

SELF-DENIAL

BIBLE TEXT : Matthew 8:19-22; 10:37-39; 16:24-27; Luke 14 :33; Philippians 3:7, 8; Romans 15:1-3.

LESSON 469 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Matthew 8:19-22

19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

Matthew 10:37-39

37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

Matthew 16:24-27

24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose

Bible References:

I Self-Denial Taught

1. The love of God must be greater than that of our family, Matthew 8:21, 22; Matthew 10:37-39.
2. We must love God more than ourselves, Matthew 16:24-27.
3. Christ must mean more to us than earthly possessions,

Matthew 19: 21

21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me.
Luke 14:33.

II Self-Denial Practiced

1. Jesus is the supreme example of self-denial, Matthew 8:19, 20, Romans 15:1-3

II Corinthians 8:9

9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

Philippians 2:5-8

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

2. Abraham left kindred, home, country, and lived in tents; refused rewards, and also offered up his son in obedience to God.

Hebrews 11:8-19

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he saw not, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.

10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

11 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, *so many* stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

16 But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

his life for my sake shall find it.
26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?
27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Luke 14 :33

33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Philippians 3:7, 8

7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.
8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ,

Romans 15:1-3

1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.
2 Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification.
3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,
18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:
19 Accounting that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

Genesis 12:1-8

1 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:
2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:
3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.
4 So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram *was* seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.
5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.
6 And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite *was* then in the land.
7 And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.
8 And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, *having* Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.

Genesis 14:21-24

21 And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.
22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,
23 That I will not *take* from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that *is* thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich:
24 Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.

Genesis 22:1-19

1 And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, *here I am*.
2 And he said, Take now thy son, thine only *son* Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.
3 And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.
4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.
5 And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.
6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid *it* upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.
7 And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here *am* I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering?
8 And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

9 And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

10 And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

11 And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here *am* I.

12 And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son* from me.

13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind *him* a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

14 And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said *to* this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

15 And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,

16 And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son*:

17 That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

19 So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.

3. **Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.**

Hebrews 11:24-27.

24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

4. **A widow cast her all into the treasury.**

Luke 21:4.

4 For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.

5. **The Apostles forsook all to follow Jesus.**

Matthew 4:18-22

18 And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

20 And they straightway left *their* nets, and followed him.

21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James *the son of* Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

22 And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

Matthew 9:9

9 And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

Matthew 19:27-30.

27 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?

28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

30 But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last *shall be* first.

6. Paul counted all things but loss for Christ, Philippians 3:8.

Notes:

Self-Denial

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). Self-denial is the very heart and centre of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Without a willingness to forsake all one cannot be a disciple of Jesus. "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33). Self-denial, then, must be practiced not only by ministers and missionaries, but by everyone who desires to make Heaven his home. Self-denial means more than just forsaking sin and sinful pleasures. It also goes beyond a willingness to make sacrifices for the Lord and His work.

Warnings

Jesus warned, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life and so that day come upon you unawares." Surfeiting is interpreted as "immoderate indulgence, as in food or drink." As the physical heart is endangered by fat from overeating, so the spiritual life of a Christian is endangered by indulgence. One of the great dangers a Christian has to face is overindulging in the things of this life. It is possible that one might keep himself from the sinful pleasures but succumb to being engrossed in the "cares of this life." If time, money, and ambitions are taken up with accumulating the good things of living, all the latest equipment; if hearts become set on these things, the Cross is abandoned. "Love not the world neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15).

If God blesses our life with an abundance, let us take heed lest we become like Jeshurun who waxed fat and kicked (Deuteronomy 32:15). Today in America we see men with their sports equipment spending their Sundays boating on the rivers, running to the mountains or beaches, taking the Lord's Day to satisfy their own fleshly desires. Is this self-denial?

Some things that are lawful are not expedient. In other words, if anything takes us away from our time in prayer, the Word, or service for God it is not good for us. If we are going to follow Christ it is necessary that we set our affections "on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2).

The Mind of Christ

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:5-8). He had the power to reign as a king, but He took upon Him the form of a servant; all things were created by Him, but He built Himself no home. He could have called more than twelve legions of angels, but He made no defence. "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Luke 9: 58). What an example of self-denial our Saviour has set!

QUESTIONS

1. What is a cross?
2. What is self-denial?
3. In what way did Abraham deny himself ?
4. What did Moses forsake to be a follower of God?
5. What do the Scriptures tell us of the "mind of Christ"?
6. What were some of the things the Apostles gave up to follow Christ?
7. What did Paul suffer for Christ?
8. What warnings are we given against the line of self-indulgence?
9. What are the rewards offered to those who forsake all to follow Jesus?
10. What can you do to be a better soldier of the Cross?

Jesus, Himself, "for the joy that was set before him endured the cross" (Hebrews 12:2). The "author and finisher of our faith" rejoiced in doing the will of His Father and completing the work that God had given Him to do. Those of His followers who have caught the vision of eternal values, also find joy in obedience to His plan. An indulged spoiled child soon tires of everything, but a person who makes sacrifices for the Gospel feels a thrill that no amount of accumulation of world's goods can equal. Jesus said, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). Life realises its highest goal in obedience to the Master's plan.

The Apostles

It was not the glamour of earthly reward that caused Peter, Andrew, James, and John to leave their family occupation of generations, abandon their boats and fishing gear, forsake their family and friends and respond to the call, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4: 19). Jesus did not appeal to His disciples with a promise of two cars to every family, a shorter work week and more fringe benefits; instead He called for self-denial and offered a cross.

Abraham

The call of God to Abraham entailed self-denial and sacrifice. It was a call to leave his home and kinfolk behind and move to a strange, distant land. There were no jet planes with meals served aloft; travel was rigorous and the way was beset with many dangers. Abraham was comfortably situated in the land of Ur of the Chaldees, but he responded to the voice of God and lived in tents with his family because "he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11: 10).

Moses

Moses was being reared in the palatial court of Pharaoh, but "when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Hebrews 11:24, 25). His self-denying choice took him from the luxurious palace life to 80 years of desert wandering; but "he endured, as seeing him who is invisible."

Paul

The Apostle Paul had everything coming his way. He was well educated and was gaining prestige and recognition as a leader of men. Suddenly a light from Heaven shone about him, and he heard the voice of the persecuted Nazarene. His life was immediately changed to one of self-denial and sacrifice. He said: "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Philippians 3:7, 8).

Paul had a goal; he had a price for which he was reaching. No earthly cost was too great to pay; and no hardship too difficult to endure. He gloried in infirmities and valued the suffering because of their relationship to the Cross of Christ. He was sure of his crown and encouraged all to "be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1).

Your Vision

Have you caught a vision of self-denial and a Kingdom to be won? or have you settled down to enjoy the pleasures of this life for a season? A crown awaits all those who will take up their cross. Will you?