

Jan 4, 2026

1 Group

Is there a difference in how a follower of Jesus approaches personal growth?

2

I do not want you to try harder.

3

4

Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."
John 12:23

5

How can Jesus' crucifixion be where he is glorified?

6

Because what Jesus calls success often looks like failure in our culture.

7

Life from victory.
Strength in power.
The greatest is the greatest.
Glory in triumph.

8

Life from victory death.
Strength in power weakness.
The greatest is the greatest servant.
Glory in triumph crucifixion.

9

Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.
John 12:24

10

Jesus is not talking about farming.

11

Jesus is not talking about farming.
Jesus is talking about his death.

12

And Jesus is talking about us dying, too.

13

Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.
John 12:25

14

Jesus isn't calling us to misery, but to freedom from self-dependence.

15

Ultimately, the secret of the spiritual life is perfect **abandonment** to the will of God in things you cannot control, and perfect **obedience** to Him in everything that depends on your own will. - Thomas Merton

16

Whoever serves me **must follow me**; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

John 12:26

17

Following Jesus is an invitation to **stop trying** and **start dying**.

18

What do these phrases all have in common?
Life from victory **death**.
Strength in power **weakness**.
The greatest is the greatest **servant**.
Glory in triumph **crucifixion**.

20

They all require faith.

21

The way to stop trying and start dying can be found in this question:
What am I depending on when I am not depending on God?

22

What am I depending on when I am not depending on God?

24

- The kids behaving
- Traffic is going my way
- Someone doing their job, so I can do my job.

25

They all depend on me getting my own way.

26

Dying is admitting I can't transform myself and trusting God to do what only he can do.

27

"Every time you are unhappy, just ask yourself: Why am I unhappy? Is it not because I cannot do something I want to do; I do not have something I want to have; or am I concerned about what others will think? It will ultimately be one of these three."

True Self, False Self: Unmasking the Spirit Within by M. Basil Pennington

28

Trying is our effort to control others and be good enough.

29

Dying is honestly confessing how much we need God's help.

30

What am I depending on when I am
not depending on God?

31

Losing weight.

Do you want to be healthy,
or are you depending on weight
loss to be worthy of love?

32

God, I confess that I struggle to
receive your love. Help me to
depend on you rather than the
scale.

33

Earning money.

Do you want to provide for
yourself and be more generous,
or is earning more what you
depend on for your sense of
identity?

34

God, I confess I'm depending on
money to make me feel secure,
even though it never satisfies.
Free me to trust you with my future.

35

Approval of others.

Do I want to serve people?
Or am I depending on the approval
of others to satisfy my insecurities?

36

God, I confess I depend on the
approval of others. Free me to rest
in your approval.

37

What am I depending on when I am
not depending on God?

39