

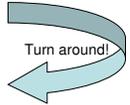
Assurance of Salvation
Part 64

Self-Denial

> Definition <

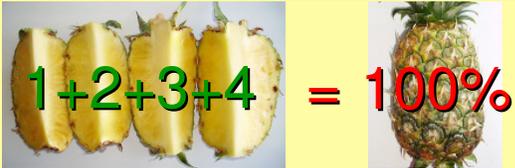
SELF-DENIAL – a refocus of life

- Involves a **100% turn-around.**
 - Changes in our #1 goal in life.
 - Changes in the way we live.



**** Did you notice: It involves CHANGES! ****
It's like all the other aspects of salvation.
Every aspect involves changes!

Definition: "A voluntary renunciation of all that is inconsistent with the glory of God and the highest good of neighbor."



There are 4 parts to this definition.
Together, they form a unified whole.

1 "A **voluntary** renunciation of all that is inconsistent with the glory of God and the highest good of neighbor."

Part 1 – ATTITUDE:
We **voluntarily** choose to do it. No external force is needed.

We VOLUNTEER!



We gladly **choose** to do it!

2 "A voluntary **renunciation** of all that is inconsistent with the glory of God and the highest good of neighbor."

Part 2 – ACTION:
We **renounce** certain things. We no longer do them.

VOLUNTEER



We gladly **stop doing them!**

3 "A voluntary renunciation of all that is inconsistent with **the glory of God and the highest good of neighbor.**"

Part 3 – OUR #1 GOAL:
There is a **godly purpose** in what we do; there is **glory and good** in our choices!

NOT:
"Because I randomly decide to stop doing it."
NOT:
"So I can impress others."

4 "A voluntary renunciation of all that is **inconsistent** with the glory of God and the highest good of neighbor."

PART 4 – THE LIMITING FACTOR:
We don't give up all things, but only things that are **inconsistent** with our #1 goal.

CONSISTENT ?? → YES → OK to DO IT!
 ↓ NO → INCONSISTENT

INCONSISTENT

- "Not in agreement with..."
- "Contrary to..."
- "In conflict with..."
- "Not compatible with..."

The LOGIC of following Jesus

1) Our #1 goal is to **love** God and people.
 – If we're following Jesus, this love will be present and wanting to express itself!

* Therefore, to accomplish this goal: *

2) We will be willing to **deny self**.
 – How often? Whenever it's needed, for bringing honor to God and good to other people.

It DOESN'T mean... ...that we deny everything that has to do with self.

- WHEN do we deny?
 - When there is a conflict between self and God/neighbor.
 - When "SELF" becomes OUR SUPREME GOAL.

"To deny, or not to deny"
 – That is the question!

- **IT IS NOT SINFUL (= no need to deny):**
 - When we like good things.
 - When we don't want to experience evil.
 - When we pay attention to our interests.
- **IT IS SINFUL (= need to deny):**
 - When we make self the center of life.
 - When we put our interests above all else.

It DOESN'T mean... ...that we love unhappiness and misery!

- Yet we may be willing to experience them!
- Why? **Because** we are willing:
 - to make a sacrifice now,
 - for a greater (and often eternal) good later.

 (Besides: Since loving God and neighbor *is our desire*, NOT loving them will give us even greater unhappiness and misery!)

As a follower of Jesus...
 HE our example.

- **In both life and death:**
 - He never sinned.
 - He never chose the "lesser good."
- **His death was the supreme example of self-denial.**
 - When he was dying on the cross, he experienced the pain of hell for us.*

* (His death was more than just a physical issue.)

Jesus' example on the cross:

Did he sin?

"He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found in his mouth."

When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats.

Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

1 Peter 2:22-23 (NIV)

Did he choose the "lesser good"?

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:2 (NIV)

"**Lesser good**": Get off the cross; to save *himself*.

"**Greater good**": Endure the cross, to save *us*.

As a follower of Jesus...
HE is our example.

• If we're following him...

- We won't want to do things that are **sinful**.
- We won't want to do things that are a **lesser good**, if they will get in the way of the **greater good**.

HOW should we decide when to "self-deny"?

- Scripture gives us:
 - **Direct commands** (and prohibitions) when there is just one option.
 - **Principles** which can apply in other types of situations.
- If we love God and neighbor, we will choose to **learn** these things and **apply** them.

FIRST STEP: A willingness to find out what the Bible says!

- 1 **Our willingness to do this** is an expression of self-denial!
 - "Self" wants nothing to do with submission to God's Word! **"Self" needs "denied"!**
- 2 **If you're NOT willing to do this**, then nothing we can say or do will convince you.

1 If you are willing to pay attention to Scripture... 1

- **You'll be willing to ...**
 - Yield to the commands and teachings of Scripture.
 - Seek the good of others.
 - Be content in your circumstances.
 - Obey God when it is not popular to do so.
- **You won't be willing to ...**
 - Push your own rights *ahead of* others.

2 If you *are not* willing to pay 2 attention to Scripture...

- Even a person rising from the dead won't change your mind!

"He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.' "

Luke 16:31 (NIV)

About the commands

- Some matters are not up for debate... specific responses are *mandatory*.
 - These are *moral* issues.
 - There are direct commands and prohibitions for these.

Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, ...

Matthew 5:19a (NIV)

About the principles

- Some things will depend on one's circumstances.
 - There are principles given, by which we can determine the right action.

If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more?

But we did not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything *rather than hinder the gospel of Christ*.

1 Cor. 9:12 (NIV)

NEXT WEEK our topic:

FAKES and FALSE MOTIVES.

These are *incompatible* with **GENUINE** self-denial.

Why?

That's a **GOOD QUESTION!**
We plan to look at the answer!!

I AM ALIVE!
How dare you call me "dead"!



RIGHT NOW our reminder:

Following Jesus is an "either-or" situation.

You will:

- **either** follow *Jesus* (and deny self)
 - **or** follow *yourself* (and *not* deny self).
- It's as simple as that.

SO HEED THIS WARNING:



WARNING!



- You cannot have BOTH God and self as "#1" in your life. **You have to choose ONLY ONE.**

"No one can serve two masters."

Matthew 6:24a (NIV)

Consider also this: **WHERE IS YOUR FOCUS?**

"The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light."

Matthew 6:22, 24a (NIV)

You CANNOT focus in two directions!

(This is *cheating!*)

There's a rumor that this photo may have been *faked*.

That would be appropriate, since "two-faced Christians" are *fake*.



Maybe you can focus in two directions if you're one of THESE creatures!

But do you really want to look this freaky?



**YOUR MISSION:
IT'S QUITE OBVIOUS!**

LIVE LIFE!!!

- Follow Jesus!
- Live for something greater than yourself!

Credits (1)

SCRIPTURE

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