

True spiritual maturity and lasting fruitfulness come from agape, self-giving love. The human heart often seeks shortcuts, but discipleship means embracing the hard and good together, just as Jesus calls us to deny ourselves and take up our cross. This week explores what happens when we commit to the long journey of deeper water discipleship (choosing faithfulness over ease) and how that shapes us into lasting, fruitful followers of Jesus.

## **PRAY ABOUT IT**

- **Morning:** *God, help me embrace the hard and good in following You with faithful, loving obedience today. (Read Psalm 37:5)*
- **Afternoon:** *Lord, strengthen me to deny myself, take up my cross and trust You. (Read Psalm 34:17-19)*
- **Evening:** *Father, shape me into a disciple who bears lasting fruit. (Read Psalm 92:12-14)*

## **WRITE ABOUT IT**

In what ways am I resisting the hard work of discipleship, and how can I embrace it as the path to lasting fruitfulness?

## **SHARE ABOUT IT**

- How do you understand agape love, and why is it the true mark of spiritual maturity? \_\_\_\_\_

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- Why do you think our hearts often look for shortcuts in spiritual growth? \_\_\_\_\_

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- What are some “hard things” you’ve faced or expect in your journey as a disciple? \_\_\_\_\_

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- How have you experienced denying yourself and taking up your cross in daily life? \_\_\_\_\_

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## **SHARE ABOUT IT**

- What does lasting fruitfulness mean to you personally in your faith and leadership?

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- How can committing to the hard, good path deepen your relationship with Jesus over time?

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- How can we be helpful to others who struggle with the challenges of faithful discipleship?

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## **DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT**

This week, choose one way to get involved with our Trunk or Treat event: volunteer, donate, spread the word, or attend.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- *Sacred Fire* by Ronald Rolheiser
- *Nearing Home* by Billy Graham
- *Love Does* by Bob Goff