

A most direct and clear statement Jesus made is:

John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

As such, a rich young man came to Jesus and asked:

Mark 10:17, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

Jesus answered:

Mark 10:18-19, "Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is*, God. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Do not defraud,' 'Honor your father and your mother.'"

The rich young man answered:

Mark 10:20, "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth."

Then Jesus added:

Mark 10:21, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

The result:

Mark 10:22, "He was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions."

Therefore as Jesus said:

Matthew 16:25, "Whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."

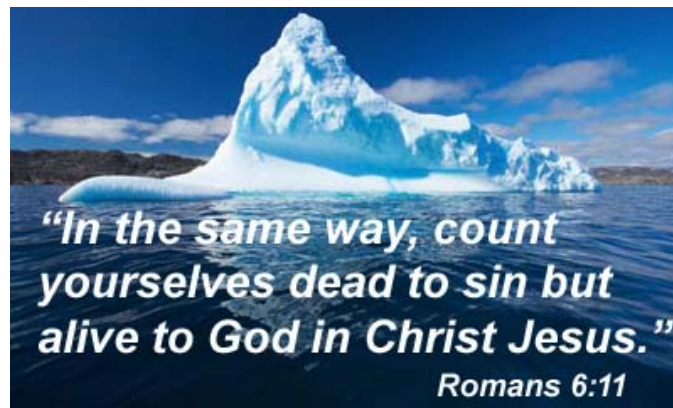
What's more?

Luke 14:33, "Whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple."

Do I understand the seriousness about carrying my cross to follow Christ?

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What does carrying our cross, that we may die to sin imply?

1 John 2:15-17, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever."

Why?

Romans 5:8, "God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners."

As such:

1 Corinthians 1:18, "The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

2 Corinthians 10:4-5, "The weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

What's more?

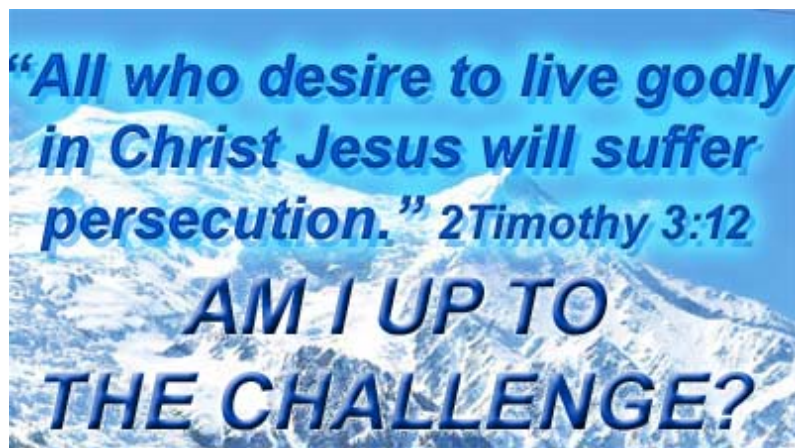
Galatians 6:14, "God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

Therefore:

2 Timothy 2:12: "If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us."

Am I alive to God, in Christ Jesus?

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As true Christ followers, are we to expect persecution from the world?
In Jesus' own words:

John 16:33, "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

As such:

1 Peter 2:21, "To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps."

Ephesians 6:12, "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

2 Timothy 2:3-4, "You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier."

Galatians 5:24, "Those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."

Therefore:

1 Peter 4:1-2, "Since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God."

Is my heart totally in Christ, no matter the circumstances of this life?

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***“He who does not take his
cross and follow after Me
is not worthy of Me.”***



Why must we carry our cross and reject the world's attractions to the flesh?

James 4:4, "Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

As such:

Romans 8:7, "The carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be."

Jesus himself so taught us:

John 14:21, "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

And therefore declared:

Luke 9:24, "Whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it."

What's more?

1 Peter 2:23-24, "When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to Him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness."

Therefore:

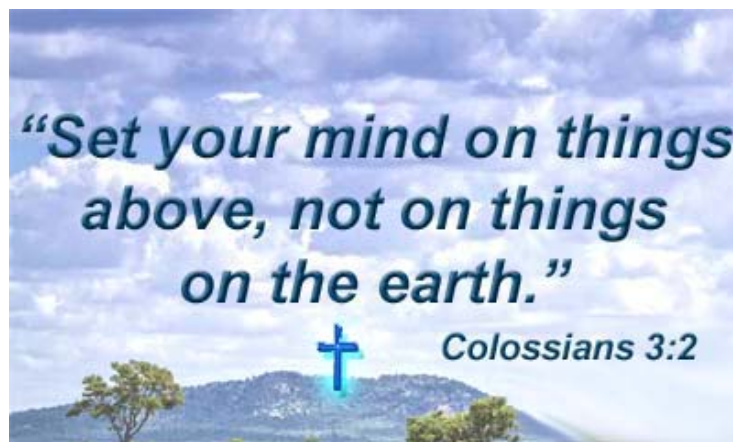
Hebrews 10:23, "Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful."

Galatians 6:9, "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."

Am I steadfast in carrying my cross to follow Christ?

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What is the path to follow so as to abide in Christ?

Romans 12:1, "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

How?

Romans 12:2, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Matthew 6:19-20, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal."

Why?

Matthew 6:21, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

What's more?

Ephesians 6:12, "We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly places."

Therefore:

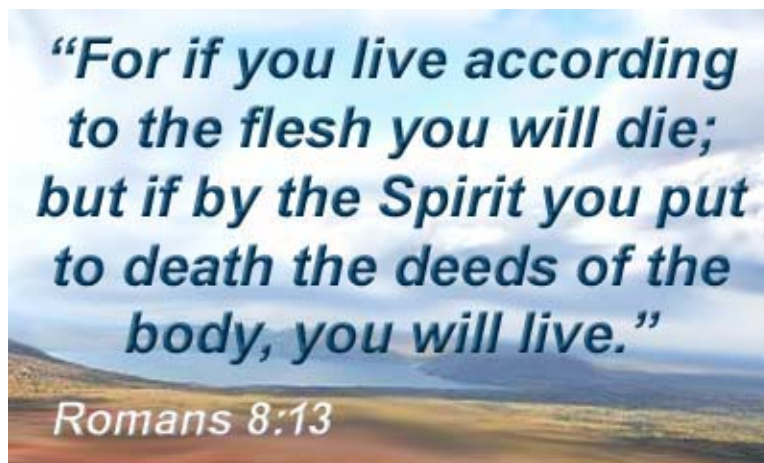
Philippians 2:5, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

Ephesians 5:1-2, "Be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us."

Is my mind set on God in Christ Jesus?

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How must we live to avoid the pitfalls and deceptions of the world?

Romans 6:16, "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness?"

The reason why Jesus said:

John 3:36, "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

John 15:6, "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned."

As such:

Luke 9:24-25, "Whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?"

Therefore:

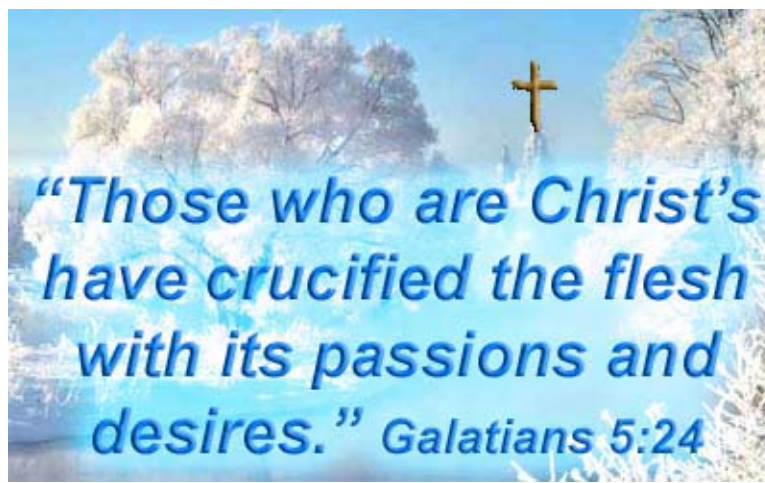
Matthew 10:38, "He who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me."

Matthew 26:41, "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak."

1 Peter 5:8, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."

2 Corinthians 10:5, "Take every thought captive to obey Christ."

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From God's perspective, who we are in Christ is found in the disposition of our heart, and how we live our life in obedience to His Word. In essence, if we believe in Christ as Savior, we must also place Him at the forefront of our lives as Lord. Otherwise, we are simply fooling ourselves, but we sure can't fool God.

The reason Jesus said:

Matthew 6:24, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other."

John 14:21, "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

John 10:27, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."

Jesus' words exemplifies that the love we must have for God must take precedence over anything else and everyone else in our life, including ourselves.

Therefore:

2 Timothy 2:12, "If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us."

A strong proof of our love for God must be achieved by:

Philippians 2:5, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

Does my life bring evidence of following Christ and carrying my cross?

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