

# Matthew 16:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

## Analysis

Jesus defines discipleship costs: 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me' (Greek: εἴ τις θέλει ὄπίσω μου ἔλθεῖν, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἐαυτὸν καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι, 'if anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me'). Three imperatives:

1. 'deny himself' (ἀπαρνέομαι) - refuse self as ultimate authority
2. 'take up cross' - embrace suffering, even martyrdom
3. 'follow me' - obedient discipleship.

The cross wasn't yet crucifixion symbol but Roman execution method. Jesus demands radical self-surrender, anticipating His own death.

## Historical Context

Roman crucifixion was public, shameful execution reserved for rebels and slaves. Condemned prisoners carried their crossbeam to execution sites. Jesus' original audience understood this literally - discipleship might mean martyrdom. Within decades, Christians faced literal cross-bearing (Peter crucified upside down, tradition says). The command challenged disciples who wanted messianic triumph without suffering. Self-denial contradicted honor-shame culture valuing self-

assertion and family loyalty. Early Christians embraced martyrdom, fulfilling literal cross-bearing.

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. What does it mean practically to deny yourself in daily life?
2. How does 'taking up your cross' differ from merely enduring life's difficulties?
3. In what specific areas is Jesus calling you to costly discipleship?

## Interlinear Text

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Τότε ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ Εἰ τις  
Then G3588 Jesus said G3588 disciples G846 G1487 G5100  
G5119 G2424 G2036 G3101

Θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἐλθεῖν ἀπαρνησάσθω ἔαυτὸν καὶ  
man will after me come let him deny himself and  
G2309 G3694 G3450 G2064 G533 G1438 G2532

ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι  
take up G3588 cross G846 and follow me  
G142 G4716 G2532 G190 G3427

## Additional Cross-References

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**Matthew 10:38** (Cross): And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

**Luke 14:27** (Cross): And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

**Mark 10:21** (Cross): Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

**2 Timothy 3:12** (References Jesus): Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

**Mark 8:34** (Cross): And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

**Acts 14:22** (Parallel theme): Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

**Colossians 1:24** (Parallel theme): Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

**John 19:17** (Cross): And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:

**1 Thessalonians 3:3** (Parallel theme): That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.

**Mark 15:21** (Cross): And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross.