

## I DIE DAILY

Jesus invites you to **“take up your cross”**. That is often where we leave his invitation. But, the next word makes all the difference. The word is **“Daily”** ... “take up your cross **daily**”. **Every day** we must make a decision that we will **die to ourselves and live for Christ**. Dying to ourselves is **not** a one-time decision. It’s a **daily** decision. That’s the most challenging part of dying. Think of your life as a \$100-dollar bill. Most of think of dying to ourselves as this one big moment where we hand over our \$100-dollar bill. I don’t want to take away from that moment. That moment of salvation is the most important moment of your life. But to see following Jesus as a one-time decision is like saying after your wedding, “Now that I’m married, it’s back to life as usual.” There is more to being a husband or wife than a wedding ceremony. Instead of thinking of our lives as a \$100-dollar bill that we give to God and that’s the end of it, we give our \$100-dollar bill to God and he accepts it but says, “This is mine, but I want you to cash it in for pennies and give one penny back to me each day.” It’s a **daily** death. What does it look like to die **every day**? Well, dying to yourself today may mean spending your lunch serving food to the homeless at the shelter down the street from your office. It may mean that the next time you’re talking with your neighbor instead of playing it safe and keeping comfortable you bring Jesus into the conversation. Dying to yourself may mean changing your vacation plans, and instead of taking your kids to Disney World this year, you take them to the Dominican Republic and volunteer in the feeding centers where hundreds of kids come each day for their only meal. Dying to yourself may mean walking by that empty room in your house and asking God if there is an orphan child or a foster child that should be sleeping in that bed. Dying to yourself may mean that you selflessly love a spouse who has cheated you out of the marriage you so desperately wanted. Please push pause for a minute and write down in the space below some of the ways that you can carry a cross and **die to yourself** today:

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Really, it's only by dying **daily** that we are even able to follow Jesus. There are many people who get frustrated in their efforts to follow Jesus. They're trying as hard as they can and don't understand why they have such a hard time or why they're so inconsistent. One person sent me an email that read, "Thanks so much for this challenge to go from a fan to a follower. I am **trying** every day to become a follower of Jesus." I appreciated that, but I can tell you he is going to fail because "**trying** every day" isn't enough. If I could just change one word in that email it would make all the difference. It needs to read "Thanks so much for this challenge to go from a fan to a follower I am **dying** every day to become a follower of Jesus."

In my closet where I get on my knees each morning and surrender to Jesus I have three words spray painted on the wall. These are Paul's words found in [1 Corinthians 15:31](#). Paul says "**I die daily**". That's the hardest part of carrying your cross...it's so **daily**. **Each morning** by the grace of Jesus, I am invited to take up a cross and die. That's the **only** way I will follow him that day. **Every morning** we crawl back on the alter and die to ourselves. That's Jesus' invitation in [Luke 9:23](#), but look at what he says in the very next verse: "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it." **It's only by dying to ourselves that we truly find life**. When we finally let go of our lives we find real life in Christ. Those of you who have experienced this understand why Jesus is saying. For some of the fans, none of this makes sense. In fact, in [1 Corinthians 1:18](#) Paul wrote: "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." One version puts it this way, "the message of the cross doesn't make sense..." (CEV.) Dying to yourself doesn't make sense for the **fan**, but the **follower** understands that **dying** is the secret of really **living**. That's why we sing about the wonderful cross. The cross that represented defeat... for a **follower** it is an image of victory. The cross that represented condemnation... for a **follower** it is an image of freedom. The cross that represented suffering... for a **follower** it is an image of healing and hope. The cross that represented death... for a **follower** it is an image of life. The cross may not be attractive, but for a follower it is beautiful. Taking up a cross and dying to myself sounds like torture. We think that such a decision would make us

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miserable. Is that what it means to follow Jesus? We wake up every morning and commit to misery. But when we **die to ourselves** and completely surrender to him, there is a surprising side effect to dying; **we discover true life**. In a twist of irony, **we find that giving up our lives gives us the life we so desperately wanted all along.**

From: **“not a fan.”**

By Kyle Idleman