

Desire for Devotion to Christ

January 27, 2019

Luke 9:23 Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

Introduction:

This passage is explained both to the saved and the unsaved. To the unsaved there is the initial surrender of the new birth, when a person comes to Christ for salvation and the old life of sin is exchanged for a new life of righteousness.

To the saved this truth has reiterated the call to the life of daily obedience to Christ.

Bottom line: Never forget, it is possible for believers to lose their first love when they first surrendered all they were and all they had to Him. It is a constant temptation to want to take back what was given up and to reclaim what was forsaken. It is not impossible to again place one's will above God's and to take back rights that were relinquished to Him. The “bottom line”, the character of a true Christ follower is manifested in obedience.

I. DESIRE

“If anyone desires to come after me”

Where does this desire come from?

“God satisfies the desire He creates”-Oswald Chambers

The Gospel creates the desire that only God can satisfy.

Why are most believers not living the life they desire that He creates?

We try to live our lives in our own strength and we ultimately fail. If we don't fail, we fall very short of God's purpose for us.

When we operate in our strength (flesh) 3 things happen:

1. We will always lack the power of the Spirit and we will suffer from fatigue.

2. We will always lack the power of the Spirit so we will suffer from frustration.

3. We will always lack the sustaining ministry of the Spirit so we will suffer from failure.

David Jeremiah

Where the Battle's Lost and Won (for control)

The battle is lost and won in the secret places of the will before God, never first in the external world. The Spirit of God apprehends me and I am obligated to get alone with God and fight the battle out before Him. Until this is done, I lose every time. The battle may take one minute or a year, that will depend on me, not on God; but it must be wrestled out alone before God, and I must resolutely go through the hell of a renunciation before God. Nothing has any power over the man who has fought out the battle before god and won there.

Oswald Chamber

II. DEVOTION

“come after me”

A call to loyal obedience. True discipleship is submission to the lordship of Christ that becomes a pattern of life.

The very desire to come after Jesus, is the work of Jesus.

The life Christ plants in us, develops its own virtues, not the virtue of the old man, but of Jesus Christ. God will wither up your confidence in natural virtue after sanctification, and in any power you have, until you learn to draw life from the reservoir of the resurrection life of Jesus.

“Coming after me” even though this commenced with our salvation, it continues with my sanctification. The person of Christ in me, since the day I came after Him (came after me, pursuing me), continues to confront me. Our decision to follow Jesus is a righteous resolve that is the result of a devoted disciple of Jesus. A promise made to God is an exclamation mark of a sold out life. It’s at the crossroad of commitment that disciples are exposed as authentic or imposters.

III. DENY HIMSELF

To say no to ourselves; to completely disown, to utterly separate oneself from someone. Same word Peter used when he denied Jesus.

Paraphrased, “let him refuse any accusation or companionship with himself.”

Self defined:

The natural, sinful, rebellious, unredeemed self that is at the center of every fallen person and that can reclaim temporary control over a Christian.

Ephesian 4:22 That you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.

To deny self is to have the sincere, genuine conviction that one has nothing in his humanness to commend himself before God, nothing worthwhile to offer Him at all.

Even after salvation, a believer has no more goodness in himself (that is in his flesh) than he had before salvation.

Philippians 3:3 how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery, as I have briefly written already.

Here is our Hope:

Ephesians 4:24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

To deny self is to subject ourselves entirely to the Lordship and resources of Jesus Christ, in utter rejection of self-will and self-sufficiency.

John 15:4-5 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

To deny self is to confess with Paul.

Romans 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.

Arthur Pink wrote,
“Growth in grace is growth downward; it is the forming of a lower estimate of ourselves; it is a deepening realization of our nothingness; it is a heartfelt recognition that we are not worthy of the least of God’s mercies.”

The challenge of **denying myself** is the resistance of self-centeredness or **PRIDE**.

Like a drug, pride is addictive and impairs good judgement. If I could be packaged as a pill in a prescription bottle the label would read, “Warning, taken too often in large doses may lead to a great fall, even death...”

Wisdom Hunters

The old flesh does not give in easily it wishes to control you still.

2 Corinthians 5:15 And He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

1 Peter 4:3 For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.

Major Problem

We hate weakness because we long to be independent and self-sufficient, not needing God's moment by moment sustaining grace.

Paul David Tripp

The very realization that we are unable to satisfy the demands of God's law by our own efforts have always been what drives us to the Lord.

With that said, our need is **repentance** which is at the heart of the gospel.

Jesus called sinners to repentance.

Jesus preached the necessity of repentance.

Jesus commanded that His followers do the same.

The New Testament uses 3 different words to describe repentance. They deal with the mental, emotional, and intellectual aspects.

1. It involves a reversal of ones one's thinking; a change of mind, a helplessness to save themselves.

2. The regret and sorrow that the change of mind produces.

3. The act of the will in changing one's direction in life; turning to God from sin (1 Thessalonians 1:9)

Intellectually - repentance is a recognition of sin's vileness.

Emotionally - it produces a sense of sorrow/remorse.

Volitionally - results is a change of direction in life away from sin to Christ.

