

# 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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**I**t might seem cruel to be reminded of self-denial during this unprecedented pandemic. Quarantined fourteen days in my room if not fortunate to be isolated in my own house seems like giving up a lot of liberty for the sake of others. And you want to talk to me about self-denial? Save your digital clicks, I am not in the mood for more restrictive demands!

But it might be a good time for all of us to think about the subject. In your isolated moments when some of your freedoms are being put on hold, and you are deprived of the “good life” to which you have been accustomed, how content are you? Do you feel blessed with your Lord when you lack your accustomed comforts? I do not hear Paul complaining when he found himself lacking food and sufficient clothing (*2 Corinthians 11:27*). Why? He lived a life of self-denial. He could be deprived of the comforts which his own body needed. He could do all things with contentment because he was living out his daily life with the Lord who gave him sufficient strength for all circumstances (*Philippians 4:15*).

Cooped up in your room or house, are you deprived of food? You mean your loved ones are making your food desires a reality? Are you deprived of mental escape from

isolation’s boredom? It could be a time catch up on your Bible reading and stimulate the godly mind. Meditating on the life-giving and root-building Word of God is an opportunity you might still have (*Psalms 1:2-3*).

You know, your isolation might be a blessing to realize how much of the Bible you can read being deprived of television and social media. I see. Your family has made sure you have a television in your room so you can catch up on your favorite shows and movies. I guess pandemic’s forced quarantine has not forced many of us to think of self-denial as much as one might think it would.

When our society returns to a “new normal,” will self-denial characterize us? We probably will continue to be able to “drive thru” satisfying our desires for food at a moment’s notice, even if we cannot enter the closed dining room. Obtaining the needed caffeine boost will probably still be just around the corner. Instead of delaying pleasures, our society will probably continue to pull out the plastic to enjoy the now and pay later plan.

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 it is no longer “my will,” but “God’s will” that will control my life. It is that “poverty of spirit” where one approaches God being destitute of one’s own will allowing God’s rule to have its proper place in his life (*Matthew 5:3*).

The lusts surrounding 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 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.” The self-controlled or sober mind must deny self so both body and spirit can serve our only Master in godliness.

If we do not cultivate self-denial we will chafe under the demands of “daily cross bearing.” Self-denial allows us to embrace the difficulties with contentment!