



ROTC LIFE AND FAITH: #3 - DENY SELF

DISCIPLESHIP SERIES: SESSION THREE

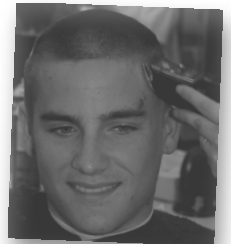
Deny Self-Centered Life

The military requires you to give up much of the control of your own life. You must regularly put your own interest aside to accomplish the requirements of the military.

The Military and your Faith require that you deny yourself as the authority and focus of your life.

Why are you willing to give up being the authority and focus of your life to be in the military?

Do you notice cadets/midshipmen who are more focused on their own interest than the interest of the military? How would you describe them?



What bad habits or personal characteristics (such as laziness, anger, etc.) would you like to change in your life so that you can be the best student, cadet/midshipman, friend?

Our greatest interests will eventually come to the surface of our lives. They will be what control our decisions and actions. If our greatest interests are self-interests, we will serve ourselves. If our greatest interests are God's, we will serve Him. Let's look at **how we can mold our character to desire God's interests.**

I. Being a follower of Christ requires us to deny ourselves as the authority and focus of our lives.

Matthew 16:24-26

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must **deny himself**, and take up his cross and follow Me. “For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”

Deny

Say no to your own interest to seek another's interest.

The next three lessons will unpack the three phrases, “*deny himself*”, “*take up his cross*”, and “*follow Me*”. Let us look at what it means to deny ourselves.

Jesus just told Peter that He must go to Jerusalem, suffer, die on a cross, and rise from the dead. Peter could not stand the thought of Jesus dying. Peter rebuked Jesus, telling Him this would never happen. Jesus told Peter to “*Get behind me, Satan,*” because he was not looking to God's interests, but to man's. Jesus exposed Peter's attitude of self-interest, which led Jesus to tell all His disciples that they must **deny themselves**. They were to deny what they wanted, and seek what God wanted.

Why do you follow the ways of the military even when it goes against what you want?



When our interests conflict with what God tells us are His interests, how should we respond? Why?

Are there things that God wants to do in your life that you are denying because of your own interests or desires?

Your desires and joys are rooted in something: Goals, Toys, Pleasures, Yourself. Plant your joys and desires in God and they will have eternal growth.

If you can deny yourself at the orders of cadets/midshipmen one year older than you, then you have great faith that can be used to place in a loving God who wants to develop you into the person He created you to be.

How do we deny ourselves so that we are able to seek God's interests? First, we must see that there is a battle going on between ourselves and God's Spirit. Second, we must develop the ability to deny ourselves so that we can be led by God's Spirit.

II. There is a conflict between myself and God's Spirit.

Galatians 5:16-17

"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please."

Do you ever sense this conflict within yourself? How?

Work of the Flesh <i>what I do</i>	Fruit of the Spirit <i>what He does</i>
<p>Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these... Gal. 5:19-21a</p>	<p>But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Gal 5:22-23</p>

Personal Reflection

List 3-5 reasons you desire to live by the Spirit instead of the Flesh.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



Why would denying a self-centered life turn out to be better for us than living a self-centered life?

Now that we know that there is a battle going on between our self-interests and God's interest, let's look at how we can develop habits that will produce
a life that is directed by God's Spirit.

III. Develop habits of denying self and pursuing God's interests.

We need to train ourselves to deny our selfish ways and pursue God's interests. The military trains you to deny your self-interests to serve the military in the protection of our country. God wants to train you to deny your tendencies to be self-centered so that you can serve His kingdom on earth.

We develop these habits by allowing God to control our hearts and actions. We can be filled with our own interests or with God's Spirit who controls us.

"Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit." Ephesians 5:18

You can be filled with the Holy Spirit only by faith, by trusting God to produce in you the fruitful life He promised.

The verb "*be filled*" is an active, moment-by-moment activity, like breathing.

Here are three helpful steps to help you train your mind and heart to focus on God's interests.

1. Desire sincerely to be filled (Matthew 5:6).

*"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."
How would you express your level of desire to be directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit?*



When we breathe, we exhale carbon dioxide, which is an impurity in our bodies, and inhale oxygen, which provides life to our bodies. This is a moment-by-moment action. In the same way, we can be filled with the Spirit moment-by-moment by spiritually inhaling and exhaling.

2. Exhale- Confess all known sin (I John 1:9; Psalms 66:18).

On a sheet of paper, write down any unconfessed sins. Confess them in prayer to God. Write I John 1:9 over the paper, tear it up, and throw it away.

3. Inhale - Yield your total life to Christ (Romans 12:1,2). Yielding involves your willingness to obey God in anything He has shown you to do.

In prayer, ask God to take control of your life and lead you by His Spirit.

Practice this exercise daily and you will develop a life that is focused on God's interests that will allow you to be directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit to accomplish God's will for your life. In the next lesson, we will focus on knowing and living out the will of God for your life.