

Carrying the Cross

Objective

To understand and identify the crosses in our lives and their importance in our relationship with God

References

“Troubles and Tribulation” by HG Bishop Youssef, www.suscopts.org
Holy Scripture

Scriptural Verse

“Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” Mark 8:34

Lesson Guidelines

1. Denying Oneself

Carrying the cross involves crucifying our desires, and ego. It means putting others before myself at the expense of my comfort and enjoyment.

2. Types of Crosses

A. The cross of being a Christian

“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.” 2 Timothy 3:12

Our decision to live as true Christians means that we will endure suffering. This suffering is because we will be faced with many temptations to sin and our refusal is a form of crucifying our flesh and its desires. We may even face literal persecution for being Christians.

B. The cross of earthly suffering

God allows periods of suffering in our lives for reasons that may or may not be so obvious. It may be:

- To deepen our relationship with Him,
- To make us aware of a certain sin that is dominating our lives,
- To prevent us from falling in certain sins that we may be liable of committing and therefore making us better fit to inherit Eternal Life (John 15:2),
- To test and strengthen our faith (Psalm 66: 10-12). Satan attacks due to his envy but only through God’s permission and to achieve positive end results (read the book of Job).
- For other reasons that only He, in His wisdom, is aware of.

However, what we must be sure of is that this suffering will bring us glory in Heaven that is weightier than all the suffering here on earth (2 Corinthians 4:17).

3. How to Carry the Cross

1. Be joyful – always looking towards the glory that will be received in heaven.
2. Remember God's good deeds in your life and tell others of them – this helps us to focus on the positive aspects rather than the negative and helps us meditate on God's continuous mercy in our lives
3. Live a life of prayer – prayer is the only way to gain comfort and peace from the Lord. Prayer gives patience and endurance which are necessary to bear the weight of the cross. During prayer, we allow God to bear the burden of the cross with us and this helps lighten our load.
4. Realize that suffering is a normal consequence of life on earth and not the exception to the rule (1 Peter 4:12-13).
5. Remember God's promises in our lives by knowing, memorizing, and living the Holy Scripture (Matthew 24:13).

Conclusion

Bearing the cross is an essential and necessary aspect of a Christian's life. Through suffering we are pruned and prepared for receiving the glory of Eternal Life.

Understanding this will make us better prepared for facing the troubles of life. Through a close relationship with God, we can attain comfort and strength during these hard times.

Activities/Discussion Points

1. What are some daily crosses that we bear?
2. What are some practices that have worked for you during times of trials?
3. Give examples from Scripture of people who underwent suffering and how they dealt with it