

October 4, 2020

Self-Denial

By Michael Hickox

Olney Church of Christ

220 North Van Street
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Services

Sunday

Bible Study	9:30 am
A.M. Worship	10:20 am
P.M. Worship	2:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Class	7:00 pm
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Elders: Mike Gerber, Travis Hall

Deacons: John Frost, Dave Goff,
Roger Sholders

Visitors are welcome

We offer Bible classes for all ages

We also offer in-home Bible studies

We have Bible lessons on the radio
(92.9 FM) Sundays from 8:00-8:30 a.m.

Luke 9:23: *He said to all, 'If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me.'*

In the above verse, Jesus taught that being His true disciple involves self-denial. Consider some things in this passage and elsewhere in Scripture that shed light on the meaning of this instruction.

The Example: **Luke 9:23** begins with the words, "***If anyone desires to come after me.***" This points us back to **Luke 9:22**, where Jesus warned His disciples of His upcoming sufferings and death.

Though Peter expressed a desire to stop such sufferings (**Matt. 16:22; Mark 8:32**), Jesus made it clear that He was choosing the Father's will over personal comfort. He accepted whatever suffering resulted from this, including death by crucifixion.

This is the setting for **Luke 9:23**. Jesus did not "sugar-coat" His description of following Him. Jesus denied Himself of many temporal comforts to obey the Father. His followers must do the same.

The Commitment: After saying "***If anyone desires to come after me***" in **Luke 9:23**, Jesus instructed "***let him deny himself...***"

Being Christ's disciple involves forsaking whatever pleasures, goals, ambitions, etc. one must in order to please God.

Certainly if one takes pleasure in something that is blatantly sinful, such

Self-Denial

(Continued)

thing must be forsaken, but self-denial goes deeper than this. It can involve, for instance, forsaking a job, hobby, or possession that hinders one from being all that God desires (**Luke 8:14**).

At its core, self-denial involves changing one's aim in life from pleasing self to pleasing God (**2 Cor. 5:9**). It involves presenting one's entire being to God as a "**living sacrifice**" (**Rom. 12:1**), so that God becomes the complete ruler of one's life.

The Sacrifice: The sacrifice associated with this lifestyle is elaborated on in **Luke 9:23** with the words "**take up his cross.**"

While Jesus died on a literal cross, the implication for us is that we must be willing to accept whatever suffering comes as a result of the choice to live faithfully.

2 Timothy 3:12 says, "**Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.**" Notice that this verse does not present suffering as something that *might* happen for those who faithfully follow Christ. Persecution is *guaranteed* for all of Christ's faithful disciples.

This can include *physical* persecution, which was common in New Testament times (**Rev. 2:10; 6:9**). What is probably more common in the time and place we live is *mental* persecution.

Following Christ's steps means accepting vast differences between oneself and the majority. Some people find the Christian lifestyle strange, and it is likely that some will

speak poorly of us, mock us, or belittle us if we choose this path (**1 Pet. 4:3-4**). We might anger close friends or family members (**Matt. 10:34-36**).

Whatever sufferings result from our choice to follow Christ, we must not deny God's will. This is the implication of Christ's instruction to take up our crosses.

The Frequency: Luke's account of Jesus' statement about self-denial includes a word that specifies the frequency of this commitment. Notice the word "**daily**" in **Luke 9:23**.

Being Jesus' disciple is not just a one-time event or a weekly event, but a *permanent, ongoing* lifestyle choice.

Self-denial is a decision to shape every day of one's life around pleasing God (**Gal. 2:20**). Given the breadth of instruction covered by God's Word, it is not hard to see how self-denial *begins* at baptism, but must be at the core of Christ's faithful disciples' lives *each day*.

The Worth: While the depth of the commitment Jesus calls for must not be under-valued, neither should the *worth* of choosing this lifestyle. No matter what we must give up to please God, it is more than worth it. This is the emphasis in the two verses that follow Jesus' instruction about self-denial (**Luke 9:24-25**).

Considering this, may each of us look to Jesus' example, deny ourselves, take up our crosses daily, and follow after Him.

Area Gospel Meetings

Walnut Chapel Church of Christ:
Oct 18 – 23 (with J.R. Bronger)
Sun: 9:30, 6:00; M-F: 7:00

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God’s Plan for Saving Man

God’s Grace	Ephesians 2:8
Christ’s Blood	Romans 5:9
The Holy Spirit’s Gospel	Romans 1:16
Sinner’s Faith	Acts 16:31
Sinner’s Repentance	Luke 13:3
Sinner’s Confession	Romans 10:10
Sinner’s Baptism	1 Peter 3:21
Christian’s Work	James 2:24
Christian’s Hope	Romans 8:24
Christian’s Endurance	Revelation 2:10

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Words to Consider

***“As the deer pants for the water brooks,
so my soul pants after you, God.”***

– Psalm 42:1

***“God is our refuge and strength, a very
present help in trouble.” – Psalm 46:1***

Prayer List

Holly G
Sandy S
Mabel H
Cheryl S
Norma C
Raymond & Maxine
Ken & Chris F
Brandon O’s Grandmother (Lung Cancer)
Jeanette’s Mother, Fontella
Jerry S (Prostate Cancer)
Carlyle (Hip)
Heather’s Friend, Courtney
Roger H
Barbara G (Cancer)

Daily Bible Reading

October 4 – Psalms 51-53; Romans 2
October 5 – Psalms 54-56; Romans 3
October 6 – Psalms 57-59; Romans 4
October 7 – Psalms 60-62; Romans 5
October 8 – Psalms 63-65; Romans 6
October 9 – Psalms 66-67; Romans 7
October 10 – Psalms 68-69; Romans 8:1-21

***“The judgments of the LORD are true
and righteous altogether. More to be
desired are they than gold, yea, than
much fine gold: sweeter also than
honey and the honeycomb.”***

– Psalm 19:9b-10

Prayer Leaders

Sunday, October 4, 2020

Bible Study: Carlyle

Worship: John

Evening: Harold

Wednesday, October 7, 2020

Larry

Assignments

Sunday, October 11, 2020

Reading: Travis

Announcements: Mike

Table: Roger

Serve: Harold

Dave

Wednesday, October 14, 2020

Invitation: Michael

Clean Building

Julzy

Prepare Communion

Julzy

Upcoming Reminders

Anniversaries

October 6 – Travis & Jessica

October 11 – Mike & Paula

October 27 – Carlyle & Donna

Birthdays

October 4 – Norma

October 20 – Alita

October 21 – Dave

October 22 – Janice

October 23 – Craig

October 29 – Morgan