

**J.R. Miller:**

"Then Jesus said to His disciples: If anyone would come after Me he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me!" Matthew 16:24

There are few things at which people enact greater farces than in their feeble and foolish efforts at self-denial. Very few seem to have the remotest conception of what self-denial is!

One does without meat on Fridays, eating fish instead and thinks that he has denied himself in a most commendable way.

Another gives up candy or a certain amusement for forty days in Lent and is proud of over his great self denial.

Others make themselves miserable in various ways: inflicting pain, making useless and uncalled-for sacrifices as if God were somehow pleased when they suffer!

But none of these things constitute self-denial. There is no merit or virtue in . . .  
giving up anything,  
suffering any loss or pain, or  
making any sacrifice merely for its own sake.

True self-denial is the renouncing of SELF and the yielding of the whole life to the will of Christ. It is SELF coming down from the heart's throne, laying crown and scepter at the Master's feet and thenceforth submitting the whole life to His sway.

True self-denial is living not to please ourselves, not to advance our own personal interests but to please our Lord and do His work. It is denying ourselves anything which is sinful in His sight. It is the glad making of any sacrifice which loyalty to Him requires. It is the giving up of any pleasure or comfort for the good of others which the living out of His gospel may demand. The essential thing is that SELF gives way altogether to CHRIST as the purpose and end of life.

True self-denial, like all other traits of Christlikeness, is unconscious of itself. We deny ourselves when we follow Christ with joy and gladness, through cost and danger and suffering wherever He leads!