

For the **SAKE**
of the **CALL**



— A Biblical Study of DISCIPLESHIP —

Intro:

Peter goes from receiving revelation from God that Jesus is the Messiah to speaking the words of Satan!

- 1) Peter's words are a hindrance
- 2) They are not things of God
- 3) They are things of sinful man

Satan did not want Jesus to go to the cross for it would be his defeat (Genesis 3:15).

The idea of Messiah to the Jews (including the disciples) was the hero King who would save them from Roman power.

Jesus' idea of Messiah was to come and die. He now calls us to the same thing.

Focus Point: *A disciple of Jesus will submit every aspect of his life, his desires, his dreams, his aspirations, his very self, to the authority of Jesus.*

- 1. The Cost (v.24)**
- 2. The Reward (vv.25-27)**

1. The Cost (v.24)

There are three “costs” to being Jesus disciple:

- Denying ourselves
- Taking up our cross daily
- Following Jesus

“Denying ourselves”

Not merely just a temporal giving up of things we enjoy:

- Favorite shows
- Food
- Leisure activities

Not a form of spiritual or religious asceticism

- Beating our bodies
- Removing ourselves from society

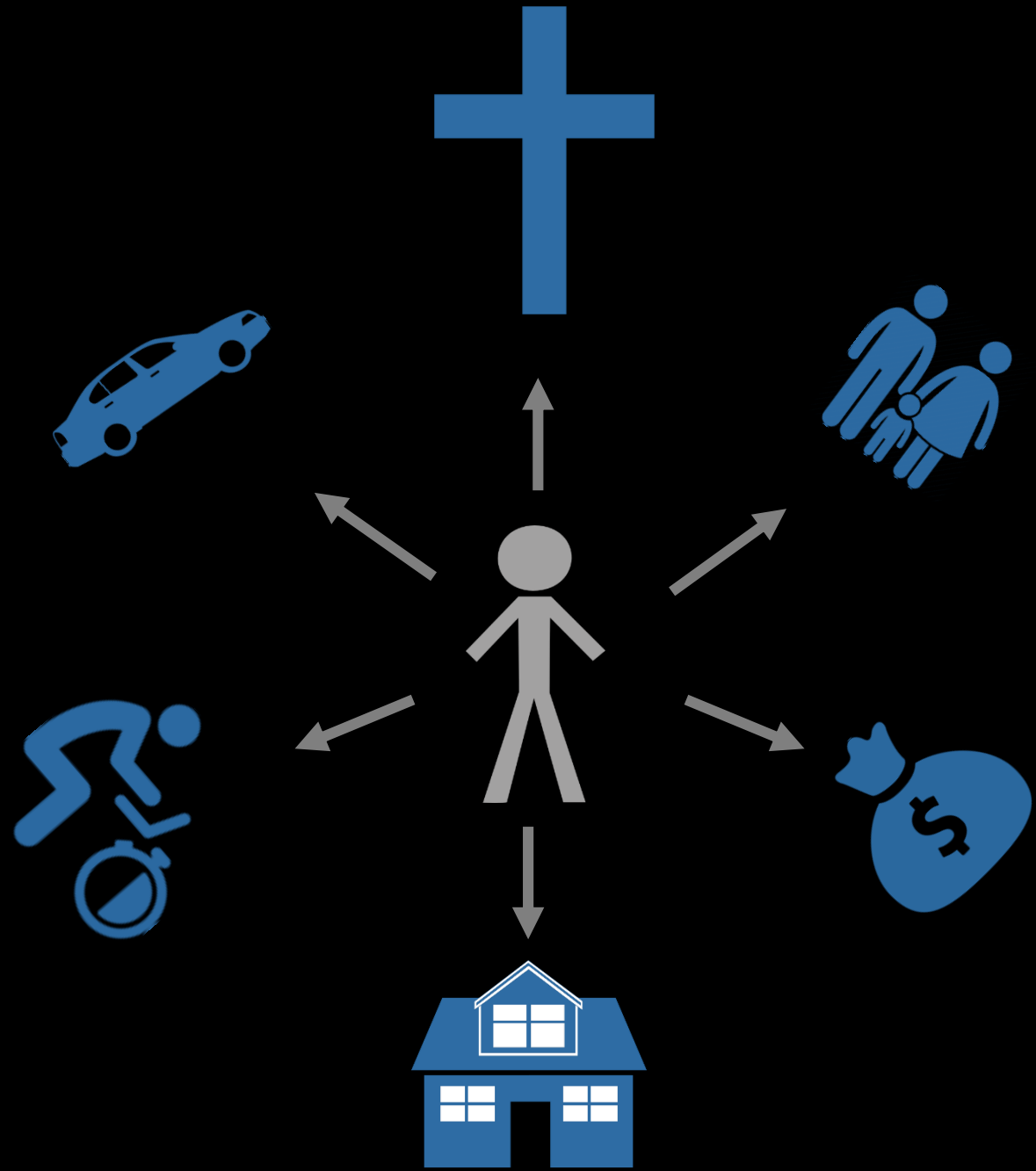
Jesus is talking about denying our very selves, the core of who we are:

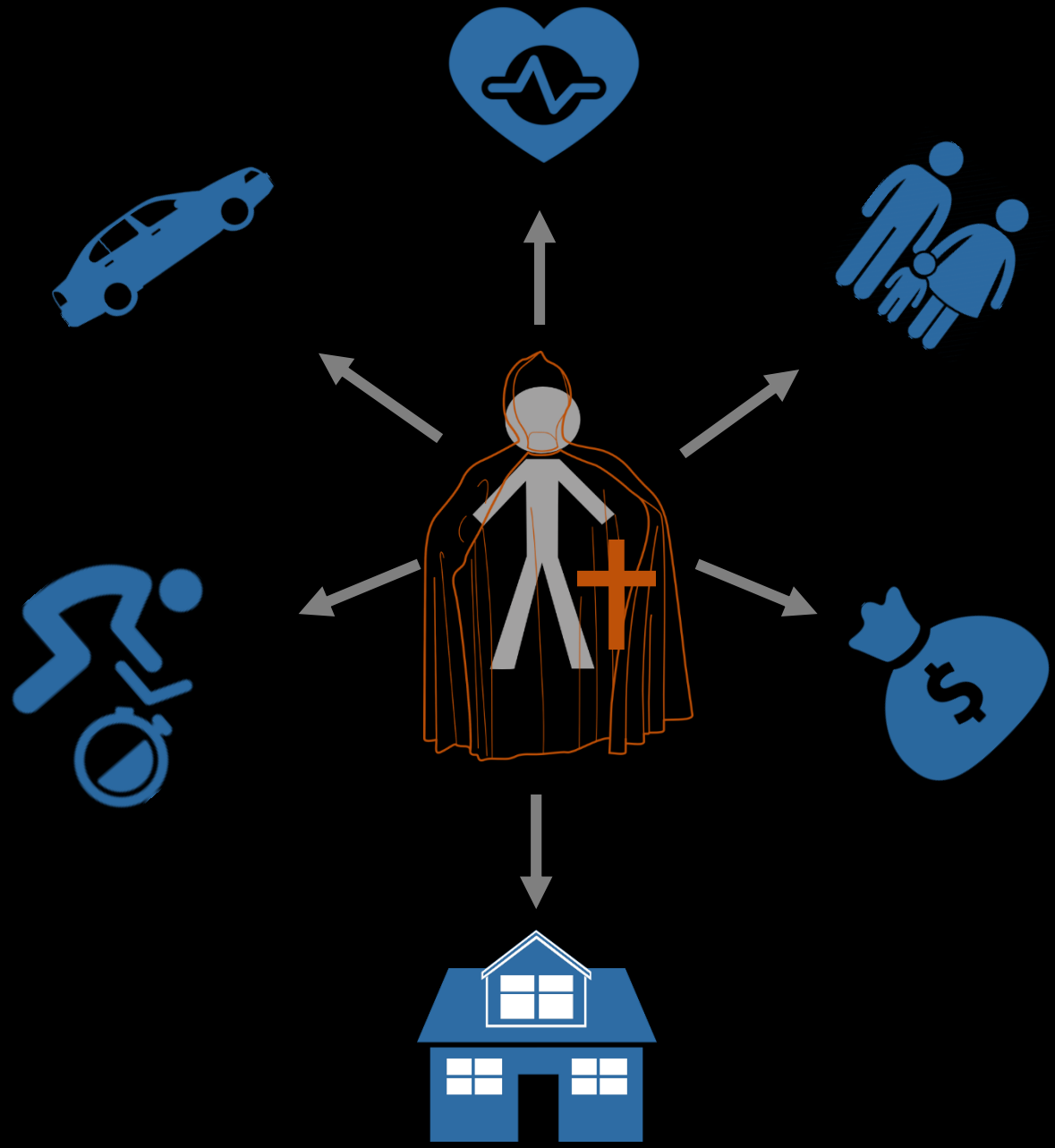
- Our dreams
- Our desires
- Our aspirations
- Our plans
- Our goals

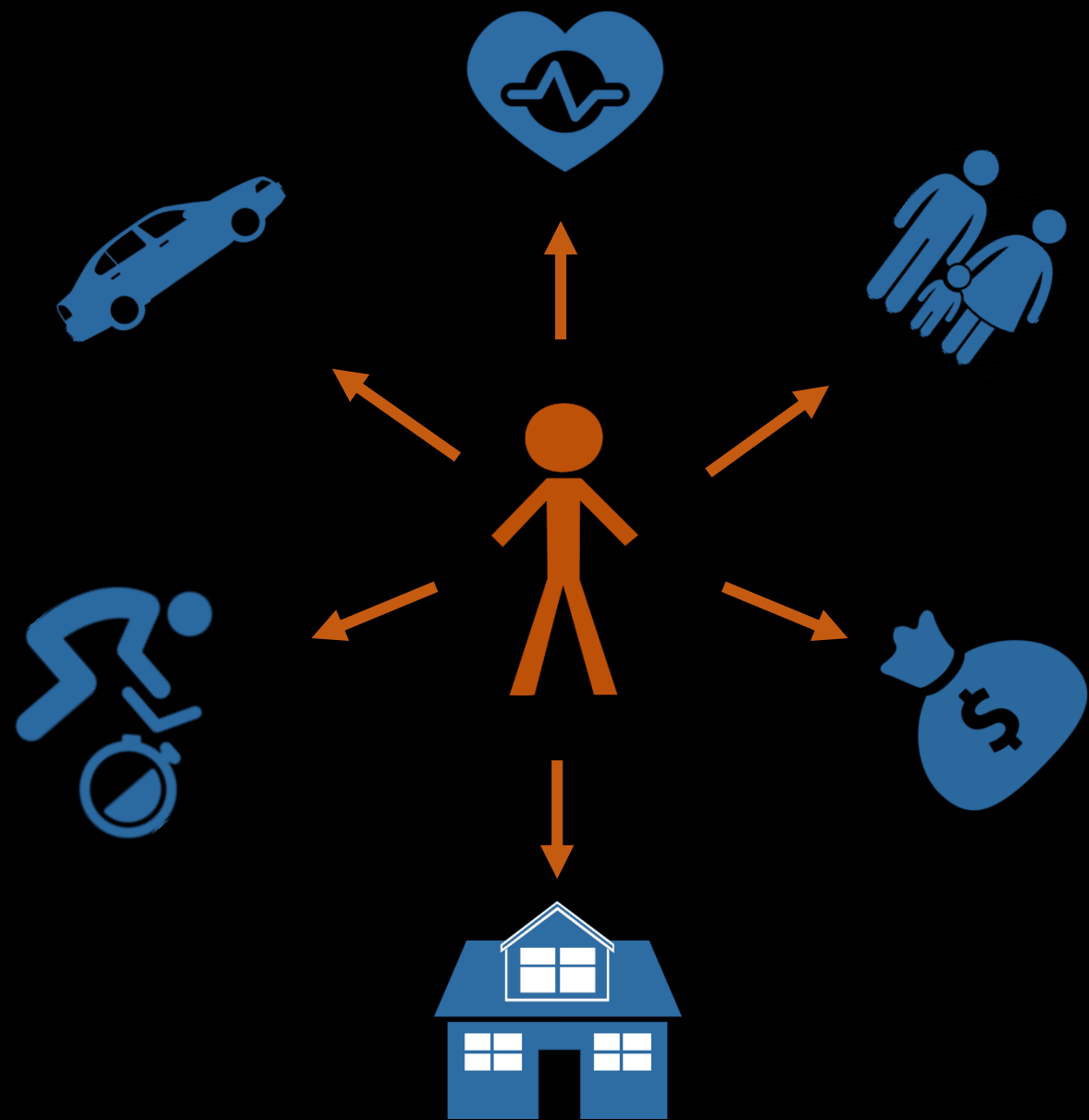
Submitting all of it to His authority.

“Self-denial is the test and definition of self-government.” *G.K. Chesterton*

“To abandon all, to strip one’s self of all, in order to follow Jesus Christ naked to Bethlehem where he was born; naked to the hall where he was scourged and naked to Calvary where he died on the cross.” *John Wesley*







“Taking up our cross daily”

Why does Jesus use “cross” language?

1. Because of the finality of it.

- When you saw someone carrying their cross, you knew they weren't coming back.
- They were going away to die.
- Their old life was gone.

2. The daily reality.

- Crucifixion was a slow, painful death. It took time.
- It was public – everyone could see it.
- The idea is, even though the old nature is gone, its influence is still present.
- Salvation removed the guilt and stain, but not the temptation.

3. The reminder of the power of His cross.

- To die to self, you must rely on His cross.
- Jesus defeated sin and forever broke its power.
- We can say “no” to sin and “yes” to righteousness (Titus 2:12).
- We rely on His cross to enable us to crucify our own selves with our own cross.

“Following Jesus”

This carries with it two aspects:

1. Following the path He has laid out for us.

- Doing what He has called us to do.
- The will of God is not a mysterious thing, He lays it out for us.

2. Obeying His commands.

- Love God with all that we are.
- Love our neighbor (others) as ourselves.

“Only the man who follows the command of Jesus single-mindedly, and unresistingly lets his yoke rest upon him, finds his burden easy, and under its gentle pressure receives the power to persevere in the right way. The command of Jesus is hard, unutterably hard, for those who try to resist it. But for those who willingly submit, the yoke is easy, and the burden is light. “His commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5.3). The commandment of Jesus is not a sort of spiritual shock treatment. Jesus asks nothing of us without giving us the strength to perform it. His commandment never seeks to destroy life, but to foster, strengthen and heal it. – discipleship means joy!”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

2. The Rewards (vv.25-27)

“Save our life”

The word “would” is a verb of choice, resolution and determination.

- “Saving your own life” means “grasping at self.”
- “Losing your life for His sake” has meaning not only for the life to come, but for this life as well.
 - Those who give up there life for Christ are blessed in this life.
 - Love, joy, peace....

“Rewards when He comes in glory”

We will receive rewards in heaven. Scripture often talks about this reality.

We warned to work with a right motive to receive reward.

1 Cor. 3:14-15 - If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.

Questions:

1. Why does Jesus require us to deny ourselves and not only take up our cross?
2. How have you viewed self-denial before hearing this message?
3. How do you see how denying yourself is tied directly to taking up your cross?
4. What things do you believe God is calling you to deny regarding your own desires?
5. What does it look like practically in your life to take up your cross daily?
6. How should you go about putting certain things to death in your life?
7. How do you see denying yourself, taking up your cross daily and following Jesus, affecting your participation in discipling others?
8. What connection is there between the cost of being a disciple and experiencing the rewards of the fruit of the Spirit in this life?
9. How do you keep your motives pure when working for Christ to receive reward in the next life?