



reflecting Jesus

BETA

death is the door
to life **22**

?

did you know...

If
anyone
would come
after me, he must
deny himself and take
up his cross and follow
me. For whoever
wants to save his
life will lose it, but
whoever loses his
life for me and
for the gospel
will save it.

Jesus

photo: sxc anaxagoras



the facts of his story

1. In Mark 8:34-36, Jesus tells potential disciples to pick up their cross and follow him. Where does Jesus expect them to follow him, and what will they do then?

2. In Romans 12:1-2, what must happen before we can know the will of God?

3. In John 12:24-26, Jesus says that his life is like a kernel of wheat. Why does Jesus say it is a good thing that this seed should die?

4. Read Philippians 2:1-8. Paul says that our attitude should be like Jesus'. In these verses what attitudes and actions does Jesus have that we should imitate?

5. In Luke 14:26-29, what does the story about building the tower have to do with following Jesus?

"Our permission is never asked as to what we will do or where we will go. God makes us broken bread and poured-out wine to please himself."

Oswald Chambers



thinking it through

1. When you look back over the texts you have studied, what do you think is the most important teaching of Jesus?

2. Why do you think Jesus teaches that it impossible to follow him unless we take our cross, and die on it—just like him?



habits for reflecting the mind of Jesus ~ learning to die

We don't want to die. We try to avoid it with all the energy we have. But if we want to live lives that reflect Jesus, Jesus calls us to die.

Baptism is a symbol of this. When we choose to follow Jesus and be baptised, we are laid completely under the water and are then raised back up. As Jesus was resurrected to a new life, so are we when we commit ourselves totally to God in baptism. As Paul writes, "don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." (Romans 6:3-4)

But baptism is just a symbol. Baptism doesn't change us or save us. Becoming a church member doesn't change us or save us. The only thing that Jesus is watching and wanting to change is what happens inside our minds and hearts.

In the table below, you will see four ideas that help us understand what dying like Jesus is all

about. Read through this now.

Practically, dying like Jesus means to submit my will to God's will in everything. This includes:

1. Allowing God to choose in all of the decisions of my life, including:

- a) The purpose of my life and what I should do with it
- b) How I should use my money (all of it)
- c) Who I will marry
- d) The friendships that will only encourage me to increasingly reflect the character of Jesus or spread the gospel to others
- e) The small choices I have to make, even though they appear unimportant

2. Acting according to the Bible when I feel like doing the opposite:

- a) The choice to forgive, and do nice things (showing mercy and grace) for someone who has hurt me
- b) The choice to be silent when people are against me, rather than getting angry, wanting revenge, or trying to justify myself

The purpose of dying is to allow God unrestricted access to change my life	Romans 6:22-23 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in a Christ Jesus our Lord.
The purpose of dying is to serve others	Philippians 2:4-8 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature a God... made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant... he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!
The decision to die like Jesus is my choice alone, and should be thought about very carefully	Luke 14:27-30 And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'
My usefulness to God only happens after I die like Jesus, but then it multiplies	John 12:24 I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.
Jesus never forces me to follow him and volunteer to die like him	Mark 8:34 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.
Dying with Jesus may appear like it is the end, but it is only the beginning	Mark 8:35-36 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?
Understanding the will of God only happens after I become a sacrifice like Jesus	Romans 12:1-2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

- c) The choice to initiate reconciliation when a relationship has broken down
- d) Obeying God's laws

3. Submitting to God's providence even though the situation is difficult or painful:

- a) Believing that even though the situation I am in is hard or painful, God is still good and working for good in my life
- b) I cannot quit what God has called me to do, just because the situation is hard or painful, because this very situation may be his choice to teach me something, or for me to help others

when do I become a living sacrifice?

The test of knowing whether we have truly died to ourselves, is if we can honestly go through every aspect of our lives and offer it to God to do

whatever he wants with it—and to do this with joy. We can't offer God even 85%, because then we would be 15% still alive! To find out how things are in our own lives, it can be very helpful to sit down from time to time and think about all of the choices I am making, to see if the choices I making today are for me, or for God.

Go through this list above and pray for each item individually. Can you pray and tell God that you are willing with all of your heart to do what is listed?

You may not feel like it right now, but the best beginning you can make is to say "God, I don't feel like living like this, but I would like to choose to live following you completely. Will your Holy Spirit change my heart so long for you to choose for me, and lead me wherever, and however, you desire? Amen."



putting the pieces together

In "the facts of his story" we saw how the 1) the call to pick up a cross and follow Jesus is a call to die, like he did. 2) Romans tells us that unless we do this, we will never know the will of God for us. 3) While dying like a seed is the end of life lived for our own pleasure, it is the beginning of a new life lived with God's power. 4) When we do this, serving others becomes our goal in life as we copy Jesus' example. 5) Because such a life is a choice. Jesus encourages us to seriously consider the cost of following him before we begin, so we will not be discouraged later when it seems hard.

In "thinking it through" you had a chance to begin to think about what it really means to die to yourself.

In "habits for reflecting the mind of Jesus" we really began to go deeper into how to practically live a life that has died and been resurrected with Jesus.



my time with God

This week we will reflect on the texts in this lesson. Take one text each day. In your journal, write the text out in full. Imagine this verse was just sent to you in a letter by God. Write a short letter in return, telling God what you think and feel about this, and how you will respond.

1. Romans 6:22-23
2. Luke 14:27-30
3. John 12:24
4. Mark 8:34
5. Mark 8:35-36
6. Romans 12:1-2
7. Philippians 2:4-8



pass it on!

Can you explain to someone what it means for you to die like Jesus, and why this is important?



extra help

1. Desire of Ages chapter 45, "Foreshadowing of the cross"
2. The Cost of Discipleship, Dietrich Bonhoeffer