



The
FLOW
Adult CURRICULUM

#38

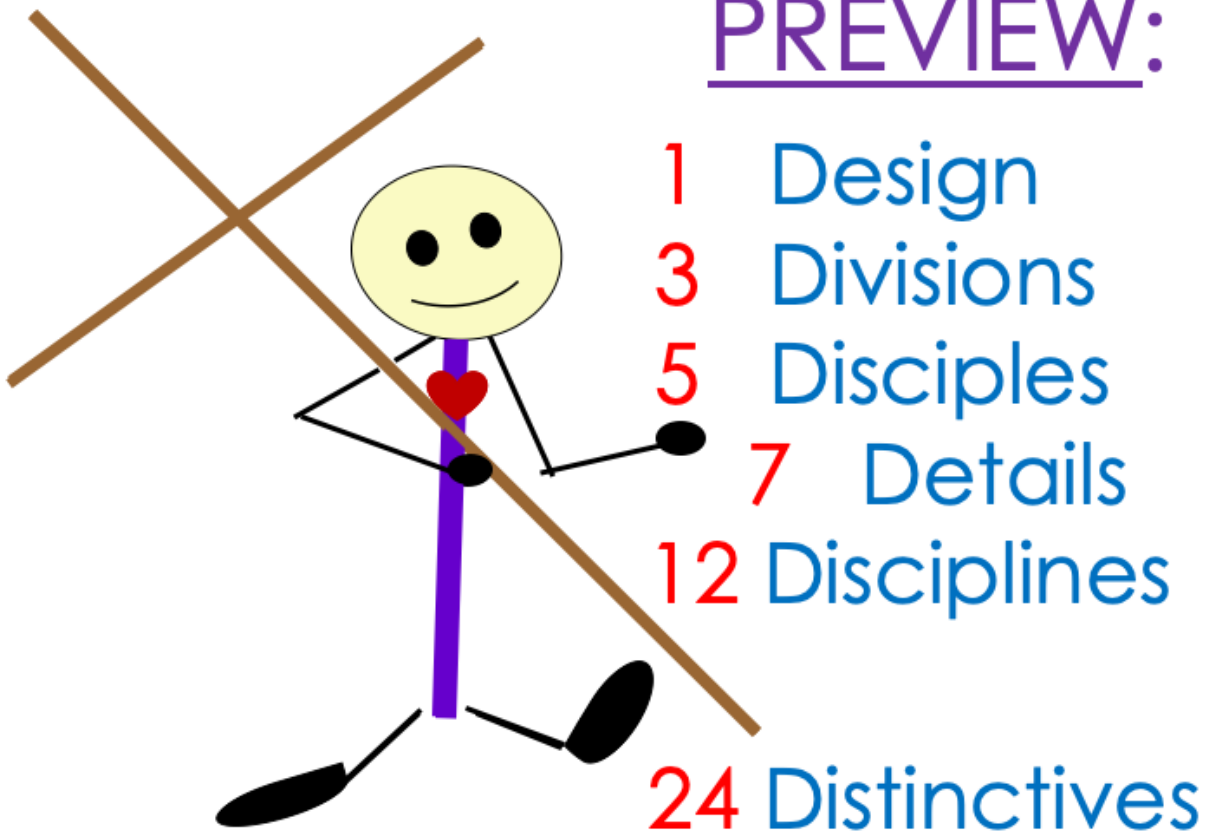
Carrying Our Cross

Luke 9:23

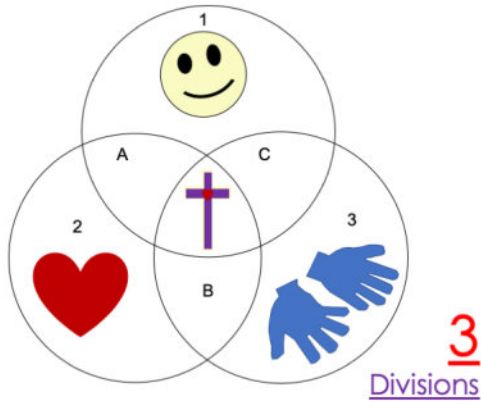
(Come And See Christianity book pages 101)

The FLOW

PREVIEW:

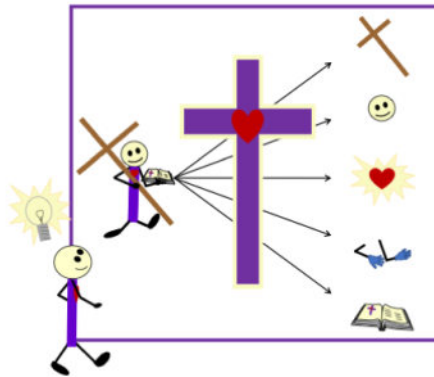


SECTION SIX: 12 Disciplines



The Disciple's "Hands" put into **action** the **truth** & **love** of God's Word, God's will, & God's ways. In short, when **each Christian's Head, Heart, & Hands** are united in purpose & power, the family of God is **living** as the **Body of Christ!**

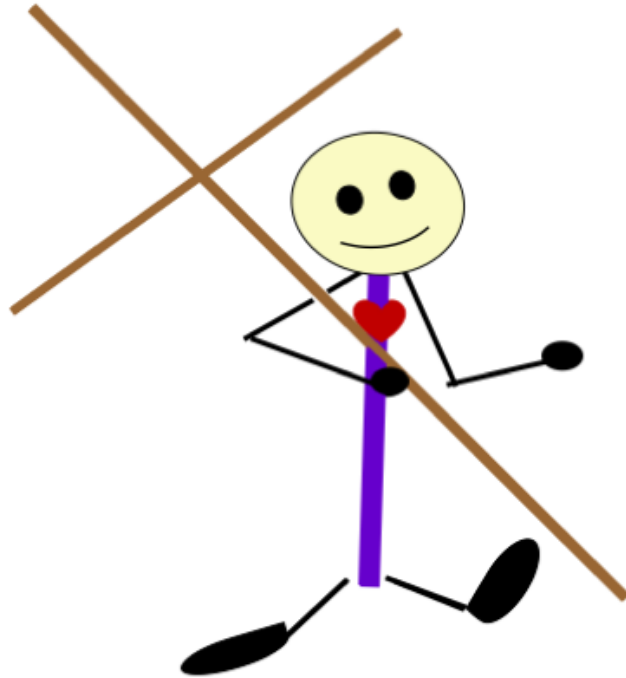
24 Family Distinctives:



24 DISTINCTIVES:

The “distinctives” are a family portrait... When you add God's Word, God's Spirit, God's Truth, God's love, and God's people all together, the distinctives are what **we look, love, & live like :-)**

We are...



Carrying our cross

INTRO:

As we begin to **see the beautiful, biblical portrait of Christ's faith-filled family** defined and described by God's Word, will, and ways, it is critical to remember that the Holy Bible is to ALWAYS BE our ultimate source, authority, and interpreter in ALL things pertaining to one's understanding of reality and application of truth in love.

**Remember,
The biblical Church is Christ's missional family...
Moreover, God's Word reveals our Father's will and His family's ways.**

2 Timothy 3:16-17

*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correction, and for training in righteousness, **17**so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

Here are **24 defining & describing HANDS-on DISTINCTIVES of Christianity:**

True Christians are biblically, miraculously, intentionally, missionally, and imperfectly...

1. *Responding to grace*
2. *Repenting of sin*
3. *Trusting the Bible*
4. *Obeying God's Word*
5. *Growing in Christ*
6. *Living Spirit-led*
7. *Praying for guidance*
8. *Following by faith*
9. *Dying to self*
10. *Carrying our cross*
11. *BE-ing The Church*
12. *Loving one another (truly loving one another)*
13. *Equipping the saints*
14. *Exemplifying supernatural unity*
15. *Ministering as ambassadors*
16. *Discerning matters shrewdly*
17. *Worshipping God vertically*
18. *Experiencing Him horizontally*
19. *Proclaiming the Gospel (no matter what)*
20. *Fishing for men*
21. *Making disciplined warriors*
22. *Winning spiritual warfare*
23. *Loving our King*
24. *Serving His kingdom*

PRAYER:

LORD, we seek to bless You with all that is within us. Help us here, we pray, to be that blessing as we come to better understand You and Your eternal truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). Help us to see with Your eyes and love with Your love, all that You would reveal to us through Your Word, Your will, and Your ways. May we grow in our grasp of Your realities, Your means of restoration, and Your mission of reproduction. In the holy name of Jesus, we pray. Amen and Amen

CONTEXT:

Macro

This lesson marks another major transition point in our curriculum's eye-opening explanation of Christianity. By way of review, we began in Section One with the reality of Almighty God having 1 Divine DESIGN (also known as a biblical worldview and the eternal application of Jesus Christ's Gospel). In Section Two, we addressed the 3 DIVISIONS (Head, Heart, and Hands) that make up the "being" in every human being. Next, in Section Three, we demonstrated how Christianity accounts for, defines, and describes all of humanity, every person, past, present, and future. We noted that all people can be identified as one of the 5 DISCIPLES – Lost, Lover, Learner, Leader, or Lifer. Moving forward, Section Four revealed, engaged, and explained the 7 fundamental DETAILS of God's Divine DESIGN... because **we all need to know what we need to know**. To be more specific, those seven truths are: The Foundations, The Framework, The Facts, The Fight, The Faith, The Family, and the truth about Forever.

Then, in Section Five, which we just completed, our focus shifted from HEAD based truths to 12 HEART shaping exercises or disciplines - each having the potential to strengthen one's personal relationship with Christ, His Church, and their collective mission: bringing God glory by finding & growing more glorifiers.

We used the acronym **J.E.S.U.S.'S. P. S.W.O.R.D.** to outline and harmonize a biblical, missional, and intentional methodology for growing in God's love - & His loving witness. The 12 HEART DISCIPLINES are: **J**ournaling... **E**ating-nothing (fasting)... **S**cripture-intake... **U**nderstudy of Scripture... **S**tewardship... **S**olitude... **P**rayer... **S**erving... **W**orshipping... **O**utreach... **R**elationships... and **D**evelopment.

Now, our curriculum and study will transition to The HANDS. This is where **Christians demonstrate to the world that Christ is in their worship & witness**. Whereas our time spent in the HEAD sections (1-4) focused on the truths that Christians need and seek to LEARN, and our concentration on the 12 HEART DISCIPLINES of section 5 helped us to grow in God's LOVE, our sixth and final section will **walk through the 24 DISTINCTIVES, which explain & exemplify how Christians are to faithfully LIVE... and fully BE The Church... together** – all by God's grace & ALL for His glory!

God's Word puts it this way:

"Let us not love with word and tongue but in action and truth." – 1st John 3:18

And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, [47](#)praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. – Acts 2:46-47

I. **DISTINCTIVES are FRUIT:**

It is important to realize that God’s miraculous and authentic **Christian DISTINCTIVES are the FRUIT of saving grace and faith** (Ephesians 2:1-10). As Jesus described in John 15, people can do nothing outside of their abiding in Him and obeying His Word, will and ways. In short, there will be no fruit unless one remains attached to and provided for by the true Vine and divine Root. With that said, a cautionary note is worth sharing here, beware the counterfeits that abound around the world. ***Plastic fruit is deceptive vs. DISTINCTIVE!***

Galatians 5:22-25

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

II. **DISTINCTIVES are FAMILY:**



DISTINCTIVES, by definition, are those “distinguishing characteristics that are notable for having a special quality, style, and/or attractiveness” (Dictionary.com).

When it comes to God’s family, the true Church, each Christian and their individualistic DISTINCTIVES are as unique as their potential. At the same time, in the same way that a billion unique snowflakes can be combined to make a single snowstorm, or countless swatches of scrap fabric can be sewn together to make a single quilt, so it is with God’s family. The LORD creates His Christian family with a both/and combination of DISTINCTIVE uniqueness, as well as DISTINCTIVE love and defining unity.

Christianity’s DISTINCT family (ecclesia) has a DISTINCTIVE unity (koinonia).

“By this all people will know that you are My disciple, if you have love for one another.”

– John 13:35

“The more genuine and the deeper our community becomes, the more will everything else between us recede, the more clearly and purely will Jesus Christ and his work become the one and only thing that is vital between us.”

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

III. **DISTINCTIVES are WITNESS:**

The most biblical and healthy understandings of Christianity will include an embrace of two overarching and DISTINCTIVE purposes. Namely, per God’s Word, will, and ways, every Christian has received miraculous, saving grace, as well as the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to:

1. Bring glory to God.

1 Corinthians 10:31

*So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do,
do all to the glory of God.*

2. BE Christ’s witness.

Acts 1:8

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, **and you will be My witnesses** in Jerusalem (locally), and in all Judea and Samaria (regionally), and to the end of the earth (globally).”*

God’s DISTINCTIVE people have been filled with His Holy Spirit for the express purpose of living DISTINCTIVE lives. When the world sees the LORD’s loving family living out their divinely empowered and God-honoring worship, work, and warfare, the resulting fruit will serve as a faithful witness, built with supernatural, grace-based, and missional DISTINCTIVES.

“God created me—and you—to live with a single, all-embracing, all-transforming passion—namely, a passion to glorify God by enjoying and displaying his supreme excellence in all the spheres of life.”

- John Piper

The Christian Distinctive

What distinguishes Christianity from all other religions is that it is a *revealed* religion. Christianity is not about our search for God or our means of finding him. Christianity is not a religion that works its way upward. It is all about God coming to us — God in grace making himself known to us and making a way for us to enjoy fellowship with him.

And so, at the very heart of Christianity is, simply, a message — a message from God to us about what he has done to bring us to himself.

If Christianity is distinctively revealed religion, then it is also uniquely *authoritative*. It does not offer itself as the best and highest of human thinking about God or even the best or most successful of human efforts to know God. It professes to be nothing less than the unique word from God, his very own self-disclosure and the record of the actions he has taken in Jesus Christ to bring us into fellowship with himself.

One of Rudyard Kipling's characters declares, "The heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone; He don't obey no orders unless they is his own." That is to say, human religions lack authority — they form their own ideas and "discover" their own beliefs.

By contrast the Christian is "under orders," because unlike human religions, Christianity is a revealed religion — divinely revealed. We Christians are not our own touchstone of truth, and we do not confuse our ideas about God with His own self-revelation. We learn truth about God not from "inner lights" within ourselves but from God's own objective Word.

And apart from this external authority, there is no Christianity. This, at bottom, is Christianity's leading distinctive.

And so, we **Christians prize Scripture as God's Word. We joyfully submit to it. And we enthusiastically proclaim its message of grace in Jesus Christ to the world.**

- Dr. Fred Zaspel

Micro

What our Lord said about cross-carrying and obedience is not in fine type. It is in bold print on the face of the contract.
– Vance Havner

*“All of us need to open our minds & our hearts in order to more fully understand the relevance of taking upon ourselves our crosses and following Christ... **The cost is steep, but the reward is priceless. Come unto Him and He will bless you beyond measure!**”* *“The Savior emphasized that all those who are willing to follow Him need to deny themselves and control their desires, appetites, and passions, sacrificing everything, even life itself if necessary, being entirely submissive to the will of the Father—just as He did. This is, in fact, the price to be paid for the salvation of a soul.”*
– Ulisses Soares

Message

[What does it mean to take up your cross and follow Jesus?](#)

The phrase "a cross to bear" is a popular derivation of the words of Jesus: "Take up your cross and follow Me." While the phrase is commonly understood to mean acceptance of some burdensome task, the command to take up the cross is much more than a symbol of the difficulties experienced by humanity. Any person, whether a follower of Jesus or not, will suffer frustration and pain in this life. Taking up one's cross and following Jesus is something completely different.

The cross was an instrument of death. What Jesus is referring to is commitment to Him, even unto death—obedience to the extreme measure and willingness to die in pursuit of obedience. Death on a cross was not pleasant. It was painful and humiliating. The implication is that even if obedience is painful and humiliating, we should be willing to endure it for Christ.

By saying, "Take up your cross and follow Me" Jesus was giving us a word picture of the concept of "death to self," which originates in another saying of Jesus, ***"For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?"*** ([Luke](#)

[9:24-25](#)). The idea is that nothing in this life is worth keeping if it means losing eternal life, not a job, not a family, not a group of friends, not even our very identity. ***The call is tough, but the eternal reward is well worth the temporary pain.***

The multitudes that followed Christ were convinced that He was going to bring a glorious kingdom to earth, freeing them from the oppressive Roman rule. Even His own disciples were thinking this way ([Luke 19:11](#)). Misunderstanding the prophecies, they were shocked when He began to talk about death to self and carrying the cross ([Luke 9:22](#)). ***They left Him in droves because of these teachings. Similarly, sometimes believers today misunderstand the call of Jesus as a call to health, wealth, and prosperity. Nothing could be further from the truth. The call of Jesus is a call to die, but today some, unwilling to accept a call to die, leave Him or simply change His message to something more pleasant.***

His message never guaranteed a pleasant life. Jesus instead guaranteed that trials would come to His followers ([John 16:33](#)). **Discipleship demands sacrifice, and Jesus never hid that cost.** He also promised that He would be there to give us the joy and peace of the Holy Spirit ([John 14:15-19](#)), comfort us in our trials ([James 1:12](#)), and act as a faithful high priest who understands our struggles ([Hebrews 2:17](#)) and accomplished for us peace with God by His blood ([Romans 5:1](#)).

In [Luke 9:57-62](#), three different men expressed a willingness to follow Jesus. When Jesus asked them a few more questions, He revealed that their willingness was ill-considered. They had not counted the cost of following Him. None of them was willing to take up his cross and forsake his own interests for Christ's. It seems clear that **then and now, people always struggle to put their own ideas, plans, ambitions and desires to death and exchange them for His.**

Have you ever wondered if you would be like these men? Consider these questions:

- Would you still follow Jesus if it meant losing your closest friends?
- Would you still follow Jesus if it meant alienation from your family?
- Would you still follow Jesus if it meant the loss of your reputation?
- Would you still follow Jesus if it meant losing your job?
- Would you still follow Jesus if it meant losing your life?

In some places in the world, actual death is a real possibility when a person becomes a Christian. In other places, the consequences are different. The cost may be exacted emotionally rather than physically. But the lesson is clear:

although following Jesus doesn't necessarily mean actual death, we should be willing to go to death, or suffer anything rather than deny Him. Many times the temptation is more subtle. For most of us, there comes a point in our lives where we are faced with a choice—Jesus or the comforts of this life—and which one we choose speaks volumes about our love for Him.

Taking up our cross to follow Christ means, simply, commitment to the point of giving up our hopes, dreams, possessions, even our very life if need be. **This is the attitude – the only acceptable attitude – of a true disciple** ([Luke 14:27](#)). Jesus' followers regard the reward as worth the price. **Jesus set the example for us in His death, to give us the gift of life.**
– CompellingTruth.org

BIG IDEA: CARRYING OUR CROSS DAILY is how believer's live and love, actively DYING TO SELF, all in the context of a Spirit-Led, step by step, Christ-like, faithful-obedience to God's Word, will, and ways.

PREVIEW:

1. CARRYING
2. OUR CROSS
3. DAILY

TEXT:

Luke 9:23

"Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross (an instrument of death) daily and follow Me." - Jesus Christ

1. CARRYING

Illustration:

*"I fear that the cross, without ever being disowned, is constantly in danger of being dismissed from the central place it must enjoy, by relatively peripheral insights that take on far too much weight. **Whenever the periphery is in danger of displacing the center, we are not far removed from idolatry.**"
- D.A. Carson*

*Be ashamed to use the vulgar arts of a recruiting soldier. Do not speak only of the uniform, the pay, and the glory; speak also of the enemies, the battle, the armor, the watching, the marching, and the drill. Do not present only one side of Christianity. **Do not keep back “the cross” of self-denial** that must be carried, when you speak of the cross on which Christ died for our redemption.*

Explain fully what Christianity entails. Entreat men to repent and come to Christ; but bid them at the same time to “count the cost.”

- J.C. Ryle

Explanation:

In our previous lesson (DYING TO SELF), emphasis was placed on the reality of one's voluntary death and born-again experience, as well as their on-go-ING, intentionality. While the expectation tends to be that those who appear to DIE TO SELF will live for Christ, that is a bad assumption. Sadly, history, as well as contemporary church culture, has been and continues to be, filled with counterfeit Christians (see Judas, Demas, and all the “disciples who followed Christ no more” – as described in John 6:66).

Getting beyond moralist deism and mere behavior modification, regardless of how moral or churchy one's HEAD and HANDS appear to be, is eternally essential. Why? Here again, the answer is not obvious. Because... **it's our HEART that cements our commitment to CARRYING OUR CROSS!**

To say it another way, Christianity's genuine, grace-based, Gospel empowered FOLLOWING BY FAITH and DYING TO SELF is so much more than the elimination of bad choices and/or the addition good ones. To truly BE a Christian, it requires the miraculous gift of grace that can only come from the Bible's Messiah (His name is Jesus The Christ)... And, wherever and whenever that Messianic miracle has been Holy Spirit applied, a new CROSS CARRYING missionary has been born... again! Consequently, per King Jesus, ***the Christian's CROSS CARRYING is not their burden, it's their birthmark!***

Jesus' apparent attempts to dissuade people from following Him surely limited the number of false converts and insincere disciples (see [John 6:66](#)). But God seeks “true worshipers [who] will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth” ([John 4:23](#)). Jesus' call to “carry your cross and follow Me” serves to screen out the disingenuous, double-minded, and dissembling.

- GotQuestions.org

Application:

Matthew 16:25

“For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it!”

Your Master's life was dominated by a cross. He has called you also to a life with a cross. This clear gospel note is so easy to forget in flabby Western society. With a great chorus of custom, advertisement, and temptation this world is beckoning you to a life of self-indulgence. Your flesh is drawn to that appeal and will fall in with the world's suggestions. But the Lord of glory has called you to a life of self-denial, to a cross.
- **Walter Chantry**

2. OUR CROSS

Illustration:

We all have a cross to carry. But it's a cross that kills our sins, smashes our idols, and teaches us the folly of self-reliance. It's a cross that says I'll do anything to follow Jesus, not a cross that says I have to do everything for Jesus.
- **Kevin DeYoung**

Explanation:

Pay close attention here... Why? Simple... **Many will miss the point.** No doubt, most assume that the CROSS will be our primary focus. That would be a mistake. To be sure, while the CROSS is an obvious key, the "OUR" in OUR CROSS is the personalizing distinctive that calls for every Christian's ongoing commitment to everyday Christ-likeness.

*What are our crosses? They are not simply trials and hardships... A cross results from specifically walking in Christ's steps, embracing His life. It comes from distain because we follow the narrow way of Jesus Christ... **Our crosses come from and are proportionate to our dedication to Christ.** Difficulties do not indicate cross-bearing, though difficulties for Christ's sake do.*
- **Kent Hughes**

Consider, for a missional moment, the following... It was Jesus The Christ who emphatically said: "Unless you are willing to pick up **YOUR CROSS DAILY** and follow Me, you **CANNOT** be My disciples." Dear reader, did you hear what the living and loving God just said to you and me (2 Timothy 3:16-17)?

Weightier words may never again be spoken.

Herein, the LORD Himself has declared a matter of personal choice and eternal consequence, an exhortation that is centered in each individual's responsibility & relationship to The crucified Christ AND their own cross. In other words, CARRYING and OWNERSHIP of one's CROSS is every bit as important as its authenticity & visibility. Thus, there are eternal differences that need to be understood and discerned between 3 types of crosses:

1. **Generic cross** - ... a widely used, historical form of capital punishment.
2. **Jesus' cross** - ...Christ's unique, Gospel-enabling death & sacrifice.
3. **Our cross** - ...a Christian's call to daily, Christlike dying & carrying.

At this point, it should be obvious, a "generic cross" is little more than a gruesome instrument and ghastly reminder of torturous death and human suffering. To be clear, crosses have always been used to humiliate, and kill people – that is it. In short, today, the only redeeming value of a generic cross is its often symbolic reference, in various forms (i.e., artwork, jewelry, etc.), to the eternally redemptive work of Christ, which was blood-bought and accomplished on His cross.

Even more obvious than the uselessness of generic crosses is the uniqueness of Christ's cross. ***Christ's cross finished The Messiah's mission!***

"Tetelestai, 'It is finished!' We have no doubt heard these words... but why does Jesus reserve them as His last and final words (before dying on His cross)? 'It is finished!' (John 19:30) indicates He has consumed the cup of God's wrath, and through His sacrifice, the bridge between God and sinful man had been established."

- BibleStudyTools.com

After considering the uselessness of generic crosses and the eternally transforming power of The Gospel's grace, which was extended through Christ's cross, let us now contemplate the unifying utility of OUR CROSS.

In every... heart there is a cross and a throne, and the Christian is on the throne till he puts himself on the cross... We want to be saved, but we insist that Christ do all the dying. No cross for us, no dethronement, no dying. We remain king within our little kingdom... and wear our tinsel crown with all the pride of a Caesar; but we doom ourselves to shadows and weakness and spiritual sterility.

- A.W. Tozer

First, and foremost, note that CARRYING OUR CROSS is a gift of grace that exemplifies biblical Christ-likeness. In short, within true, healthy, and God-honoring Christianity, CROSS-CARRYING is NOT a “have to” proposition. No! By contrast, those who have genuinely DIED TO SELF and live perpetually DYING TO SELF, thank The LORD for their privilege to serve and even suffer for their Savior. To that end, fully devoted disciples of Jesus The Christ live and love with a “get-to” attitude when it comes to CARRYING THEIR CROSS.

Acts 5:40-42

and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. ⁴¹Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. ⁴²And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.

Application:

Pick up your cross... follow Jesus... no matter what... and count it all joy!

*We are not bearing our crosses every time we have a headache... an aspirin tablet will take care of that. What is meant is the trouble we would not have if we were not Christians.
- Vance Havner*

James 1:2-4

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

*I admit it costs much to be a true Christian. But who in his sound senses can doubt that it is worth any cost to have the soul saved? When the ship is in danger of sinking, the crew think nothing of casting overboard the precious cargo. When a limb is mortified, a man will submit to any severe operation, and even to amputation, to save life. **Surely a Christian should be willing to give up anything which stands between him and heaven. A religion that costs nothing is worth nothing! A cheap Christianity, without a cross, will prove in the end a useless Christianity, without a crown.**
- J.C. Ryle*

3. DAILY

Illustration:

There are no crown-wearers in heaven who were not cross-carriers here below.
– Charles Spurgeon

Turn back to the cross. Our Lord proved to us the redemptive power of suffering for His sake. But we have to choose it. We are constantly tempted to withdraw into self-protection and anger and defensiveness. But looking to the Lord moment by moment, we can embrace the cross with its pain and see Him use us to communicate more grace to people who aren't even asking for it. We didn't ask, and He suffered for us anyway. That kind of love was the only power that could get through to us. And it did.
– Ray Ortlund

Explanation:

Don't think for a second that you can be a "Sunday Christian." Part-time, Sunday-morning, pick and choose Christians don't exist! Christianity and CROSS CARRYING are ALL day, EVERY day commitments.

While none of us are perfect, that reality is no excuse for trying to lower the bar of God's biblical standards. Instead, when we falter and stumble, (and we all will), our sinful shortcomings call for confession, repentance, and a heartfelt, prayerful request for loving restoration. Beware those who say or imply ANY other perspective (see Galatians 1:6-10).

Thankfully, our LORD and His people love, help, and restore imperfect Christians - biblically. At the same time, when dealing with lying, lukewarm, Laodiceans (Revelation 3:15-22), and deceptively destructive hypocrites, The Lord's miraculously transformed ministers of reconciliation, (His righteous ambassadors for Christ - 2 Corinthians 5:17-21), should bring "truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15) to bear upon the sinner(s) and their situation.

We must not conceal from ourselves that true Christianity brings with it a daily cross in this life, while it offers us a crown of glory in the life to come. The flesh must be daily crucified. The devil must be daily resisted. The world must be daily overcome. There is a warfare to be waged, and a battle to be fought. Never was there a truer word than the old saying, "No cross, no crown!" If we never found this out by experience, our souls are in a poor condition.
– J.C. Ryle

If a professing Christian does not embrace the biblical ideal of DAILY, full-surrender and DYING TO SELF, they will not persevere as Christ-like CROSS CARRIERS. Again, without a DAILY, heartfelt passion for DAILY, grace-based, CROSS CARRYING and Christ-likeness, the professing Christ follower will be exposed as a counterfeit follower of Christ. **In reality, like it or not, those who do not biblically follow Christ... are not biblical Christ followers.** Hence, when Jesus said “*you must pick up YOUR CROSS DAILY and follow Me, or you CANNOT be My disciple*” – He was declaring a defining condition of Christianity. Consequently, per the definitions and descriptions of God’s Word, will, and ways, the **DAILY CROSS CARRIERS are the true Christians, whereas the part-timers, who may be in a church... are NOT in Christ... The part-time or non-CROSS CARRIERS are non-Christians!**

In summary, as confrontational and/or convicting as this section may sound, a faithful commitment to full-context, biblical discipleship demands a crystal clear, no wiggle-room, explanation of DAILY CROSS CARRYING. Thus, ***A cross-less Christ is a mythical oxymoron. He does not exist!*** In the same way, ***cross-less Christians are hypocrites, NOT Christians.***

Reader, take this to heart, those who disregard or deflate Christ’s defining terms on CROSS CARRYING are in peril. Therefore, with a missional sense of eternal urgency, know that all such souls need to be prayed for and warned. The same is true for anyone and everyone whose HEAD and HANDS appear to represent a HEART that is ALL-in, when in reality, their passions are part-time and their motives are not pure.

Let it be said to and shared with those who know much “about the cross,” as well as those who appear to occasionally CARRY a CROSS, that, according to Christ, all HEART-less, and/or part-time CROSS CARRYING is unacceptable to Him. Moreover, He equates such self-satisfying disobedience with false conversions, also known as spiritual goats and wolves. Such souls have a greater chance of drawing square circles than entering the kingdom of heaven (read Matthew 7:21-27 very prayerfully, slowly, and carefully).

Application:

*The cross is not a mere event in history; it’s a way of life!
Take up your cross DAILY, Jesus said!*

***Christ died to save us from hell but not to save us from the cross.
He died so that we could be glorified, but not to keep us from being crucified.
For the Christian the cross of Christ is not merely a past place of substitution.
The cross is also a present place of daily execution.***

– John Piper

Where are the marks of the cross in your life?
Are there any points of identification with your Lord?
Alas, too many Christians wear medals but carry no scars.
– Vance Havner

CLOSE:

We must never forget – if we are to grow in grace, and therefore grow like Christ – that the One we trust, love, and serve is a crucified Savior. To follow Him means taking up the cross, as well as denying ourselves. It means a crucified life.
– Sinclair Ferguson

The old cross slew men; the new cross entertains them.
The old cross condemned; the new cross amuses. The old cross destroyed fleshly confidence; the new cross encourages it. The old cross was an emblem of shame; the new cross is jewelry.
– Anonymous

For What?

To take up one's cross is simply to be willing to pay any price for Christ's sake...
We must keep in mind that Jesus' path to glory was marked by pain before pleasure, sorrow before joy, humiliation before glorification, persecution before exaltation, death before resurrection, earthly hatred before heavenly worship. To remember those truths about our Lord's earthly life will protect us from the foolish and ungodly promises of the so-called health and wealth gospel, which vitiates His command to take up our crosses as He took up His.
– John MacArthur

So What?

If you will bear the cross, it will bear you.

- Robert Murray McCheyne

*Choosing the cross over comfort
is a requirement for following Christ.*

- David Platt

Now What?

*Cross bearing means to fully embrace, identify with, and follow Jesus
wherever that will take us and with whatever that will cost us.*

- Tim Keese

PRAYER

Dear heavenly Father, thank You so much for the Truth and Love of Your Word, will, and ways. Please help us to absorb and apply ALL that You have shared and commanded in the Bible. May our heads be infilled with Your defining Scriptures, for the express purpose of informing, inspecting, and inspiring our sanctified hearts and serving hands.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen and Amen

Support Sermon:

"The Unattractive Truth"

Revelation 11:18

September 20, 2009

Sermon Series: Doulos