

Jeremiah 29:13 (MSG) *“When you come looking for me, you’ll find me. Yes, when you get serious about finding me and want it more than anything else, I’ll make sure you won’t be disappointed.”*

“Jesus is the God of reversal and redemption. He redeemed sinners to life by his death, and he redeemed a symbol of execution by repurposing it for salvation. He redeemed my suffering by making me rely upon Him for my every moment, bending my heart toward him. It was there in my pain that I knew him intimately. He reached me through investigations, dreams, and visions, and called me to prayer in my suffering. It was there that I found Jesus. To follow Him is worth giving up everything.”

– Nabeel Qureshi

Old and New Testament examples:

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| * Abraham (Genesis 17) | * Esther |
| * Joshua (Joshua 1) | * Daniel |
| * David (1 Samuel 17) | * Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego |
| * Elijah (1 Kings 18) | * Peter |
| * Josiah (2 Kings 22-23) | * John |
| * Asaph (Psalm 73) | * Paul |

The call to get serious about the things of God

INTENSE

* **Luke 13:24** – Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

* **2 Peter 1:5-10** – Make every effort to supplement your faith increasingly with these qualities... virtue... knowledge... self-control... steadfastness... godliness... brotherly affection... love.

* **1 Corinthians 9:25** – every athlete exercises self-control in all things

* **1 Corinthians 15:58** – Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

* **James 1:12** – remain steadfast under trial

* **Ephesians 6:13** – Take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day.

* **Philippians 2:12** – Therefore, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

* **1 Corinthians 9:24-27** – Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So, run that you may obtain it.

* **Philippians 3:13-14** – But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

* **2 Corinthians 7:1** – Let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

* **1 Timothy 6:11-12** – But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith.

* **Matthew 5:29-30** – If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away... And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

* **Luke 9:23/ Matthew 16:24** – If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

* **Luke 14:27** – Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple

* **Hebrews 12:4** – In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

ALARMING

Jesus’ warning – Revelation 3:15-20

Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (MTD) – “MTD is mostly about improving one’s self-esteem and subjective happiness and getting along well with others... though superficially Christian, MTD is the natural religion of a culture that worships the self and material comfort.” (Rod Dreher)

Paul’s warning – 2 Corinthians 13:5