

Follow Me
Deny Myself? - 4
9/1/19

Matt 16:24 - three steps to answering His call - deny yourself - what does that mean
We are looking at what it means to “deny yourself”

We’ve seen that (at least in part) since I have been joined to Christ, all that we are now comes from our union with Him. Therefore, we have given up our right to act, respond or speak as if we were still independent of Him. To deny myself means I deny myself these rights daily.

Four areas where we are to apply this: Our relationship with the world, people, God and ourselves.

1. Our relationship with the world

This includes what we call the “natural” world that our senses reveal to us

Tangible things - money - etc.

What occupies so much of our time, effort and thought

Religious thinking tells us that this realm is evil and must be avoided

To be holy you must withdraw from it and have no contact

Basis of monastic life

This is error and basis of several heresies

God created this realm and declared that it was good

In Gen 1 God created this realm and 6x said it was good

Vs 31 He looked at all He created and declared it very good

Jesus did not withdraw from the things of this world

Church is supposed to influence this world, & can’t if we withdraw

God made man in perfect union with Him

He was their source of everything they needed or wanted

God created the things of this world to supply their needs and give pleasure

Eden = place of delight God made for them

But God was the owner and man was His steward

When man rebelled, he removed God from being his source and substituted the things of this world

He took ownership away from God and claimed it for himself

He became his own god - the source of his own needs

The physical world took God’s rightful place in man’s heart

Christ came to restore the union that God had originally created with man

First, He had to pay for our sin before He could restore the relationship

When we accept His payment for our rebellion, we are joined to God through Christ

Therefore, since we are now in Him (one with Him), we have the same relationship with this world that He has

Satan and our flesh try to get us to hold on the things of this world for our value, security and pleasure

His goal is for us to operate independent of Christ

1 Jn 2:15-17 we are not to love or seek these things

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Matt 6:19-21 - what we are to treasure because it controls our hear

2. Other people - includes closest family as well as people you don't know
If we are in Christ, then we can only relate to them through Him
We are taught by the world to love those who are worthy of our love
 Treat them based on their value to me or to others
 If we see them as no value, we treat them accordingly
But Christ does not see people as we have been taught
 He loves everyone, not based at all on anything about them except that they are God's creation
 Rom 5: 6-8 God's love is shown by His giving His son's life for His enemies
 Matt 5:43-48 - because we are one with Christ, we are to do the same
Satan's goal is for us to evaluate and treat people based on what WE think of them
 That is to separate ourselves from Christ who sees them very differently
 To realize that I am in Christ, changes how I see everyone
Slavery existed for so many years in the US and England because of how Africans were seen
 They were not seen as God's creation but as property, so they were treated as such without any sense of guilt
 It took William Wilberforce, wealthy spoiled Englishman, to change that
 What changed him and how he saw slaves was he met Christ and saw these people as He saw them

 He worked with John Newton (writer of *Amazing Grace*) who was a former slave ship captain who also met Christ

3. God as our Father

Separate from Christ, we see ourselves in relationship with God based on our own value or goodness

- Either we have confidence because we have been faithful, good, generous or done our duty
- Or we shrink back because we know that compared to what God expects and who He is, we fall terribly short
- Both of these are based on ME - before I was joined to Christ
- One good measure of this is how confident am I that God will answer my prayers

When I see myself in Christ, it takes me out of the picture.

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My standing and relationship with the Father are the same as Christ because I am in Him

John 17:20-23 - Jesus prayed for this union with Him and together with Father

4. Myself - How I relate to myself

After coming to Christ, we still have all the same memories of how we were raised, how we have acted, thought and spoken & how others treated us

- We still have stored everything that was done to us or for us
- We still have the memories of all our successes and failures
- These all form a picture of who we are, what we are like and what we can and cannot do

When we come to Christ, our spirit is instantly changed made new into the nature of God,

2 Cor 5:17 - we were made instantly into a new person in the inner man

This new man has God's nature and is joined to Christ

This is who we really are

But we still have these old memories and images in our mind

Our soul is not changed when we are joined to Christ

These old images and memories keep us enslaved even though we have been set free

As long as I still see myself separate from Christ, I will see myself connected to all that past

When I see myself as this new person IN CHRIST, this new person has no past

Heb 10:14-18 -

We HAVE BEEN sanctified through Christ

We have no past in God's eyes

Eph 4:20-24 -

Put off the old man - no longer who you are

Put on the new man - who you now are IN CHRIST

Rom 12: this become a reality to us as we renew our thinking to see ourselves In Christ