early on:
small lions become big
lions and big lions eat
people.”
PJ Smyth



3. Carrying the Cross

"and take up his cross daily"

"The world takes us to a silver screen on which flickering images of passion and romance play, and as we watch, the world says, "This is love." God takes us to the foot of a tree on which a naked and bloodied man hangs and says, "This is love."

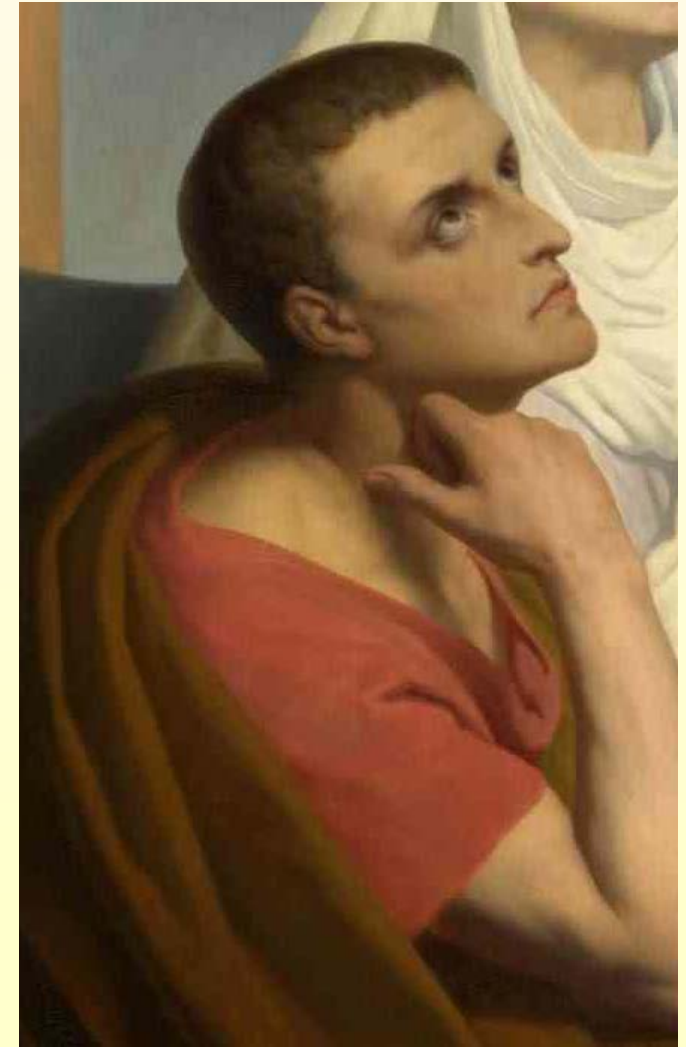
Joshua Harris

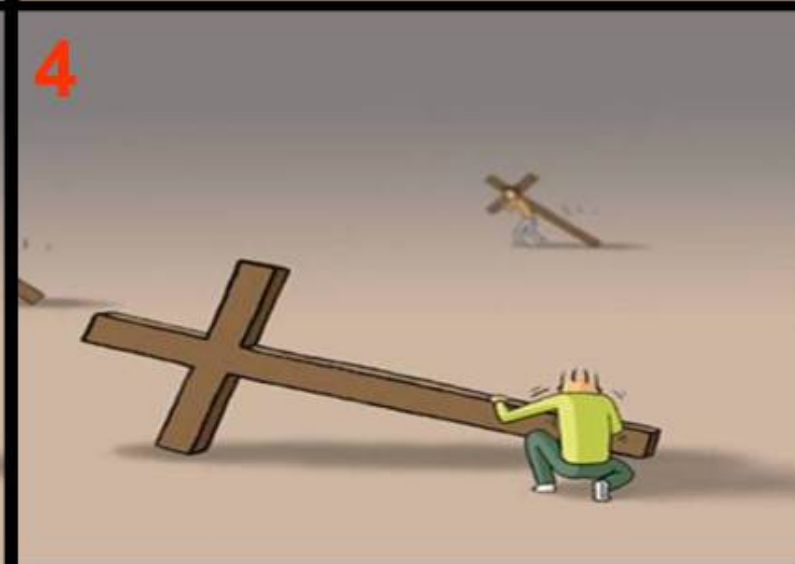
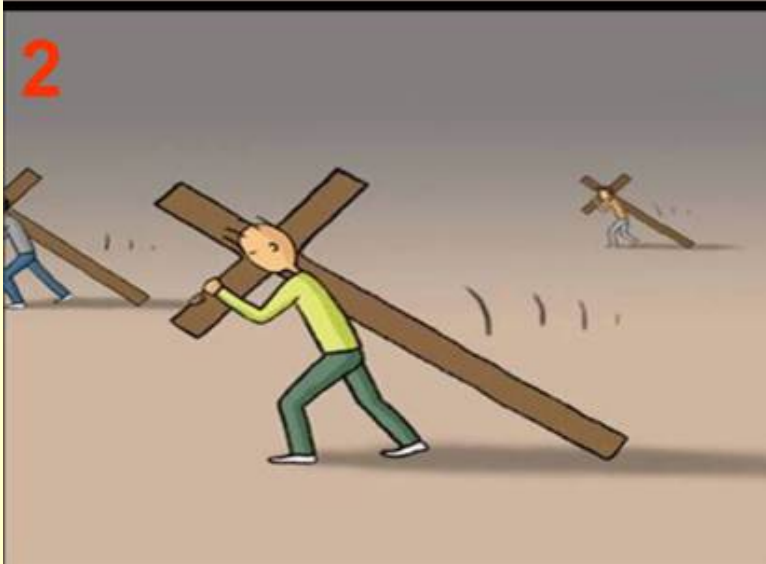
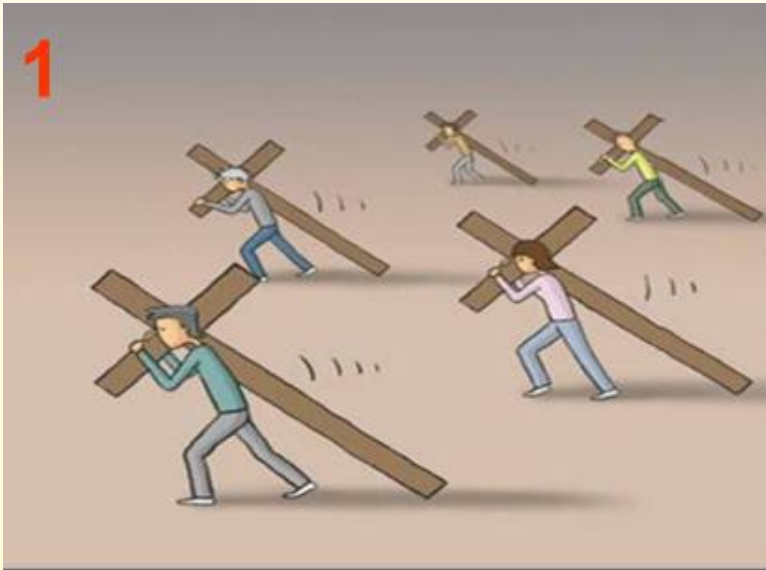


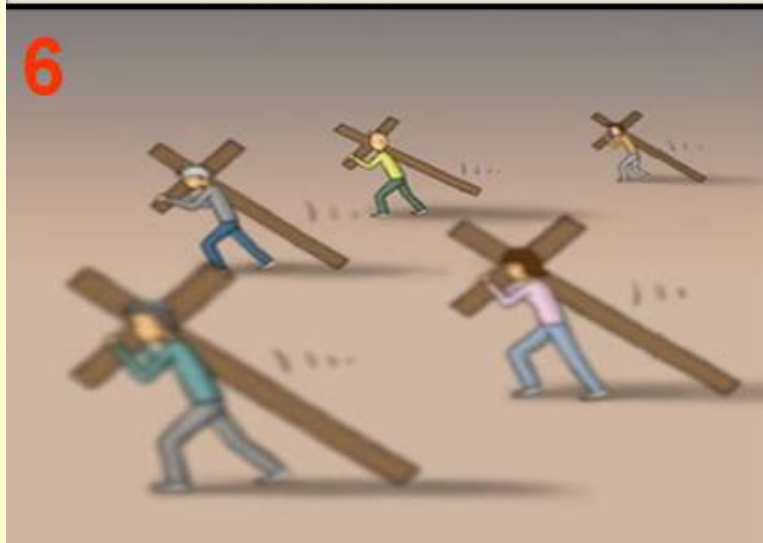
„We sometimes carry crosses that are not really ours. There are many crosses we insist on carrying, loads we are not suppose to carry in the first place. Due to our stubbornness however, we refuse to let it go. We refuse to forgive the people who have hurt us, because we do not believe they deserve to be forgiven. We refuse to forget our past wounds because we want to get even with those who have caused us pain. We refuse to lay our burdens to God because we don't trust Him enough to believe everything will be taken care of. Sometimes we even refuse to let other people carry their own crosses because we believe we are the only ones capable of doing the right thing. Carry only your own cross, my friend. That is all that is asked of you.”

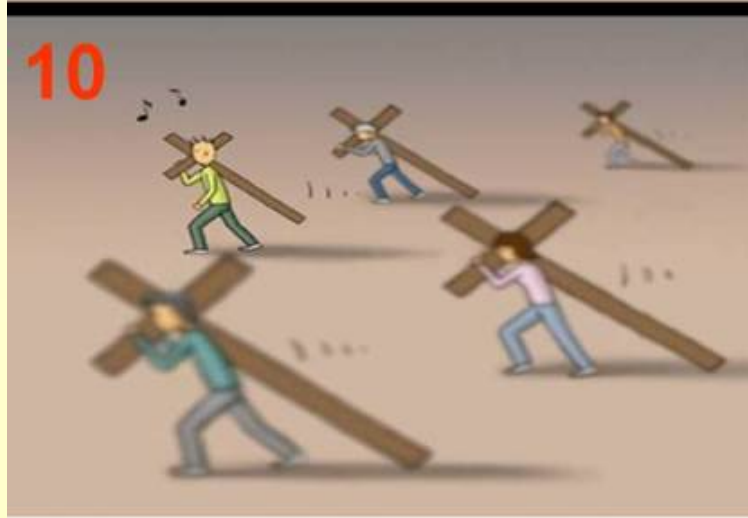
Jocelyn Soriano

"If someone were to catch sight of his homeland from afar, separated by the sea, he would see his destination but lack the means of reaching it. So it is with us... We glimpse our goal across the sea of the present age... But to enable us to go there, the One who is our goal came to us... he brought us the plank by which we can make the passage. No one may cross the sea of his age, unless he be carried by the Cross of Christ... So do not forsake the Cross, and the Cross will carry you".
Augustine, Commentary on St. John 2: 2











"It is to the Cross that the Christian is challenged to follow his Master: no path of redemption can make a detour around it."

Hans Urs von
Balthasar, *Unless You
Become Like This Child*



4. Following Jesus

"and follow Me"

"No man can follow Christ
and go astray."

William H.P. Faunce



“God’s grace
is costly because it calls us
to follow, and it
is grace because it calls us
to follow Jesus Christ. It is
costly because it costs a
man his life, and it is grace
because it gives a man the
only true life. It is costly
because it condemns sin,
and grace because it justifies
the sinner.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, p. 45.



„Being reduced to nothing is the most powerful means we have of uniting ourselves to Jesus and of doing good to others.“
Charles de Foucauld



"To believe one does not
need counsel is great pride."
Basil the Great



"Radical obedience to Christ is not easy... It's not comfort, not health, not wealth, and not prosperity in this world. Radical obedience to Christ risks losing all these things. But in the end, such risk finds its reward in Christ. And he is more than enough for us."
David Platt



V. Conclusion



“No man can succeed in the service of God unless his whole heart is in the work, and he counts all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. No man who makes any reserve can be the disciple of Christ, much less can be His colaborer. When men appreciate the great salvation, the self-sacrifice seen in Christ’s life will be seen in theirs. Wherever He leads the way, they will rejoice to follow.”

Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, 273.

“There is a wide difference between a pretended union and a real connection with Christ by faith. A profession of the truth places men in the church, but this does not prove that they have a vital connection with the living Vine. A rule is given by which the true disciple may be distinguished from those who claim to follow Christ but have not faith in Him. The one class are fruit bearing, the other, fruitless. The one are often subjected to the pruning knife of God that they may bring forth more fruit; the other, as withered branches, are ere long to be severed from the living Vine....{NL 43.1}

The fibers of the branch are almost identical with those of the vine. The communication of life, strength, and fruitfulness from the trunk to the branches is unobstructed and constant. The root sends its nourishment through the branch. Such is the true believer's relation to Christ. He abides in Christ and draws his nourishment from Him.”

Ellen G. White, A New Life, p. 43.

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