

GROWTH GROUPS

September 10, 2017 - Week 3: "Following"

1. **Deny yourself:** Read carefully through a couple of the following passages (Matt. 7:13-14; 10:34-39; Luke 14:25-33; John 12:24-26; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17) and answer these two, weighty questions: (1) What does it mean to deny oneself, hate the world, lose one's life? (2) What might God be asking me to deny myself today and how might I go about doing that?

2. **Deny yourself daily:** CS Lewis wrote that "the real problem of the Christian life ... comes the very moment you wake up each morning. All your wishes and hopes for the day rush at you like wild animals. And the first job each morning consists simply in shoving them all back; in listening to that other [still small] voice." Which "wild animals" rushed at you this week? What was that other voice saying in those moments and what might it have looked like for you to listen to it?

3. **Hole in our gospel:** Many of us are familiar with the Bible verse Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you ... plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." Oftentimes the gospel is explained with this verse alone. Come to Jesus and he will make your life better. Is this true? (be careful! this is a trick question!) How does Luke 9:23-26 highlight what is missing from that description of the Christian life.

4. **Count the cost:** Denial of self is costly. Jesus was aware of that and in Luke 14 he commanded his would-be disciples to 'count the cost' before deciding to follow him. Read Luke 14:25-33 and together count the cost of denying yourself and the world - what do you stand to lose - but then read Matthew 13:44-46 and consider together what you stand to gain from making that denial.
