

Denying and Loving

Jeff Rogers / Lamplighter Bible Study
Matthew 5:43-48

A principle of discipleship (following Christ) is that a Christian must deny himself and follow His Lord in obedience. Denial is negative by definition. Jesus gives us the other side of the coin in Matthew 5:44. Denial and love are the heads and tails of the coin of the Christian life. You cannot have one without the other as a believer.

I. The Negative side of Self Denial?

- A. A denial is just that. It is negative.
 - 1. Turn the other cheek – insults (**Matthew 5:39**, *But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.*)
 - 2. Give your cloak (**Matthew 5:40**, *And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well.*)
 - 3. Go the second mile (**Matthew 5:41**, *And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.*)
 - 4. Do not refuse the borrower (**Matthew 5:42**, *Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.*)
- B. To do this, you must deny yourself. In the words of Lloyd-Jones, “*be finished with self, with his right to himself, his right to determine what he shall do, and especially, . . . the rights of the self.*” Including:
 - 1. Attacks
 - 2. Insults
 - 3. Defensive attitude
 - 4. Desires
 - 5. Dreams
- C. Discontinue with sensitivities (words, actions, positions of others). Hyper-sensitivities in our society result from emphasizing self and self-rights and interests over everything.
 - 1. Follow the example of Paul – setting aside self; and self-interests.
 - a) Regard yourself as a servant (as a guard is to the judge (Matthew 5:25) and a steward (supervisor; manager under the direction of another; accountable) (**1 Corinthians 4:1**, *This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.*)
 - b) Be Found Faithful (“found” as in discovered). (**1 Corinthians 4:2**, *Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.*)
 - c) Small things (**1 Corinthians 4:3**, *But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.*)
 - (1) To be judged in court or by another (judged judicially and personally)
 - (2) To judge myself.
 - d) **1 Corinthians 4:4–5**, *For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. 5 Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.*
 - 2. Paul committed the whole question of his judgment to God.

II. The Example of George Muller

- A. George Muller, “*There was a day when I died, utterly died, died to George Muller and his opinions, preferences, tastes, and will; died to the world, its approval or censure; died to the approval or blame of even my brethren and friends; and since then I have studied only to show myself unto God.*”
 - 1. Muller died to self, first. (Opinions, preferences, tastes, will)
 - 2. Died to the world, next (approval or censure, critique, condemnation).
 - 3. Died to brethren and friends.

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4. To show myself approved. 2 Tim 2.15
- B. **Galatians 2:20**, *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

III. Denying self begins with self examination.

- A. Why exactly am I upset or feel defensive at this moment.
- B. Why am I grieved by it?
- C. What is my real concern at this point?
- D. Am I really concerned for some general principle of justice and righteousness?
- E. Am I moved and disturbed because I have some true cause at heart?
- F. Is it just horrible, foul self-centeredness and self-concern?
- G. Is it nothing but an unhealthy and unpleasant pride?
- H. To what extent do I allow “self” to control my life?
 - 1. We are concerned about doing it well. Why?
 - 2. For the glory of God, or for our own glory?
- I. Go back over the last week and examine, recall all the events and words.

IV. Jesus came to deliver us from our selves

- A. The Fall (Genesis 3) was self in defiance of God (the devil was subtle, “*God is not being fair to you.*”) Self always puts myself on the throne instead of God, therefore it is always something that separates me from Him
 - 1. **Romans 11:33**, *Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable [impossible to plot; or trace to the end; incomprehensible] his ways!*
 - 2. **Man does not find God, God finds Him. Looking for a god? What god are you looking for? How will you know when you find god? By what measurement are you judging? How can the crooked find the straight?**
- B. All unhappiness is ultimately due to this “self-induced” separation.
 - 1. Philippians, Whatsoever state I am in, content.
 - 2. Holiness, is deliverance from a self-centered life. It is being able to say, I died.
 - 3. Why did God send His Son, Jesus? To deliver man from self.
 - a) He lived a selfless life
 - (1) **Philippians 2:5–8**, *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*
 - (2) He lived a selfless life on Earth (**John 14:24**, *Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me.*
 - b) We self selflessness on the cross (**1 Peter 2:23**, *When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.*
 - c) Paul to the Ephesians (**Ephesians 2:8–10**, *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*
 - d) We can no longer live for ourselves. **2 Corinthians 5:14**, *For the love of Christ controls [constrains, impels, forces into action] us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died;*
 - e) **2 Corinthians 5:15**, *and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.*