

Cross Centered Living...Denial of Self or Self Denial?

[Mark 8:34-35](#): "When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, **let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.** For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it."

Did you know that we can all be a narcissist? Yes...when we live a self-sufficient and self-centered life apart from Christ.

Adam and Eve were the first people to entertain the idea "to be like God" ([Genesis 3:5](#)), which is the essence of the self-centered life that Satan promotes and our flesh easily cooperates with. Satan's lie is that you are capable of being the god of your own life.

That is why identifying with the cross of Christ is the daily life of the true Christian. Jesus is telling us that to follow Him is to deny ourself. ***That means taking ourselves off the throne of our life.*** Jesus is asking for His Lordship over every area of our life.

Jesus said...deny yourself.

Dying to self is our primary battle of life. Denying yourself is not the same as self-denial. The purpose of self-denial is focused on self improvement, whereas, **denying yourself is denying self-rule.** Our flesh desires to sit on the throne of our lives, but only Jesus is truly worthy. Seeking to overcome self through our own self discipline is a futile effort.

Identify with His cross!

The cross is not our own cross but Christ's cross. "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." ([Galatians 2:20](#)) Taking up the cross means to acknowledge our need for Jesus Christ every day to live through us. Our life is hidden in Christ because He is our life ([Colossians 3:3, 4](#)).

Follow Jesus... where He leads you.

Be filled and led by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will lead us down the path of death to self-rule. [2 Corinthians 4:11](#)—"For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh." It is only as we live out of our new heart in Christ that we can obey Him.

In this world we find our identity and sense of worth in positions, titles, accomplishments, possessions. If our goal is for the things of this world, we will lose our life. If our goal is living our lives now for His kingdom and eternal things, we will also receive the benefits of living and knowing Christ now. **We are sacrificing the pleasures of things to gain the source of true joys in this life.** It is better to know we are children of God than to gain something in this world that we will eventually lose.

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