

# Daily Discipleship



Discovering God's Word  
Bible Study Series

# Daily Discipleship

Learn some things disciples of Christ should do every day of their lives

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## Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

**Study Number:** DGW88

Written by Eric Krieg

**About the author:** My name is Eric Krieg. I am a disciple of Jesus, a Bible student, a truth seeker, and an evangelist. My interest is in using the Bible as my only guide in my faith. My desire is to help others understand the message of the Bible and pursue true, New Testament Christianity.

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**My plea:** It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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# Daily Discipleship

A disciple is someone who learns from, imitates, and follows a master. Acts 11:26 says that it was those who were disciples of Jesus Christ who were first called “Christians.” Therefore, Christians and disciples are one-in-the-same. They are students of Jesus Christ. They try to imitate Jesus Christ. They try to follow Jesus Christ. Anywhere. Everywhere. All of the time.

You see, true disciples of Jesus Christ do not put on their discipleship whenever it is convenient and advantageous for them and take off their discipleship when it is not. True discipleship is a 24-7-365 lifestyle. 24 hours a day. 7 days a week. 365 days a year (and 366 days in a “leap” year).

As we begin this study, please recognize the principle that daily discipleship brings about daily fruit for the Lord. God will be praised. His word will be taught. His people will be encouraged. You will mature in the faith. You will have daily victories over temptation. People will be served. And, you will be ready for the Lord’s return.

Unfortunately, many will not be committed to daily discipleship. When this happens, the reverse effects are experienced. God is not praised. His word is not taught. His people are left discouraged. You will not mature in the faith. You will be defeated by the devil daily. People will not be served. And, you will not be ready for the Lord’s return.

Then, not only does daily discipleship impact your own service to the Lord, but if every Christian will be devoted to daily discipleship, the church will grow daily. This growth might be in spiritual

strength. This growth might be in number. I am impressed by how the Lord’s church grew on a daily basis during Bible times. Acts 2:47 says, “the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” Acts 16:5 says, “So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.” While there is much to consider in why the Lord’s church was growing so much and so rapidly during the first century, certainly one reason is the daily commitment disciples of Christ made to living out the faith!

During this lesson, I want you to recognize the “daily” responsibilities you have been given as a disciple of Jesus Christ. I want you to challenge yourself to fulfill these specific responsibilities every day. While I am sure we could add to this list, I want to consider these things that are directly stated or inferred that should happen every day in your life as a disciple.

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## ***Daily Death***

On the surface, the concept of a “daily death” does not make any sense. However, the Scriptures teach that those who are disciples of Jesus Christ must put their old selves (which were dedicated to living for sin and unrighteousness) to death in order to live for the Lord. For instance, Romans 6:2-4 describes the Christian as having died to sin, been buried with Christ in baptism, and been raised to walk in newness of life (a life of righteousness). Therefore, whenever an individual becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ, he/she is making a commitment to put Jesus Christ first in every area of his/her life. In order to do this, you will have to die daily so that Jesus Christ can live in you. But, are you dying daily for Jesus Christ?

### **Paul died with Christ daily**

Consider the commitment the apostle Paul made to serve Jesus Christ. Galatians 2:20 says, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Simply put:

Paul's life was not about Paul anymore. Paul gave complete control of his life over to Jesus Christ to serve Christ in his body.

But, while Paul did make this determination whenever he first became a disciple of Christ, Paul recognized that this was a daily determination that he needed to make. For instance, Paul said, "I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily" (1 Corinthians 15:31). Not only were there daily trials and temptations for Paul (as we all experience), but Paul was also being constantly persecuted for following Jesus Christ and teaching the gospel. That appears to be the context in which Paul makes this statement in 1 Corinthians 15. Therefore, every day, Paul sacrificed his own desires and personal ambitions in order that he might serve Jesus Christ and accomplish God's desires through his life!

### **A daily commitment to serve Jesus Christ is necessary**

It is not enough just to begin to follow Jesus Christ – and then fail to completely devote yourself to following Him. For instance, whenever Jesus addressed some people who wanted to follow Him but would not put Him first in their lives, Jesus said, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). Therefore, not only must you make the commitment to serve Jesus Christ the day you first obey Him – but every day for the remainder of your life!

Just as Paul recognized the need to die daily for Jesus Christ, you must determine to give your own fleshly desires up to desires of Jesus Christ every day – each day renewing your commitment to serve Jesus! Listen to Paul in Galatians 5:24: "And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." Similarly, Jesus says, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?" (Luke 9:23-25).

Though dying with Jesus Christ is not always easy and requires a great commitment and demonstration of self-control, you should be renewed concerning the hope offered by the gospel every day. This hope of eternal life in Heaven is what makes dying with Christ every day of your life worthwhile! Paul said, "Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

## ***Daily Prayer***

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Prayer is a tremendous blessing for those who are God's people. James 5:16 says that the "effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." God has promised that He will hear the prayers of His people – and prayer has the potential to accomplish much. But, are you taking advantage of this blessing every day?

### **The Father is seeking true worshipers**

In John 4:23-24, Jesus said that the Father is "seeking" those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth. So, in a general way, worshiping God is one of the things you ought to be dedicated to accomplishing on a daily basis. God is pleased whenever you offer Him the kind of true worship that He is due.

Prayer is one of the ways through which you can acceptably worship God. Examples of worshiping God in prayer can be seen throughout the book of Psalms. Through that book, David can often be seen as praising God for who He is, for the things He has done, petitioning God for help, etc. In the same way, God wants you to take advantage of the avenue of prayer to worship Him. Hebrews 13:15 says, "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips,

giving thanks to His name.” While there are various ways we can praise God with our lips, certainly prayer is one avenue we can accomplish that task.

### **Pray without ceasing**

There are many wonderful functions prayer offers. Through prayer, we can praise God, we can thank God, we can cast all of our burdens and cares upon God, we can petition Him for help, etc. Certainly, then, there are many things for us to be praying about. Therefore, the apostle Paul simply instructed some Christians to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). This is a continual dedication to prayer – all day, every day. And, this constant prayerful attitude is manifested in that you pray to God whenever there is opportunity to do so.

There are many things for you to pray about on a daily basis. Consider just a few things you should pray about every day. Jesus taught to praise God (“Hallowed be Your name,” Matthew 6:9). He taught to pray for God’s will to be done on earth as it is done in Heaven (Matthew 6:10). He taught to pray for the daily provisions of life (“Give us this day our daily bread,” Matthew 6:11). He taught to pray for forgiveness (Matthew 6:12). He taught to pray for deliverance from evil (Matthew 6:13). He taught to pray for laborers to do the work of God (Matthew 9:37-38). You are taught to cast your anxieties upon Him (Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Peter 5:7). Prayer is to be offered for the sick (James 5:14). Prayer is a remedy for suffering (James 5:13). Prayer is to be offered for “all men” (1 Timothy 2:1). Prayer is to be offered on behalf of those who are in positions of authority (i.e. governmental leaders, 1 Timothy 2:2). Prayer is to be offered in connection with Christian brothers and sisters (Acts 12:5, 12). Prayer is to be offered in connection with teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, both for your own work in teaching and for the work others are doing in teaching (Acts 4:23-31; Colossians 4:2-3).

Now as you reflect on this list, you can see that there is much to be praying about. Furthermore, I am certain that I have not addressed everything that you can be praying about. Even still, please reflect on this list and evaluate the importance of praying about each one of these things daily. Once again, there is to be a constant prayerful attitude manifested

by those who are Christians. Anytime you have the opportunity and ability to pray, there is something that you can pray about!

## ***Daily Bible Study And Meditation***

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God has revealed His will to mankind in the pages of His written word, the Bible (see 1 Corinthians 2:6-16). Therefore, it is whenever you read this message that you can know what the will of God is and make the appropriate applications of it to your life (see Ephesians 3:3-5). Studying God’s word is able to make you knowledgeable about God’s plan of salvation for you and equip you to do all of the good works He desires for you to do (2 Timothy 3:15-17). But, are you working to learn more about His will for you and meditate on it every day?

### **The lover of truth will want to study every day**

I want you to consider two examples of truth-loving people. First, consider David in Psalm 119. This entire psalm tells about his love for the truth. While we could consider all 176 verses of this psalm, let’s just consider a small section. “Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; For they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, Because I keep Your precepts. I have restrained my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word. I have not departed from Your judgments, For You Yourself have taught me. How sweet are Your words to my taste, Sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way” (Psalm 119:97-104).

Second, consider the example of the Bereans. Whenever Paul and Silas arrived in Berea and spoke the word to the people, consider what is recorded concerning their attitude. “These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they

received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11).

Do you love the truth that comes from God, which will set you free from your sins (John 8:32)? If so, you will want to follow these two examples. David loved God’s truth so much that he focused his mind on it all day long. Then, the people of Berea wanted to know the truth and not be led into error so much that they made a daily search of the Scriptures in order to find the truth. Do you study God’s word daily? Is it your meditation throughout the day?

### **Daily study gives you access to daily encouragement**

One of the benefits of studying and meditating on God’s word daily is that it provides you with the needed encouragement to overcome all of the obstacles, trials, and temptations of life. Acts 20:32 says that the word of God’s grace “is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.” Look carefully at 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and you will see how God’s word is able to build you up (spiritually) and result in your eternal salvation in Heaven. The passage says that “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

As you live your daily life, there will be many things that try to pull you away from following Christ. But, one of the things that will work to help you stay on the path that leads to Heaven is the revealed will of God. If you will study His message, it will tell you everything you need to know to overcome the obstacles, trials, and temptations of life. It will truly equip you to make the right decisions 100% of the time! This is why the Psalmist said, “With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You” (Psalm 119:10-11). Therefore, if you love the truth and want to do what is right you will study God’s word every day and meditate on His ways throughout the day.

## **Daily Teaching**

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The salvation-bringing gospel of Jesus Christ has been committed into the hands of God’s people. God has determined “to save those who believe” through the preaching of His message (1 Corinthians 1:21). Whenever Christ lived on this earth, He taught a great many people. But, as He was preparing to depart from this earth and return to Heaven, He commissioned His disciples to preach the message of the gospel throughout the world (see Mark 16:15-16). The early disciples were dedicated to this work and accomplished their mission (see Colossians 1:23). Now, there is an entirely new generation of people who live on this earth – and the disciples who are living now have the responsibility to teach the saving message of the gospel to the lost! But, are you working to fulfill this responsibility every day?

### **Jesus and His apostles taught daily**

The master teacher was involved in daily teaching. Luke 19:47 says that Jesus “was teaching daily in the temple.” Certainly this is just one example. Read the gospel records and see the commitment Jesus demonstrated to teaching the saving message people needed to hear. Of course, He did this because He truly cared about their spiritual condition. For instance, whenever Jesus saw a multitude of people, He was “moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd” (Matthew 9:36).

Then, after being commissioned by Jesus to preach the gospel throughout the world, the apostles followed in Jesus’ footsteps and were involved in preaching the gospel every day. Acts 5:42 says, “And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.” Acts 17:17 says that Paul “reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there.” Then, after experiencing some opposition to the gospel in Ephesus (Acts 19), Paul departed from those who caused him trouble and began “reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus” with the disciples and anyone who was willing to hear the

gospel for a period of two years – “so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19:9-10). Regarding Paul’s work in Ephesus, he later said that for three years he “did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears” (Acts 20:31).

### **There are people you can teach daily**

Jesus and His apostles (along with many early disciples, see Acts 8:4) took advantage of their opportunities to teach people God’s truth. In the same way, you have new opportunities every day to teach people the truth of God’s gospel. You may come into contact with someone new. You may have a new opportunity with someone you have attempted to teach before. You may have the opportunity to build on what you have taught in the past. As Paul lived his life, he was looking for doors of opportunity to be opened for the word of God and wanted to be ready to take advantage of those opportunities whenever they presented themselves (see Colossians 4:2-3). In the same way, you should be praying, preparing yourself, and looking for doors of opportunity to speak the word of God with boldness any time you have the opportunity. Lift up your eyes and look at the fields to see the potential for harvest every day (see John 4:35)! If you are not looking for opportunities every day, you might miss many open doors for God’s word.

Furthermore, as we have already seen, the Lord’s church was increasing in strength and number daily in the first century (Acts 2:47; Acts 16:5). While there are many things that contributed to those results, I am confident that the daily work of preaching the gospel was crucial to daily conversions. After all, how will people hear and be saved without someone to preach the gospel to them (see Romans 10:13-15)? Therefore, you should be encouraged to do your part in teaching the gospel of Christ every day. Look for the opportunities to preach as you go about your daily activities. Attempt to do something every day to further the gospel of Jesus Christ!

Every Christian is fighting a war for his/her soul against a fierce opponent. Satan is working diligently to destroy the soul of each person who is living on this earth by trying to lure them away from following the ways of God. He is pictured in 1 Peter 5:8 as the “adversary” of all people on this earth – and as “a roaring lion” who is seeking whom he may devour.” Our responsibility is to resist him so that he will flee from us (1 Peter 5:9; James 4:7). Fortunately, while the devil has many weapons he employs to lure us away from God, God has not left His people alone in fighting these fierce battles against this spiritual adversary. He has intended that those who are Christians edify (build up) one another in order to help each other overcome these battles and make it to Heaven. Particularly, it is in the local church that God has provided a base of fellowship and strength greater than the individual Christian. But, are you working to edify your Christian brothers and sisters every day?

### **First century Christians were together daily**

First century Christians were not strangers to one another – particularly those who lived in the same geographic areas. Acts 2 is one passage that presents a wonderful picture of Christians spending time with one another and edifying each other. In this chapter, the gospel of Jesus Christ was first proclaimed on the Day of Pentecost. On that occasion, about 3,000 people were obedient to the gospel and were baptized for the remission of their sins, according to Peter’s command to do so (Acts 2:38, 41). Then, these new Christians “continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). Later, verse 46 says, “So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.”

Certainly, these new Christians were diligent in assembling together as a local church and continuing in the things the apostles instructed them to do (as verse 42 indicates). However, in addition to the assemblies of the church, whether in the temple

“daily” or from “from house to house,” this passage presents a remarkable picture of Christians who were determined to be with one another and help one another in their new lives of service to Jesus Christ.

But, this is not the only picture of the early Christians being devoted to edifying one another in the faith. Acts 4:23-31 pictures Peter and John coming together with their companions (either the church or the other apostles) and praying for boldness to preach the word of God after they had been threatened not to preach in Jesus’ name. Acts 12:5, 12 pictures the church assembling together to pray whenever Peter was in prison. And, in Acts 19:9-10, the disciples joined Paul and others to reason concerning the gospel of Jesus Christ, meeting daily in the school of Tyrannus. These are a few examples of the great work that was accomplished by many of the early Christians in being with one another and edifying each other in the faith.

### **Daily encouragement is needed**

Though there is a responsibility for each individual Christian to find edification for himself/herself through studying God’s word and meditating on it daily, each Christian profits greatly through the edification offered by Christian brothers and sisters. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 helps us understand how there is great encouragement and strength that is found in working with others to accomplish a mutual goal (in this case, the mutual goal of spending eternity in Heaven). “Two are better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up. Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; But how can one be warm alone? Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”

Once again, the devil is attacking each person and trying to lure him/her away from following Jesus Christ. And, these attacks from Satan come against us daily. Therefore, Christians must be a daily source of edification for one another. Hebrews 3:12-13 says, “Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;

but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”

Like Barnabas, you should work diligently to encourage your brethren that “with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord” (Acts 11:23). And, you should do something to encourage your brothers and sisters every day to help them resist the devil and live for the Lord! The Scriptures present many ways you can edify your brethren – including bearing one another’s burdens (Galatians 6:2), correcting one another whenever there sin is present (Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20), teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16), assembling with the local church at the appointed times (Hebrews 10:24-25), etc.

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## ***Daily Service***

Jesus perfectly demonstrated His willingness to serve. In John 13:1-17, Jesus provided a wonderful example of how He was willing to wash the feet of the disciples. And, ultimately, Jesus’ service is demonstrated in the fact that He was willing to leave Heaven, come to this earth and give His life for the sins of the world (see Matthew 20:27-28). Particularly notice, then, that those who are Jesus’ disciples must walk in these same footprints left by Jesus and serve other people as they have opportunity to do so. Jesus said, “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you” (John 13:14-15). But, are you looking for and taking advantage of opportunities to serve others daily?

### **People have daily needs**

While there are certainly daily spiritual needs other people have that we must be looking to serve, we have already spent time addressing those types of needs. At this point, we are focused on daily physical needs. These needs range dramatically in scope and size. Therefore, how you can serve other people by addressing these needs also greatly vary. But, you do



need to begin serving other people by simply recognizing that there are needs that people have every day.

Consider some of the needs individuals had during Bible times. For instance, Jesus taught His disciples to pray and ask that the Father would give them their “daily bread” (Matthew 6:11). In Acts 6:1, Christian widows had to be cared for on a daily basis so that they would have the things they needed. In Acts 11:27-30, the disciples sent relief to their brethren who were going to experience a great famine. James 2:15 makes reference to a brother or sister who would be naked and in need of daily food. James 1:27 identifies the “trouble” of orphans and widows. And, in Luke 10:25-37, Jesus taught a parable in which a man fell among thieves, was stripped of his clothing, robbed of his possessions, and left half dead. Though that passage records a parable, recognize Jesus used familiar situations as He taught in parables. Certainly, this was not an uncommon occurrence.

This is just a sample of needs that are addressed in the Bible. There have always been daily needs that folks have had, physically speaking. The same remains true today. Some people need financial help. Some people need food. Some people need clothing. Some people need medical help. Some people need a ride to a destination. Some people need visited. Some people need help doing some chores around the house. Some people need to know that someone cares about them. There are all kinds of needs that folks have around us.

### **Watch daily for opportunities to do good to others**

So, why is it important for you to recognize the fact that individuals have daily needs? Because it is very easy to become consumed by your own needs and desires that you fail to lift up your eyes and see the needs of others. Then, if you are not lifting up your eyes and seeing those needs, you will not serve those needs – because you will not even recognize the opportunity to do so. Or, other times, you might recognize the need that exists and turn your head because you are not interested in serving the need (like the Levite and the priest who passed by the wounded man in Jesus’ parable).

The fact is, this is a daily responsibility because you never know when a need will present itself. You must simply do your best to be prepared to serve whenever and wherever there is opportunity. Galatians 6:10 says, “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” Do you suppose that the Samaritan who helped the wounded man in Jesus’ parable set out that morning to find a wounded man, provide him with “first aid” attention, take him to an inn, and pay for his care? I doubt it. Still, Jesus’ lesson indicates that the Samaritan had compassion on the man and demonstrated his love for his neighbor when he had the opportunity.

Then, at the conclusion of Jesus’ parable, He simply instructed, “Go and do likewise” (Luke 10:37). Therefore, you must be looking out for the daily opportunities that are around you to serve other people, lest you follow the example of the men who passed by the one who was in need. Instead, strive to be like the “Good Samaritan” who saw a need – and then did what was within his ability to address that need!

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## ***Daily Cross-Bearing***

Let’s revisit Luke 9:23. Jesus said, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.” There are three things required by Jesus in this passage of those who desire to follow Him: (1) Deny yourself of anything that conflicts with what God wants you to do and how He wants you to live, (2) Take up your cross every day by bearing the burdens that come along with serving Him, and (3) Follow Jesus everywhere and anywhere He leads you. Every one of these requires a daily commitment and is involved in daily discipleship. However, I want you to particularly focus on the concept of bearing your cross daily – since Jesus specifically identifies it as a “daily” responsibility. But, are you bearing your cross every day?

## **Jesus bore His cross**

After Jesus had been sentenced to die by means of crucifixion, the soldiers scourged Jesus (a brutal and often fatal beating), stripped Jesus of His clothing, put a scarlet robe on Him, put a crown of thorns on Jesus' head, mocked Jesus, spat on Jesus, put His own clothes back on Him, and led Jesus away to be crucified (see Matthew 27:26-31).

As they journeyed to the place Jesus was to be crucified, they made Jesus (after being severely beaten) carry the cross He would later die upon. Later, a man named Simon was compelled to bear Jesus' cross (presumably when Jesus could physically bear it no longer by Himself). Therefore, the concept of bearing a cross has reference to bearing burdens involved in serving God. For Jesus, this was the physical burden of carrying His cross to the place of His execution.

## **Daily burdens will be experienced**

Isn't it interesting that Jesus (who knew that He would die by means of crucifixion) instructed His disciples to bear their crosses daily? Of all people who have ever walked on this earth, Jesus knew that there would be burdens associated with living to accomplish the purposes of the Heavenly Father. After all, Jesus' dedication to bear the burdens of doing the Father's will led Him to physically bearing a cross – and later being put to death on that cross.

Throughout the Scriptures, you read about the burdens that Jesus' disciples have borne in order to follow Jesus Christ. Many of them were even so dedicated to living for Jesus Christ that they were literally put to death for Him. For instance, Stephen was stoned to death (Acts 7) and the apostle James was killed by the sword (Acts 12). Furthermore, recall that this is exactly the type of commitment Jesus requires from those who will follow Him – that they even must be willing to sacrifice their physical lives for His sake (Luke 9:23-25).

Therefore, bearing your cross has reference to anything/everything you are called to suffer while you live as a Christian on this earth. This could be ridicule. This could be mistreatment. This could be discrimination. This could be financial persecution.

This could involve being jailed or beaten. This could involve being put to death. Certainly, persecutions can come in many different forms – and are promised to all those who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 3:12).

## **Perseverance pleases God**

Then, as you consider that there will be burdens associated with living your life for Jesus, you must recognize that God will not allow you to experience more than you are capable of bearing. God is a just and fair God who is in ultimate control of all things. And, He has demonstrated and promised that He will not allow Satan and his allies to put more pressure on you than you are capable of bearing. He will never allow you to be faced with a “lose-lose” situation. For instance, 1 Corinthians 10:13 promises that “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”

Yes, Jesus requires you to bear your cross. Don't give up whenever difficult times come. Instead, He promised some Christians who were about to be severely persecuted, “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life...He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death” (Revelation 2:10-11). Similarly, the apostle Paul (who knew what it was like to be persecuted) said, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58)! Then, not only must you persevere through these burdens, but you must persevere daily! You must never become so weary that you decide to deny Jesus Christ!

## ***Daily Working Out Salvation***

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Salvation is the wonderful opportunity we have all been given to experience through Jesus Christ, as offered by the gospel of Christ. Romans 1:16 says that the gospel of Christ “is the power of

God to salvation for everyone who believes.” God has given each individual the responsibility to evaluate whether or not he/she is living in a way that God approves. For instance, Philippians 2:12 instructs, “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” You must be diligent to “work out” your salvation in recognition of the fear of God (recognizing who He is and how He has promised to punish those who disobey Him). But, are you working out your salvation with fear and trembling on a daily basis?

### **Daily evaluations are needed to produce daily faithfulness**

Jesus Christ (as we have just seen) requires faithfulness for salvation. Once again, Revelation 2:10 says, “...Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.” Faithfulness to God (obeying what God has instructed) is necessary because it is possible to fall from the grace of God after you have been saved by it (see Galatians 5:4).

But, how can you possibly “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling”? You do this by making evaluations of your life every day to determine whether you are living for the Lord or not. 2 Corinthians 13:5 says, “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.”

God has given you everything you need to know to live your life in the way He desires (in His written word, 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Your responsibility is to honestly study that message He has given and make diligent application of it to your life. James 1:22-25, for instance, teaches that it is not enough to just be a hearer of God’s word. But, you must also be obedient to His word (a “doer” of the word). Therefore, you must use God’s word like a mirror for your soul, evaluating your spiritual condition by what you can read in its pages. Identify the areas in which your life is lacking. Identify the areas of your life in which you are following God’s commandments. Then, make the appropriate changes.

### **Today is the day of salvation**

When do you need to work out your salvation with fear and trembling? When do you need to make these honest evaluations? You must do it today! In fact, you must do it every day – and as often as you have opportunity.

You simply never know when you will take your last breath on this earth. You never know when Jesus Christ will return. Therefore, the only time you have been assured of to make your life right with God is the moment you have right now! That is the reason Paul said, “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2). Do not procrastinate making the changes you need to make in your life. Do not wait for a “more convenient” opportunity. Those times may never come. Instead, determine that you will evaluate your life and work out your own salvation with fear and trembling *right now!*

### **Conclusion**

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Are you being a true disciple of Jesus Christ every day? Or, are you putting on and taking off your discipleship whenever it is convenient and advantageous to do so? Are you living for Jesus Christ 24-7-365? Are you living for Him right now?

Yes, the cost of being Jesus’ disciple is high. We have already seen that He requires you to give your entire life over to His control. However, we are also assured that there is a “crown of life” that is waiting for and will be given to those who are faithful to God until death (Revelation 2:10)! Follow Jesus Christ today – and every day of your life – so that you might win that crown!

# ***Study Questions***

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What kind of commitment does true discipleship require?

## **1. Daily Death**

What was Paul's commitment to Jesus Christ?

What kind of commitment is required of you to serve Jesus Christ?

## **2. Daily Prayer**

What is the Father seeking?

What should the disciple's commitment be to prayer? Give examples of what you should pray about daily.

## **3. Daily Bible Study And Meditation**

What will the lover of truth want to do?

How does daily Bible study help you serve God?

## **4. Daily Teaching?**

What did Jesus and His apostles do in teaching every day?

How can you teach people every day? What did daily teach lead to during New Testament times?

## **5. Daily Edification**

What kind of commitment did first century Christians have to being together daily?

Why is daily edification needed among Christians today?

## **6. Daily Service**

What are some needs that people have every day?

How can you work to do good to others daily?

## **7. Daily Cross-Bearing**

How did Jesus bear His cross?

How will daily burdens be experienced by those who follow Jesus Christ?

What does God require you to do with these burdens?

## **8. Daily Working Out Salvation**

Why do you need to make daily evaluations of your life?

When do you need to make corrections to your life?  
Why?