

## Hard Sayings Of Jesus

### Lesson 5

#### I. This Week's Hard Saying

Matt 16:24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. KJV

Mark 8:34 Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. KJV

Luke 9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. KJV

#### II. Why It Is Considered Hard

- It is hard because what the statement commands is nothing short of a willingness on the part of the disciple to go to his or her **literal death**.
- In the original Greek, these steps are stated in the present, **continuous** tense. That means, "Keep on denying yourself, keep on taking up your cross, keep on following me."
- This is **not** the decision of a moment, but a program for a lifetime, to be repeated again and again, whenever we fall into circumstances which make these choices necessary.
- The progression within the verse indicates self denial as a step **preceding** picking up one's cross. No one picks up his cross without first denying himself.

#### III. The Significance Of Self Denial

- In order to comprehend the significance of self denial we must first see the implications of **any act** of self assertion as it impinges upon the Godhead. *Gen 3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. KJV*
- There are four special honors that are due to the Godhead, which when abrogated by any creature constitute **treason** against the King of all creation.
  - To be the first **cause**, upon whom all things depend for their being and functioning. We are creatures. *Ps 100:3 Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; KJV Acts 17:28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; KJV*
  - To be the chiefest good, and therefore **to be valued** above all beings, interests, and worldly concerns. *Ps 119:68 Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes. KJV Ex 20:3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me. KJV*
  - To be the highest Lord and most absolute **sovereign**, who performs all things by his laws and providence. *Ps 103:19 The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all. KJV Eph 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: KJV*
  - To be the last **end**, in which all things do at length terminate and center. *Rev 1:8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. KJV*
- These honors are abrogated, when for any reason, by the exercise of human will, man applies to himself any of these four privileges. This we call; "**asserting the self**".
- Any instance of this conduct on the part of man is an attempt to **usurp** the throne of God and to elevate the self to the position of the Godhead. Hence, man becomes both his own idol and idolater. *Isa 14:13-14*  
*13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. KJV*
- Therefore, Scripture is absolute with regard to the importance that Christ places upon his followers when it comes to self denial. **No one** can be a follower of Christ who does not deny himself.

#### IV. What Is The Self

- Apart from the body, the self is an **immaterial** being, often referred to as the soul and is comprised of the following elements:
  - The **mind** (the seat of logic, reasoning and understanding).
  - The **will** (the purposeful, executive decision making function of the soul.)
  - The **emotions** (the affect, feeling)

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#### V. What Is It That We Should Deny?

- a. Deny your own **will**, with all its ceaseless lusts and desires. Seek God's will. *John 6:38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. KJV*
- b. Deny your own **honor**. Seek the honor of God *1 Cor 6:20-7:1 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. KJV*
- c. Deny your **own power** and natural abilities *Phil 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. KJV*
- d. Deny your own interests when your interests are in **conflict** with another. *Phil 2:4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. NIV*
- e. Deny you own **righteousness**. *Phil 3:9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness KJV.*
- f. Deny your own **wisdom** and understanding. *Prov 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; NIV*
- g. Deny your own **rights**. *1 Peter 2:21-23 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: KJV*
- h. Repudiate **self itself**, be done with self altogether. *Phil 3:8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, KJV*
- i. It means ceasing to consider your own comforts, your own ease, your own pleasure, your own aggrandizement, or your own benefits **over that of others**.
- j. It means, saying with the apostle, For me to live is, not self, but **Christ**. For me to live is to obey Christ, to serve Christ, to honor Christ, to spend myself for Him. *Romans 12:1, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice unto God.*

#### VI. What Is Implied In Self-Denial.

- a. True **holiness**, or agape love to God. If God's glory is so preferred to our own happiness or convenience, that we deny ourselves for the sake of glorifying Him, it proves that our love to Him is supreme. *Eph 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. KJV*
- b. Self-denial implies agape love to others. If we deny ourselves **for the sake** of promoting their happiness, whenever their happiness is a greater good than our own, it shows that we love them according to the requirement of the law of God. *John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. KJV*
- c. It implies the giving up of that which might be a real good to us. It is no proper denial of self, unless we might be **benefited** by the thing which is given up.
- d. In short, self-denial implies, the death of **selfishness**. That is—self denial and selfishness cannot exist in the mind at the same time. They are exact opposite states of mind.

#### VII. Self Denial Cautions

- a. Christ-like self denial is done **in the Spirit** and can not in any way be accomplished in the flesh. Herein lies a major problem of discernment for the believer. *John 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. KJV*
- b. An error in **discernment** in this matter holds profound eternal consequences for the believer. *1 Cor 3:13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. KJV*
- c. Self denial is rooted in the understanding of one's own total **depravity** which precludes any notion of self righteousness.
- d. Therefore, self denial is not a form of **asceticism** in which there is perceived merit for self inflicted pain, suffering or discomfort.
- e. Christ-like self denial, more than anything else, is a **heart attitude** of submission to the will of God in every instant of every day, in every transaction with others, and in every thought you entertain.

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*2 Cor 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; KJV*

#### **VIII. Application**

An unknown author wrote about self-denial in this way: Suppose you have been neglected or unforgiven. You sting with the hurt of the insult from such an oversight, but your heart is happy because you have been counted worthy to lose yourself for Christ. That is what denying self is all about. When your wishes are crossed, your advice disregarded, and your opinions ridiculed, and yet you refuse to let anger rise in your heart or try to defend yourself, you are practicing self denial. When you lovingly and patiently stand face to face with folly and spiritual insensitivity, and endure it as Jesus did, you are denying self. When you are content with any food, money, clothing, climate, society, solitude, or interruption by the will of God, you are denying self. When you never care to refer to yourself in conversation, record your own good works, or desire commendation from others, you are denying self. When you can honestly rejoice with a brother who has prospered and had his needs met, and never feel any envy though your needs are greater and still unmet, you have practiced denying self. When you can receive correction and reproof from one of less stature than yourself, and humbly admit he's right with no resentment or rebellion in your heart, you have denied self.

So, How Are You Doing With Self Denial?

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- Deny you own \_\_\_\_\_ Phil 3:9
- Deny your own \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Peter 2:21-23
- Repudiate \_\_\_\_\_, be done with self altogether. Phil 3:8
- It means ceasing to consider your own comforts, your own ease, your own pleasure, your own aggrandizement, or your own benefits \_\_\_\_\_.
- It means, saying with the apostle, For me to live is, not self, but \_\_\_\_\_. For me to live is to obey Christ, to serve Christ, to honor Christ, to spend myself for Him. Romans 12:1

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