

### Scripture Points

The purpose of the Scriptures listed below is to be food for you to chew on. Meditate on these related texts.

\* Mark 8:34-38: <sup>34</sup> And He summoned the multitude with His disciples and said to them, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. <sup>35</sup> For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s shall save it. <sup>36</sup> For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? <sup>37</sup> For what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? <sup>38</sup> For whoever is ashamed of Me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

- Denying or saying no to self does not mean that we deny that we are self created in the image of God (vs. pantheism). It does not deny the new self being created in the image and likeness of God (Eph 4:24, Col 3:10). It does mean saying no (having nothing to do with) to the old self (Eph 4:22, Col 3:8-9)
- Jesus’ paradoxical saying (save-lose; lose-save) means that if we try to do it our way (save self) we will lose life not only eternally but the fullness of life right now. On the other hand, if we lose our lives (give them totally up to Christ), we will find the key to life eternally as well as in the present. Our unbelief about these truths is at the root of all sin, and assumes that we can find more life doing it our way than doing things God’s way.
- Jim Elliot said, “He is no fool to give what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” Who would not give our time, money, life that are transitory to gain a pearl of great price, a hidden treasure – something of immeasurable, eternal value that we cannot lose?

\* Matt. 4:18-19: <sup>18</sup> And walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter and Andrew, his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. <sup>19</sup> And He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

- From the beginning to the end of our lives in Christ, no matter how advanced we become, no matter what our titles, no matter how exalted our experiences, the call is simple: “Follow Me.” Peter’s first call was to follow Jesus (above) and his last call from Jesus is to “follow Me” (John 21:22).

- We are called not only to follow but to be trained so that we can be fishers of men.
- To catch fish can be a difficult task unless you have a guide; Jesus will work to “make” us fishers of men.

\* Luke 9:57-62: <sup>57</sup> And as they were going along the road, someone said to Him, “I will follow you wherever You go.” <sup>58</sup> And Jesus said to him, “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” <sup>59</sup> And He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Permit me first to go and bury my father.” <sup>60</sup> But He said to him, “Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.” <sup>61</sup> And another also said, “I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home.” <sup>62</sup> But Jesus said to him, “No one after putting his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God.”

- The first would-be disciple volunteers his service but has not (perhaps) counted the cost, the difficulty and inconvenience of being a disciple.
- The second disciple is called by Jesus to follow Him, but he wants to fulfill his social, familial obligations first. Probably he is saying that he wants to wait till his father is dead before he follows. He places conditions on his discipleship. Jesus’ response is to let the spiritually dead bury the physically dead.
- The third disciple says that he will follow, conditional upon saying good-bye to his family. This means that he will ask permission to go, ask for their blessing, ask their approval for him to leave. If they say no (as he may expect them to do) then he can say he wanted to follow, shed crocodile tears and say that he unfortunately cannot.

\* John 6:65-69: <sup>65</sup> And He was saying, “For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father.” <sup>66</sup> As a result of this, many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore. <sup>67</sup> Jesus said therefore to the twelve, “You do not want to go away also, do you?” <sup>68</sup> Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. <sup>69</sup> And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.”

- Some disciples no longer walk with Jesus because His teaching offends them. It may seem to them that He is giving too much place to God’s sovereignty. No one can come unless the Father grants the power.
- Jesus tests the twelve to see if they want to go as well. Many other perspective worldviews and religions offer answers that avoid the stumbling block that faith in Christ involves (sin, the cross, judgment, etc.)

- Peter’s words, “To whom shall we go?” do not mean that he lacked options or the initiative to pursue them. Peter’s answer affirms his faith that He is the Holy One of God and that his words give eternal life. In other words, Jesus and his message provide solid rock to stand on while other ways are like sand.

\* John 3:1-8: 1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; 2 this man came to Him by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” 3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” 4 Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?” 5 Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, you must be born again. 8 The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

- Despite Nicodemus’ flattery Jesus jumps into some tough teaching. He tells Nicodemus that no one, not even Nicodemus, can enter the kingdom unless he is born from above (or again).
- Nicodemus is puzzled by the analogy thinking about natural birth. Jesus indicates that unless he is born of the water and the Spirit – he cannot enter the kingdom. Probably, the “water” refers not to baptism but to cleansing (Ezekiel 36:25-27).
- If we start with flesh we end up with flesh. You cannot get to the Spirit out of the flesh (our human will or sinful nature). The only way you can get into the Spiritual realm is by the Spirit alone.