

# TOTAL SURRENDER

Luke 9:23

“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”

Jesus makes it clear that if we are going to follow him, a casual no strings attached arrangement isn't a possibility. You can't come after Jesus without denying yourself!

The phrase “deny yourself” isn't just the idea of saying no to yourself. The idea here is that you do not even acknowledge or recognize your own existence. (Do you see what happens when I go without preaching for one week?!)

- So the question that is before us today is, how do we deny ourselves in a culture that says it's all about you?
  - Matthew 19:16 helps us out with that question. A man who we have identified as the “rich young ruler” asked Jesus, “Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?” Jesus says to him, “Sell all your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me.”
  - Many people want to make this story about money, but its not, it's about following Jesus. Jesus put this man at a cross roads. Either follow Jesus or love your stuff. You cant do both!
  - We are all standing at the same cross roads. We all have to choose, and its not a one time choice, it's a daily one that has to be made by you and you alone!!

## Living In Denial

The Author of the book “Not A Fan” told a story of his trip to Africa. As he was preaching two young men in their twenties raised their hands for salvation only to be banished from the village they grew up in and excommunicated by their own

families. They knew this would happen when they made the decision. They chose Jesus over family and home. Fans don't do that!!!

- Followers are willing to deny themselves and say. "I choose Jesus." Over family, money, friends, career, or over what people think about me!!!! Even if it costs me everything!!
- When we sacrificially deny ourselves for Christ's sake it is the clearest evidence of our committed love to him.
- Another way fans try to follow Jesus without denying themselves is by compartmentalizing the areas of their lives they don't want him to have access to. They try to negotiate the terms of the deal. It's the old I'll follow you Jesus but...don't ask me to forgive, don't ask me to give more than I want to, and don't ask me to tithe, you know I cant afford that!!!
- The Barna research group reported that 65% of 18-42 year olds in America have made a personal commitment to Jesus that is still important. They also showed that only 23% of those people believe that sex outside of marriage is wrong. And only 13% said getting drunk is a sin. In other words, 65% say they are committed to Jesus but not in every area of their lives. Jesus never left open the option of selective commitment.
- This doesn't mean you will follow perfectly, but you can't say I'm a Christian and then refuse to follow Christ when it comes to certain people or places or practices.
- The rich young ruler wanted to say yes to Jesus without a commitment to say no to himself. Instead of approaching their faith with a spirit of denial that says, "What can I do for Jesus?" they have a consumer mentality that says, "What can Jesus do for me?"

- When Peter began 2 Peter, he didn't introduce himself by saying, "Peter, a best friend to Jesus, present at the Mount of Transfiguration, and preacher on the day of Pentecost. Instead he says, "Simon Peter a slave." NLT John, Timothy, and Jude all give themselves the same title. James doesn't begin his letter by saying, I'm the half-brother of The Son of God." He begins by saying, "James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." NLT
- Bill bright, the founder of Campus Crusade For Christ. Wrote a tract called The Four Spiritual Laws that printed more than 2.5 Billion copies worldwide. He was central to the making of the "Jesus" film that has been seen by more than 4 billion people in 660 languages around the world. But if you were to visit his gravesite, you would find three words on his Tombstone: Slave For Christ.
- Why would anyone want to be slave? IT is rare but it did happen in the Old Testament. I'm not going to read it but its found in Deut. 15:16-17. They are called bond slaves. After seven years as a slave if you are permitted to return home free but if you loved your master and wanted to stay because you have it better off as a slave than back home then. They willingly stay under the direction of their master.
- A bond slave is what most New Testament writers refer to themselves as. A bond slave says, "Everything I have, everything I am, I sign over to you." That's what Jesus was wanting from the rich ruler, and that's what Jesus is wanting from each and every one of us today, right now.
  - In closing: The story of Millard and Linda Fuller, founders of Habitat for Humanity. He was a millionaire at age 29. Millard said, "The minister didn't understand that we weren't giving up money and the things money could buy. We giving up period." Reference page 154 of the book "Not A Fan for the full story.
- That's what the story of the Rich Young Ruler is really about. It's not about just giving up money and things money could buy; it's about giving up period! That is what it means to deny yourself and follow Christ.