

We begin our commitment to Jesus Christ by choosing to follow him. We grow by following him. Jesus calls for our uncompromised commitment. Let's consider our text.

*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, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said, "This shall never happen to you!" Then Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."*

*Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."* Matthew 16:21-24

### **1. Resist Temptation**

*have in mind the things of God (v. 23)*

The disciples did not want to see Jesus as the "suffering servant." Like many before them, they wanted a conquering messiah who would restore the "promised land" to the "promised people."

What kind of messiah are we seeking?

Jesus came as a spiritual messiah. When Peter heard Jesus' explanation of what was about to happen, Peter said, "Never Lord!" Jesus responded with a rebuke. "Get behind me Satan! You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

Jesus' world-shaping mission transcends personal desires.

### **2. Relinquish Control**

*He must deny himself (v.24)*

*Let him say 'No!' to himself.*

*Jewish New Testament*

What does self-denial look like to you? Our witness for Jesus is compromised when we choose self-centered living.

*Let him forget himself.*

*Today's English Version*

Jesus challenged Peter with the promise: "for whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it." (Matthew 16:25)

What needs to take place in your life for you to relinquish control? Think through the aspects of your life? Where would self-denial look different in your use of time, treatment of family or friends and service to our Lord?

### **3. Receive the Cross**

*And take up his cross (v. 24)*

The disciples were no strangers to crosses. Thousands of people died on crosses throughout their lifetimes.

The call to the cross is a call to pay any price, take up whatever trials and troubles we face to witness to the faith, hope and love found in Jesus. Self-denial may be private, but crosses are public.

*I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.* Galatians 2:20

People on a cross face one direction, cannot turn back and have no other plans of their own.

*But whoever loses his life for me will find it.*

*Matthew 16:25*

### **4. Respond by Following**

*And follow me (v. 24)*

*I am the Way...*

*John 14:6*

Which way are you taking? Your way, the way of others or the way of Jesus?

*What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?* Matthew 16:26

Followers of Jesus seek to find his footprints and step in them.

The search for the way of Jesus will always keep Jesus before the believer.

*I have set the Lord always before me.*

*Psalms 16:8*

Our responsibility as a church is to walk in the way of Jesus. When we united with the church, we became a part of the body of Christ called "First Baptist Church Dawsonville." To accomplish God's purposes, we need to show up, get involved and help carry the load. Today we are challenged to renew our commitment to serving Jesus in and through the body of Christ.

