

Main Idea: Being a Christian is far more than being a good person. Jesus demands absolute and total commitment.

Clarification: Total commitment to Christ is not a “good work” that earns salvation but rather evidence of your genuine faith in Christ.

According to Jesus you’re not a Christian unless you:

1) Deny yourself and transfer control of your life to Christ on a daily level – 9:23-24

- It’s not your life – Colossians 1:16 *“For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.”*
- Christ came to ruin your so-called “life” – *“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”* 9:23
- Christ came to give you a real life – *“...but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.”* 9:24; John 10:10 *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”*
- Christ does not call you to give up your life but to get a life; without Christ you have no life – 9:23; John 1:4 *“In him was life, and the life was the light of men.”* ⁵ *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”*
- God can run your life better than you can – 9:23-24; 1 Corinthians 3:18-19 *“Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise.”* ¹⁹ *For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, “He catches the wise in their craftiness,”*

2) Take up your cross and lay down your life – 9:23-25

Notice the Paradox...

- Life without Christ as Lord brings temporary pleasure and ends in unspeakable loss and suffering – *“For whoever would save his life will lose it,”* 9:24a
- Life with Christ as Lord brings temporary suffering and unending joy, satisfaction, and fulfillment – *“but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.”* 9:24b
- All the knowledge, power, possessions, influence, and entertainment in the universe is not worth going to hell over – *“For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?”* 9:25

3) Follow Him wherever He leads and obey whatever He says – 9:23-27

- a. Are you willing to obey whatever Christ tells you to do?
- b. Are you willing to move where Christ tells you to move?
- c. Are you willing to die for Christ?

Action point: Obey Christ

D. James Kennedy, “You cannot say ‘No, Lord’ and mean both words; one annuls the other. If you say no to Him, then He is not your Lord.”¹

¹ Ray Comfort, *The Evidence Bible* (Gainesville: Bridge-Logos, 2001), 272.