

THE CROSS AND SELF

PASTOR FERNANDO SERRANO | MARK 8:27-38

I love legends, and there's this one about the Knights Templars and their baptism prior to heading off on their crusade from Europe to Israel. Legend has it, the knights would hold their swords out of the water as they were baptized to symbolize that they were surrendering everything to God except their swords. "God, I surrender you all, except what I do with my sword"

How many of us are like the Templars? As a pastor, my job is to guide people to Jesus, to teach them His ways and encourage them to trust Him. And that takes so much of my time, and sometimes, sacrifice. As a family we left behind our home and family in Mexico to come and plant a church. But, to be honest, like the Templars, I find myself holding stuff above the waters.

That represents a big problem in my spiritual walk because when I refuse to take up my cross and deny myself, I'm missing on God's best for my life.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE SHOULD BE JOYFUL, MEANINGFUL AND EFFECTIVE (THAT IS THE ABUNDANT LIFE), BUT IT ONLY HAPPENS WHEN YOU ARE CHARACTERIZED BY FOLLOWING JESUS IN SELF-DENIAL, CROSS BEARING, AND SUBMISSIVE OBEDIENCE.

Leaders: Take your group through each section: Pray, Reflect, and Reach. Keep in mind the time allowances. In the Reflect section, feel free to focus on several of these questions instead of all as time allows.



PRAY (10 min)

Pray as a group with the expectation that He is with you and that He is going to move in a special way during your meeting. Give thanks because he is worthy of your trust and surrender.



REFLECT (25 min)

As you've had the opportunity to reflect on what God has spoken to you through the lesson this week, consider these questions as a group and discuss them.

1. **Who is Jesus that we should follow Him?**

IF YOU HAVE THE WRONG MESSIAH, YOU ARE THE WRONG DISCIPLE

2. **Is it really necessary to take up my cross to be His disciple? What does it mean?**

3. **What is the difference between life's difficulties and taking up my cross to follow Jesus?**

**TO SAY YES TO JESUS IS TO SAY YES TO ALL OF HIS WILL, TO SAY YES TO JESUS IS TO SAY NO TO OURS.
– IT IS TO DIE TO SELF**

4. Share with your group something you struggled in the past to surrender to Jesus and what was your experience when you did.



WEEKLY MEMORIZATION VERSE

GALATIANS 2:20 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.