



Deny, Carry, & Follow

Pastor Jake Taylor 09.21.2025

USING THIS SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

We have provided all the Scriptures references in the sermon and some discussion questions for you to use to discuss the weekend message.

This Sermon Discussion Guide is only a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. For most groups, there are too many questions to answer in one session. Give priority to the needs and pace of your group members.

While the questions are important, remember your group's goal is to create an atmosphere that will foster true friendships. Use the discussion questions as you see fit but emphasize the relationships.

(Matthew 16:24-25] ESV

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

1.Deny Yourself

[Romans 3:11-18] NIV

There is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.”

“Their throats are open graves, their tongues practice deceit. “The poison of vipers is on their lips. “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. “Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know. “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

2. Carry Your Cross

[Colossians 3:5] NIV

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

[Galatians 2:20] ESV

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who 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.

[Galatians 5:24] ESV

And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

[Romans 8:13] NIV

For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

[Galatians 5:16-25] NLT

So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses. When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.

3.Follow Me

Cultural Christianity has become so normalized in America over the last several decades that now Biblical Christianity seems radical.

-Shane Pruitt

[Romans 12:1] NIV

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, this is your true and proper worship.

Key Points:

- 1. Deny yourself**
- 2. Carry your cross**
- 3. Follow me**

Applications for the Week:

The call to deny ourselves goes against the message of our culture, which often says, do whatever makes you happy. Can you identify an area in your life where your desires are in conflict with what God wants? What would it look like to deny yourself in that area this week?

Discussion Questions:

- 1.** In Matthew 16:24 what three actions does Jesus say are required for anyone who wants to follow Him?
- 2.** What did Pastor Jake say about the public nature of carrying the cross in the Roman world? How was this act understood by people at that time?
- 3.** What is the difference between managing sin and putting sin to death as Pastor Jake described in his sermon?
- 4.** Why do you think Jesus connects denying yourself, taking up your cross, and following Him as a single call, rather than separate options? What does this reveal about the nature of discipleship?
- 5.** Pastor Jake said that, "faith is personal, but never private." What does it look like for faith to be lived out publicly in today's world?
- 6.** According to the sermon, why is surrendering every area of your life to Jesus considered the only rational response to God's mercy?

7. Pastor Jake said that many people try to manage their sin instead of putting it to death. Is there some sin in your life that you've been trying to control or hide? What practical steps could you take this week to bring it into the light and begin to put it to death by the power of the Holy Spirit?