

3 Hallmarks of a True Disciple

1. A true disciple exhibits a **PATTERN** of **SELF - DENIAL**.

- What is at the heart of self - denial?
The heart of self - denial is refusing your natural desire to be the ruler of your life and yielding to Christ as the Lord of your life. When we truly say and mean, "*Not my will but Thine be done*", we are denying our self.
- Why is self-denial the foundation of every act of sincere obedience?
If we try to obey Christ with out cultivating a heart of self-denial we will disobey as soon as obedience to Christ crosses paths with our own personal desire. Also, if we try to obey outwardly without cultivating a heart of true humility and selflessness we will end up hypocritical, legalistic, and pharisaical.

2. A true disciple takes up **HIS CROSS** and is willing to **SUFFER** for Christ's sake.

- **Define the Christian Cross:** The cross of Christ is the suffering that is ours because of our relationship to Christ. The common trials and sufferings of life we all must endure, but the cross of Christ is those sufferings that are unique to a Christian *because* He is associated with Christ.
- **What does it mean to take up your cross?** If the cross is the suffering that a person receives because of being a Christian, then to **take up** your cross is to being **willing** to suffer humiliation, persecution, and even death rather than denying our Lord.

3. A true disciples **PATTERN** of life is **FOLLOWING CHRIST** in **OBEDIENCE**.

- In this world, lost sinners are in desperate need of a true leader; a guide who can navigate us through this maze of life. We need a guide who can not only tell us the way but show us the way by example. Christ in every way is our guide through this world and our perfect example, and He calls us to **follow Him in obedience**.
- **(1John 2:6)** The one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

Putting it all together:

So a true believer is characterized by denying himself, taking up his cross, and following Christ, Let's look at how these three characteristics work together. The end result of this teaching is following Christ. This is what Peter failed to do. Jesus said I am going this way and Peter said no I want to go this way. Jesus then went into His sermon to inform all **how to follow Christ, by first denying your self and then taking up your cross.** The truth of the matter is this: you can't follow Christ if you are not willing to take up your cross because the way of Christ is the way of the cross. The cross is inseparable from the life of an obedient believer. So we have to take up our cross to follow Christ. Well there is no way we are going to take up our cross without first denying our self. Who naturally wants to expose themselves to humiliation, suffering, even martyrdom? Only the person who has died to himself that Christ may live in him and be glorified is willing to do this. That is why self-denial is at the heart of all obedience; because the carnal man is completely opposed to the ways of God.

Peter's Great Confession: a synthesis from Lk. 9, Mt. 16, Mk. 8

Lk. 9:18 And it happened that while He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him, and He questioned them, saying, "Who do the people say that I am?" **19** They answered and said, "John the Baptist, and others say Elijah; but others, that one of the prophets of old has risen again." **20** And He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered and said, **Mt.** "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven." **Lk. 21** But He warned them and instructed them not to tell this to anyone, **22** saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and raised up on the third day." **Mk.** And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, **Mt.** saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You." But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and said, **Mt.** "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."

Mk. And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, **Lk. 9:23** And He was saying to them all, If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up His cross daily and follow Me. **24** For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. **25** For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? **26** For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.