**Self-Control #2, *Self-Denial***

Last week, in a lesson called “Self-Control,” we *defined* our subject simply as manifesting *control* over *self* (in all its constituent parts, rather than just our behavior). We also noticed the *origin/source* of “self-control” as being *divine* rather than *of the devil* (from Luke8:26-29), and for us, as stemming from *true knowledge* and *faith* (which both originating from the Word), then *increasing* with the *application of diligence, in our faith,* to the *supplying of it* with and as a *key* to “unlocking” and enabling the other so-called “Christian Graces,” 2Pet.1:2-7. Thus, to truly “control self,” we must control our *thoughts, emotions,* and *passions/desires* in order to regulate or change our *bodies/behavior.*

Now, after covering those basics, we will begin what I would consider the “how to” part. Theory is important and even necessary, but to be what God wants us to be (cf. 1Pet.1:13-16; 2Pet.3:11-16), and *increase* to *stability* and *security* (cf. 2Pet.1:8-11), we have to understand, develop, and manifest the practical aspect of self-control.

**To Develop and Practice *Self-Control,* we must master *Self-Denial,* Matt.16:24-26.**

Such necessarily includes…

* Being willing to ***deny* all aspects of *self,* v.24a:**
* Our ***thoughts****-* 2Cor.2:5
* Our ***emotions****-* Matt.15:18-19; 22:37; 6:21
* Our ***passions****-* Col.3:5
* Our ***bodies****,* Col.3:5
* Being willing to ***take up our cross,* v.24b.**

When Jesus made this requirement of His *disciples,* the *cross* had no spiritual significance. It was before His own crucifixion, so the *cross* was just a gruesome symbol of *death,* Rom.8:12-13. This is not accomplished *once* at baptism- though through it we are certainly *crucified with Christ* (cf. Rom.6:3-6), but is an *every day* requirement (Luke 9:23) to *put to death the flesh* and its *deeds*, Rom.8:6!

* Being willing to ***follow******Him****,* **v.24c.**

It’s simple (to *understand* at least!): no one can *follow* two at once. Not Jesus *and* Satan, Rom.6:16,18,19-22. Not Jesus *and* the world, John 7:7; 15:18-19 and most importantly to our purposes here, not Jesus *and* self, Matt.16:24; Amos 3:3; 1John 2:6,11!

* Being willing to ***lose your life,* v.25.**

*Death* is not really the point, though we must be willing to go that far in following Christ also, Rev.2:10. Instead, it is allowing *your* life to be *“hidden”* (*kyrpto/krupto-* to *cover* or be *hidden* or *conceal*) *in* and *with Christ* to the point that you are *overshadowed* and He is *visible,* Col.3:3-4; cf. Gal.2:20.

**Conclusion**: If we are ever to muster any degree of self-control, we must summon the strength to say “No” to ourselves. “No” to our *thoughts, feelings, passions,* and *bodies,* but “Yes” to Christ in all things.