

SELF DENIAL

Luk 9:23 And he said to *them* all, "If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." ²⁴"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: *but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it*".

²⁵"For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? " ²⁶"For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and *in his Fathers*, and of the holy angels."

Western lifestyles are not congenial to self-denial. It may not be easy to take up the cross of Christ. We are told to lose our lives in Christ. (Luk 9:24) There are no spiritual advantages in the "world". In other words, those who follow its pathway will live in spiritual barrenness.

Mk 1:35 And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

The solitary place is often a lifestyle of self-denial. However, it is not a lonely place for we are with God.

Gen 32:26 And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, **I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.**

Dan 10:2 In those days **I Daniel was mourning three full weeks.** ³I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, **till three whole weeks were fulfilled.**

Those that are desperate for God will not give up (Gen 32:26).

They may also be challenged to deny themselves in fasting. (Dan10:2)

Mk 9:29 And he said unto them, "This kind can come forth by nothing, **but by prayer and fasting.**

2 Cor 11:27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. ²⁸Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

It wasn't an easy lifestyle, however Paul walked in the blessing of God.

Phl 3:18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: ¹⁹Whose end is destruction, **whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.**)

These Christians lived as if they were enemies of the Cross. They knew nothing of self-denial.

Isa 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; **he was despised, and we esteemed him not.**

As Christ was "rejected of men"; we will be rejected by friends and family.

Mat 6:16 "Moreover **when ye fast**, be not, as the hypocrites, of a **sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast.** Verily I say unto you, They have their reward." ¹⁷"But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;"

Our fasting must be done as unto God. (Matt 6:18; Isa 58:3, 8-9)

1Jn 1:3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: **and truly our fellowship is with the Father**, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Maturity demands a more focused fellowship with the Father.

Psa 37:5 Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring *it* to pass. ⁶And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. ⁷**Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way**, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

Our commitment is unto the Lord, He is responsible to prosper our pathway. God will feed us, clothe us and give us a place to live.

Psa 37:3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; *so* shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.