



TRANSFORMED

DEVOTIONS CONNECTING TEENS TO CHRIST

If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

Luke 14:26-27

All in this together: Grow closer

Even if you don't love the game of basketball, I bet you know what the goal of the game is: Put the basketball in the hoop.

But, a good player knows that sometimes you have to pass the ball **away** from the hoop so that another player can get a better shot to score a basket. That sounds a little crazy. You deliberately go away from your goal so that you eventually reach it? Yep!

This week, our goal is to grow closer to our families and close friends and partner with them to grow closer to Christ.

So why would Jesus tell us to hate our fathers or mothers, our brothers or sisters? Isn't hating our family members wrong? Won't hating them bring us further apart and not closer? What's Jesus really saying here?

Actually, it's another case where going "away" from your goal really gets you closer to achieving it.

Jesus' ultimate goal for you and your family is to hug them in heaven. He wants to spend eternity with you, and that only happens through faith in him. Jesus wants to be number one in your life. But, he knows that other things or people are often put in that prime spot instead of him. So, Jesus uses strong language as a way to get his point across: Don't let anything come in between you and him.

As we grow closer to Jesus, something amazing happens. Our relationships with others get stronger. Philippians 2:5 says: "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus."

Jesus' mindset was to give up everything so that we could have forgiveness, hope, and life! He made himself a servant. He humbled himself and even died on the cross for us. He showed us unconditional love.

If your goal is to grow closer to family and friends, go first to Jesus. Rest in his promises. Enjoy his forgiveness and love.

As you do that, you'll notice something happen. That same forgiveness and love will come overflowing out of your own heart into your relationships with others. You'll grow closer to them by growing closer to Jesus! And then, everybody wins!

Prayer: Jesus, help me grow closer to you. Remind me each day of the forgiveness and love you have for me. Let nothing come between our relationship. Let that same forgiveness and love overflow out of my heart into my relationships with my family and friends. Amen.