

Courageously Fighting Yourself
(The Challenge of Self-Denial)
Matthew 16:21-26 (NKJV), Part 2

November 17-18, 2018

Big Question: What will you deny yourself to accomplish your goals?

Introduction: Last Week Review

1. Jesus Courageously Lays Out The Fight Plan That Peter Struggles With (Matthew 16:21–23)

- 21 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and **suffer** many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be **killed**, and be raised the third day 22 Then Peter took Him aside and **began to rebuke Him**, saying, “Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!” 23 But He turned and said to Peter, “**Get behind Me, Satan!** You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.” (NKJV)

2. Jesus Courageously Lays Out The Price Tag for Followers (Matthew 16:24-26)

- 24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him **deny himself**, and **take up his cross**, and **follow Me**. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?
 - A. You must **deny** yourself (What will you deny yourself to win your fight?)
 - B. You must take up your **cross** (What responsibility will you carry to win your fight?)
 - C. You must be willing to **follow** (Who are you willing to follow that can help you win your fight?)

I. Four Things Self-Denial Can Bring Into Your Life
(Watch Jesus in Gethsemane Model Self-Denial)

The Painful Side of Self-Denial

1. Self-Denial can cause isolation

- **36** Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, “Sit here while I go and pray over there.”

2. Self-Denial can cause sorrow

- **37** And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be **sorrowful and deeply distressed**. 38 Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.”

3. Self-Denial can cause confusion (Listen to the tone of this request)

- 39 He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, **not as I will, but as You will.**”

4. Self-Denial can cause emotional exhaustion

- **40 Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? 41 Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”**42 Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.” 43 And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.44 So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. 45 Then He came to His disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46 Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.”

The Benefit Side of Self-Denial

1. Isolation is often the soil that grows blessings and opportunity (Success often demands it)
2. Sorrow is often the place where you learn the lessons that will change your life
3. Confusion is often the place where you learn humility and how to trust others
4. Exhaustion is the red flag that can save your life if you pay attention

Conclusion:

II. Four Things I Have Noticed People Have Trouble Denying Themselves

1. Companionship (They have trouble being alone)
2. Criticism (They have trouble being positive)
3. **Complacency** (They have trouble staying productive)
4. Bondages (They have trouble staying free from bad habits.)
5. Fatigue (They have trouble staying rested)

Complacency Defined:

- “complacency- a feeling of contentment or self-satisfaction, often combined with a lack of awareness of pending trouble or controversy. An example of complacency is the type of attitude a long-time leader may have.”

(Your Dictionary: <http://www.yourdictionary.com/complacency>)

Next Time: Courageously Fighting By Taking Up your Cross