**RISE UP** in 2021

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**RISE UP and Follow**

*Mark 8:34-38*



When you were a kid, did you like losing or winning?

What if all our focus on winning is creating a world of losers?

What if losing is the secret to winning?

When does losing actually become winning?

When you **lose** what you cannot **keep** … you **gain** what you   
cannot **lose**.

*For whoever wishes to save his life [in this world] will [eventually] lose it [through death], but* ***whoever loses his life*** *[in this world] for My sake* ***will find it*** *[that is, life with Me for all eternity].* Matthew 16:25 (Amp)

*He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.* Jim Elliot

To be a loser is to **let go** of this life and **pursue** what you can never lose.

*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? …* Romans 8:35

*… No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth,* ***nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God*** *in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Romans 8:37–39

**I am a loser, are you?**

*And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, “****If anyone would come after me****,* ***let him deny himself*** *and* ***take up his cross*** *and* ***follow me****.* ***For*** *whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it.* ***For*** *what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?* ***For*** *what can a man give in return for his soul?* ***For*** *whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”* Mark 8:34–38

To follow Christ requires two things:

Self-**denial** and **cross** bearing.

To deny yourself means saying **no** to yourself and **yes** to God.

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To take up your cross means to **embrace** your **death**.

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*The cross of Christ is the sweetest burden that I ever bore. It is a burden to me such as wings are to a bird or sails are to a ship to carry me forward to my harbor.* Samuel Rutherford

Why would you want to deny yourself and take up your cross?

***In every Christian’s heart there is a cross and a throne****, and the Christian is on the throne till he puts himself on the cross; if he refuses the cross, he remains on the throne. Perhaps this is at the bottom of the backsliding and worldliness among gospel believers today. We want to be saved, but we insist that Christ do all the dying. No cross for us, no dethronement, no dying. We remain king within the little kingdom of Man’s soul and wear our tinsel crown with all the pride of a Caesar; but we doom ourselves to shadows and weakness and spiritual sterility.*  A.W. Tozer

*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.* Galatians 2:20

*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* Philippians 1:21

**Rise Up and Follow …**

Think about **yourself** less.

*Humility is not thinking less of yourself but thinking of yourself less.* Rick Warren, *Purpose Driven Life*

For C.S. Lewis, the truly humble man or woman “will not be thinking about humility: he will not be thinking about himself at all.”

Think about **God** more.

*The real test of being in the presence of God is that you either forget about yourself altogether or you see yourself as a small, dirty object. It is better to forget about yourself altogether.* C.S. Lewis

Let go of what you **have**.

Take hold of what God **has** for you.