

Denying Jesus

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While reading through the books of Matthew & Mark, I thought a lot about this topic of “Denying Jesus”. Matthew 10:32-33 — *Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.* (NASB) Jesus is talking in this passage about his disciples, and we see here that we must confess Jesus..

When we confess Him, we acknowledge Him as Lord. We acknowledge Him as the Son of God who came to seek & save. We often talk about the verbal confession one makes in being His disciple. While that is a completely true idea, there is much more involved. The English Standard Version translates confesses as acknowledges. When we acknowledge someone it is more than just stating their name. That is recognizing someone. When we acknowledge one, we show it in our actions, in our demeanor, in our lives.

A good example of this is found in Matthew 26:31-35. Jesus speaks of that which was spoken and recorded in Zechariah 13:7. In Matt. 26:33, Peter makes the statement that he will never leave Jesus. In verse 35, he makes the vow even with even more boldness (even to death). Often, we criticize Peter for breaking this vow, but notice in verse 35, all the disciples said the same thing too. They all vowed never to deny Jesus.

We know through the rest of the story that Peter denies Jesus to three different peoples at three different times. He has denied Him not only in word but also in deed. Do we have indication though of the other disciples denying Jesus? In word, we would be hard-pressed to find their words of denial. (Thomas did doubt that Jesus was risen, and that would be close.) We do, however, have proof of their denial in action: Matthew 26:56. *Then all the disciples left Him and fled.*

In the moment of heat, as Jesus is being arrested, His disciples forsook (KJV) and fled. These same men who said that they would follow Jesus until death are the ones who

left Him at His arrest.

The question for this bulletin is how do we deny Jesus? We were not with Him as He was betrayed, arrested, tried, and crucified. We were not in the early church that was persecuted to a large degree. We live in the "Bible Belt" where many profess Jesus, so how can we be guilty of denying Him?

First, and hopefully easy to see is verbally. We can claim not to know Him through our speech. If we are treating our brothers and sisters wrongly, we are treating His fellow disciples in a wrong manner. If we are using speech we should not, and it defames God, then simply in speech we are denying Him. If we turn our backs on Him who died for us, and speak contrary to His Word, then we are denying Him.

If we are not following His commandments, we deny Him. Many claim even portions of Jesus teaching (Matthew 19; Mark 10) to not be effective today. If we deny His teaching, then we are not true disciples of Him. We keep His commandments, we strive to be more like Him, because *the student is not above his teacher* (Matthew 10:24).

If we are not acting properly, we deny Him. If we live a sinful life then we are not acknowledging Him. When we fill our lives with activities contrary to God and His will, then we deny Jesus has our Lord. As our Lord, we are to be obedient to Him always. As King, we are to follow His law. When we break it, just as in any country or kingdom, we are denying the foundation built upon that cornerstone.

Finally, if we are surrounding ourselves with entertainment, friends, etc. that is causing us to be sinful, we deny Jesus. What about the television we watch or the books we read. Do they contain items that we would not want Jesus to see. Are we condoning something that is an enemy to God. Are we surrounding ourselves with those who defame God, who break His law, who refuse to acknowledge Him and act as if nothing is wrong? If we find ourselves there, then we are denying Him. —**CW**