

When I Die To Myself, I ...

Practical Self-Denial

Ephesians 4:20-24

Selfishness is the most besetting of sins. It is at the heart of all that goes wrong between us and God (cf. Gen. 3:1-6). Self-denial is, understandably, God's absolute prerequisite for lifesaving rehabilitation. God's insistence on "death" or "crucifixion" as the defining nature of our self-denial has enormous implications (Gal. 5:24; 6:14-15). What are they?

A New Master is Chosen

- We can serve but one master at a time (Matt. 6:24)
- The one we choose as Lord is supposed to rule our lives (Lk. 6:46)
- Obedience is a nonnegotiable requirement (Matt. 7:21-23)

The Change Begins With Conversion and Continues Until We Die

- We are buried with Christ in baptism (Rom. 6:3-4)
- The new life, however, remains for us to choose (Rom. 6:12-14)
- Baptism involves a commitment to the teachings of Jesus (Rom. 6:17; Matt. 28:20)

The Master We *Embrace* Results in a Lifestyle

- It is a very personal thing (II Cor. 5:14-15)
- Love rules (Jn. 14:15, 23)
- "Style" has ongoing implications (cf. I Jn. 1:7; 3:4-11)

Scripture, not Culture, Tradition, Trendiness, or Emotions, Sets the Tone

- Truth is the only standard for Christian holiness (Jn. 17:17)
- Scripture alone fully supplies all we need (II Tim. 3:16-17)
- The world speaks another language, but those who belong to Jesus listen to Him (Jn. 10:1-5, 27)

The dynamics of self-denial are Christ-centered. The death of prideful self-assertion is necessary, but it is a process, not the work of but a moment in time. The process, however, does stem from a moment of commitment (Acts 2:37) and an action of obedience (Acts 2:38, 41). The beginning and the continuation are a response to the Good News about Jesus and the transforming relationship it forges with Him in our lives (Rom. 8:29).