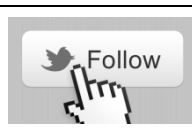


FOLLOWERS Part 3 Denying Selfie



Luke 9:22-26

- * About halfway through his ministry, Jesus started talking about His death and the emphasis changed to SUFFERING, COST, SACRIFICE.
- * The crowd suddenly THINNED as they began to count that COST.

THE BIG IDEA: Jesus wouldn't have said 'DENY SELF' if it hadn't been extremely IMPORTANT and very GOOD FOR US.

→ Craig Groeschel wrote: "When we contrast selfie-centredness with what Jesus requires – selfless surrender, the difference is striking ... Our culture says 'Show yourself.' Jesus says 'deny yourself' ... *How does our culture say Show Yourself? What are the fine lines of self-promotion and marketing? What are the traps? What are your motivations for posting what you post? Are you ever tempted to post things for self-centred reasons? How can that be a bad thing?*

Denying self is NOT

Self-LOATHING ... Self-ABUSE ... Self-NEGLECT

The contradiction is that each of those actually end up focussing on SELF.

→ *Why is that true? What are the different forms of pride (besides arrogant boasting)?*

→ *What 'denying self' messages have you heard in the past? Have they been helpful? What are the possible errors / extremes we can fall into?*

Countering those 4 strong cultural pulls

Each one is a subtle DISTORTION, PERVERSION, COUNTERFEIT of the REAL THING.

- INDIVIDUALISM:** Is it about you? God LOVES you, the individual very much ... He didn't come to CONDEMN, OPPRESS, CRUSH you, but to REDEEM, RESTORE, REFINE you.
- NARCISSISM:** Are you beautiful? ABSOLUTELY, you are (Psalm 139:13-18, Genesis 1:27-31 ... Don't let ANYONE tell you OTHERWISE ... If you think you're not, it's not because of anything GOD said.
- MATERIALISM:** Blessing for you? God LONGS to BLESS you (Matthew 7:7-11) ... It's okay to HAVE stuff as long as stuff doesn't HAVE you.
- ENTITLEMENT:** Serving you? Jesus BURST that bubble (Matthew 20:25-28).
→ *How are each of those distortions / perversions / counterfeits of the real thing? Have any of them attempted to seduce you? What is there in all of that that people are longing for and how can the negative aspects of social media fuel them?*

THE CRUX: It all comes down to IDENTITY

People are desperately STRUGGLING for IDENTITY.

- * WHO am I? WHY am I here? WHAT am I supposed to be like?
- * The enemy ATTACKS identity REMORSELESSLY.

→ *What do you think about selfies? Are there dangers? How do they relate to identity? (Look where I am. Look who I'm with. Look how exciting my life is. Look how good I can look.)*

THE SCOOP: We have NEW identity IN CHRIST.

= Forgiven, blood-washed, liberated ... New name, new future, new Lord ... New promises, destiny, purpose ... New strength, power, authority, boldness

- * But, the enemy wants you STUCK back in your OLD identity: Trying to stand on your own two feet, doing it in your own strength, falling at all the old hurdle, looking in the mirror and seeing SINFUL, BOUND + DEFEATED.
- * That's why Jesus said, DENY SELF → Don't FEED that stuff, CUT it off at the ROOTS, don't ENTERTAIN it, FALL for it or become ENSNARED by it.
- * It's time to realise WHO YOU ARE = A son / daughter of Most High ... redeemed, righteous and holy ... liberated, empowered, called.
- * We need CONSTANT REMINDING of who we are in Christ.

→ *How can we grow strong in our identity in Christ?*

→ *Why is our old identity so dangerous? What's the enemy trying to do / get you to focus on?*

→ *Identity in Christ v old identity is a matter of rock v sand ... truth v lies ... stability v insecurity ... It's hope v despair ... beauty v ashes ... life v death. Discuss!*

WHAT DOES IT MEAN, then, TO DENY SELF?

1. Don't TAKE YOURSELF so SERIOUSLY.

- * Acknowledge that you're not PERFECT yet + lean into GOD AT WORK in you.

→ *Do you take yourself too seriously? Do you give yourself too hard a time? Do you focus on the errors at the expense of the successes? What does true authenticity look like?*

2. Recognise that the enemy wants you to make it about YOU, because that's the big DISTRACTION.

- * The more you make it about YOU, the more DISAPPOINTED you'll become.
- * The more you make it about HIM, the more FULFILLED, CONFIDENT, BALANCED you'll become.

→ *On a sliding scale on 1-10, is it about you or Him? How does that choice relate to the quality of your life?*

3. There's an INTERNAL BATTLE that FLESH must not win (Galatians 5:16-24)

- * The devil is playing into an EPIDEMIC of INSECURITY.
- * THE REMEDY: STARVE self/flesh by WALKING in the SPIRIT.

→ *Is there an epidemic of insecurity? What are the symptoms? How wide spread is it? What is the remedy? How do you starve the flesh? What happens if you don't?*

4. There's a NEW AGENDA in play and it's HIS.

- * We all long to be part of something MORE, BIGGER, TOGETHER = a new CAUSE, the cause of CHRIST.

→ *There's a strong clash at the moment being articulated by younger generations between the unrelenting pull towards individualism versus a growing desire for belonging, purpose and cause. How does denying self help?*