

Lesson
14

A Christian and Himself

The small country was in a civil war and the guerillas were fighting everywhere. They captured a young man and his life threatened if he didn't renounce Christianity.

In a moment of desperation he yielded and renounced his faith. He was then forced to accompany the guerillas who also expected him to work for them. He became their leader and led the killers to the homes of Christians he had known.

Months passed. Then one day he was in a terrible fight and one of his own men killed him. What a loss—both in this life and in the one to come!

How much better it would have been if the man had stood true to his convictions. He might have lost his life, but he would have gained eternal life. He failed in his responsibility toward God and toward others. He also failed in his responsibility toward himself.

This chapter will help us understand what we owe ourselves. Also how to obey God, who wants our lives to count for both time and eternity.



In this lesson you will study...

Denying Ourselves
Cleansing Ourselves

This lesson will help you...

- Realize your greatest gain is found in denying yourself.
- Describe why a clean and pure mind and body is necessary for every Christian.

DENYING OURSELVES

Objective 1. *Identify what “denying ourselves” means to a Christian.*

A Christian believer’s life is not his own. The Lord owns the life of a Christian because He bought it with His own blood.

You know what was paid to set you free. . . It was not something that can be destroyed, such as silver or gold; it was the costly sacrifice of Christ who was like a lamb without defect or flaw (1 Peter 1:18-19).

First Corinthians 6:20 also tells us that about the sacrifice that Jesus paid on the cross. “He bought you for a price.” If Christ paid a price for us, we must also pay a price. The Bible tells us that to be a Christian means to forget ourselves and follow Jesus. In Luke 9:23 the Lord’s words are “If anyone wants to come with me, he must forget himself, take up his cross every day, and follow me.”

We forget ourselves when we do God’s will rather than have our own way. Jesus Christ set the example for us, and His words in John 6:38 are: “Because I have come down from heaven to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me.”

Not every person who calls me ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but only those who do what my Father in heaven wants them to do (Matthew 7:21).

As Christians we must choose to do right every day even though it goes against our own wishes. “But take up the weapons of the Lord Jesus Christ, and stop paying attention to your sinful nature and satisfying its desires” (Romans 13:14).

Does denying ourselves sound negative? Surely not, because the Lord never asks us for anything without giving us something better in its place. It’s like the story of the dog and the bone. His master tried to take the bone but the dog became angry and growled. The bone was all he had and he didn’t want to give it up. But when his master put down a large steak, the dog gave up his bone immediately.

Sometimes we are too concerned with hanging on to “bones”—the things we think we want. We need to realize that the Lord is offering us something better. When the disciples were a bit concerned about what they had to give up, Jesus gave them a clear answer.

Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake, will receive a hundred times more and will be given eternal life (Matthew 19:29).

Jesus said in another place that He came “in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness” (John 10:10).

Life in all its fullness! That is what the world is seeking, but only God can give it.

Yes, may you come to know his love—although it can never be fully known—and so be completely filled with the very nature of God. To him who by means of his power working in us is able to do so much more than we can ever ask for or even think of: to God be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus for all time, forever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 3:19-21).



For You To Do

- 1 Read Luke 14:27.
 - a This verse compares *denying yourself* to carrying a
 - b According to this verse we should love God above
- 2 Denying ourselves or carrying our cross means
 - a) not owning any material possessions.
 - b) selling what we own and giving it to the Church.
 - c) doing God's will above our own.
- 3 Which of the following statements are TRUE?
 - a Jesus gave His life for us, not to add to our burdens but to free us from our own guilt.
 - b Fullness of life is found by being completely filled with the very nature of God.
 - c Denying ourselves means to stop giving attention to our sinful natures.
- 4 Read Matthew 11:28-30. To carry the cross of Jesus is not a burden, on the contrary, it is

CLEANSING OURSELVES

Objective 2. *Decide on appropriate Christian behavior regarding keeping body and mind clean.*

A Christian should keep his body and mind pure and clean. The Bible tells us why.

Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and who was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourselves but to God (1 Corinthians 6:19).

Such habits as smoking and using drugs injure a person's health, can harm both his body and his mind, and shorten his life. The user may think he can stop whenever he wants to, but that isn't true—he becomes a slave to his habits.

Surely you know that when you surrender yourselves as slaves to obey someone, you are in fact the slaves of the master you obey—either of sin, which results in death, or of obedience which results in being put right with God (Romans 6:16).

Perhaps some temptations have overcome you. Do you go to places that are not pleasing to the Lord, or read books or magazines that you would be ashamed for Him to see? Asking God to help us change our ways can break harmful habits.

Tell the Lord that you cannot conquer evil in your own strength and He will help you. Ask for His healing within you. Then learn the following verse and repeat it whenever you are tempted. "I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me" (Philippians 4:13).

Give yourself to the Lord; trust in him, and he will help you; he will make your righteousness shine like the noonday sun (Psalm 37:5-6).



For You To Do

- 5** What would you do in the following situations? Answer YES or NO to each of the questions.
- **a** You are invited to a friend's party (who is an unbeliever) to participate in activities against your Christian convictions. Would you go just this one time in order not to offend your friend?
 - **b** Several members of your church have asked you to go to a place where you will be expected to do things you know are not pleasing to the Lord. Would you accept so they won't feel you are trying to be "holier" than they are?
 - **c** Several unbelievers have asked you to attend festivities in their home and give your testimony of your conversion. Would you go because it is an opportunity to witness?
- 6** A new Christian confesses to you he can't stop smoking. Which of the following would you do?
- a** Tell him he's not going to heaven until he stops smoking.
 - b** Tell the pastor so the new Christian cannot be baptized.
 - c** Pray with him and help him go to the Lord and His Word for strength to overcome this habit.



Check Your Answers

- 1 a** cross.
b our family or friends.
- 4** easy and light.
- 2 c)** doing God's will above our own.
- 5** Your answer. I hope you said NO to **a** and **b** because you should not change your Christian convictions for friends whether they are unbelievers or Christians. I hope you said YES for **c**. Jesus witnessed wherever He went—in the temple or in people's homes. I believe He would go wherever people are hungry to hear His Word.
- 3** All of the statements are true.
- 6 c** Pray with him and help him go to the Lord and His Word for strength to overcome this habit.