

The Yielded Life

By: Dick Schroeder

If you want to follow Jesus, you will walk the path He took. It leads to the cross and, on the other side, into resurrection. You cannot get to the resurrection except through the cross. To take up the cross means to deny yourself, or in other words, to put to death your selfishness. *Taking up your cross – putting to death your self-willed, sinful nature – is simply coming to understand that you do not have to have your own way to be happy (Foster 115).* In fact, demanding your own way leads to a great deal of unhappiness for you as well as for those affected by your self-serving actions and words.

Then Jesus said to them all: Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves [the self-willed, self-serving nature] and take up their cross daily [personal “death-to-selfishness” instrument] and follow me. Luke 9:23

Jesus was able to take the path, facing death, because He kept His eyes on *the joy set before Him* – the resurrection and the reign that would be His.

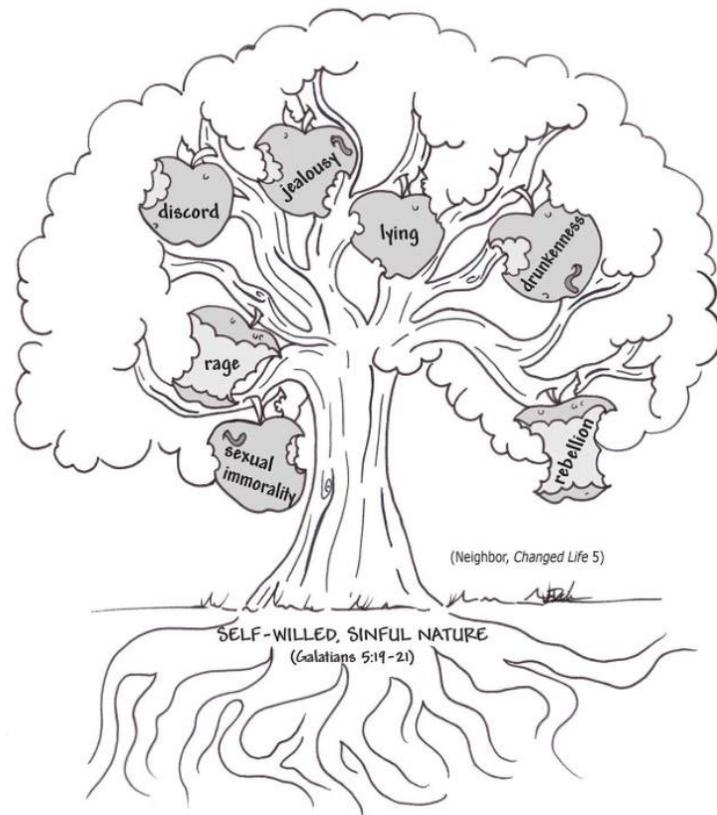
And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:1-2

Fix your eyes on Jesus – follow Him. The joy set before you, resurrection, includes freedom from the bondage to selfishness now, as well as eternity in a new, resurrected body when Jesus returns. Eternal, resurrection life begins now and goes on forever.

Freedom to Love

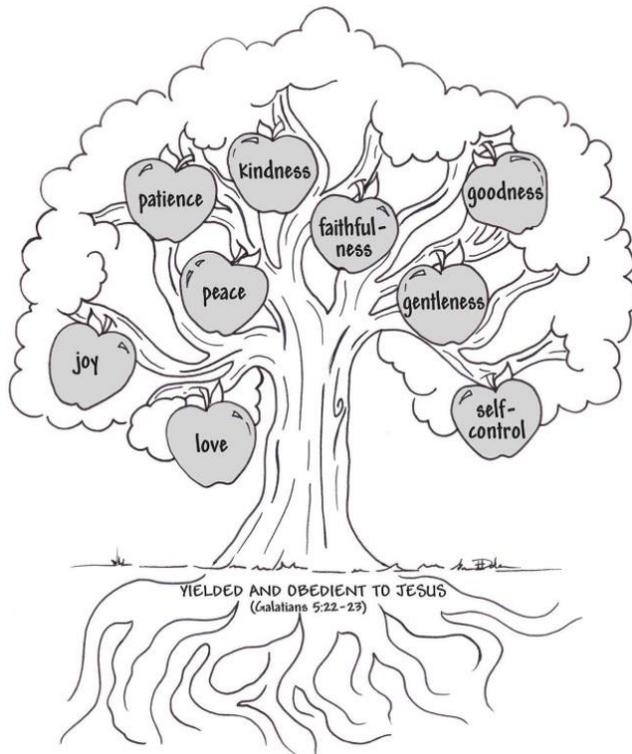
Deep down, sin is rooted in an attitude of active rebellion or passive indifference toward God; you tend to want your will and preferences, not God’s, time after time. The Bible calls this rebellious attitude “the flesh” or “the sinful nature.” Look at the fruits that grow from the root of the self-willed, sinful nature:

People will be lovers of themselves [selfish], lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. [They participate in] sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed... anger, rage, malice... filthy language... lies... debauchery [excessive indulgence]; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy... selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. 2 Timothy 3:2-4; Colossians 3:5-15; Galatians 5:19-21.



Dying to selfishness brings increasing freedom from all these destructive behaviors and freedom to love others like Jesus loves them. You are not dying to your personhood nor valuing yourself less than others. In fact, losing your self-centered life to live for Him is the only way to become who God created you to be; a person with the character of Jesus. You become the best possible version of yourself.

For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self [who God created you to be? Luke 9:24-25 (emphasis added)



When you are in God-allowed circumstances that reveal your selfishness, you can put it to death by keeping your focus on the resurrection freedom of the yielded life – just like Jesus kept His focus.

Look at the new fruits (character) that grow from the root of the yielded, obedient life: ... *love, joy, peace, forbearance [patience], kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Galatians 5:22-23*

Dear reader,

As we begin these devotions on “The Yielded Life” ask God to reveal what part of your life you are not yielding to him. As we dive into more of this series we will look at areas of our lives that God wants us to yield to His will.

Try and put to memory and in your heart Luke 9:24-25:

For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? Luke 9:24-25

We love you and will be praying for you over the Christmas break! Feel free to email us at chialphagf@gmail.com if you have any questions.

With a pastors heart,

Your XA Staff