

Leader's Guide

Great Disciples: Live in Denial

Luke 9:23

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Goal for Discussion

The goal of this conversation is to help participants honestly identify areas where they have not fully surrendered to Jesus, understand what it means to deny themselves and take up their cross daily, and take one clear, practical step toward deeper obedience and transformation.

Icebreaker / Opening Question

- What is something you've tried to change in your life that was harder than you expected? What made it difficult?
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Discussion Questions

1. When you hear Jesus' words in Luke 9:23, what stands out or challenges you most and why?

Follow-up prompts:

- What part feels hardest to accept or live out?
- How does this compare to how you've typically thought about following Jesus?

Leader Insight:

Help the group see that Jesus is redefining what it means to follow Him. Many people expect comfort or benefit, but Jesus starts with surrender.

2. The message highlighted that many people wanted what Jesus could do for them, not what it would cost to follow Him. Where do you see that tension in your own faith right now?

Follow-up prompts:

- Are there ways you've approached Jesus more for comfort, community, or benefit?
- What might it look like to shift from "what do I get?" to "what is Jesus asking of me?"

3. What is one area of your life where you sense God inviting you to “deny yourself” to truly turn away, not just manage or minimize?

Follow-up prompts:

- Do you relate more to blaming, minimizing, or avoiding (denial)?
- What makes this area hard to fully surrender?

Leader Insight:

Remind the group that “deny” means turning away, not just trying harder.

4. Jesus says to take up your cross daily. What is one practical, daily step you can take this week to follow Him more intentionally?

Follow-up prompts:

- Is it a habit to start, stop, or replace?
- When during your day will you intentionally practice this?

Leader Insight:

Push toward *clear and doable*. If someone says “pray more,” help them define when and how. Transformation happens through small, consistent steps.

5. Who is one trusted person you can invite into this process for honesty, prayer, and accountability, and what will you share with them?

Follow-up prompts:

- What holds you back from opening up?
- How could community help you experience real change?

Leader Insight:

This is where application becomes real. Emphasize that lasting change rarely happens in isolation. If appropriate, invite group members to pair up or follow up during the week.

Closing Scripture Reflection

- Matthew 16:24-25

Invite someone to read it slowly and ask:

- What might it look like to actually believe this is true?