

**Take Up Your Cross**  
**Mark 8:34-35**

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1. Watch any commercial these days and you're going to get a single message.
2. I mention this all because when we look at the Bible passage that was read this morning, you've got to admit, Jesus is not portraying an image that is going to 'sell.'
3. It's at this point, that Peter or anyone today would turn into a marketing consultant, sitting down with Jesus and saying, "Look, we need to work on your image!"
4. We try so hard today to recreate Christ the way we want Christ to be. But Jesus has a right to call on us to take up a cross, for He, Himself, first bore one for us.

**I. What Did Jesus Mean When He Said "Take Up Your Cross?"**

- A. First, Jesus says, **"If anyone would come after me,"**
- B. Second, **"let him deny himself..."**
  1. The word **"deny"** means to disavow any connection with something.
- C. Third, follows: **"Let him... take up his cross..."**
  1. I am sure these words, falling on the disciples' ears, were almost totally incomprehensible to them.
- D. Last, Jesus said, **"Follow me."**
  1. This really means, **"Obey me."**
  2. These words are stated in the present, continuous tense.

**II. Cross-Bearing Is Always Voluntary.**

- A. Jesus tells us that "taking up our cross" is something that we do voluntarily.
  1. Self-denial is not easy.
- B. Jesus also said, "Take up your cross." In other words, pick it up yourself.

**III. Cross-Bearing Is An Act Of Love.**

- A. Let's first consider what bearing your cross is not.
  1. When facing difficult circumstances, people often say, "I guess that's a cross I have to bear."
- B. Bearing the cross is a choice.
  1. It is a voluntary form of sacrificial obedience that identifies us completely with Jesus Christ.