Choosing a “Life Verse”

**Luke 9:23-24** Then he (Jesus) said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.

**Deny Yourself:**
- to affirm that one has no acquaintance or connection with someone
- to forget or lose sight of one’s self and one’s own interests

**Take Up Your Cross:**
- Not a sacrifice; to obey is better than sacrifice.
- What does the cross mean to you?
- What difference has the cross made in your life?

“At the heart of the gospel is a God who deliberately surrenders to the wild, irresistible power of love.” – Philip Yancey, *What’s So Amazing About Grace?*

**Romans 8:15-17** The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs— heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.
“True discipleship is all about living with the paradox of the miracles that God does alongside the miracles that God doesn’t do or hasn’t done yet.”
-Pete Greig, *Red Moon Rising*

- The cross is where the tension of life is felt in the on-going injustices we continue to witness.
- The cross is where we see that life was full of heartache and full of pain for the One we follow.
- The cross is where we see the heart of God being fulfilled by putting others before personal happiness.
- The cross is where “sorrow and love come mingled down.”

When we think our happiness can only be found where there is no struggle, we’ll try to escape the struggle every single time.

Taking up my cross means I give to others what the cross has given me, what the cross means to me.

**Matthew 6:24a** No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other.

**I John 4:10** … this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us…

God’s glory is found in …

- Being faithful to others and to your word
- Remaining joyful in trial
- Loving until it hurts; loving while it hurts
- Praying for the one who has hurt you instead of getting even with them
- Keeping your commitments
- Saying “yes” to the Father yet one more time … and more …
The Father wants us to be happy but the Father doesn’t want us to be selfish.

Grace is the undeserved, unearned, and unmerited favor of a good God!

When it comes to grace, it really is all about you. Grace is all about our happiness because of who God is.

Psalm 23:6 Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

“follow” in Hebrew: to chase, hunt down
Further Study

1. **Read Luke 9:23 and make two lists.** Make a list of all what feel you already know about grace. Make another list of what the cross means to you; how has the power of what happened on the cross made a difference in your life?

2. **Read the article “All About Grace” by Joseph Prince.** Record anything you learned about grace for the first time, or in a fresh new way.

3. **Read and meditate on the following verses.** Record anything significant you see in them about grace, or about selfishness:

   Luke 2:40
   John 1:14-17
   Acts 20:24 (Amplified Bible)
   2 Corinthians 8:9
   Ephesians 1:7
   Ephesians 2:3-8
   2 Timothy 1:9
   Hebrews 2:9
   Matthew 6
   Romans 5:1-11
   Romans 8
   Philippians 2:1-11

4. **God and medicine cured Pete Greig’s wife, Samie and he wrote a book, God On Mute about unanswered prayer during their personal trial.** Check it out!

   “Pete Greig, the acclaimed author of Red Moon Rising, has written his most intensely personal and honest account yet in God on Mute, a book born out of his wife Samie’s fight for her life and diagnosis of a debilitating brain tumor. Greig asks the timeless questions of what it means to suffer and to pray and to suffer through the silence because your prayers seem unanswered. This silence, Greig relates, is the hardest thing. The world collapses. Then all goes quiet. Words can’t explain, don’t fit, won’t work. People avoid you and don’t know what to say. So you turn to Him and you pray. You need Him more than ever before. But somehow... even God Himself seems on mute. In this heart-searching, honest and deeply profound book, Pete Greig looks at the hard side of prayer, how to respond when there seem to be no answers and how to cope with those who seek to interpret our experience for us. Here is a story of faith, hope and love beyond all understanding.”