

## DENY, DIE, FOLLOW | 1-17-16

### REFLECT & DISCUSS

Have you ever had a rude awakening? Maybe you were sleeping and someone kindly woke you up with an airhorn. Or you tried something that looked easy to do but found out it was really hard. Or you spent too much money and found an overdraft charge on your bank statement. What is an example of a rude awakening in your life? Why do these rude awakenings affect us so much? How can they be a good thing?

### READ: *Matthew 16:21-23*

In this passage, Peter gets a rude awakening from Jesus. In verse 18, Jesus just told him that he would be the rock on which Jesus would build his church. Now Jesus is explaining how He would suffer and die. How would Jesus build His church on Peter if He was dead? To Peter, do you think this sounded more like victory or defeat? Why? When God allows something in your life that you don't understand, how do you respond? Jesus rebuked Peter for having a human point of view and not God's point of view. What's the difference?

### READ: *Matthew 16:24-25*

Jesus tells His disciples to deny themselves, to die by taking up their cross, and to follow Him. This is not a flashy fun message. Why would anyone want to do what Jesus is asking us to do? What does it mean to deny yourself? Does this mean to kill all your desires? Why/why not? What does Jesus mean when He says to take up our cross and die? If we are dead, how can we follow Jesus (*see Galatians 2:20*)? What is the difference between simply believing in Jesus and being willing to follow Him each step? Why do we lose our lives when we try to save them? Why do we gain them when give them up for Jesus?

### READ: *Matthew 16:26-27*

Do we typically place more value on gaining things in this world or taking care of our soul? Why? Jesus reminds us that He is coming back and that he will reward us according to what we have done. What actions will be rewarded? How can we make living these actions the top priority of our lives? What do we need to cut out of our lives to make this happen?

### CHALLENGE

Deny. Die. Follow. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you where you need to deny yourself, where you need to die, and how you can more closely follow Him.

### PRAYER

Holy Spirit, I repent for placing more focus on this world than on Your Kingdom. Help me to make the priorities of your Kingdom my top priorities. Please give me the courage and strength to cut things out of my life to make more room for you to fill me and empower me.