

**A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS**  
**PP. Christ's Call To A God-Rewarded Discipleship**  
**(Matthew 16:24-28; Mark 8:34-9:1; Luke 9:23-27)**

**I. Introduction**

- A. When Jesus told of His suffering, death and resurrection, and Peter rebuked Him for making such a prediction that in Peter's view contrasted with the hope of Jesus' setting up His Kingdom, Jesus revealed that true discipleship that God rewarded contrasted sharply with the ungodly, Satanic view that Peter had then voiced.
- B. We study Christ's call of a God-rewarded discipleship in Matthew 16:24-28; Mark 8:34-9:1 and Luke 9:23-27 for our insight, application and edification (as follows):

**II. Christ's Call To A God-Rewarded Discipleship, Matthew 16:24-28; Mark 8:34-9:1; Luke 9:23-27.**

- A. "The Gospels reveal three stages in the development of a disciple. (1) Multitudes were attracted to Jesus Christ to hear His words and see His works . . . (Matt. 5:2). We would call these the *curious*. (2) From among the curious there were many who came to put faith in Jesus Christ (John 2:11). We would call such ones the *convinced*. (3) But now Christ demanded that the convinced make a commitment. We would call these the *committed*" (J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, 1991, p. 254).
- B. After Peter's rebuke of Christ's prediction that He would suffer, be killed and rise again from the dead, Jesus explained that a **committed** discipleship to Him involved suffering much as He suffered only to be followed by God's rich reward. We view this kind of **committed** discipleship in Mark 8:34-9:1 (as follows):
  - 1. Jesus directed not only His twelve disciples, but also the crowds who followed Him on what was involved in a committed discipleship to Him, Mark 8:34a. "(It) was necessary for individuals to make a decision as to whether they would follow the Pharisees or follow Him," Ibid. Thus, Christ's clarification of what was involved in a committed discipleship was specifically applicable to the Hebrew people in His time.
  - 2. Accordingly, whoever wanted to be a committed disciple of Jesus had to deny himself, take up his cross and follow Him, Mark 8:34b. In Christ's era, "'to take up one's cross' was to demonstrate publicly one's submission/obedience to the authority against which he had previously rebelled" (B. K. C., N. T., p. 141). Jesus submitted to the Father's will to go to the cross, what led to His having to carry His cross (John 19:17), so a committed disciple of Christ must obey God's will "as revealed in His Word, accepting the consequences without reservations . . . For some this includes physical suffering and even death . . ." (Ibid.) In so doing, the committed disciple would find that losing his claims to his own life would be countered by a divinely rewarded life lived full of value and God's eternal reward, Mark 8:35.
  - 3. Second, whoever wanted to be a committed disciple of Jesus had to follow Him regardless what it cost him materially, Mark 8:36-37. "Christ no doubt was anticipating the devastating judgment that would come on the nation through Titus in A. D. 70 as a result of the nation's rejection of Christ. At that time people would lose all that they had accumulated" (Pentecost, op. cit., p. 255). Nevertheless, the eternal reward of the Father would be great, imperishable and full of endless glory, cf. 1 Peter 1:7 with Revelation 22:12.
  - 4. Third, whoever wanted to be a committed disciple of Jesus had to focus on his eternal accountability to the Lord when He returned to earth to set up His kingdom and when He judged the earth, Mark 8:38. In view of that accountability, the committed disciple needed to submit to the will and calling of God regardless what it cost him in any or every realm of life if he desired to gain God's rich eternal reward!
  - 5. Fourth, Jesus promised that some of those who were then listening to His description of committed discipleship would be given an edifying glimpse of the kingdom of God in its power before they died, Mark 9:1. We know from Mark 9:2-8 that Jesus here referred to His transfiguration that Peter, James and John witnessed just six days later, which event they would later recount to the other disciples and other committed believers to their edification as that event would clarify the reality of Christ's identity as Messiah and God in His fulfillment of all the Kingdom promises of Scripture, cf. 2 Peter 1:15-21. Thus, God gives committed disciples insight to encourage them to stay committed to being His disciples.

***Lesson:*** *A committed discipleship of Christ involves denying one's claim to his earthly life in favor of yielding to God's will for his life, resulting in a life lived of its greatest value; it involves obeying the Lord at all material cost in hope of an eternal reward; it involves following the Lord in view of one's eternal accountability to God and it involves being given God's edifying insight that keeps one heeding God's calling once he is committed to Christ.*

***Application:*** *May we become committed disciples of Christ to maximize the value of our earthly lives for His glory.*