



UNDENIABLE (Part 2) - "The Way to Follow"

Matthew 16:21-26

21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"

23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. 26 What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?"

Ephesians 2:15-16 NIV

15 His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

Romans 5:8-10 NIV

8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! 10 For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

2 Corinthians 5:18-19 NIV

18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

Key Points

- *"Saving ourselves is our attempt to preserve our way at the expense of anything that threatens our autonomy and independence."*
- *"We see denying ourselves anything as something bad; it feels oppressive."*
- *"The satisfaction and care of ourselves have become the highest values."*
- *"Self-preservation gives way to a life of protection and demand."*
- *"Self-preservation takes, and grace cannot be taken, only received."*
- *"We live as though we can save ourselves by preserving our way."*
- *"Self-denial is a resolve not to be governed by fear."*
- *"Taking up your cross is taking up your call."*
- *"You will not navigate the chaos of this world without taking up your cross."*
- *"We experience His promise to be found faithful when we follow Him."*

READ

Open your time together by reading the Scripture passages on Page 1. Then, take a moment to consider what you just read:

- **Read Matthew 16:21-29. How does self-denial lead us to the life we actually long to experience?**
- **Read Ephesians 2:15-16, Romans 5:8-10, and 2 Corinthians 5:18-19. How does the cross serve as the clearest demonstration of God's love?**

REFLECT

- **Can self-preservation and grace coexist, or do they inherently conflict with each other? How so?**
- **How do we discern between healthy self-care and selfishness in our pursuit of personal well-being?**
- **Grace cannot be taken; it is only received. What does this mean to you personally, and how does it shape your approach to life?**

RESPOND

- **What does it mean to "take up your cross" in the context of navigating your life's challenges and responsibilities?**
- **What steps can you take to cultivate a mindset of gratitude and trust in your journey towards self-denial?**
- **What barriers do you face in embracing self-denial, and how can you overcome them?**

PRAY

Close your time together with prayer requests. Ask how you can pray, support, and lift one another up. Pray over these requests collectively or by breaking into prayer partners.