LEADERSHIP LESSON #14 - FAITH...DENY YOURSELF

LESSON

To deny yourself, you essentially reject your own companionship! You come to Christ saying, "I've had it with me and with everything I am. I'm sick of my natural, depraved, impotent, sinful self. I've tried everything I know to make something out of my life and I can't do it. I'm overwhelmed with my failure. I'm overwhelmed with my disappointment. I'm overwhelmed with my emptiness. I'm overwhelmed with my sinfulness.

EXPLANATION

Prior to meeting Christ on the road to Damascus, Paul had spent a lifetime trying to please God by persecuting Christians. reach a highpoint of religious zeal and morality. After his conversion experience, he declares that "Whatever things were gain to me, those things immediately I have counted as loss." (Philippians 3:7) His perceived assets now became a liability – a loss. His law-keeping and morality…a loss. His zeal for "religion" and maintaining tradition…a loss. Paul came to the same humble attitude described in Psalm 51:17: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart." Humility is key. As a new believer, we say we want to do something for God. As a mature believer, we say how on earth could God use a broken, flawed, sinful vessel like me!

APPLICATION

John Macarthur perfectly captures how we deny self:

- When you are not forgiven, or neglected, or purposely set aside, and you sting and hurt with the insult or oversight, but your heart is happy and you're content to be counted worthy to suffer for Christ
- When your good is evil spoken of, when your wishes are crossed, your advice is disregarded, your opinions are ridiculed, and you refuse to let anger rise in your heart or even defend yourself, but take it all in patient, loyal silence
- When you lovingly and patiently bear any disorder, any irregularity, or any annoyance, when you can stand face-to-face with foolishness, extravagance, spiritual insensitivity and endure it as Jesus endured it
- When you're content with any food, any offering, any clothes, any climate, any society, any solitude, any interruption by the will of God
- When you never care to refer to yourself, or to record your own good works, or seek commendation, when you can truly love to be unknown
- When you see another brother prosper and have his needs met, and can honestly rejoice with him in spirit and feel no envy, nor even question God while your own needs are far greater and in desperate circumstances
- When you can receive correction and reproof from one of less stature than yourself, and can humbly submit inwardly as well as outwardly, finding no rebellion or resentment rising up within your heart

DIRECTION

"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23)