

STAYING ON COURSE SPIRITUALLY

Luke 9:23

Introduction: Pilots plot a course from take off to their destination, figuring in variations such as wind speed, wind direction, altitudes, air craft speed and configure estimated approach and landing time at the destination. If, for what ever reason, the airplane gets off course, adjustments have to be made and sometimes landing times change. No pilot deliberately gets off course but human error sometimes happens. Today's technology has become so advanced that aircraft can be controlled, even without a pilot, miles away but that is just not how it works with a Christian who is trying to stay on course in living his/he spiritual life. Since the first human being no one has been able to stay on his/her spiritual course all the time except Jesus when He was here.

I. HOW DOES ONE KNOW WHEN HE/SHE IS ON COURSE SPIRITUALLY?

1. A child once asked his mother, "what is my soul?" She told him that the soul is that part of him that makes him laugh and cry and think and move."
 - That explains the soul in very clear terms.
2. When one is off course spiritually he/she is not acting properly.
 - What does one laugh at?
 - What does one cry about?
 - What does one think a lot about?
 - Where does one spend most of his/her time doing what?
3. If a person spends a lot of time thinking about how to get ahead, gloating over success, planning for one's pleasures, thinking about him/herself, then that person is off course spiritually.
4. The Bible is to one's soul what chemistry is to the pharmacist, math is to the banker or knowledge of colors to the artist.
 - Within the pages of God's Word lie the ways to spiritual success, it is a treasury of spiritual wisdom.
5. The spiritual life is not like poetry or music or a movie or some sport for these are not necessary to life but there is no life without spiritual well being.
 - Without spiritual well being, life is but a mad struggle, confusion, chaos and no future in sight.
 - The soul/mind/spirit is the most important part of one's being.

II. SELF MUST BE DENIED TO STAY ON COURSE SPIRITUALLY

1. Jesus said, "*...If any one wishes to follow me, let him renounce self and take up his cross and so be my follower...*" (*Matthew 16:24*)
 - *John 12:24-26*

2. Jesus teaches that the first step in being His follower is to deny SELF, to disregard what self wants.
 - Jesus was not saying to not marry and go into a monastery somewhere and withdraw from the world.
 - Jesus was not saying to "limit" one's desires.
 - Jesus was not saying to deny the world, the flesh and all worldly associations.
 - Jesus was saying to put down, renounce, one's own self importance.

III. HOW IS "SELF" PUT DOWN, DENIED, RENOUNCED?

1. There are few, if any, who don't think that they are better than others.
 - "I wouldn't be caught dead wearing that..."
 - "Who does he/she think he/she is?"
 - "Did you hear what he/she just said?"
 - Every person is displeased at others at some time or other about something or other.
 - Every person who is displeased at others also does things that others don't like either.
 - Who comes first in just about every person's life? SELF!
2. Most of a person's worries and fears are due to self-importance.
 - Worried that he/she won't be liked.
 - Worried that he/she might say the wrong thing.
 - Worried that things are not going as planned.
 - What do YOU worry about? Isn't SELF involved?
3. Consider the Lord's Day and the Church and SELF.
 - How important is the Lord's Day to most people, especially Christians?
 - How faithful in attendance, giving and serving are most Christians?
 - Why is 75% of a Church membership absent on any given Lord's Day?
 - Why is it that 20% of the Church membership give 80% of the budget?
 - Why does the pastor have to beg for help in the nursery or for teachers?
 - SELF is in control and is doing what it wants to do or not do.
4. No Christian will ever get on course or stay on course until he/she puts SELF in its place and that place is not FIRST place.
 - *"...Whosoever shall save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's the same shall save it..."* said Jesus.

CONCLUSION:

1. **Luke 11:24-26**
 - When one does deny self, that leaves a void and something/someone must be put in self's place or else self will come back stronger than before.
2. Self has to be replaced with the Holy Spirit and the Word of God
3. Self cannot guide a person spiritually, only God can. Put away self and give God that place.