

# Jeremiah's Yoke

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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





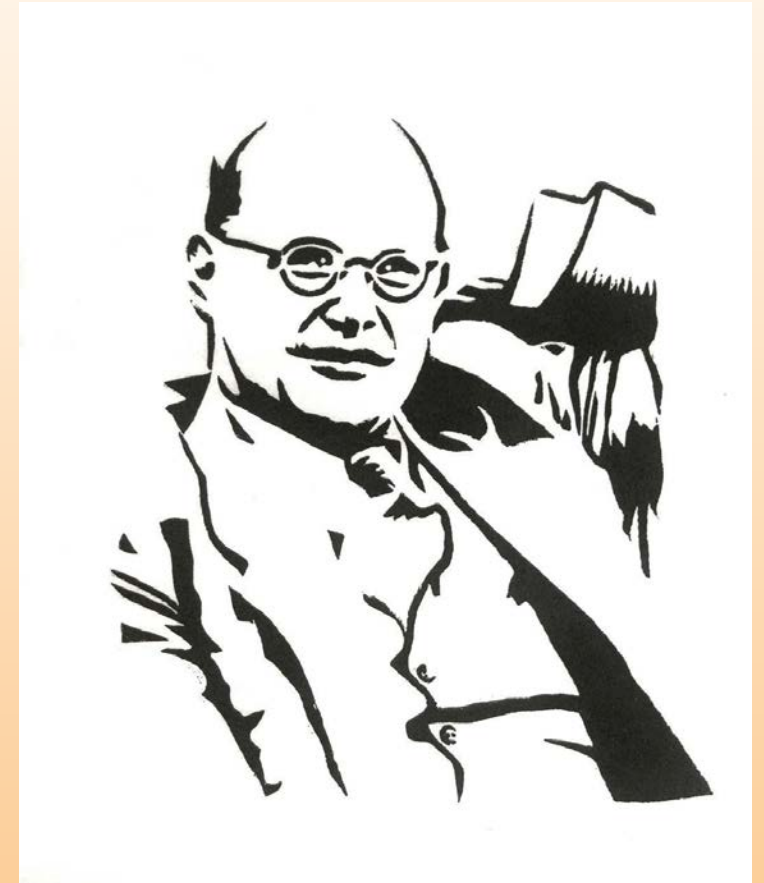
# I. Introduction

Following Jesus and giving to Him the first and the last and the best place is always challenging, but also fulfilling. The life with Him is full of tests, confrontations and sacrifices. At the same time, our soul is filled with joy, peace, and meaning that no one else can provide.



"Cheap grace is the deadly enemy of our Church... Grace without price; grace without cost! Cheap grace means the justification of sin without the justification of the sinner. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession... Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer,  
The Cost of Discipleship, p. 46. 47.



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



“If thou art willing to suffer  
no adversity, how wilt thou  
be the friend of Christ?”  
Thomas à Kempis





“The decision to grow always involves a choice between risk and comfort. This means that to be a follower of Jesus you must renounce comfort as the ultimate value of your life.”

John Ortberg



"Some Christians want enough of Christ to be identified with him but not enough to be seriously inconvenienced; they genuinely cling to basic Christian orthodoxy but do not want to engage in serious Bible study; they value moral probity, especially of the public sort, but do not engage in war against inner corruptions; they fret over the quality of the preacher's sermon but do not worry much over the quality of their own prayer life. Such Christians are content with mediocrity."

D. A. Carson, *A Call to Spiritual Reformation*, p. 121.



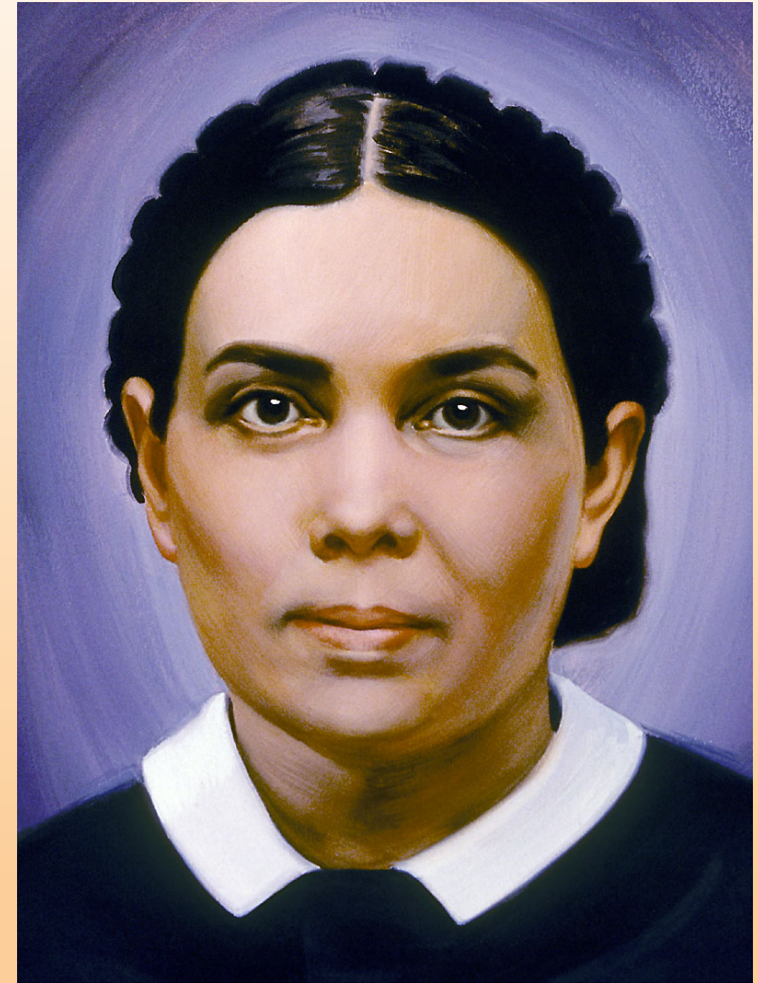


“Discipleship is not limited to what you can comprehend. It must transcend all comprehension. Bewilderment is the true comprehension. Not to know where you are going is the true knowledge. Thus Abraham went forth from his father and not knowing whither he went. He trusted himself to God’s knowledge, and cared not for his own, and thus he took the right road and came to his journey’s end. Behold, that is the way of the cross.”  
Martin Luther



"The true disciple will not live to gratify beloved self, but for Christ, and for the good of his little ones. He is to sacrifice his ease, his pleasure, his comfort, his convenience, his will, and his own selfish wishes for Christ's cause, or never reign with him on his throne."

Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches*, 1880, p. 246.





## II. Context





# Gospel of Luke 9: 23 – 27 Structure

## Everything is about Jesus and God's Kingdom

A	23	Desire to FOLLOW ME <i>WHOEVER</i> Jesus and His earthly ministry
B	24	Desire to save oneself FOR ME <i>WHOEVER</i> Jesus and His earthly ministry
C	25	What profit? <i>MAN, Antropos</i> Gaining the world (kosmos) and being destroyed or lost
A'	26	Consequences of our current choices have repercussion in His kingdom <i>WHOEVER</i> Jesus and His glory
B'	27	Consequences of our current choices have repercussion in His kingdom <i>SOME</i> Kingdom of God

In the center of this passage (Luke 9: 23 – 27) there is an essential question, already found in other texts of the Bible: **WHAT PROFIT?** The book of Ecclesiastes has already the same inquiry and helps the author to build the entire structure around this concept: “What profit has a man from all his labor in which he toils under the sun?”



The answer to this central question is obvious: If a man, after the entire life of plans, projects, and activities, is not qualified to be part of the eternal kingdom of God, his life is meaningless.





The repetition of the verb 'desire' facilitate the understanding of the structure. Thus two things are in parallel: the desire of the listeners to follow Jesus and their desire to save their life. The answer of Jesus is to invite his audience to accept to lose their life, in order to find the true life in following Him and in the preparation for His second coming in glory.



There is also a contrast between the desire of the listeners to follow Jesus and their shame to recognize His authority as the Son of Man who will soon come in glory.

(A. 9:23 and A'. 9:26.). This way of presenting the discipleship (desire/shame) underline one of the essential characteristics of those who are following Jesus: they are bold in presenting their Master everywhere. "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word." Acts 4: 29.



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

IN	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
E	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



## 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

III. The authentic discipleship is one of the essential characteristics of true Christians. Without discipleship, without transformed Christians following Jesus Christ, our churches are dying.



# 1. Jesus' Order is valid for all disciples

"Then He said to them all"





"Scripture is not only timely but timeless. Just as God spoke to the original audience, so he still speaks to us through the pages of Scripture. Because we share a common humanity with the people of the Bible, we discover a universal dimension in the problems they faced and the solutions God gave them. The timeless nature of Scripture enables it to speak with power in every time and in every culture."  
Michael J. Wilkins, The NIV  
Application Commentary: Matthew



“Technically, from the moment of spiritual birth, every Christian is a disciple. Disciples are born by the Spirit to be made into mature reproducers, as described in John 15: 7 – 17. They are to be made in every nation. Therefore, every person in the church is a disciple and has the responsibility and divine ability to be what Christ desires.

The idea that only mature people are disciples and all other Christians are immature converts appears nowhere in the New Testament. God expects every believer to be a mature, reproducing disciple. Therefore, any leader can confidentially stand before the church and call every believer to discipleship. In fact, nothing less will please God.”

Bill Hull, The Disciple-making Church.

“Disciple-making is the process by which one helps another become a follower of Christ. It is not limited to evangelism, although that might be a component of it. Nor is disciple-making limited or relegated to the paid professionals. Disciple-making is investing in someone’s life in order to help them become a disciple-maker. While some see becoming a Christian as an end in itself, the Scriptures are clear that a Christian is to be a disciple maker of others who are making disciples. There should be a multiplication and generational component.”

Jeffrey Howell Lynn, Making disciples of Jesus Christ.





“When discipleship takes a place alongside leadership, evangelism, preaching, worship, counseling, support groups, and other programs, it ceases to be what it was meant to be: the heart of what it means to be a Christian.”

Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ*



## 2. We are not forced to be disciples

"If anyone desires to come after Me"



“God wants you to have good things and a good life, but He won't gift wrap them for you. You have to choose the actions that lead you to that life.”  
Jim Butcher





“Jesus taught that to follow Him is perfect freedom. Discipleship is about freedom: freedom to love God with our whole heart and freedom to love one another without the distortion of lies, manipulation, hatred, and lust. Becoming an apprentice of Jesus means freedom from shame, freedom to follow the Spirit wherever he takes us, freedom from worry, freedom from materialism and greed, and freedom from the weight from despair and hopelessness.”

Lucy Peppiatt, *The Disciple. On becoming truly Human*, p. 5.



“Jesus spoke of bondage to sin and showed that true freedom consists in escape from sin through obedience to Him. ‘I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.’ Freedom comes only as we determine to follow Jesus. That freedom is the greatest freedom of all.”

James Montgomery Boice,  
Christ's Call to Discipleship.



3. The self denial  
is the basic  
element  
for the new,  
transformed life  
of Jesus'  
disciples  
"Let him deny himself"





"Discipleship entails a life of total self-denial, a humble disposition towards others, a whole-hearted devotion to the Lord alone, a willingness to obey His commands in everything, an eagerness to sense Him even in His absence, and a motivation that comes from knowing He is well pleased."

John MacArthur, Slave, p. 43

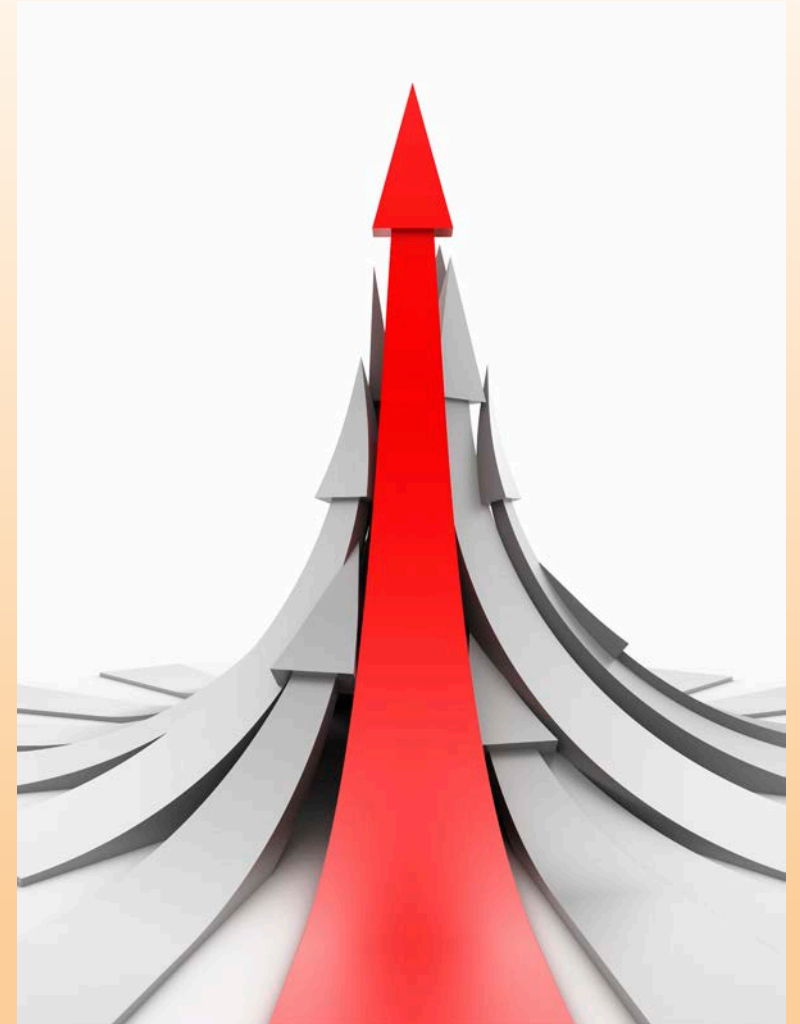


“We are not meant to die merely in order to be dead. God could not want that for the creatures to whom He has given the breath of life. We die in order to live.”

Elisabeth Elliot,  
Passion and Purity:  
Learning to Bring Your  
Love Life Under  
Christ's Control



"Control is not leadership; management is not leadership. If you seek to lead, invest at least 50% of your time leading yourself, your own purpose, ethics, principles, motivation, conduct."  
Dee Hock





4. The commitment  
of the disciples is  
renewed every day  
“And take up his cross  
daily”



“Discipleship is a daily discipline; we follow Jesus a step at a time, a day at a time.”

Warren Wiersbe



“Is the cross of your choosing or one you have been handed? Humans are very good at creating unnecessary suffering for themselves. The difference is profound. If it is a cross of your choosing, think carefully. Enduring crosses are the breeding ground of self-pity. If your cross was handed to you, you have little choice other than understand the good that can come from bearing it well. How well you bear your cross, helps define it and you as well.”  
John Frank Giovanni



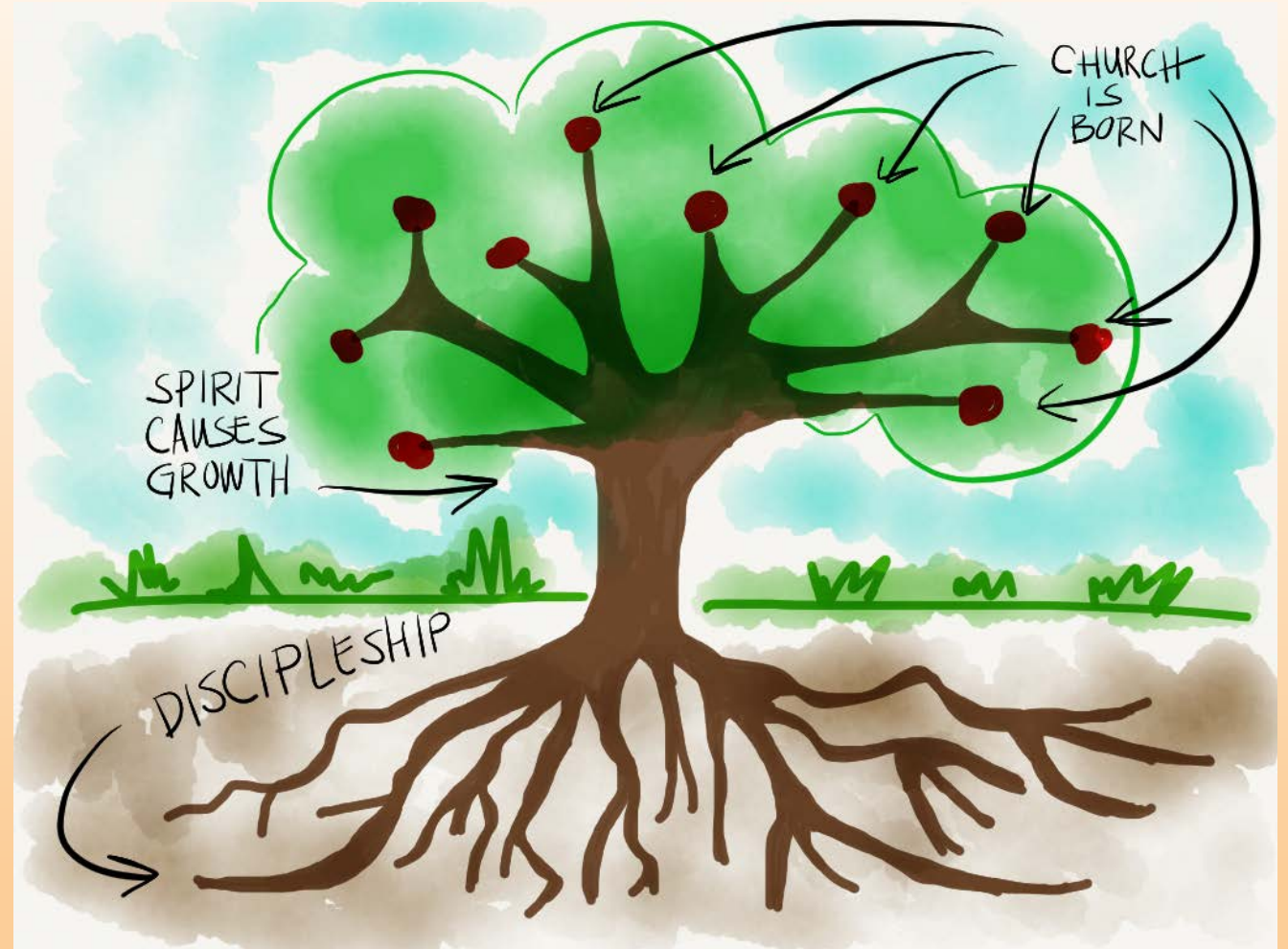


“The relationship between commitment and doubt is by no means an antagonistic one. Commitment is healthiest when it’s not without doubt but in spite of doubt.”

Dr. Rollo May



5. Every disciple of Jesus has exclusive commitment to Himself  
"And follow Me."



“When I put God first, God takes care of me and energizes me to do what really needs to be done.”

David Jeremiah,  
Prayer, the Great  
Adventure



“Those who aren’t following Jesus aren’t His followers. It’s that simple. Followers follow, and those who don’t follow aren’t followers. To follow Jesus means to follow Jesus into a society where justice rules, where love shapes everything. To follow Jesus means to take up His dream and work for it.”

Scott McKnight, One Life:  
Jesus Calls We Follow





“Discipleship in eight  
simple words. ‘When God  
asks you to do  
something, say yes’.”  
Malcolm Duncan



# V. Conclusion





“If you make disciples, you always get the church. But if you make a church, you rarely get disciples. Effective discipleship builds the church, not the other way around.”  
Mike Breen



“Converts are believers who live like the world. Disciples are believers who live like Jesus. Converts are focused on their values, interests, worries, fears, priorities, and lifestyles. Disciples are focused on Jesus. Converts go to church. Disciples are the church. Converts are involved in the mission of Jesus. Disciples are committed to it. Converts cheer from the sidelines. Disciples are in the game. Converts hear the word of God. Disciples live it. Converts follow the rules. Disciples follow Jesus. Converts are all about believing. Disciples are all about being. Converts are comfortable. Disciples make sacrifices. Converts talk. Disciples make more disciples.”

Tyler Edwards



"The entrance of God's word is the application of divine truth to the heart, purifying and refining the soul through the agency of the Holy Spirit. The faculties devoted unreservedly to God, under the guidance of the divine Spirit, develop steadily and harmoniously. Devotion and piety establish so close a relation between Jesus and His disciples that the Christian becomes like Him. Through the power of God, his weak, vacillating character becomes changed to one of strength and steadfastness. He becomes a person of sound principle, clear perception, and reliable, well-balanced judgment. Having a connection with God, the source of light and understanding, his views, unbiased by his own preconceived opinions, become broader, his discernment more penetrative and farseeing. The knowledge of God, the understanding of His revealed will, as far as human minds can grasp it, will, when received into the character, make efficient men."

Ellen G. White, Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, p. 37.

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