

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Self-Denial

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Do you practice much self-denial in your daily life? You probably will not think about such a spirit if you observe the way of the world around you. There seems to be a convenient “drive through” for any sudden whim of hunger or thirst. Don’t wait till suppertime, fulfill your hunger right now! Don’t wait another sluggish moment, get an immediate caffeine boost by turning in at the next corner! You do not even have to leave the convenience of your car. How often does the world see something they want and delay the pleasure by saving up enough to purchase the item? Instead we pull out the convenient plastic card and obtain the desired item instantly. Enjoy now, pay later.

While self-denial is not seen much around us, its spirit must be in us if we are to be true disciples of the Lord. Jesus says, “...*If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me*” (Luke 9:23).

Self-denial manifests itself in one saying to self that it is no longer “my will”, but “God’s will” that will control my life. It

is that “poverty” of spirit where one is destitute of his own will in order for God’s rule to have its proper place in one’s life (*Matthew 5:3*).

The lusts surrounding us in this world clamoring for our attention and unlawful fulfillment must be denied. God’s grace has taught that “*denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world*” (*Titus 2:12*). The Christian must not be caught up in all the noise of, “If it feels good do it;” or “You only go around once in life. so don’t deprive yourself of the present pleasure;” and with a self controlled or sober mind, serve our only Master in godliness.

If we do not cultivate the spirit of self-denial, we will constantly have trouble following Christ. We will want to lead Him by telling Him the way we should go. It will come in the form, “I think it should be this way” instead of following what the Scriptures actually command us to do. You are my Lord, but I refuse to repent and be baptized for the remission of my sins (Acts 2:38). I do not believe that baptism ought to have anything to do with you

saving me. Who is leading whom?

If we do not cultivate the spirit of self-denial, we will constantly have trouble with contentment. Because our sense of right has been violated by having to suffer persecution for living as a Christian, we will not be able to “rejoice” in such moments. We will concentrate more about the feelings of self instead of the cause of Christ. Void of the spirit of self-denial, a person will never understand the spirit of the persecuted apostles who after being beaten, departed “*rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name*” (Acts 5:41).

Instead of being content or feeling sufficient in the Lord, the person lacking self-denial will view the hardships of following Christ with resentment. Jesus had no permanent place to lay his head (*Lk.9:58*), but I must have such comforts. Paul suffered in his journeys to preach the gospel from lack of sufficient food and clothing (*2 Cor. 11:27*), but I demand a proper salary. Are we willing take on these difficulties “daily”? Only a self-denying spirit says “yes” with contentment.