

LOSING OUR LIVES TO FIND THEM

The Believers' Secret To Joy

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One of the most misunderstood statements of Jesus is His call to lose our lives so that we may find them. *"For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."* (Mt.16.25)

These words are often taken as if they were a demand to live in misery. Nothing could be further from the truth. Jesus is showing His followers how to **ESCAPE** a life of misery and enjoy a more **ABUNDANT LIFE** in the care and provision of God which He opened for us through His death and Resurrection. He assures us that if we abandon our independent lives and learn to live in total dependence on our Loving Heavenly Father, we will experience a more joyful and fulfilled than any life we could plan for ourselves. *"I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."* (John 10.10)

It Is More Than Dedication

The invitation to lay down our lives to follow Jesus, goes further than dedicating our lives to Him and choosing the way of unselfish love. It includes that, but there is more to it than dedication, and this is where we can miss it. In urging us "to lose" our lives, Jesus is not just asking us to be unselfish and dedicated to Him, but to set aside 'SELF' completely as the **GOVERNING PRINCIPLE** of our lives. He is showing us a way out of the tyranny of **SELF** (EGO) with its endless demands, to a life of partnership with Him. Imagine if the greatest earthly king invited you into partnership with

him in exchange for your meagre self-created and self-centered life. This is exactly what Jesus' invitation is – a challenge to abandon ourselves, deliberately and completely, yield ourselves to the plans and ways He calls us to, and for which He created us.

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Mt 11.27-29)

To take the "yoke of the Lord" is **to cease from forcing ourselves to perform** and to draw instead from the energy and life of the One to whom we are joined. This releases us from every pressure to invent a personal agenda of self-realization and connects us to the life and **DESTINY** for which Our Father created us. When we join ourselves to the Lord and **draw life only from Him** we begin to discover **life in its fullness**. When we follow Jesus in this way - allowing ourselves to be directly governed by Him and His life - we are released from the pressure of self-improvement, self-righteousness, self-fulfillment, self-realization and self-governance. We begin to discover the real life for which we were created - lives of **partnership and union** with Him.

An Essential Part Of The Good News

The invitation to lay down self - deny our self - is an essential part of the **GOOD NEWS** that is too often neglected. The call to renounce self as the governing principle of our

lives - far from being a harsh demand - is exactly the opposite! It is an invitation to allow Him to express His perfect way through us.

union with Jesus there is no self-righteousness whatsoever. There is no self-anything - there is simply HIM IN US. It is no longer WE living the dedicated unselfish life, but HIM living HIS perfect life in us and through us. When we continually lay down not only selfishness, self-determination and self-interest, but SELF itself as the governing principle of our lives, we BEGIN to discover the joy of being His disciples.

On the surface, the call to deny ourselves and lose our independent life seems like a negative, harsh demand. This is only because we have looked at it through the prism of religious performance and pressure. In fact, it is a call to **rest from self completely** and become partners with Him in life – joined to Him and led by His Spirit. Jesus did not say: “My yoke is heavy” - He said: “*My yoke is easy and My burden is light!*” (Mt 11.30)

As we take up His ‘yoke’, yield to Him and let Him express His actions and reactions through us, we lose our self-engineered and self-driven lives and discover **His abundant life**. We cease from our works ‘for’ Him and enter “the rest of faith” where He does His works through us and with us. To live this way is to be a true disciple of Jesus and is totally contrary to the humanistic message of self-fulfillment self-help and self-realization so widely promoted in today’s world

Four Ways To Lay Down Our Lives

1) Decide not to exist any longer as an

Jesus lifts the burden off SELF to live a life that is impossible for us and comes **Himself to live and do the impossible through us**. In real

independently operating human – your life is Christ’s life, and His life is your life. “*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*” (Gal. 2.20)

2) Decide to live in total dependence on the providence of Father God and His faithfulness to fulfil His promises. (Jn 14.1-2)

3) Decide to allow Jesus to be your Good Shepherd, who guides and directs your way. “*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.*” (Proverbs 3.5-6)

4) Decide to draw your life and ability from Him and not from yourself and not to be empowered by will power or self-effort, but by the life of Jesus’ Spirit in you. By myself I can do nothing, but “*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*” (Phil. 4.13)

“*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*” (Romans 8.14)

“*Whoever hears these words of Mine and does them, will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.*” (Matthew 7.24)

“*Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.*” (Hebrews 10.7)

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