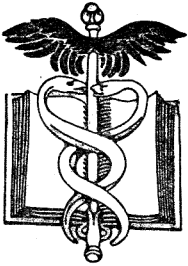


WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY



Take Thy Cross



If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

(Matt. 16:24, 11:29-30)

The Lord Christ never squandered His precious Power in idle speech. What He spoke was always purposefully said for our special benefit. Every utterance is a magic formula whose application gives man the Power he needs for mastery over life. Christ demonstrated what that mysterious Power can do. With it He healed the sick, the blind, the obsessed; fed the hungry; rose from the dead. And in addition He promises—perhaps the greatest boon of all—that “ye shall find rest unto your souls.” No more untraceable fears, unsatisfied yearnings, unshed tears, but *rest*—when we *take* our cross of self-denial and follow Him. That is the condition.

In this voluntary taking of our cross, denying ourselves when we have the choice of gratifying ourselves, an alchemical process is involved that *changes* us. When we endure, in negative resignation, the cross as it is forced upon us, we become weaker, as evidenced by less control over nerves and morale following trial and affliction. But when we *take* the same cross from *choice*, we must of necessity bring into action the positive power of *will*, and applied will has a transforming effect. It accelerates the pitch of vibration throughout our entire being, breaking down resistance to the higher spiritual currents, thereby letting the Christ Power flow through unimpeded.

This release of inner spiritual power is the Way of human evolution from this point on. We *must* get back to God, consciously, either from choice or by force. Interferences, attachments to the physical life that hold us back, must go, either through voluntary self-denial or by needless suffering. The choice is in our hands, whether to undertake this process of self-purification ourselves or wait until Nature’s repeated afflictions and chastenings force us to do so.

We must study ourselves very seriously and intelligently, make ourselves poignantly aware of our faults, and then earnestly and systematically *work to overcome them*. Let no day pass without an honest effort to master some weakness which habitually masters us, trivial though it might seem. It is such sincere effort, if methodically repeated, which brings the positive force of *will* into action, liberates proportionately the precious Christ Power within us, and subsequently changes our entire life, making us conscious of a dawning sense of mastery, of worthwhile purpose and progress in every situation.

And here is the sweetest mystery of all. When we *take* our cross, which appears so heavy and wearisome, we experience the truth of this: “My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Only those who have tasted the inner compensation of even a small degree of self-conquest know the unutterable bliss hinted at in this assurance—an uplift that makes the sacrifice a joy such as the world can never give or understand.

The wise are those *willing to try* and in their hands is placed this individual key to increasing freedom, power, and infinite peace: “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”