

**Luke 9:23-26 --To follow Jesus is not a means of self-fulfillment but of self-denial.**

- ✓ He says something that is clear, hard and fast; He delivers us from being able escape into our own definitions of discipleship is or isn't.
  - ✓ What does it mean to be Jesus' follower? What does it take? What is
  - ✓ required to come after Jesus?
  - ✓ "Do you want to follow Me and live the life I have for you? --die to
  - ✓ yourself, deny yourself: your dreams, goals, ambitions, whatever your
  - ✓ plans may be—be willing to throw it all away, then you can be My disciple."
  - ✓ Following Jesus is the only means to fulfillment, the only means to
  - ✓ find yourself and your purpose.
  - ✓ But it will never be found in seeking what's best for yourself; it will never be
  - ✓ found in seeking your own purpose.
  - ✓ Dietrich Bonhoeffer – "Salvation is free, but discipleship will cost you your life."
- 
- 
- 

**1. Jesus gives us four conditions of discipleship which can be summed up in four words: Desire, Denial, Death, Devotion.**

- ✓ **Mark 8:33-34** – Jesus isn't just speaking to the 12, He's speaking to the entire crowd.
  - ✓ This call is not a select few, but everyone who would consider following Jesus.
- 
- 

**2. The "IF" of discipleship**

- ✓ Jesus was big on conditions; He used the word "if" often with regards to following Him: **Luke 14:25**. That's a big if!
  - ✓ "If" is one of the first words a child learns to associate with logical thinking and conditional results. "Johnny, if you eat all your carrots, then you can have some ice cream"
  - ✓ There are lots of "if's" in the New Testament (574) but almost half of those are in only the first four book—the gospels—where Jesus' teachings are mostly contained
  - ✓ Jesus was the master of the "if": **Mark 4:23; John 7:37; John 8:31; John 14:15.**
- 
- 

**3. The first "if" of discipleship is Desire: "If anyone *would* come after Me,..."**

- ✓ "If anyone would", "If anyone wishes...", "If anyone wants to be My disciple"
  - ✓ "If anyone wants to come after Me..." – that implies movement – lining up behind and following where He goes—we don't walk in front of Him and ask Him to follow us.
  - ✓ "If anyone wants" – Until you desire to be a disciple, you won't be one.
  - ✓ Do you desire to be a disciple of Jesus? Discipleship will cost you your life.
- 
-

**4. The second condition of discipleship is Denial.**

- ✓ Self-denial – Denying your dreams, goals, ambitions, plans—put it all way or be willing to.
  - ✓ The Self-Esteem movement is totally opposed to discipleship.
  - ✓ Jesus is calling you to forsake the one person you like most!
  - ✓ Leave all of you out of this—be willing to lose your whole self—totally pushing Jesus forward and totally pushing yourself out of the picture.
  - ✓ “let him” – puts the responsibility on each of us as individuals; it must be intentional; it is not automatic.
  - ✓ “Deny” – a firm refusal; the same word used to describe what Peter did to Jesus 3 times.
  - ✓ **Luke 14:33** – is the unclear? **John 12:25** not like a teenager who can’t get her way, “I hate my life!” No. You hate what you’d do with your life, what you’d make of it, how you’d manage it; **Luke 14:25** Hate how your parents would direct your life, what they’d make of you as opposed to what Jesus would make of you.
  - ✓ Deny self – this is in the aorist imperative meaning we are to do it right now without delay.
  - ✓ We renounce self-will and live to do God’s will.
  - ✓ We renounce self-exaltation and live to exalt God.
  - ✓ We renounce self-seeking and live to seek God and His Kingdom.
  - ✓ We renounce the self-centered life on every level and of every kind.
  - ✓ Alexander Maclaren – “Flagrant vice is not needed to kill the real life. Clean, respectable self-centeredness will do the work quite well.”
  - ✓ I deny self because I’m not my own, I’ve been bought out and belong to another: **I Corinthians 6:19-20**
  - ✓ There is not a third position, it is either self or the Savior; we are either denying ourselves or we are denying the Savior.
  - ✓ We have to confess Christ and deny self, or we will confess self and deny Christ.
  - ✓ You either live for self or live for the Savior, there is no third alternative.
  - ✓ There really is no room for two.
  - ✓ Either self is on the throne or the Savior is!!!
- 
- 
- 
-