

5-Day Devotional: The Journey to the Cross – The Cost of Discipleship
Pastor Jay Hassman
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Day 1: The Open Invitation

Reading: Luke 9:23-25; John 3:16-17; Revelation 22:17

Devotional: "If anyone..." These two words reveal the heart of God—His invitation is radically inclusive. No matter your past, your failures, or your doubts, Jesus invites you to follow Him. But notice: He doesn't invite you to simply add Him to your busy life. He calls you to reorient everything around Him. Today, reflect on whether you've truly accepted this invitation or merely acknowledged it from a distance. Are you a fan who admires from afar, or a follower who pursues intimately? The grace that saves you is free, but the life that follows requires your whole heart. Jesus doesn't want a portion of your life. He wants to be your life. The invitation stands open today: Will you come?

Day 2: Daily Surrender

Reading: Galatians 2:20; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 15:31

Devotional: Paul declared, "I die daily." Discipleship isn't a one-time decision; it's a daily practice of surrender. Each morning presents a fresh choice: Will you lead your life today, or will Christ? The cross Jesus calls you to carry isn't a dramatic, one-time gesture. It is the quiet, consistent dying to self-rule. Your flesh doesn't stay crucified without intention. Yesterday's obedience doesn't cover today's compromise. What does daily surrender look like for you? Perhaps it's choosing forgiveness over bitterness, humility over pride, or obedience over comfort. The altar requires fresh commitment because living sacrifices keep trying to crawl off. Today, what will you intentionally lay down so Christ can truly live through you?

Day 3: Denying Self, Finding Life

Reading: Matthew 16:24-26; Mark 8:34-37; Philippians 3:7-11

Devotional: Self-denial sounds countercultural because it is. In a world obsessed with self-expression, self-promotion, and self-preservation, Jesus calls us to self-surrender. But understand this clearly: denying yourself is not self-hatred because it's dethroning self-rule. It means your feelings don't get final authority. Your preferences don't determine your path. Your comfort doesn't dictate your obedience. When you step off the throne of your own life, you make room for the King. The paradox is stunning: the moment you stop trying to save your life is the moment you truly find it. What are you clinging to that God is asking you to release? Your identity isn't found in what you protect—it's discovered in what you surrender.

Day 4: Losing to Gain

Reading: John 12:24-26; Luke 17:33; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Devotional: Kingdom mathematics don't make worldly sense. Jesus teaches that death produces life, surrender produces fruit, and loss produces gain. A seed must die to multiply. You must lose your life to truly live. This isn't destruction. It is amazing transformation. You're already losing

your life to something: ambition, approval, comfort, control, or Christ. Only one leads to eternal life. The world promises fulfillment through accumulation; Jesus promises it through surrender. What profit is there in gaining everything but forfeiting your soul? Today, examine what you're investing your life in. Are you trading the eternal for the temporary? The things you grasp tightest often become your greatest prisons. Open your hands. What you release to Jesus, you'll find multiplied in ways you never imagined.

Day 5: The Cost and the Crown

Reading: 2 Timothy 2:11-13; Romans 8:16-18; Philippians 3:10-14

Devotional: We want resurrection without crucifixion, crowns without crosses, glory without suffering. But the pattern of Christ is unmistakable: the cross comes before the crown. Paul understood this, declaring his desire to "know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings." Present suffering is real, but it's not final. Romans 8:18 assures us that our present sufferings aren't worth comparing with the glory to be revealed. The journey to the cross isn't the end because it is the pathway to resurrection life. Every act of obedience, every moment of surrender, every cross you carry daily is forming Christ in you. The cost is real, but the crown is certain. Today, whatever cross you're carrying, carry it with hope. Resurrection morning is coming.