



"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – May 10, 2009

Heart to Heart...

One of the most difficult teachings for many to follow and accept is that of self-denial. It's an easy topic to discuss but it is something different to practice it. ***"If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it."*** (Matthew 16:24-25) Our walk with the Lord is about denying ourselves, surrendering our heart and lives to Jesus. We deny our desires and put His desires in that place.

Sometimes people are faced with the truth of the word, but their tie to their families is stronger than the truth and they cannot deny themselves to follow Jesus. The love for the parents or siblings is so intense they simply cannot let go to take hold of the truth. ***"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."*** (Matthew 10:37)

Walking with the Lord begins with self denial. There is no spiritual progress, no help from God until we are willing to surrender completely to His word and will. When we deny ourselves, our lives begin to take on new meaning and depth. Jesus said when one denies themselves, it is the gaining of life, His life. It is an expansion of life, not a narrowing of it. Jesus said He came ***"...that we might have life and have it abundantly."*** (John 10:10) Jesus offers us His life to share in but it comes only through surrender, self denial. When we surrender ourselves, we are saved from losing our lives to anyone or anything created on this earth. We find true life!

When a young man or lady denies themselves of immorality of any kind, it keeps them from dishonor and life flourishes in them. They do not dishonor the Lord, their families or themselves. When a person denies gossip, it might turn someone away from them, but it will bring many more friends to your life. To deny our personal pleasure in order to worship with our brothers and sisters will bring a new depth of faith and a renewal that could not be touched otherwise.

In the end, when our lives are over and we stand face to face with the Lord, we will be so thankful that we lived a disciplined and self-denial life. We will never regret one choice we made to deny ourselves. Self-denial takes us to eternity. If we aren't willing to sacrifice ourselves for the sake of the Lord, our lives will end with only the things and pleasures we could muster in this life, forfeiting our lives for eternity. Think about it!!!

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