

3 Ways to Walk in God's Perfect Will

Jesus was specific about what it takes to be a good disciple. This isn't a guessing game.

If we want to mature in our walk with Christ, we should pay close attention.

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. 16:24).

According to God's Word, here are three steps to become an expert disciple:

1. We must deny ourselves. Jesus is not saying here that we should not own anything. Or want nice things. He is asking us to line our desires with His desires—even when they conflict with our desires. He is asking us to prioritize our life—with God and others in mind. (The first and greatest command—and the second is like it.) In denying ourselves, we are to look to Jesus and not unto our own abilities and trust Him when we can't find our way without Him. That apart from Him, we can do nothing.

Deny our fears. Deny our inabilities. Deny our sinful temptations by the power of the gospel. Deny me—for Him—knowing I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

2. We must take up our cross daily. I don't have a cross, at least not literally. But Jesus is encouraging us to carry forth His cross. His agenda. His mission. We are to be the salt of the earth. We are to spread the Good News. We are to be Christ's ambassadors to the world, as others see Jesus in us. The message and wonder of the cross—the gospel—is to be

evident in us. We should love the unlovable. Forgive the ones who don't deserve forgiveness. Extend grace. Attempt to bring reconciliation through Christ. His cross.

3. We must follow Him. That may seem like the easiest, but it is perhaps the most difficult. It would be easier to write a bunch of rules of what a good little Christian should look like. But, we'd only mess that up into some sort of legalism. Michael Yaconelli once wrote, "Jesus said follow me', not 'Follow my rules."

I remember when I was younger playing "follow the leader." The guy in front made all the moves. The object was to follow the leader exactly. It was usually easier in looks than in practice. Jesus is our leader and every day we need to mimic the Savior. It won't always be easy. Culture will work against us. Some in the church will still want to write more rules. But Jesus following will always be best. It's part of being a disciple. In fact, it IS being a disciple.

Which of these three steps do you most need to apply to your life today?

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