



# Being with Jesus:

A Devotional From the Book of Mark

Week 4  
The Cost of Following Jesus

Day 5

## Scripture

Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”  
— Mark 8:34-38

## Prayer:

Jesus, thank You that You offer true life that I won’t lose. Thank You for taking away what is temporary and unimportant and giving me what matters most. Help me to lose my life for You, so that I can find true life. I do not want to gain the world and lose my soul, so help me choose You. Amen

## Reflection

The words Jesus speaks here are some very strong words. He says that his disciples must take up their cross to follow Him. At that time, the cross was a symbol of a torturous death. It is likely that the people who Jesus was talking to would have seen someone die on a cross before. It is a striking image. They must be prepared to lose everything if they follow Jesus.

In the next breath, Jesus tells them what they will gain if they do follow Him—real life. This is a life that lasts forever and that cannot be taken away even by death. They are letting go of a world opposed to God and gaining their soul. What good would it do to have things the other way around?

Earlier in the week, we discussed the exchange that Jesus and the Bible often talk about. You give up one thing to get another. It is the same situation here. Jesus is saying that you give up your old life. It’s the life where you lived selfishly and did not follow God. That life has to die, and if it doesn’t, it will rob you of true life where you follow God and flourish because of it. Living life for God is so much better than living it for yourself. There is instant gratification in a selfish act, but in the end it leads to your joy decreasing. Following God may be difficult, but in the end it leads to life—life to the full.

## Questions

Have you ever made a bad trade before? How did it feel afterwards?

Do you often think about giving up things of less value for things of greater value?

Have you seen your joy increase when you follow God, and decrease when you don’t?