

Assurance of Salvation
Part 57

Self-Denial

Introduction

? "Self-Denial" ?

WHAT IS IT???

What does it mean to followers of Jesus???

DOES IT MEAN...

Giving up something you like for a period of time?

- Be careful, lest your "sacrifice" become
 - a mere ritual,
 - something superficial,
 - or a matter of convenience.

I'm giving up chocolate!

I'm giving up vegetables!

But you don't like vegetables!

That's why I'm giving them up!

Giving up something?

- Perhaps you *need* to give up something
 - Whether for a *short time* or for *life*.
 - It may feel like making a "sacrifice."

As a follower of Jesus...

- Your motivating factor will be *love for God and neighbor*.
- You'll learn that following Jesus is great gain – much greater than any loss.

What do you value most?

- If you value Christ, you'll discover that "losing" isn't so bad!

What is more, **I consider everything a loss** compared to **the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord**, for whose sake **I have lost all things**. **I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ ...**

Philip. 3:8 (NIV)

DOES IT MEAN...

Making resolutions to change something in your life?

- Unfortunately, resolutions often get broken within a few days of when they were made.*

This year, I plan to exercise and lose weight!

This year, I plan to be a better neighbor! [or better spouse/parent/child...]

This year, I plan to quit smoking!

This year, I plan to read the Bible!

* (Like breaking a "New Year's Resolution.")

Resolving to change?

- Some changes may be wants; others may be actual needs.

As a follower of Jesus...

- You'll discover that those needed changes are already the desire of your heart.
- Since you are empowered by the Spirit who is in you, you have the power to NOT fail.
 - If you do fall down, just get up and start again.

About changes you NEED

- The Bible calls it "**repentance**."
 - It includes the attitudes and motives that influence your actions.
- God has **given it as a gift** to ALL who follow him.

JEWES: God exalted [Jesus]... that he might **give** repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.

NON-JEWES: "... God has **granted** even the Gentiles [non-Jews] repentance unto life."

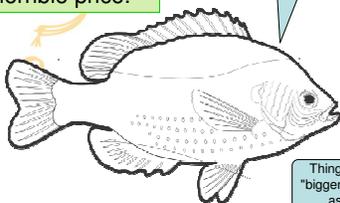
Acts 5:31; 11:18b (NIV)

DOES IT MEAN...

Forsaking the "pleasures of sin"?

- Sin often looks appealing. But it comes at a horrible price.

IT LOOKS SO-O-O-O DELICIOUS!



Things that tempt us always look "bigger than life." The "pay" is never as wonderful as promised.

Forsaking something?

- If you love sin, you do need to forsake it.

As a follower of Jesus...

- You'll learn that the "pleasures of sin" are nothing compared to the presence of God.
- You'll learn that you cannot think of sin as an option.

Is sin an option?

Those who have been **born from God** don't live **sinful lives**.

What God has said lives in them, and they **can't** live **sinful lives**.

They have been **born from God**.

1 John 3:9 (GW)

[WE REPEAT:]

- If you love sin, you do need to forsake it.

DOES IT MEAN...

Devotion to religious activities?

- Going to church at least once a week...
- Giving alms, reciting prayers, fasting...
- Resigning one's life to a cloister, hermitage, place of solitary confinement...
- Etc.



Religious activities?

- They may be of value... or not.

As a follower of Jesus...

- You'll discover that some religious activities have value, but they are *nothing*, compared to *actually following Jesus* and doing what he says.

Don't do religious activities without love for God and neighbor!

A WARNING!!

- You can be *very* religious and *still* be God's enemy!

'We have fasted before you!' they say. **'Why aren't you impressed?'**

We have done much penance, and you don't even notice it!

Isaiah 58:3a (NLT)

Religious activities can be dangerous!

"I will tell you why! It's because you are living for yourselves even while you are fasting.

You keep right on oppressing your workers.

What good is fasting when you keep on fighting and quarreling?

This kind of fasting will never get you anywhere with me.

Isaiah 58:3b-4 (NLT)

"No, the kind of fasting I want calls you to free those who are wrongly imprisoned and to stop oppressing those who work for you. Treat them fairly and give them what they earn.

I want you to share your food with the hungry and to welcome poor wanderers into your homes.

Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help. ..."

"Stop oppressing the helpless and stop making false accusations and spreading vicious rumors!"

Isaiah 58:6-7, 9b (NLT)

DOES IT MEAN...

Punishing yourself, in order to "beat out" the sin that lurks inside you?



Punishing yourself?

If* your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away.

It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire.

Matthew 18:8 (NIV)

If you did these things, you would discover that the *actual cause* was much deeper than a hand or foot. **You need Jesus, the "heart surgeon."**

* In this passage, the word "if" is very important! The *actual* cause is your "flesh" (sinful nature), not your body part.

Why pay a second time?

As a follower of Jesus...

- You'll realize that Jesus took your punishment for you. *There's nothing left for you to pay for.*

JESUS ON THE CROSS: Jesus said, "**It is finished.**" With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

John 19:30 (NIV)

This is a translation of the Greek word "tetelestai."
It is like saying, "Paid in full!"

Self denial is so much

GREATER

than ANY of these things!

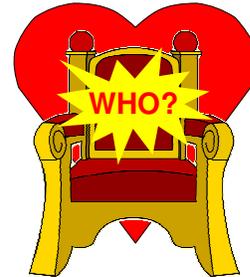
It means the renouncing of one's "SELF"!

WE need to give up "**OURSELVES,**" before we give up "**things**"!

DEAL WITH THIS FIRST!

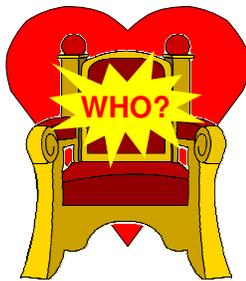
- It is our primary obligation!
- Only then can we consider other matters.

The #1 obstacle between you and God:
WHO is in charge of your life.



"SELF DENIAL" means:

YOU must get off the throne of your life.



GOD must get on the throne of your life.

"SELF DENIAL" involves:
Being honest about yourself!

~~YOU~~



GOD

You never had "rights" to rule your life.
(You stole those rights from God.)

YOU DO NOT HAVE A CHOICE

To follow Jesus, you MUST live by the truth!



Self denial is simply *admitting the truth*,
and choosing to *live by the truth!*

Jesus made it clear...

- If we *don't* do it, we can't blame Jesus for our disobedience!

Then Jesus said to his disciples,
"If anyone would come after me, **he must deny himself** and take up his cross and follow me."

Matthew 16:24 (NIV)

✦ **HERE IT IS!!!!!** ✦

SINCE Jesus made it clear...

- If we *don't* do it, WE are the losers!

"For whoever wants to save his life will **lose it**,
but whoever loses his life for me will **find it**."

What good will it be for a man if he gains the
whole world, yet **forfeits his soul**?

Or what can a man give in exchange for his
soul?"

Matthew 16:25-26 (NIV)

SINCE Jesus made it clear...

- Our actions DO matter!

"For the Son of Man is going to come in his
Father's glory with his angels,
and then **he will reward each person
according to what he has done.**" *

Matthew 16:27 (NIV)

* (Yes, we will be rewarded. But we will also admit our
dependency on God for the success we had in obeying him.)

SINCE Jesus made it clear...

- We can't blame him, if we "muddy up" the
issue by our own actions!



**I SEE
CLEARLY!**
It's the **trees** that
are dirty!

So...

YOUR MISSION

THINK about what self denial is...

EVALUATE your life...

RESPOND appropriately!

(We should do this with ANY topic
related to salvation and spiritual growth.)

Credits (1)

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