Answer:

To “deny yourself” means to willingly surrender your own will, desires, ambitions, and preferences in order to follow Christ wholeheartedly. It is a call to die to self — to put aside the flesh, with all its passions and desires, and to live under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

When Jesus said in Matthew 16:24:

> If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.
>
> Matthew 16:24, NKJV

He was not calling people to a life of comfort, but to a life of complete surrender and obedience. This call demands a radical break from selfish living — a decision to no longer live for ourselves, but for Christ.

1. The Nature of Self-Denial

Self-denial is not about hating yourself or losing your identity. Instead, it is the deliberate act of choosing God’s will over your own. It means placing God’s desires above your personal feelings, ambitions, or comfort. It means saying “no” to the flesh and “yes” to the Spirit.

As Jesus taught:

> Whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.
>
> Matthew 16:25, NKJV

This seems paradoxical, but it speaks to a spiritual truth — when we try to preserve our lives on our own terms, we ultimately lose them. But when we give up our lives for Christ, we gain eternal life and true purpose.

2. Paul’s Example of Denial for Christ

The Apostle Paul modeled self-denial clearly:

> But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss
>
> for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things,
>
> and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.
>
> Philippians 3:7–8, NKJV

Paul let go of his prestigious background, his status as a Pharisee, and his earthly ambitions to follow Jesus. He saw the surpassing value of knowing Christ as greater than anything the world could offer.

3. Self-Denial Is Daily and Practical

Jesus also said:

>

> Then He said to them all, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.
>
> Luke 9:23, NKJV

The cross in Roman times was a symbol of death. Taking up our cross daily means putting to death our sinful desires every day. It means choosing holiness, righteousness, and obedience even when it costs us something — popularity, pleasure, or possessions.

This includes:

For Christian women: choosing modesty over worldly fashion, and simplicity over seductive appearances (cf. 1 Timothy 2:9–10).

For young men: choosing purity over sexual immorality, godliness over partying, and wisdom over worldly entertainment (cf. 2 Timothy 2:22).

For all believers: choosing prayer over sleep, evangelism over

personal comfort, and God’s work over self-interest (cf. Romans 12:1–2).

4. The Reward of Self-Denial

While self-denial may seem costly, Jesus promises that what we lose for Him, we will gain in eternity:

> And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands,
>
> for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.
>
> Matthew 19:29, NKJV

God does not forget sacrifice. Our surrender is not in vain. He rewards those who choose Him above all else. Even if we appear to be “losing” in this life, we are gaining far more in the next.

> For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil,
>
> to give you a future and a hope.
>
> Jeremiah 29:11, NKJV

5. A Final Warning and a Heavenly Perspective

Jesus ends His call to discipleship with a sobering question:

> For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?
>
> Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?
>
> Matthew 16:26, NKJV

This verse reminds us that eternity is at stake. No amount of worldly success or pleasure is worth the loss of one’s soul. The

things we deny now are temporary. The reward we gain is eternal.

Conclusion

True Christianity is not just about attending church or claiming to be saved. It is about denying yourself, taking up your cross daily, and following Jesus wherever He leads. It is a call to die to the old self and live a new life fully devoted to Christ.

This may cost you relationships, ambitions, or comforts — but in return, you gain eternal life, peace, joy, and a secure future in Christ.

Choose to follow Jesus — fully, daily, and faithfully. He is worth it all.

> If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.
>
> Matthew 16:24, NKJV

Be blessed and strengthened in your walk with Christ.

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