

## DAY 16

Yesterday we learned that one way the Devil will keep you from becoming holy is to turn you into a modern-day Pharisee. Today we will look at another one of his strategies that keeps you from becoming holy.

### **He'll turn self-denial into self-destruction**

To follow Jesus is to "*Deny ourselves and take up our cross*" (**Luke 9:57-53**). It's a call to be accountable for keeping God's commands; therefore, any call to cross-bearing will not violate other eternal commands! That means we leave and follow Jesus with our whole heart and life. Nothing should get in the way of our commitment to be fully submitted and obedient to Jesus.

To follow Jesus is an invitation to fullness of life (**John 10:10**). But the Devil will try and trick you and make you think that following God is too difficult and even impossible. He will turn self-denial into self-destruction and do all he can to "*steal, kill and destroy*" your life – and he will make you believe you are holy in the process.

**The result?** You become miserable. Then the Devil will use your misery to deceive you into thinking you must be holy since you are miserable.

### **Misery must equal holiness.**

I've lost count of how many people I have known who claim to love God but are the most miserable people you have ever met. Their relationship with God is defined by how hard their life is – and they will make sure you know how hard their life is. The enemy twists their understanding of self-denial and turns it into self-destruction, robbing them of the joy that comes from following Jesus.

Following Jesus may be challenging, but it's not miserable. It's life-giving. Denying ourselves is key to becoming and living a holy life. Let me help you understand the difference between self-denial and self-destruction.

**Self-denial** is a commitment to place yourself under the Lordship of Jesus so that you become Holy as He is holy. It's living a life that realizes satisfaction and significance only comes through obedience to Christ.

**Self-destruction** believes that satisfaction and significance are found in the pleasures and things the world offers. It assumes that you matter first and, therefore, puts your first before anyone else.

Self-denial is not self-destruction. We're called to one, but not the other.

One will make you holy; the other will leave you hopeless.

**READ:** Matthew 16:24-28, Romans 5:1-11, John 10:10

**JOURNAL (Reflect):**

- What is one insight from today's Scriptures that jumped out at you?
- Now ask the Lord why He highlighted what He did for you? What specifically, Lord, do you want to speak to me about?
- Lord, are there any areas I have turned self-denial into self-destruction?

**PRAY:**

- Ask the Lord to bring joy into your life where you are experiencing misery. Revisit your thankful list or add to it. Thank God.
- Who do you know that is experiencing or living a self-destructive lifestyle. Pray for them today and ask God to intervene with his truth and grace.