

What Does it Mean to Deny Yourself And Take Up Your Cross?

Tim Conway | illbehonest.com

Question: "Hi Pastor, I have a real concern about what Jesus said to His disciples: 'He that is not willing to deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me cannot be my disciple.' I see so many Christians buying luxurious cars, living in mansions, treating themselves with every pleasure that this world can offer, and it seems as if there's no conviction or even thought about what Jesus said to His disciples. Can you please clarify or explain? What does it mean to deny yourself and take up your cross? And deny yourself what? What was Jesus talking about?"

Discussion:

Tim: Well, Randall. I think you have a faulty assumption to begin with. You say that you see so many Christians buying luxurious cars and living in mansions, treating themselves with every pleasure that this world can offer without any conviction about what Jesus said?

Let me tell you something. People that live without any conviction of what Jesus said are not Christians. Jesus Christ, did He not say? "If you have My words and keep them, it's by that you prove to be My disciples." Christ told the parable about the man that built his house on a rock and the man that built his house on the sand. The man that built his house on the rock is the man that hears His word and does it! If you've got people here that are living their lives on sand, when the flood comes they're gonna be washed away.

The fact is: What does it mean to deny yourself? What do we deny? Well, Jesus Christ said this in Luke 14:33 "Anyone of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be My disciple." In Luke's gospel, you have Matthew. What did Christ say to him? He just said, "Matthew, follow me." You know what it says he did? He left all. We just talked about the rich young ruler in one of these other ones (Bible studies). Guess what? He came to Christ. You know what Christ said to him? "Forsake it all." Was he willing? Nope. And he went away sorrowful, and he went away damned. Peter says: "Lord, we left everything! What are we gonna have?" And you know what, Peter wasn't exaggerating. He had left everything. That's what Christ demands.

What does that mean? Listen to this. Unless you forsake all that you have, you can't be His disciple. Do you remember this? When we were dealing with Romans chapter 10? There must be a calling upon the Lord as Lord as Lord. There must be an acknowledging. There must be with the mouth a confession. A believing in the heart that He is Lord! When you come to Christ as Lord, you're saying: "Lord, you're Master. You're Master of it all. All that I have. All my family, all my time, all my self. All my possessions, all my money, all of it. They're Yours." It's always true that they're His, but that's what repentance is: It's submission to that fact. It's submission to that reality. And you know what we find? We put it all out there on the table. "Lord, it's all Yours."

And you know what we find He does? He says: "Okay." "Use that, and use that, it's all Mine. The cattle on a thousand hills are Mine. All the silver and the gold is Mine." That's what He says. But He says. You know what He says? He says: "Now that you've trusted Me, Peter is yours, and Paul is yours, it's all yours! The whole world, it's yours!" That's what He says. And it's all to be used for His glory.

And if we look at something on that table and we say: "I can't use that for His glory." Then guess what? You don't use it. You give it up. It comes back to what we talked about before right there at the end of 1 Corinthians 10. "Whatever ye do, whether ye eat or drink..." You know what that means? It means He gives you food, and you say: "Thank you Lord!" How do you use it for His glory? Well, that's one way. You thank Him for it. You praise Him for it! And whatever you do, whether it's the food, whether it's the drink, whether it's the clothes you put on your back, you're thanking Him for it, and you're using it for His glory. And you know what? It says that if you have two tunics, and somebody has need, what do you do? You give one away. And that's how you use it for His glory. You have money? What does Scripture say? If you see a brother or sister in need, what do you do? You help them. Does He say: "Take care of your own family with it?" Yes. He that does take care of his own family is worse than a what? An infidel. So He says take care of your family with it. But not only take care of your family, if you see another family that has need, well you share it over there. Especially give concern to widows and orphans. Take care.