The Imitation of Christ

When Jesus announced His coming death, He called on His disciples to imitate Him. “When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer). We can do nothing to atone for our sin. The death of Jesus alone can do that, but we can imitate His death in other ways. This was a very difficult lesson for His disciples to learn, and it is difficult for us as well. **How is Jesus calling you and me to imitate Him?**

**1. Take up your cross** (Mark 8:31-37)

Your cross is—

A. Not your *personal sin* or your *incidental suffering*

B. *Christ’s tasks* and the *accompanying trials*

**2. Serve the little people** (Mark 9:30-37)

A. The *children*

B. The *unimportant*

**3. Set aside selfish ambition** (Mark 10:32-45)

A. To *lord it over* others

B. To *appear better* than others

**For Private Meditation or Family Discussion**

1. How did the Lord speak to you through the message? Did He put His finger on any habits or attitudes that you need to change? Did He encourage you regarding some difficulty, move you to undertake some new challenge, or open your heart to some truth you hadn’t seen before?

2. In Mark 8:34-38 what do the following phrases mean, and how do they relate to following Christ?

“Deny himself”

“Take up his cross”

“Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it”

“Whoever loses his life for My sake... will save it”

“Gain the whole world... forfeit his soul”

3. How does the teaching of Jesus in Luke 14:1-24 reinforce the idea of serving the little people?

4. What kind of ambition does the Lord reject? What kind of ambition does He want you to have? (The NASB uses “ambition” in these verses. Other versions may express the same idea in different words.)

2 Corinthians 5:9

1 Thessalonians 4:11

James 3:14-16