

G R O W

Get focused, Read, Observation, Worship

Deny Self – Luke 9:23

What would be something really hard to sacrifice? Would it be a gaming system, smart phone, vehicle, or something else like dreams and ambitions? When I went off to college, I had big plans. I was going to live my life by my own rules, I was going to be free, and I was going to have fun. But I surrendered all my plans and aspirations to follow Jesus, and when I did, I truly started to live for the first time.

GET FOCUSED

Time with God is worth it; it's really the most valuable thing. But there's so many distractions, both external and internal. So, take a few moments to quiet yourself and get focused.

READ

When we read our Bibles, we hear God speak. The Bible is God inspired and His message to us. So, get your Bible ready to read our main text and the surrounding verses for context.

OBSERVATION (COMB through the text)

In addition to reading our main passage, read the verses around it to understand the **context**. The Gospels are written so that we will know that Jesus is Lord and Savior and that we can find life in Him (John 20:31). In Luke 9, Jesus is identified as the Christ (v20) and Jesus foretells His death and resurrection (v22). Then we have our focus verse and explanation. If we want to find life in Jesus' name, we must do what He calls us to do in Luke 9:23.

Next, we want to **observe** the key words and phrases in verse 23. What stands out to you? Some key words and phrases are: deny himself, take up his cross, daily, and follow me.

To help understand the **meaning** of these words and phrases, invest in a good study Bible or utilize online tools like netbible.org.

Deny means to disregard self-interest. To deny self means to not think of your interest but to look to the interest of another. In v24, Jesus says we must "lose" our lives, which means to give up entirely. Following Jesus involves complete surrender. In Luke 14:26, Jesus says that we are to

“hate” everyone else, including self, but what does that mean. It was an idiom, a familiar expression, that meant everyone else comes second behind Jesus. He must be our most important one, even more important than our closest relationships.

Take up Cross: a cross was a place of execution, a place of death. Those crucified would have to carry their cross to their place of execution. So, Jesus uses an extreme image to convey that we must completely surrender to Him, to completely die to self.

Daily: Following Jesus is a daily commitment, not just once a week or on special occasions. It should move us that God desires a close, daily relationship with us.

Follow Me: This was a familiar Jewish expression used by rabbis, they religious leaders and teachers. It was a call to join your life to another, to learn how to live from them. Answering this call means that we want to become like Jesus and that He will be our truth.

So, what’s the **bottom-line**, how would you sum all this up? **We are called to follow Jesus with everything, completely surrendering all to Him.**

WORSHIP

So, how will we live this out, what does it mean for our lives? **Worship** is so much more than songs; it is honoring God with our lives. Jesus asks a question in verse 25, “what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?” To follow Jesus involves self-sacrifice and surrender; life will be completely different, with new goals and aspirations. Some are not up for this, as they don’t want to give up their worldly standing, worldly luxuries, worldly ways, etc. But by doing so, they lose their souls; they remains at odd with God and under condemnation. You may gain everything in this world, only to perish for all eternity. Let’s not be so temporal minded; let’s life for eternity. When we daily surrender to Jesus, by denying our self-interest and pursuing His interest, we truly worship Him. By doing so, we declare that Jesus is more important than worldly gain, that Jesus is more valuable than anything else.