

Self-Control #2, Self-Denial

Last week, in a lesson called “Self-Control,” we *defined* our subject simply as manifesting *control* over *self* (in all its constituent parts, rather than just our behavior). We also noticed the *origin/source* of “self-control” as being *divine* rather than *of the devil* (from Luke 8:26-29), and for us, as stemming from *true knowledge* and *faith* (which both originating from the Word), then *increasing* with the *application of diligence, in our faith*, to the *supplying of it* with and as a *key* to “unlocking” and enabling the other so-called “Christian Graces,” 2Pet. 1:2-7. Thus, to truly “control self,” we must control our *thoughts, emotions, and passions/desires* in order to regulate or change our *bodies/behavior*.

Now, after covering those basics, we will begin what I would consider the “how to” part. Theory is important and even necessary, but to be what God wants us to be (cf. 1Pet. 1:13-16; 2Pet. 3:11-16), and *increase to stability and security* (cf. 2Pet. 1:8-11), we have to understand, develop, and manifest the practical aspect of self-control.

To Develop and Practice Self-Control, we must master Self-Denial, Matt. 16:24-26.

Such necessarily includes...

- Being willing to **deny all aspects of self, v.24a:**

- Our **thoughts**- 2Cor. 2:5
- Our **emotions**- Matt. 15:18-19; 22:37; 6:21
- Our **passions**- Col. 3:5
- Our **bodies**, Col. 3:5

- Being willing to **take up our cross, v.24b.**

When Jesus made this requirement of His *disciples*, the *cross* had no spiritual significance. It was before His own crucifixion, so the *cross* was just a gruesome symbol of *death*, Rom. 8:12-13. This is not accomplished *once* at baptism- though through it we are certainly *crucified with Christ* (cf. Rom. 6:3-6), but is an *every day* requirement (Luke 9:23) to *put to death the flesh* and its *deeds*, Rom. 8:6!

- Being willing to **follow Him, v.24c.**

It's simple (to *understand* at least!): no one can *follow* two at once. Not Jesus *and* Satan, Rom. 6:16, 18, 19-22. Not Jesus *and* the world, John 7:7; 15:18-19 and most importantly to our purposes here, not Jesus *and* self, Matt. 16:24; Amos 3:3; 1John 2:6, 11!

- Being willing to **lose your life, v.25.**

Death is not really the point, though we must be willing to go that far in following Christ also, Rev. 2:10. Instead, it is allowing *your life* to be “*hidden*” (*kyrpto/krupto*- to *cover* or be *hidden* or *conceal*) *in and with Christ* to the point that you are *overshadowed* and He is *visible*, Col. 3:3-4; cf. Gal. 2:20.

Conclusion: If we are ever to muster any degree of self-control, we must summon the strength to say “No” to ourselves. “No” to our *thoughts, feelings, passions, and bodies*, but “Yes” to Christ in all things.