



## [Luke 9:23-25](#)

(23) And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. (24) For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. (25) For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?

*King James Version*

[Jesus](#) presents the choice between clinging to our former lives or letting go and entrusting our new lives to His care. He points out that all the riches of [the world](#) mean nothing without a spiritual life—a life that will not be held captive by the grave. We might have some years of glorious living in a physical sense, but inevitably, the same event happens to us all.

He emphasizes the tremendous waste of squandering the opportunity for eternal life in exchange for a little more fun or comfort today. Christ reminds His followers that He will be coming again to reward people for the choices they made—whether they valued Him and sought Him, or were ashamed of Him and sought the dead things of this world.

One other instruction appears here: the command to deny oneself. He is not advocating asceticism but allowing [God](#) to set the terms of one's life. It is about renouncing one's own life in favor of the life that Christ is offering—one far better but more costly.

To follow after Him, we must willingly reject—even disown—any aspect of life that is not in subjection to Him. This involves putting to death the works of the flesh and purging the love of the world, including the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life ([1 John 2:15-17](#)). We must hold at bay all those things embedded deep in our human nature that prevent our being worthy of Him.

We must realize that to carry a *stauros* is not a brisk walk with a little stick softly resting on one shoulder. The stake, or the crossbeam, was a thick and heavy piece of wood. It

The Berean: Daily Verse and Commentary for Luke 9:23-25 (<http://www.theberean.org>)

weighed down the bearer and hindered normal mobility.

Similarly, some aspects of our calling and conversion burden us and make it impossible to walk as others do—and that is by design. Becoming a follower of Christ has never meant having an easy life. It has tremendous benefits and blessings, but it also has its burdens because of the nature that remains inside us, weighing us down as it fights for dominance. This is why in [Galatians 5:24](#) Paul says that “Those who belong to Christ have crucified their old nature with all that it loved and lusted for” (Phillips' Translation).

The fact that we must take up our cross daily means that we must lift that crossbeam every morning and crucify our carnal nature up until we go to sleep. Then the next morning we rise and shoulder afresh those things we have to bear, crucifying the flesh again. This routine begins at [baptism](#), but it does not end until our final breath.

[1 John 5:3](#) says that God's commands are not burdensome, yet the carnality that remains within us considers them to be so. Many believers have had to face the dilemma of being offered a better-paying job if they were willing to break the [fourth commandment](#) and work on the [Sabbath](#), or the ninth commandment by misrepresenting ourselves. Similarly, they could have more money by breaking the eighth commandment and robbing God of His tithe. If we are accustomed to getting our way, then these behavioral limits will seem burdensome, but only because we still lack the perspective of the divine Lawgiver.

Jesus said that His yoke is easy and His burden is light ([Matthew 11:30](#)). In Christ, we still have burdens, but they are far easier to bear when He is providing the strength. As we become aligned with His standard of conduct, the burdens become less about the conflict within ourselves because of what we feel God will not let us do and more about the conflict we will encounter from the world as God's way of life offends them. There can be external conflict but internal peace because we are in alignment with God.

But until we are of the same mind as the Lawgiver, our carnality will tirelessly pressure us to ease our burdens by playing fast and loose with God's instructions. That is part of the cross we have to bear until our perfecting. God's law is not the problem—it is the carnal mind feeling vexed that makes our obligations feel heavy.

— David C. Grabbe

**To learn more, see:**

[What Does It Mean to Take Up the Cross?](#)

**Related Topics:**

[Choices](#)

[Christ's Yoke](#)

[Christ's Yoke is Easy](#)

[Foolish Choices](#)

[Putting to Death the Flesh](#)

[Squandering our Time](#)

[Stauros](#)

[Taking up Cross](#)