

Following Jesus

There are two ways we talk about following Jesus.

1. It's easy. Just say this prayer and He's your Lord.
 - a. **Matthew 11:28-30** Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."
2. He demands your everything. Following Jesus is not for the timid, you must be willing to die to follow Him.
 - a. **Luke 9:23** Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

So which is correct? Both

Jesus actually demands everything from us in order to follow Him. But then once we have done that He empowers us to live that life.

Jesus demands everything

- **Luke 9:23** Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.
- What does it mean to take up your cross and follow Jesus?
- Die to self.
- **Luke 9:23-25** And He said to all, If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily. And let him follow Me. ²⁴ For whoever desires to save his life, he will lose it. But whoever loses his life for My sake, this one will save it. ²⁵ For what is a man profited gaining the whole world but destroying himself or suffering loss?
- This "loss of life" is about surrendering. No longer our will, but His will. Not our desires, but His desires. And not our strength, but His strength.

He not only asks for our lives, but also begins to get specific:

- **Matthew 8:21-22** And another of His disciples said to Him, Lord, allow me first to go away and bury my father. ²² But Jesus said to him, Follow Me, and allow the dead to bury their own dead.
 - Jesus above our families
- **Matthew 19:21** Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."
 - Jesus above money/possessions
- **John 21:18-19** Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish." ¹⁹ This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me."
 - Jesus above our will, our plans, our life
- **John 21:22** Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me."
 - And how others follow Jesus does not affect how we follow Jesus. If another is blessed and we are not, what is that to us?
 - Jesus above fairness

But after asking for our lives, He then gives us His life to be lived through us

John 6:53 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.

- We take His life into us.
- He asks to be Lord over our family, and He makes us His children, co heirs with Christ. He makes us family
- He asks to make Him Lord over our money and possessions, but then He declares Himself our Provider

- He asks us to make Him Lord over our lives, He gives us His life, and gives us life abundant.
 - **John 10:10** The thief does not come except that he may steal, and kill, and destroy. I came that they may have life and may have it abundantly.

Jesus does not make us live this life on our own

John 13:8 Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."

- In other words, what Jesus has asked of us, we cannot do on our own. He provides the way for us to do it through Him.

The greatest thing Jesus ever did was rise from the dead, and he didn't do it: God did it to him. Jesus simply trusted that he would. "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."

- **Romans 8:11** But if the Spirit of the One having raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the One having raised the Christ from the dead will also make your mortal bodies live through the indwelling of His Spirit in you.

The same God who raised Jesus raises us. Our surrender of everything to Him results in Him giving us everything.

2 Peter 1:3 As His divine power has given to us all things pertaining to life and godliness through the full knowledge of the One calling us through glory and virtue

The secret to following Jesus is to surrender everything. Give it all. Because in return He gives us all of Himself, and His life is greater than our lives could ever be without Him.