

HABITS.

**Have a Plan ♦ Affirm your Faith ♦ Be a Friend
Intentionally Choose Him ♦ Trust Him ♦ Surrender to Him**

Part Four Intentionally Choose Him

Intentionally

- An intentional life is one lived with purpose, on purpose. Being intentional has to do with our habits and choices we make. See James 5:12
- When you are an intentional Christian, your heart beats for God. See Hebrews 4:12
- If you don't know what you believe, you won't be able to make deliberate choices. See John 18:37

Choose

- Choosing Christ is to prioritize Him above all others. It is an ongoing process that will never stop, it requires action. See Matthew 6:33
- Each and every day we should choose to serve Him more joyfully. See Joshua 24:15

Him

- Jesus changes everything. See John 3:16
- Jesus tells us our souls have infinite value, because they will carry us to our eternal destination. We can't gain the whole world at the expense of our souls. See Mark 8:36-37

How do we do this? See Mark 8:34

Deny yourself

- When there is a conflict between what He wants and what we want, we must choose God's will over our own. Every time we pray the Lord's Prayer, we remind ourselves of this. See Matthew 6:9-10
- This isn't self-denial based on our own boundaries that WE establish. Rather, denying myself is an ongoing surrendering of all aspects of my life according to HIS boundaries so that I can be more transformed into the image of Jesus Christ daily. See Luke 22:41-42

Take up your cross

- The cross was not yet a symbol of grace or salvation or forgiveness. It was a symbol of shame and death. What the disciples didn't know was that following Christ meant that they would face a very real danger of persecution, some to the point of death. Jesus is saying that "To follow Me, you have to be prepared even to die." See 1 Corinthians 1:18
- To take up your cross also refers to an opportunity to embrace your own unique gifts and challenges. See Matthew 25:14-15

Follow Me

- He leads, we follow. This is HARD! See Luke 9:57-62
- In the original Greek, these steps are stated in the present, continuous tense. That means, "Keep on denying yourself, keep on taking up your cross, keep on following Me." This is not the decision of a moment. It is for a lifetime, to be repeated every day. See Luke 9:23

Scripture References

James 5:12	<i>But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath, but let your yes be yes and your no be no, that you may not fall under condemnation.</i>
Hebrews 4:12	<i>For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.</i>
John 18:37	<i>Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth hears My voice."</i>
Matthew 6:33	<i>But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.</i>
Joshua 24:15	<i>And if you be unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."</i>
John 3:16	<i>For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.</i>
Mark 8:36-37	<i>³⁶ For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? ³⁷ For what can a man give in return for his soul? (ESV)</i>
Mark 8:34	<i>And He called to Him the multitude with His disciples, and said to them, "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me."</i>
Matthew 6:9-10	<i>⁹ Pray then like this: Our Father Who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. ¹⁰ Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.</i>
Luke 22:41-42	<i>⁴¹ And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, ⁴² saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me. Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done." (ESV)</i>
1 Corinthians 1:18	<i>For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.</i>
Matthew 25:14-15	<i>¹⁴ "For it will be as when a man going on a journey called his servants and entrusted to them his property; ¹⁵ to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.</i>
Luke 9:57-62	<i>⁵⁷ As they were going along the road, a man said to Him, "I will follow You wherever You go." ⁵⁸ And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay His head." ⁵⁹ To another He said, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." ⁶⁰ But He said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." ⁶¹ Another said, "I will follow You, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home." ⁶² Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."</i>
Luke 9:23	<i>And He said to all, "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me."</i>

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Questions

1. Do you have areas of your life that you are already intentional about? How do you maintain intentionality? Have you ever considered how intentional you are with your relationship with Jesus Christ?
2. What do you think of what you hear the call to "deny yourself?" How about the call to "take up your cross?" Is there anything which you are not willing to let go of for the sake of following Christ?
3. Look at the scripture references for Luke 9:57-62. Have you given the Lord reasons or excuses for not following Him? How can we reconcile our reasons with His will?
4. Who or what do we follow? We follow the lives of celebrities, we follow people on social media, we follow our schedules, however do we follow God? If Jesus wanted to gain more followers, why did He give a speech like this?