

Volume

6

DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING

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Not I but CHRIST

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Scripture Texts

2Cor 5:17; Col 3:1-10; Gal 2:20,21; 5:24-26; Rom 6:3-14; Phil 1:20,21; 1Cor 5:1-10

The self-life is stubborn, arrogant and defiant to every correction. It will not obey God's word, indeed it cannot,

“because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (rom 8:7,8).

The way out is not to bend him down...but to uproot the self-life and crush it to death. Nothing can be done to improve on him. Any little trace of the old man you permit in your life now surely will outgrow and choke up whatever spiritual life you think you are nurturing.

As Cain slew Abel, as Esau sought to kill Jacob, as Ishmael persecuted Isaac, as Joseph's senior brothers bound him up in a dry pit and later sold him for 20 pieces of silver, so does the self-life, the old man, to everything spiritual. Have you noticed that in each example it is always the seniors that persecuted? The old man came first. You are more accustomed to his way and lifestyle than the new life.

Self does not need any pampering or training to develop, just like weeds. If left unchecked it will choke the life out of the new life. God's verdict is clear: “Cast out the son of the bondwoman”. Cut him down: crucify him.

Unfortunately self cannot crucify self. So all we need to do is to give it up to the cross of Christ. Hand him over to the **Elder**, even the Lord Jesus Who took self to the cross and nailed him up there, never to come down again.

As we have seen, by the death of Christ on the cross my old man, my self is now dead.

1. Gal 2:20,21; 5:24-26

a. "I am crucified with Christ..."

Note the firmness and certainty of this declaration. The first step into a victorious new life and clear manifestation of the resurrected life within is the revelation knowledge. Rom 6:6; col 3:3; 2Cor 5:14 – a declaration to the world system: Gal 6:14-17; Rom 11:13.

Can you face the world all around you and say boldly: leave me alone, I am crucified with Christ. My hands, my feet and my head are all nailed up. I have no hands again to cover up self. I have no head free again to nod in self- defence. My feet no longer could run errands for self. I am crucified with Christ.

b. "Nevertheless I live, yet not 'I'"

You will notice there are two 'I's. What does that mean to you and why the 'nevertheless'? For the New Life to be manifest in your life, for the fullness of God's purpose to now come through your life, you must be ready to place a '**Nevertheless**' on your daily encounter and activities.

c. **“...but Christ lives in me” (...my tabernacle)**

(Col 3:4; 1Cor 3:16; 6:19,20; 1Jn 4:4)

Let's look carefully at what God is saying to us here. **“Christ lives in me”**. What does that imply? The life in your tabernacle (body) now is the exact life of Christ. It is the same quality, has the same power, holiness and all attributes of God. **“For as He is, so are we now in the world”** 1Jn 4:17. The resurrected Christ in me.

2. **Implications**

We have now come to the point where we must consider what implication this truth has on our present pilgrimage here. What is God looking for in us now that it is 'no longer 'I' but Christ who lives' in us? Ask God that He may anoint your eyes with eye salves to see what your duty must now be.

- a. **Henceforth, we must live only for Him** (2Cor 5:15; Rom 14:7-9; 12:1,2). You have no personal reason anymore to live on earth, except for Jesus to live in you. You ought to cease to live for the old self and his pursuits, except you want to cheat Jesus who delivered you from the tyranny of the old man and the devil.

- b. **He must be magnified in us at any cost** (Phil 1:20,21)
 - i) Can you see what Paul called his duty?
 - ii) What is life all about?
 - iii) Paul wondered, **“What is life all about?”**

To Paul it was Christ...!

To you... what is life? Is it your wife? Is it money? Is it your career? Is it even your ministry? Paul said, 'To me, it is Christ'.

- c. **Frustrate not the grace of God!** (Gal 2:21; 2Cor 6:1,2).
Much has been poured out on your life. Let it not be wasted. Do not waste His death on the cross for you. Receive not the grace of God in you in vain. Keep in step with the Master!

Take up your cross daily

Introduction

“And he said to them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Lk 9:23).

All through the scriptures this has been the pattern God uses as His selection criteria for the men and women He uses. If we are to be used by Him to affect the lives of others, and have the word of God flow through us without distortion, we must come to Him on His own terms.

Notice that the three conditions for discipleship did not say, “...if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, *then* take up his cross, *then* follow Me”. That means that all the conditions must be fulfilled concurrently. As you are saying ‘No’ to self, God expects you to take up your cross and follow Jesus. It is only divided into sections for the purpose of our study. Having looked into how to secure victory over self, we shall now study the second condition.

“Take up your cross daily”.

1. What is the cross?

(a) The cross is God's instrument for terminating the natural life (i.e. the self-life, life in the flesh) Isa 53:5,6; Rom 6:6; Gal 2:20, 6:14.

It is by the cross that the 'iniquity of us all' (the self-life), the embodiment of sin (the flesh) was crucified and rendered powerless over me. By the cross 'I' became dead. I became dead to the world. Whenever the world sees me, it sees a dead man, as I live the crucified life. In other words, the world loses interest in me. It is only the cross that has such power over the flesh. The rat race of living to please, sustain and defend yourself ends at the cross.

(b) The cross is the authentic symbol and the public identification mark of the death of the old man – the flesh (Rom 6:1,2; Gal 6:14,17) When you see the crucified life, it signifies the death of the natural life.

(c) Life in the Spirit begins at the cross. It is only dead man that can resurrect. (1Cor 6:19,20). The point at which the natural man terminates is also where the spiritual life begins. The point of death is the point of resurrection. The cross (as you surrender to it) is what God uses to release and translate you from the natural life to the supernatural. It is the doorway into a life of spiritual and physical prosperity.

(d) The cross is also God's instrument for rendering the devil impotent. It nullifies the ground on which the devil can attack us. (Jn 3:3-16; Col 2:13-15)

(e) The cross insulates us from the world system so that we may be able to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit with all liberty. (Gal 6:14,17; Rom 6:14,18; 1Jn 2:15,16)

As we become liberated from the grip of the natural life, we become free and available to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

When the cross is allowed to work in any life, he is not only dead to the world but the world and everything that is in it becomes crucified, dead, rendered useless to him. He loses taste for the world and all that is in it.

2. What the cross is not

- a) The cross is not a sickness, a deformity or an infirmity. 1Cor 1:18; 3John 2. God does not give people sickness as their cross, rather all such things terminate at the cross.

- b) The cross is not a physical ornament for decorating the body, nor a symbol for ceremonial purpose (1Cor 1:18-23). Using it this way only robs the cross of its power.

3. Daily application of the cross (Lk 9:23)

- a) Why must we take up the cross daily?
 - i) We are not of the world (though we are in the world). Applying the cross daily in our lives distinguishes us from the people of the world (Jn 15:18-21).

- ii) We are still in the world and we encounter the world daily. Even though our lives have changed inside, the world has not. (Jn 17:14-17; 1Jn 2:15,16) Therefore we need the power of the cross in order to overcome the world and its influences daily. Without applying the cross the world will influence, squeeze us into its mould and standards and overcome us. It is only as we apply the cross to our lives that we experience daily victory over the world system.
 - iii) Daily application of the cross in our lives reminds us of the death of the flesh, so that we can be free everyday to serve God (Rom 6:6,7,14,19; 2Cor 5:15,17)
- (b) How to apply and experience the cross daily
- i. The power of the cross is made manifest only in someone who has seen the rottenness of himself and has become tired of himself (Rom 7:8-15,24; 1Cor 15:31).
 - ii. Reckon yourself dead...Rom 6:7,11,14; 2Cor 5:14). We were in Him when He was crucified, therefore His death becomes our death. It is credited to our account.

Count yourself dead. You are dead, that is the truth. Not that you will die. Your flesh, your human nature has been done away with and rendered impotent. Self shall no longer be your master. It's grip over you is broken. You can freely walk out of that sepulcher now, living the resurrected life.

- iii. Declare daily in your dealings with the world. (Gal 6:14,17; Heb 13:13; Rom 6:7) Don't keep quiet about it. Be bold and walk in the consciousness of the power that the cross exerts on your life. Anytime temptation comes your way God is only giving you an opportunity to prove that you are dead. Just as a dead man in hospital has to be certified dead, you, too, though through the cross you have died, you have to be proven and certified dead by the world before you are said to be dead. Therefore when temptations and provocations come your way, God does not expect you to fail, but to prove the death of the old man.

Discussion Point

What kind of provocations and temptations are likely to come your way now? Discuss how you intend to overcome them?

- iv. Prove the life of Christ within (Gal 2:20; 1Cor 16:19,20). Proving that you are dead is not enough, you must practically manifest the life of Christ, the “New Creation Life” within.
- v. Set your mind on things above (Rom 8:5; Col 3:1,2; Phil 3:7,8). Since your desire now is to do what the Holy Spirit tells you, set your mind on things above, things that the Holy Spirit wants. Devalue the things of the flesh and of the world as Paul did. Put the highest value on spiritual things and set (tune) your mind on desiring such things.
- vi. From now on live only for Jesus. (2Cor 5:15; Rom 6:13,14; 14:7-9) There is no vacuum in nature. As you stop living for the flesh, a vacuum is created. If you don't immediately start living for Jesus, the flesh and its lusts will creep back into your life. The right thing to do is to replace the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit. As the flesh is evacuated fill your mind with the word of God.
- vii. Christ must be magnified in us at any cost (Phil 1:20,21) Be willing to allow Christ to be magnified in you whether by life or by death.

Conclusion

The cross is God's wisdom for dealing with the flesh (the enemy within) and the devil (the enemy without). By the cross the power and the hold of the self-life over us is broken. By it also Satan and the principalities and powers have been rendered powerless. God did all these for us so that we might be free to serve Him in spirit and in truth.

From now on going to school or doing any work must no longer be just to earn a living but as a way of service to the Lord. Alive or dead we are the Lord's property. Can a dead man earn a salary? He who lives in you now does all these things you are claiming now. Do not rob Him of your body, your thoughts, your money, your soul, which are legally His now. He bought you with a price.

We have no other duty here on earth other than to bring glory and honour to Christ. Any job you are doing where Christ cannot be honoured and where you cannot boldly live for Christ is a **cheat**. It is an illegal private practice. You must arise at once and live only for Christ.

Personal Assessment Questions

1. *In what practical ways has the cross been at work in you, to release the inner life, as it terminates your old self-life, since this study?*
2. *What definite victory has your carrying of your cross daily brought to you from the world system and its standards? Give instances?*
3. *Were you able to apply this study to deal with sickness, oppression or any such thing in your life? What is your experience? Share a definite case.*
4. *Share what practical changes have taken place in your life since you started this study. Have you experienced any difficulty or conflict along the way? Give examples.*