

✚ Jesus always drew His stories from everyday life; stories that the people would immediately understand. This was an everyday life scenario because this is how the Herods got to be kings. Jesus was not like the Herods because His heart, was to die for people and not kill them; save the people not run rough-shod over their lives. It was to redeem, restore, and reconcile them to Himself. To the Herods people were nothing but expendable commodities, people were enslaved to them without choice. Jesus lays down His life for the sheep, whereas the Herods ate the sheep. The Heart of God is to save us from being on the wrong side when the time of HIS return comes. When HE returns HE will return as an omnipotent King, **John 3:16-17**. In His first coming Jesus did not fix any social issues or abolish corruption. He did not stop the crime, abuse and poverty in the nation of Israel or anywhere else. He didn't come the first time to fix any of these things, He came the first time to fix us and to make us right with a Holy God, He didn't come the first time to make things right, He came the first time to make us right.

✚ But please understand, we are now in the age of grace in which God is allowing us to make our own decisions and reap the consequences of our own behaviors. For the most part, He is not intervening in our evil world other than to save the lost. But at some point that will change. Currently it seems wicked people are getting away with murder, but that will change. Corrupt people are destroying lives and not getting struck dead for doing so, but that will change. Christians are living in disobedience to His directives, and nothing seems to be happening and even though we don't seem to be held accountable, that will change. Supposedly and technically, the change of honoring Jesus as King has already been affected in those who are who claim to be His slaves.

1. Isn't interesting that the King refers to those who serve Him as slaves?

- ✓ This seems to sound very similar to how the Herods treated people, like expendable slaves. The word for "slave" in this passage is not the same word that is used for the "slaves" of the Herods; it is the Greek word "doulos". A "doulos" was a slave who had the option of going free but who loved his master more than he loved his freedom and preferred to stay in his master's service for the rest of his life. In English, they are called bond-slaves because they had bound themselves willingly to their master. Being a bond-slave of Christ as a believer is not optional if your desire is to please Him. It is optional but only in the sense that disobedience is an option. A bonds slave is promoted in the New Testament as the only correct way to live as a Christian, note **Romans 1:1; 2nd Timothy 2:24; James 1:1; 2nd Peter 1:1; Jude 1:1; and Revelation 1:1**. A bond-slave is a disciple, **Luke 9:23**. Discipleship is something beyond belief. If you're a believer that's great, but that doesn't mean you're a disciple. Discipleship is something beyond salvation, it is a decision to enslave yourself to the King, a bond slave. Jesus didn't call the church to make decisions but to make disciples, **Matthew 28:19-20**. Again, it is the only way to live an obedient life as a believer, anything short of discipleship is disobedience. It's the followers of Christ, His bond slaves that live a life He will reward.
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2. We went over what it means to be a disciple several years back, and I thought this would be a good time to review some of that.

- ✓ The first condition of discipleship is desire: "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.", **Luke 9:23**. This statement implies movement, lining up behind and following where Jesus goes. We don't walk in front of Him and ask Him to follow us. He said, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow me.", **Luke 9:23**. Until you fully desire to be a disciple, you won't be one. Do you really desire to be a disciple of Jesus? Discipleship will cost you your life.
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Luke 19:11-27, "Returning King, Part 2"

- ✓ The second condition of discipleship is "denial". Self-denial is the denying of your dreams, goals, ambitions, and plans. You must put it away or be willing to do so. We cannot be fulfilling our personal agenda and the King's agenda at the same time. Every day, I am either denying myself or I am denying the King. What does it mean to deny yourself? It means to leave all of yourself out of this and be willing to lose your whole self by totally pushing Jesus forward in your life and by totally pushing yourself out of the picture. To "deny" is a firm refusal. This is the same word used to describe what Peter did to Jesus 3 times. What did Peter say about Jesus, "I don't know what you're talking about", and "I never knew the man." That is what we are saying when we deny ourselves. We are now identifying ourselves as His bondslaves, **Luke 14:33**. Nothing here is unclear, **John 12:25**. It is not that "I hate my life", like a teenager who can't get his or her way. No, but you do hate what you'd do with it. What you make of it, and how you've managed it is what matters.
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- ✓ To deny self is in the aorist imperative meaning that we are to do it right now and without delay. Alexander Maclaren said "Flagrant vice is not needed to kill the real life. Clean, respectable self-centeredness will do the work quite well."
 - 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.

I deny my "self" because I'm not my own, I've been bought out, and belong to another. "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body.", 1st Corinthians 6:19-20. This is critical and crucial because the choice is either self or the Savior; we are either denying ourselves or we are denying the Savior. Salvation is free, but discipleship will cost you your life.
