

August 8-12, 2016

Chad Cowan, Pastor of Care Ministries



5 MINUTES / 5 DAYS

The Abundant Life *In the second half of John 10:10, Christ makes a strong assertion: "I have come so that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." Do you ever wonder where this abundant life is? In the midst of life's heartaches, it can be difficult to see. This week, we'll focus on Luke 9:23, which illumines for the reader how they may grasp this kind of life.*

MONDAY Desire

Luke 9:23

Author C.S. Lewis writes, "We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered to us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at sea. We are far too easily pleased." God made us creatures with desires, and our ultimate desire is to be for Him. Christ refers to His followers as disciples, and in order to become one, we'll need to start our journey with desire. In Luke 9:23, the text states, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." Do you have a desire to be a disciple of Christ? Then it's decision time...

Pray that God would increase your desire for Him.

TUESDAY Decide

Luke 9:23b; Joshua 24:15

I remember the very first time I saw the woman who would later become my wife. **Wow!** I was immediately attracted to her. Not long after that, I started thinking seriously about asking her out on a date. The "thinking" part, though, took me about four years. Yes, you heard correctly—*four years*. You see, there's a difference between desiring something and actually following through with the decision to do something with that desire. Jesus says there's a difference between just walking and listening to Him, and actually becoming His disciple. You must make up your mind whom you will serve.

Have you decided to be a disciple? If so, what steps will you take next?

Glorifying God by producing more maturing followers of Jesus.

WEDNESDAY Deny

Luke 14:25-36

A few months ago, *The Telegraph*, a British paper, reported a story about a British soldier who was beheaded in broad daylight outside his barracks. His attackers were confronted by a mother and Cub Scout leader, Ingrid Loyau-Kennett. While one of the terrorists held a bloodied knife, she selflessly engaged the terrorist in conversation to prevent him from killing others. A Christian blog noted that the factor that motivated Ms. Loyau-Kennett to risk her life and get involved was her Christian faith. She said, "I live my life as a Christian. I believe in thinking about others and loving thy neighbor. We all have a duty to look after each other." Being a disciple of Christ will require self-sacrifice. We must put others before ourselves.

Ask God to show you how you may love others sacrificially.

THURSDAY Take Up Your Cross Daily

Luke 9:23c

Even though Christ had not yet died on the cross, His audience would still have known what He meant when He made the statement "take up your cross daily." Taking up the cross refers to the Roman custom of requiring the condemned criminal to carry the cross-bar to be used in the execution to the place of execution. Carrying His cross through the heart of the city was supposed to be an admission that the Roman Empire was right and He was wrong. So when Jesus enjoined His followers to carry their crosses and follow Him, He was referring to a public display before others that Jesus was right and that the disciples were following Him, even to their deaths. This is exactly what the religious leaders refused to do. Are you willing to live before others in such a way that it may even mean death? And can you do that on a daily basis?

Dedicate yourself to follow the cross no matter what!

FRIDAY Follow Christ

Luke 9:23d

Have you ever encountered an older believer and thought to yourself, "I'd sure like to be like them one of these days?" I've been blessed in life to have several good examples of older Christians who have kept the faith, but this is not an easy thing to do. It's a lifetime of choosing to follow Christ. Having desired to be a disciple of Christ, followed by a willed decision to deny yourself and take up your cross daily, the next step is simply to follow Christ. Following Christ can mean a number of different things, and what discipleship looks like for one person, can look very different for someone else. The path of a disciple doesn't mean an easier life, but it is the only way to an abundant life.

Enjoy the abundant life!