

# THE GLORY & GRACES OF CARRYING YOUR CROSS

*“Then Jesus told his disciples,  
‘If any want to become my followers,  
let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.  
For those who want to save their life will lose it,  
and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.  
For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life?  
Or what will they give in return for their life?’”*  
Matthew 16:24-26

## **What is “Carrying Our Cross”?**

- ◆ Doing things we do not want or choose to do.
- ◆ Doing things that are not our personal comfort, outside our comfort zone.
- ◆ Doing something that takes time, energy, resources away from what we prefer and desire.
- ◆ A sacrifice of personal will for God’s Will.
- ◆ Denying our own desires, preferences, habits in lieu of serving God.

## **Why We Should Carry Our Cross**

- ◆ It is what Jesus asked us to do.
- ◆ It grows us in love of God, perfects us in love.
- ◆ It opens us to receive and share spiritual gifts.
- ◆ It unites us with Christ Jesus more deeply.
- ◆ It takes us out of individualism and selfishness.
- ◆ It helps unite us with God’s Will.
- ◆ United with God’s Will empowers our intercession.

# THE GLORY & GRACES OF CARRYING YOUR CROSS

## Why Are You Not Carrying Your Cross?

- ✓ You don't have confidence in doing it.
- ✓ It's something you just don't want to do.
- ✓ It's something you don't like or enjoy doing.
- ✓ You are allowing a spirit of sloth to control you.
- ✓ You do not understand the spiritual purpose and value to it.
- ✓ You are afraid of what other people may say or think of you.
- ✓ You are allowing resentment, selfishness, stubbornness, vanity, laziness, self-doubt or other flaws to supersede your love for God.

## Throne of Grace to Committing to Carrying Our Cross

This is a protocol going before God's Throne of Grace to ask God to bear witness to our commitment to carrying our cross, however that looks like in any given moment and day.

### 1. Going Before God's Throne of Grace.

Dear Heavenly Father, I come before Your Throne of Grace and ask You to bear witness to my commitment to carrying my cross, however that looks like in any given moment and day. I understand from Christ Jesus that this means denying myself, in whatever that means and looks like in a given moment or day. I ask for your help to possess a deeper and more clear understanding of what denying myself entails.

I ask You to receive my repentance for all the times and ways I have fallen short in carrying my cross, and I ask for your forgiveness. I understand that carrying my cross is not a religious notion, but a way to truly realize my spiritual potential and destiny, which is being one with You and Christ Jesus according to John 17.

## **THE GLORY & GRACES OF CARRYING YOUR CROSS**

Father God, please reveal to me the glory and graces that come from carrying my cross, being truly self-denying, selfless in my walk of Faith with You and Christ Jesus.

Dear Heavenly Father, I put on the robe of Jesus Yeshua's righteousness according to Isaiah 61 and I loose the Blood of Jesus over myself to enter into Your Court of Grace sanctified, in praise and thanksgiving, in love and gratitude.

### **2. I Commit to Carrying My Cross**

#### ***I Repent for Not Carrying My Cross***

Dear Heavenly Father, I am truly sorry for all the ways and times I have refused to carry my cross, knowing full well when I have been called to do so, but did not. I repent for....

- ◆ Allowing self-doubt and lack of self-confidence to be my excuse.
  - ◆ Indulging in obstinance, refusing to do what I just don't want to do.
  - ◆ Indulging in immaturity and selfishness, just not doing what I don't like or enjoy doing.
  - ◆ Allowing a spirit of sloth to control me.
  - ◆ Not understanding and appreciating the spiritual purpose and value to it.
  - ◆ Being afraid of what other people may say or think of me.
  - ◆ Allowing resentment, selfishness, stubbornness, vanity, laziness, self-doubt or other flaws to supersede my love for You and Jesus Christ.
- [Personalize this.]

#### ***Denying Myself***

- ◆ Dear Heavenly Father, I understand that denying myself is core to carrying my cross. I commit to greater and regular self-examination to cultivate deeper self-awareness as to what I am choosing to do and be; rather than carrying the cross You are calling me to do in any given day

## THE GLORY & GRACES OF CARRYING YOUR CROSS

and moment. In my weakness, I am made strong in Christ Jesus. I submit my weakness to You, that I may be strong in Him.

- ◆ Jesus has spoken to me in Mark 8:34, exhorting me: "*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.'*" How can I deny that Jesus has asked this of me? Help me, Father God, to overcome the barriers within me and external to me, that have kept me from this calling; as I commit to denying myself in the things that keep me from carrying my cross with Christ Jesus.

### ***Taking Up My Cross Daily***

- ◆ Dear Heavenly Father, Jesus tells me in Luke 9:23, "*If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.*" This means that "taking up my cross" is not an occasional thing, but a way of life, a way of being, that unites me with Christ Jesus.
- ◆ By this, I understand that I am essentially lukewarm if I choose to do what I want most or all of the time; if I refuse to carry my cross and do things that I do not want to do. The more my life is filled with my personal choices and preferences, the less I am filled with Christ Jesus.
- ◆ Father God, help me to empty of all that stands in the way of my being filled completely with Christ Jesus Yeshua. Heaven is not some simple ticket to get punched and then I just lay back and do whatever I want in this carnal world. I repent for my laziness, spiritual laziness. Help me to release all that is in me, impeding my spiritual growth and realizing my full spiritual potential.

### ***Esteem Others Less to Be a True Disciple***

- ◆ Dear Heavenly Father, I understand from Jesus' teaching in Luke 14:26-30 that carrying my cross is about choosing what I value most; and honoring that in every moment, every decision and every choice in my life.
- ◆ I repent for all the times and ways I have put You and Jesus Christ last or secondary, definitely not first, in all ways in my life. I apologize for

## THE GLORY & GRACES OF CARRYING YOUR CROSS

my coarseness; by picking and choosing when, where and how I will put You first, maybe for an hour on Sunday or Sabbath, maybe some time for personal prayer; but not in every moment and way in my life. I am truly sorry and ashamed of my selfishness and materialism.

- ◆ For Jesus said: *"Whoever comes to me and does not esteem less/love less his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."*
- ◆ Lord God, now I more fully understand Jesus' teaching on the consideration and thoughtfulness required to be an actual disciple of Jesus, not just a "believer." In Jesus time and culture, the disciple, 'talmid', was expected to give over their complete life for their teacher/ rabbi, to become like him.
- ◆ Abba Father, I am truly sorry for not understanding this and not taking the gift of salvation more seriously, for what it is also asking and requiring of me. I repent for believing that being a Christian is a set of beliefs, accepting Jesus as my Savior, without any requirement of sacrifice on my own part.
- ◆ As Jesus taught: *"For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'"*
- ◆ Lord God, I understand from this passage that it is my choice how deeply I truly want to be in a relationship with Christ Jesus, how much I genuinely aspire to walk as Christ Jesus, rather than staying in my own comfortable personality self, cherry picking my Faith walk.
- ◆ I truly repent for my selfishness and superficial walk of Faith. There could be no more incredible gift than to walk as Christ Jesus and do the greater works. Help me Father God, to shed my personality traits and flaws that stand in the way of being a true disciple of Christ Jesus Yeshua.

# THE GLORY & GRACES OF CARRYING YOUR CROSS

## ***Training in Righteousness***

- ◆ Heavenly Father Abba, I ask for your help in my training in righteousness, according to 2 Timothy 3:16-17 which says: *“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”*
- ◆ Surely carrying my cross is also training in righteousness, and in righteousness, my spiritual gifts are deepened and strengthened. Accordingly, I embrace and do not shirk from, but truly embrace, the opportunities and gifts that come from carrying my cross. Thank you Lord God for the gift of the cross, the gift of the Cross!
- ◆ The whole point of denying self is to be an imitator of Christ Jesus, according to 1 Corinthians 11:1. I DO want to be an imitator of Christ Jesus! Help me in this walk Lord Jesus.

## ***Cultivates Graces***

- ◆ Dear Heavenly Father, Your Incarnate Word demonstrated the glory and graces that are the fruits of carrying one's cross. It is a dying to self that dissolves individualism, personality, egoism and all their accompanying traits, habits, flaws and limitations. I want to grow in You! I want to grow and strengthen spiritually. I now realize I can only do that my choosing to carry my cross, dying to my own will to be born united to Your Will.
- ◆ In addition, the Word in Romans 5:3-5 says: *“Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”*
- ◆ Hebrews 12:1 tells us that we are never alone in our Faith walk, so this gives me encouragement and strength. *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”*

## THE GLORY & GRACES OF CARRYING YOUR CROSS

- ◆ Heavenly Father, I choose to run with endurance the race set before me. I choose to embrace it with joy and gratitude, seeing it with new eyes as an opportunity to grow in Love, to grow in oneness with You and Christ Jesus Yeshua.
- ◆ Apostle Paul encourages me through Galatians 6:9, “*And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.*”
- ◆ Holy Father, the ultimate grace is to be with Jesus where He is, as He speaks of in John 12:25-26, “*Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be. The Father will honor whoever serves me.*”
- ◆ So now Father God, knowing that the ultimate spiritual destination is being with Christ Jesus where He is, I embrace and welcome carrying my cross! Thank you for this holy honor and blessing! Amen.

### 3. Thanks and Gratitude.

- ◆ Thank you Heavenly Father for receiving me before Your Throne of Grace and helping me to overcome barriers to carrying my cross.
- ◆ Thank you Father God for strengthening me to carry my cross as a way of living as a true man/woman of God.
- ◆ To You alone be all the glory in Heaven and Earth forever and ever! Amen!

### Sealing Prayer:

*I count it all joy, my brothers and sisters,  
when I meet trials of various kinds,  
for I know that the testing of my faith produces steadfastness.  
And so I let steadfastness have its full effect,  
that I may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

James 1:2-4