

Foundation to Fullness: Part 1

Deny yourself take up your cross and follow me: Humility

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We always need reminders; we are human, with short attention spans and many distractions. A real understanding of who God is and who I am is something that I constantly need a reminder of...

Starts in Humility

23 Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. 25 What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self? 26 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. 27 I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God."

Fun Fact: Cross was a dirty word in Jesus' day to most upper-middle class people. It would have been similar to walking into a party and saying ABORTION loudly...a bit jarring, a bit disconcerting. But Jesus said those who come after him would take up his cross daily...

Deny yourself...put yourself down, do not gratify yourself.
Take up your cross...sacrifice, obedience, embarrassment, shame.
Follow me...faith, trust.

The prospect seems grim at this point...Christianity must be a real drag...but it's going past the cross; it doesn't end there.

We are going towards the life Jesus desires us to have! We are risen with Christ when we follow and believe him...and we are miraculously enabled to become a Servant Body which Celebrates the god of the Scriptures [our pillars], but it all begins with following Christ in humility.

So we have to put ourselves down, and recognize Jesus as sufficient, right? Are you sure? Because there's a tendency to try to carry and drag ourselves after Christ has given us that initial 'pick-up'...enter the 'well-tank fiasco'.

Deny yourself, take up the cross and follow me:

In order to truly follow God to where he is taking me, I must put myself [my efforts, my dreams of prideful victory, my self-salvation] down, and lift up the cross: this phrase of self denial is found five times in the three synoptic gospels, and is usually followed by the sentiment, "those who desire to save their life will lose it, but those who lose their life for my sake will find it..." We find life as we put ourselves down and pick up Christ.

Other notes:

Matthew: 10:38, 16:24

Mark: 8:34

Luke: 9:23, 14:27

humble - cause to be unpretentious

Deny yourself: what does it mean to deny yourself? Do not indulge, restrain, control yourself. What are we to deny in ourselves...control, the ability to take control

Take up the cross: what does Jesus mean by this? Kill yourself, die to self, suffer in the same way Christ suffered

Follow him: what does Jesus mean by this? This is follow him to obedience (Phil. 2), through pain, through punishment, and through fear, through dark times, but eventually to rest, to reward and to perfect relationship.

Who we long to be in our pillars:

A joyfully serving (Diakonos) body (Somatos) who celebrates (Euphraino) the God of the scriptures (Logos) with our lives.

How we will ever hope to get there:

1. Authentic understanding of who God is.
2. Authentic understanding of who I am in Christ
3. Abiding in him to the point of surrendered obedience in my everyday life.