



# **Lights and Perfection, Inc.**

**Go and make disciples!**

E-votional 109

## **Deny Yourself**

Luke 9:23-26 (ESV)

*And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.*

The morning that I read this passage of Scripture came after many grueling days of opposition and difficulty of a kind I could not even begin to reiterate. So on a morning after these many grueling days, I had enough and was ready to stop. That was until I read my Bible. The chosen Scripture passage came at a time when I needed it the most. Very pointedly it was as if Jesus stood before me first thing in the morning and said, '*If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.*'

As soon as I read this, I thought to myself God is on time. Here I was at the brink of insanity in dealing with the opposition to the point that I was getting physically ill. Then there it is, deny yourself and take up your cross. I have to be honest here for a moment, this passage of Scripture took me right out of my woes and self-pity and rejuvenated me to another level of glory in Christ Jesus. After that, I was ready to take on the world all over again. Praise the Lord!

Now, I want to add, that I am not trying to make this all about me. I am simply sharing with you a struggle and an experience where I received from God some extra encouragement for the battle ahead. But while I am calling this encouragement, I also wanted to share that the opposition didn't cease, nor did my perception of it.

Instead, as I read the passage of Scripture above, I also realized that Jesus just spoke this to His disciples right after verses 21-22, where He spoke of how He

was going to be rejected, killed, and then raise from the dead on the third day. Hallelujah! I feel a resurrection in my soul!

Could you imagine with me for just a moment that you were there when Jesus just described His awful crucifixion before it took place and how He would be rejected, killed, and then raise from the dead? Then, right after this, He says, *'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.'*

Daily! Take up your cross daily! You mean that I have to endure and keep moving through this daily? It's not just a once-in-a-while thing? Man!

But in all seriousness, here Jesus is again telling forth of His rejection, killing, and resurrection and then in the very next breath says to His disciples, yeah, your next. Obviously, that is my added paraphrase here. But really, let this sink in. Jesus in the very next breath after telling forth of His death, tells us that we are not followers of His unless we are willing to go through the same.

Now, if you are like me, I was rather wanting to hear a passage of Scripture saying that God would deliver me from this terrible opposition, but instead, this is the passage of Scripture that I hear. Deny yourself and take up your cross. I did not hear a there there now, or I know it's tough. I heard deny yourself and take up your cross. So where's the hope one might ask because there is always hope.

Well, let's recap to get to that point. Very simply Jesus mentioned in verses 21-22 that He would be rejected, killed, and then raise from the dead. From the recap, we can quickly ascertain that the hope we are speaking about is not necessarily about what happens in this life, but what happens in the one to come. That's it the resurrection. Oh, praise Him!

Added onto this in the here and now is something that is far greater than anything the world has to offer. That is the inner strength and power of the Holy Spirit to bring us out of those moments of clear desperation and hopelessness to find that all we need the whole time was Christ alone.

What I mean, is that for example, the morning that I read this passage of Scripture, I was anything but strong in the Lord and the power of His might. But when I read this passage of Scripture and allowed for the Holy Spirit to impart it into me it was as if all of that opposition and difficulty (even though still physically present) vanished. It was at the moment that I read the passage that I realized that God was not going to remove the difficulty or the opposition and when I accepted the words of Jesus and said yes Lord let's go that I received

the courage to move forward just like He did. Praise God!

Brothers and sisters, I am so thankful for a God that tells it how it is and gives us the power to live for Him and move through any obstacle or difficulty that is in our way. We are definitely not promised to have an easy life, but it is still more worth living than when we were dead in our sins. Hallelujah!

The takeaway here is that those who truly desire to follow Christ must also live like Christ. That is to say that we must also take up our crosses and daily that to follow Him just like He carried the cross of rejection, being killed, but then because of it raised from the dead. After all, the Lord Himself said in John 15:20 (ESV), *'Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.'*

Brothers and sisters, we are honored to be able to equip and encourage you in the Word of God. And as the times get darker and darker, we sincerely ask for your prayers to stay faithful to the Lord's calling. We love you all! The Lord bless you in Jesus name. Amen.

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