

Luke 9:23 - Discipleship will cost you your life. Jesus places several "ifs" or conditions in front of actual discipleship. We looked at two of those conditions last time:

1. The condition of Desire. Do you really want to be a disciple? "If anyone wants." Until you desire to be a disciple, you won't be one.
 2. The second condition of discipleship is Denial. Self-denial, your dreams, goals, ambitions, plans; put it away or be willing to.
 - ✓ I deny self because I'm not my own; I've been bought out and belong to another. **1 Corinthians 6:19-20**
 - ✓ It is either self or the Savior; there is no third alternative.
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1. The third condition of discipleship is Death.

- ✓ "Let him take up his cross daily and follow Me." Called to take up the very thing that will take your life.
 - ✓ Not something you have to do; it is something you choose to do; in fact, you will have to choose it again and again and again.
 - ✓ It is your own cross because you can't make decisions for me, and I can't make decisions for you; we have to decide for ourselves and take it up ourselves.
 - ✓ It is not your original cross. The reason why God chose a cross for Jesus to die on when there were so many other ways to die, was because it was and remains the cruelest form of torture and death ever invented.
 - ✓ That cross is a message about many things; God's great love and grace; God's great hatred of sin; what eternal punishment in Hell would have been like for us.
 - ✓ When Jesus picks the imagery of the cross, He picks one that would turn the most people away.
 - ✓ This will rule out the groupies and the less than serious; it was intended to cause us to swallow hard at what it takes to be a disciple.
 - ✓ Cross bearing means you're willing to pay any price for Christ's sake.
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2. We have romanticized the cross.

- ✓ It's not what we hang around our neck or the pretty gold on the front of our Bibles.
 - ✓ What would you think of a person who wore a miniature guillotine around their neck or a hangman's noose, or a miniature electric chair?
 - ✓ We somehow got the idea that it's some sort of difficulty like an illness or putting up with some obnoxious relative.
 - ✓ In Jesus' day, everyone knew that a person with a cross was saying goodbye to everything and everyone, and that they weren't coming back.
 - ✓ It's a death; death to our rights of self-fulfillment, self-promotion, and self-centeredness.
 - ✓ It is self-sacrifice; Jesus lays claim to our ambitions, money, minds, work, children, our say over our lives in general.
 - ✓ The one with the cross on his back was headed in only one direction, no return; He had **no further plans of his own.**
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3. Discipleship is a daily decision. One step at a time, one day at a time. **1 Corinthians 15:31** "I die every day". **Galatians 2:20; Galatians 5:24** We need to be able to say that!

- ✓ **You cannot be a disciple without denying self and taking up your cross**, dying to self. In case you missed it; self is the issue.
- ✓ How did the gospel get to you? Cross bearers who denied and died to themselves so that their world could hear the truth.
- ✓ **Hebrews 11:36-38** No matter who you are, somebody somewhere denied their own rights, agendas, lifestyles, plans, dreams, and money.
- ✓ They died to their own ambitions, whatever they or anyone else could have made of them and did whatever it took to get that message to you.
