



**Scripture Nugget** - The cost of true discipleship and the peace that comes with it  
*Then Jesus said to His disciples: Whoever wishes to come after Me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me (Matthew 16:24).*

**The conditions to become a true disciple of Christ.** Jesus lays out clearly the conditions to be His disciples. He requires an interior and total change of our minds and hearts so that we can follow His teachings and commandments. Our natural sinful self would dictate that the top priority in our lives be ourselves or those related to us. To follow Christ, however, one has to deny oneself and instead, place God as first priority. This is not easy as it runs counter to our natural, sinful inclination. However, it is only in loving God above everything else that we can love others unconditionally as God requires of us. Denial of ourselves involves the daily surrender of our free will, desires and passions, and the embracing of God's will, commandments and desires for our lives. It involves our moment-to-moment responses and choices. Simply put, it is not to live for ourselves but for God alone. It is then we can live life fully and abundantly and achieve the highest potential God created in us.

**Without denial of self, we cannot take up our cross.** To walk in the footsteps of Christ, we need to carry our own cross. The cross that God has prepared for us is the sum total of His will, His commandments, the trials and temptations that He allows to come our way accompanied by all the divine graces that are needed to overcome any difficult situation. Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life (cf. John 14:6), and the holy cross is our road to our glorious, eternal inheritance. It is the path of truth that we need to walk on every day.

**Abandoning our ways and getting rest for our souls.** *Come to Me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For My yoke is easy, and My burden light (Matthew 11:28-30).* God is a most loving father and wills the best for us. Carrying the cross God prepared for us is to walk on the shortest, safest and surest route to our glorious eternity. The cross which God has prepared for us is not burdensome but within our strength to carry with the help of God's graces. *For the love of God is this, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome (1 John 5:3).* The cross God has prepared for us is not crushing like the cross we place on ourselves whenever we pursue our passions and free will which lead ultimately to sorrows, disappointments, unfulfillment, restlessness and sin. Thus, Jesus invites us to cast off our crushing yoke and instead take on His yoke so that we can have true rest for our souls.

**Conversation with Jesus:** Precious Lord, our Heavenly Father calls everyone to fellowship with You, and to become co-heirs to His glorious Kingdom. Through Your time on earth, You laid out for me a Way to walk so that I can attain my glorious inheritance. You ask me to abandon my ways that are not Yours and invite me to take up my cross. Bestow upon me holy wisdom so that I can see with my heart that embracing Your will and commandments is the path of truth to my eternal happiness. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.