



**Courageously Fighting By Taking Up Your Cross
The Challenge of Unfair Responsibilities
(Matthew 16:21-26, NKJV), Part 3**

November 24-25, 2018

Big Question: What unfair crosses or responsibilities are you willing to carry?

Introduction: Series Review

1. We described Peter's struggle with the price tag for being a follower (Matthew 16:21-26)

- 21 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and **suffer** many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be **killed**, and be raised the third day. 22 Then Peter took Him aside and **began to rebuke Him**, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"
23 But He turned and said to Peter, "**Get behind Me, Satan!** You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

2. We described the challenge of self-denial (Matthew 16:24-26)

- 24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him **deny himself**, and **take up his cross**, and **follow Me**. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

3. Today, we talk about the challenge of carrying an unfair responsibility

A. Christ was unfairly wounded for us (Isaiah 53:5, NKJV)

- 5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.

B. Christ was shamed for us (Hebrews 12:2, NKJV)

- 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

I. Seven Types of Unfair Responsibilities and Crosses People Are Forced to Carry

1. Family Crosses (e.g. single parents, grandparents, siblings)
2. Physical Crosses (e.g. illnesses, assaults)
3. Emotional Crosses (e.g. people who have been abused emotionally)
4. Academic Crosses (e.g. people who were not properly prepared academically)
5. Relationship Crosses (e.g. friends who betrayed you in disappointed ways)
6. Prison Crosses (e.g. people who are convicted for crimes they did not commit)
7. Religious Crosses (e.g. churches and leaders who failed you)

II. How Do You Manage Unfair Crosses and Responsibilities?

1. Embrace them with vision and confidence like Jesus did (Matthew 16:21–22)

- 21 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be **killed**, and be raised the third day. 22 Then Peter took Him aside and **began to rebuke Him**, saying, “Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!”

2. See them as part of your growth journey (v21)

...He must go to Jerusalem...

3. See them as a short-term distraction. Believe your third day is coming (v21)

....and be raised the third day”

4. Learn how to be a follower (Set a goal to master followership not just leadership)

Next Time: Courageously Fighting By Following Leadership

Big Question: Can you name the person you have faithfully followed?

A Look Ahead: We live in a culture of people who oftentimes, from their youth, have not really followed anyone without resistance for a long period of time. Our confidence in church leaders, political leaders and corporate leaders is at an all-time low. The tragedy is that we have developed an anti-follower approach to life. It is hard to be a good leader if you have never been a good follower. In our country, we like leadership more than followership. In scripture and in many countries around the world the emphasis is on followership. In the book, *Discovering Followership: Learn The Secrets of Walking Behind and Staying Ahead* by Omokai Imoukhuede he says:

“Followership is perceived as a forced condition of servitude that impedes individuality and results in the loss of identity of the person following. However [*sic*] nothing could be further from the truth, ...true followership is actually a tool of empowerment and a launching pad for the release of a follower’s individuality and potential.”

Finally in the book, *The Leadership Principle Nobody Is Talking About* by Tracey Armstrong she proves this point in her description of Michael Jordan.

“When the Chicago Bulls basketball team regularly won championships, the coach, Phil Jackson, was asked, “What is the key? Michael Jordan, right?” “Yes, but not for the reason you may think,” he replied. “Not for the scoring?” the reporter asked. “No,” said Coach Jackson. “Not for playmaking?” “No.” “It must be for his defense?” “No,” Jackson responded to the reporter. “He was my coach on the floor. He executed my directions, the game plan, the way I wanted the team to play. He was the role model, the prototype player, and he ensured that the rest of the team modeled what I expected. He worked relentlessly to learn and elevate his play. He set an example for the team, being the last that left the floor in free throw practice and the first and last in and out of the weight room.”