



*Heart of
a Godly
Woman*

A large, empty rectangular box with a dark purple border, occupying most of the page. It is intended for writing or drawing. The box is surrounded by a light olive-green decorative border on the left and top edges.

A GODLY WOMAN'S HEART IS ...

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A GODLY WOMAN'S HEART IS ...

Submissive

♡ HEART TO HEART

I hate submitting. Whenever I hear the word “jumper,” it reminds me how much I hate to submit.

It was during the era of mini-skirts and hot pants, and if you wanted to be cool, you uncovered a lot of leg. In our Christian high school, the ladies auxiliary wanted to obey God's mandate for modesty. And so they insisted all the girls wear home-made black jumpers. We had to use a regulated pattern (meant to be shapeless) and the jumper had to be a certain length (meant to be ugly, I was sure).

Once a year, all the girls were paraded into the library. We all had to kneel down, black ducks in a row, while a measurer inspected each pair of legs to ensure that no more than six inches of skin was showing. Of course we all hated this process. But, I went beyond merely hating submission to practicing rebellion. My shoulder lowering skills during the measuring process, and my jumper seam tightening skills afterward caused my jumper to ride way higher than my authority required.

You rile up too when you think about submission to things you don't want to do. Have you ever thought about clues that reveal your hatred of submission? Our problem goes way back. Submission was a problem long before your stubby little legs ever ran away from your mommy. It was a problem long before Sara worked so hard to control the child bearing issue between her and Abram. It was even a problem before Eve's success in getting Adam to do dinner her way.

This problem with submission began in heaven. Defiance to authority is the mark of Satan. He wanted to do things his own way, instead of submitting to the Most High (Isaiah 14:11-15). We all know the rest of the story. Deception sauntered into Eve's pure, innocent union with God, when “Do it your way” stood before her all tempting and juicy, actually dripping with death. One bite later, she was hooked, no longer submissive, and cursed by the desire to rule (Genesis 3:16).

Every one of us struggles with a non-submissive heart. It rears up when we are given a command to do something different than we want to. Then we view the voice of authority with suspicion. We tell ourselves that one telling us what to do must have a personality problem. That our workplace operates under a faulty system. That our pastor needs confrontation, or better yet, we'll change churches. We convince ourselves that our husband's problem with sin is greater than ours. All these thoughts reveal hatred of submission.

The culture of democracy in America gives us license to view authority with suspicion. It's hard for us to even recognize the problem. Here's why: Students become suspicious of the authority of the Bible, in every college where psychology is taught as the foremost authority to equip them for helping human problems (Joshua 1:8, 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Children learn to undercut the authority of the church, in every home where parental ideals are preached as the foremost authority over Christ's authority (1 Peter 5:2-4, Hebrews 13:17). Daughters learn to undercut the authority of the father, in every home where a mother's desires are given foremost authority for decisions in the home. Wives feel justified in disrespecting the authority of their husbands, giving their negative opinion foremost authority every time they think or talk about him without dignity and deference (Ephesians 5:33b, 1 Peter 3:6, Genesis 18:12).

Suspicion of authority creates a problem for the spread of the gospel. Wives are told to be loving and submissive to their husbands if they don't want the gospel to be maligned or reviled (Titus 2:5). With a mindset that accepts the undermining of authority, there is no landing pad for the gospel. You see, God is a Judge who must be submitted to if we are ever to believe and receive Christ as Lord and Savior.

In Matthew 28:18 (and throughout Scripture), all authority in Heaven and on Earth is given to Jesus. In Matthew 16, He commissioned it to the local church. It's in light of this that we are disciple-makers, converts brought into community and taught to submit to everything the Creator has commanded. God, as our authority, has commanded that relationships be ordered in a certain way. Christians do not live in a democratic vacuum where we freely cast votes on how to order our lives.

Discuss ways in which you struggle with the following mindsets that reveal hatred of submission to authority:

- ♥ Women allow themselves to think critically about our husbands, rather than respectfully as we are commanded. (Clue: Lack of harmony in your home.)
- ♥ Mothers are given more authority than fathers. (Clue: :You think "Mother knows best.")
- ♥ Our culture gives children equal authority with adults. (Clue: Lack of formal speech, wherein children call adults by their first name, and parents call their children "buddy" and "sister.")
- ♥ We give more credibility to psychology's diagnostic labels, than to the prescriptions for success in God's Word. (Clue: Search online regarding behavioral symptoms, and readily accept labels.)
- ♥ We place more emphasis on a pastor's style of preaching or personality, than on the truth of God's Word. (Clue: Home churching or church hopping are justified.)

The solution to the problem is Jesus Christ. Submission to authority is His mark. He said, "Yes, I'll do it Father. I'll submit to the crushing of the cross. I'll take a trip to Hell. I'll bear the sins of those who will accept me by faith and therefore submit because they are imitating me." When we submit, we are like Jesus.

HEART WORK

♥ DAY ONE: Describe what the following passages teach you about submission and your relationship with God.

♥ John 14:21 _____

♥ John 14:23-24 _____

♥ DAY TWO: Summarize what the verses below teach you regarding submission to authority, whether it be the authority of the workplace, the church, or the home.

♥ 1 Peter 2:13&18 _____

♥ Hebrews 13:17 _____

♥ Ephesians 5:22, Colossians 3:18 _____

♥ DAY THREE: Although the word submission is not used in the following verses, it's quite clear that God is giving us commands regarding times of trial. When we submit to God in a trial, what will it look like?

♥ Romans 5:3-5 _____

♥ James 1:2-4 _____

♥ DAY FOUR: Submissive obedience starts inside us, with a little thing called attitude. Another name for attitude is mood. We can have full control of our attitudes, or moods. When we

choose a good mood, God is pleased. But, when we choose a bad mood, that is sin which we must confess to God, and to those around us who have been affected by it. Even if we submit on the outside, when we do it with a bad attitude or mood, it is still sin. Which of the following attitudes does a submissive heart display? Give scriptural evidence for your answer.

♡ Cheerful or grouchy _____

♡ Helpful or resentful _____

♡ Energetic or lazy _____

♡ Agreeable or complaining _____

♡ Optimistic or realistic _____

♡ Generous in mercy or angry _____

♡ DAY FIVE: A submissive heart is respectful of husbands. We've been sold a bill of goods that respect is earned. God's Word clearly teaches that respect is not on the basis of the person's behavior, but rather on the basis of the person's sovereign-ly ordained position. Respect has nothing to do with the person being respected, but everything to do with the person doing the respecting. If you are married, you will be respectful to your own husband. If you are not married, you will not accept another women's complaints or disrespect against her husband. Read the following verses and summarize what God says about wives respecting husbands.

♡ Ephesians 5:33 _____

♡ Proverbs 31:23 _____

♡ 1 Peter 3:6 _____

A GODLY WOMAN'S HEART IS...

Gentle And Quiet

HEART TO HEART

A quiet heart does not rush. A quiet heart trusts. A quiet heart rests in a Sovereign God who controls all things.

Pastor's wives often have an extraordinary privilege - spending time with women who are approaching their last moments on earth. In remembering these experiences, it seems that the way we die evidences whether we have a gentle and quiet spirit in our hearts. When all ability to control has been stripped away, some women are calm and at peace, some anxious and frightened.

Please, we're not suggesting death as the test for our "gentle and quiet" quotient. At the same time, it is in dying with Christ that we live (Galatians 2:20, Colossians 3:3-4). We must, therefore, crucify our natural thoughts and think right about moments of difficulty and trial, those times when there's nothing we can do about it. Difficult times are a door of opportunity to work on being "gentle and quiet."

The command to wear a gentle and quiet heart (1 Peter 3:4) is set in the context of a wife whose husband is sinning, which is a trial for a Christian wife. You see, our response to trials, such as the example of a husband who is sinning, grows and shows a quiet, gentle heart that trusts God.

Do we trust God? Do we act like we're sure that today's problems are part of the "all things" that work together for good if we love God and allow Him to conform us to Christ's image? (Romans 8:28-29) Are we skeptical about our thought processes, so that we actually open our Bibles and search out how God wants us to think? (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Jesus taught us not to worry (Matthew 6:34). Worrying is the lazy option. Instead of worrying, expend your energy in doing whatever you can to deal with the problem today, and trust God for tomorrow. A gentle and quiet spirit works hard to fulfill today's responsibilities, with faith that God will take care of those areas of concern that are out of your control.

Discuss how to work on the virtues below, to help you grow and show a gentle quiet heart, instead of a worried anxious heart:

♥ The work of prayer (Philippians 4:6-7). Jesus spent the night praying instead of going to the

rescue, when the disciples were in chaos (Mark 6:45-52).

- ♥ The work of praise (1 Thessalonians 5:18, Romans 1:21). When we insert verbal gratitude into stressful situations, our thought processes change.
- ♥ The work of poise (James 1:2, 17). Your intellect must tell your feelings to joyfully accept the present trial from God's hand as a good gift from Him.
- ♥ The work of preparation (Proverbs 31:15, 21, Ephesians 3:12). A wise woman gets up early, not for herself, but so she can prepare food and clothing for others.

Gentle and quiet hearts grow in women who choose joy. It seems we forget that a merry, laughing heart is the best medicine (Proverbs 17:22). Did you know that you have 100% control of your thoughts? You can choose happy thoughts, as a matter of fact, you must. It is the work of Christians to be supremely happy. Do we glorify God by running around rushed and harried, or anxious and wary? No. Gentle and quiet spirits make time to smile at God during busy days, and cast long, longing looks at God during difficult days.

A gentle and quiet heart grows in women who choose gratitude. Gratitude is an attitude. We choose our attitudes. You can change your attitude quick as a wink, by confessing sin, and determining to be grateful.

In every circumstance, when we put on the glasses of gratitude in Christ, our perspective changes. Jesus described it as choosing either a bad eye or a good eye. When we wear the bad eye of seeking more (discontentment), everything about us will be dark, brooding, upset, turmoil (Matthew 6:22-23). A gentle and quiet spirit does not allow discontentment to breed.

Discuss ways to grow a gentle and quiet heart instead of a heart of discontentment:

- ♥ Speak gratitude for the gifts of today (James 1:17).
- ♥ Focus on God's grace that trumps sin (Romans 5:20).
- ♥ Refuse to react, instead choose deliberate words/acts of kindness (Ephesians 4:32).
- ♥ Confess self-absorption quickly (Philippians 2:3-4).

"I think I find most help in trying to look on all the interruptions and hindrances to work that one has planned out for oneself as a discipline, trials sent by God to help one against getting selfish over one's work. Then one can feel that perhaps one's true work—one's work for God—consists in doing some trifling haphazard thing that has been thrown into one's day. It is the most important part of the work of the day—the part one can best offer to God. After such a hindrance, do not rush after the planned work; trust that the time to finish it will be given sometime, and keep a quiet heart about it." ~Annie Keary, 1825-1879

HEART WORK

♡ DAY ONE: Summarize what these passages teach about being still before God.

♡ Psalm 46:10 _____

♡ Isaiah 26:3 _____

♡ Zephaniah 3:17 _____

♡ Acts 19:36 _____

♡ DAY TWO: What do these verses teach you about trusting in God?

♡ Psalm 2:12 _____

♡ Psalm 91:1-2 _____

♡ Isaiah 31:1 _____

♡ DAY THREE: Contentment is a learned art (Philippians 4:11). In his book, "Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment," written in 1705, Jeremiah Burroughs says that a quiet heart must strongly oppose affections that move away from God, fears that distract from God, or risings that rebel against God. He states, "*Since God is contented with Himself alone, if you have Him, you may be contented with Him alone, and it may be, that is the reason why your outward*

comforts are taken from you, that God may be all in all to you. It may be that while you had these things they shared with God in your affection, a great part of the stream of your affection ran that way: God would have the full stream run to Him now."

Summarize what you learn about contentment in God:

♡ Psalm 90:14 _____

♡ Hebrews 13:5 _____

♡ DAY FOUR: Ingratitude is a sin. From these verses, what do you learn about the attitude of gratitude?

♡ Numbers 21:5-6 _____

♡ Psalm 107:1-2 _____

♡ Romans 1:21 _____

♡ DAY FIVE: We are 100% in control of our thoughts. How can we choose happy thoughts that will grow and show a gentle and quiet heart?

♡ Psalm 5:11 _____

♡ Psalm 64:10 _____

♡ 1 Peter 1:8 _____

A GODLY WOMAN'S HEART IS...

Generous And Hospitable

HEART TO HEART

"Company's coming!" When you hear those words, what goes on in your heart? Do you feel child-like excitement, eagerness for the opportunity? We are called to generous hospitality. That's a call to all of us, in any circumstance (1 Timothy 5:10, Hebrews 13:2).

There's a difference between generous hospitality and grudging entertainment! Consider the following contrasts:

GRUDGING ENTERTAINMENT

- ♥ Terrifying bondage
- ♥ Demands perfection
- ♥ Seeks to impress, network, use hospitality
- ♥ A rigorous taskmaster
- ♥ Enslaves by form and functionality
- ♥ Puts things before people
- ♥ Strict about the condition of house/food/service when company comes.
- ♥ Says, "I want to impress you with my home, my cooking, my decorating."
- ♥ Makes people feel nervous or unworthy
- ♥ Picky about whom to invite
- ♥ Modeled in magazines

GENEROUS HOSPITALITY

- ♥ Joyful privilege
- ♥ Focuses on love and loyalty
- ♥ Seeks to minister and serve
- ♥ A motivating delight
- ♥ Motivates relationships and creativity
- ♥ Puts people before things
- ♥ Strict about an open heart that welcomes strangers/friends/family.
- ♥ Says, "I want to share my home, my cooking, my decorating."
- ♥ Makes people feel welcome and wanted
- ♥ Willing to invite anyone (angels unaware)
- ♥ Modeled in God's Word

In generous hospitality, we put our pride away. We open our hearts to people, and welcome them into our homes. This type of generous hospitality doesn't negate preparing ahead and being organized, instead it is enhanced by these disciplines. God is a God who calls chaos into order with unmatched beauty (watch a few sunrises if you're not convinced).

To obey God's mandate so my home is welcoming for company, I've been taught a few helpful, simple techniques. It *is* possible to keep tidiness under control, but it takes discipline to follow through in putting away whatever is used. (I can't tell you how many times my husband has had to remind me, "Follow through. Finish what you start.") As for cleaning, even one room per week makes a big difference. But mainly, never forget to start mornings with a very real (and sometimes desperate) cry, "Lord, you see what needs to be done here. You order my day." (Psalm 90:10)

♡ As a group, share a few simple housekeeping shortcuts.

As for cooking, keep meals simple, and perhaps ask everyone who is coming to contribute something—one a salad, one a dessert, one an appetizer. We need to keep it "doable" because after all, as writer Karen Mains puts it, "I have (a husband to love), four children to raise, a God to know, words to share, wounds to heal." Our most important goal in generous hospitality is to glorify God and worship Him (Luke 10:38-42, 1 Peter 4:11). There will be times when part of our organization in hospitality includes delegation.

♡ Talk about easy menu ideas.

Certainly organization includes rising early (Proverbs 31:15). This is a good regular habit. But I'm ashamed to admit that I've risen early for intimate time with the Lord, and then resented the interruption of a husband rummaging in the kitchen. How much better for him to walk into a kitchen where a happy woman, who loves him more than anyone (because she loves the Lord), has set a place for him. The food is optional (some men only drink coffee in the morning), but the happy woman is not. If you are a bear, he won't want to see you in the morning. And couples who don't start their day together, grow apart.

♡ Discuss the necessity of serving our husbands first, then our children.

Last but most important, generous hospitality requires denial of self. We are naturally generous with ourselves, and must work hard to die to ourselves. In Christ, as we walk in His Spirit, we can be generous with others. The cost is self-denial (Luke 9:23), death to self (Colossians 3:3-4). Which of these thoughts do you find yourself thinking most often—what is going to be done for me, or, what am I going to do for others?

♡ Discuss ways you've learned to deny yourself (see poem at end of book for ideas).

The poorest people can be generous and hospitable. Bolivian bricks, crude and rough, held up tin roofs to shelter dirt floors, but every night our entourage of twenty or so ate from china plates. Chipped, cracked, broken—china. When we realized it was the same mismatched set each evening, whether in a candle lit church yard or a humble home, we knew we'd tasted generous hospitality. Each day of our visit, those wildly beautiful barefooted women carefully, stealthily, carried their precious plates to our next destination so that we could be treated with their best.

HEART WORK

♡ DAY ONE: Jesus had a lot to say about servanthood. Please summarize each passage with a lesson for yourself.

♡ Matthew 20:26-28 _____

John 13:15-16 _____

Luke 12:43 _____

John 15:15 _____

♡ DAY TWO: Self-denial is very difficult for me when it comes to my reputation. I'm happy to practice "hospitality," but only when I've met certain self-imposed requirements that have to do with food preparation and housekeeping. What do the following verses teach about self-denial?

♡ Luke 9:23 _____

Luke 6:34-35 _____

♡ Philippians 3:3-8 _____

♡ DAY THREE: What do the following verses teach about dying to self?

♡ Colossians 3:1-5 _____

♡ Romans 6:3-11 _____

♡ DAY FOUR: Hospitality characterizes Christians, men and women, singles and marrieds. Wives own the role of helper, and therefore play a large part in making hospitality happen. As you summarize the teachings of the following verses, ask yourself whether generous hospitality is a suggestion or a command, and whether you need to make some changes.

♡ Proverbs 25:21-22 _____

♡ Romans 12:13 _____

♡ Hebrews 13:2 _____

♡ 1 Peter 4:9 _____

♡ (Wives of Elders and deacons) Titus 1:8, 1 Timothy 3:2 _____

♡ DAY FIVE: God in his wisdom has written many things for our learning, so that we might have hope (Romans 15:3-4), including examples of hospitality, As you read these stories, ask God what He wants you to learn from them.

♡ Genesis 18:1-8 _____

♡ 1 Kings 17:8-16 _____

♡ 2 Kings 4:8-11 _____

♡ Acts 16:13-15 _____

A GODLY WOMAN'S HEART IS...

Gracious, and so is her Speech

HEART TO HEART

The grace of God has appeared! Grace saved me! And now—Titus 2:11 tells me that grace trains me to control my speech. Then why do I say cutting things? Why do I discourage the ones I love most? Living in a fallen world, I know I'm not the only one.

Do these two biblical truths resound frightening, and reassuring, for you too?

- ♡ The tongue is set on fire by hell (James 3:6).
- ♡ Where sin abounds grace abounds all the more (Romans 5:20).

The fires started by my tongue make me insatiably thirsty for grace. It's grace that imputed Christ's righteousness onto me when I first knew the forgiveness of His cross. It's grace that drives the desire to speak well, and empowers us to speak without sin.

Discuss practical ways in which the following aspects of graceful speech could play out in your life:

- ♡ Grace builds up (edifies), instead of tears down (cuts) (Ephesians 4:15-16 29).
- ♡ Grace speaks pleasantly or is silent, instead of nagging (Proverbs 21:19, 30:32).
- ♡ Grace gently corrects, instead of harshly criticizes (Galatians 6:1-2).

Even though I embrace these wonderful truths, I gravitate toward law. Give me a set of rules and regulations by which I can judge the person who makes me so mad. Give me a set of guidelines to hold out to the person who doesn't treat me like I think I need to be treated. Give me a system of principles, and I'll teach that person just how to speak right. I even thought about others instead of myself when looking at the list of grace. Did you?

Years ago, I heard a popular psychologist on Christian radio teach that a woman is so much more in tune emotionally that she understands the problems in her marriage better than her husband does. If a husband would just ask his wife's advice and heed it, everything would be fine. Problem is, Christ, sin, mercy, grace, and God's Word are completely removed from this psychological solution. The Bible teaches that women win their sinning husbands without a word (1 Peter 3:1-2).

And do you remember James' statement that the tongue is set on fire by hell? It follows a warning, that not many should desire to become teachers (James 3:1-6). It's when we long to teach law more than we long to be grace, that our tongues flame and devour.

If our speech would be gracious, it is not going to be about our tone of voice, or even the words we choose. Loud words can flow from grace as much or more than muted words. Confrontation can flow from grace as much or more than commendation.

Grace depends on who we are (Luke 6:45). The things we say, and the ungraceful way we say them, start inside us. If we would speak well, we must be growing in our union with Christ, walking in His grace, and reflecting Him (2 Corinthians 9:8, 11:3). It's His grace in our lives that makes people long for God. And it's His grace in their lives (and ours) that changes things—not our words or teaching.

The words we say reflect our character, and the way we say them reflects our attitude. Gracious words, loving countenances, gratitude for rebuke, and kind silences stem from a heart full of grace. Harsh speech, anxious demeanor, hurt feelings, and sullen silences stem from a heart full of self. When we react, it's because of our desires. We say what we say to get what we want.

Discuss ways your speech has flowed from a heart filled with desires:

- ♥ The desire to control
- ♥ The desire to “go underground” and manipulate
- ♥ The desire to be spoken to with kindness
- ♥ The desire to feel superior (the root of gossip)
- ♥ The desire to be heard (speaking without pondering your words)

I'm desperate for a heart where grace trumps my desires. But how? Let's think about the word grace for a minute. The Greek word for grace, or gift, is *charis*. The Greek for joy is *chara*. Do you see the similarity? Note another Greek word, *eucharisteo*, which implies sitting at the table of thankfulness. Do you see *char* in all three words? Grace is a gift all tied up with joyful thankfulness. Note how God's Word reverberates with the commands:

- ♥ Rejoice always (Philippians 4:4, 1 Thessalonians 5:16).
- ♥ Pray always, about everything (Philippians 4:6a, 1 Thessalonians 5:17).
- ♥ Give thanks, in everything (1 Thessalonians 5:18, Philippians 4:6b).

Gracious speech comes from a thankful heart that prays about everything and chooses joy. Grace prays with trusting awe of God, sins not, and is still (Psalm 4:4).

HEART WORK

♡ DAY ONE: Gracious speech is not fake, smooth, flattering, or seductive. It's easy to spot another woman acting with smooth flattery, and getting what she wants, but harder to see ourselves doing it. Sometimes our flattery flows out of an angry heart, and we go "underground" to manipulate, all to get our way. Rewrite the following Proverbs so they speak to you personally.

♡ Proverbs 2:16 _____

♡ Proverbs 5:3 _____

♡ Proverbs 6:24 _____

♡ Proverbs 7:5 _____

♡ Proverbs 7:21 _____

♡ DAY TWO: Gracious speech is not harmful, perverse, strife-filled, or divisive. As you summarize the following proverbs, allow God's Spirit to convict you. Go to the person to whom you have spoken wrongly, and confess your sin. Then practice speaking gently, in a kind, acceptable way.

♡ Proverbs 4:24 _____

♡ Proverbs 8:8 _____

♡ Proverbs 10:32 _____

♡ Proverbs 15:4 _____

♡ Proverbs 16:28 _____

♡ Proverbs 31:26 _____

♡ DAY THREE: As you summarize these verses, confess times when your speech has been dishonest, wicked or deceptive.

♡ Proverbs 6:17 _____

♡ Proverbs 6:19 _____

♡ Proverbs 8:7 _____

♡ Proverbs 15:26 _____

♡ Proverbs 22:11 _____

♡ Proverbs 24:28b _____

♡ Proverbs 26:18-19 _____

♥ DAY FOUR: It takes two to tango (or tangle). You might think it's all the other person's fault, which was true when Jesus allowed his enemies to kill him. If you are being reviled, you are called to take it like He did (1 Peter 2:20-24). But whenever you get involved in an argument, you have contributed to it. It is not all the other person's fault. As you read these verses, let God convict you of ways your speech has brought discord, stirred up anger, been quarrelsome, fretful, or troublesome. After you've confessed, plan ahead for how you will use soft, pleasant, agreeable speech that builds unity.

♥ Proverbs 6:19 _____

♥ Proverbs 15:1 _____

♥ Proverbs 16:24 _____

♥ Proverbs 24:1-2 _____

♥ Proverbs 19:13b, 21:9, 25:24 _____

♥ DAY FIVE: I am often reminded that women in the NT church are specifically called to less speech (1 Corinthians 14:33-35, Titus 2:3, 1 Timothy 3:11, 5:13). As you summarize the following verses, confess ways you have talked too much, and/or spoken hastily, foolishly, or without thinking. Determine specific times, places, and persons with whom you need to restrain or discipline your tongue, guard your words carefully, and speak commendably.

♥ Proverbs 10:19 _____

♥ Proverbs 13:3 _____

♥ Proverbs 15:28 _____

♡ Proverbs 17:27 _____

♡ Proverbs 29:11 _____

♡ Proverbs 29:20 _____

Self Denial

When you are not forgiven or neglected, purposefully set at naught and you sting and hurt with the insult and oversight but your heart is happy because you have counted yourself worthy to suffer for Christ—That is self denial.

When your good is evil spoken of, when your wishes are crossed, your advice disregarded, your opinions are ridiculed and you refuse to let anger rise up in your heart, when you take it all in patient loving silence—That is self denial.

When you lovingly bear any disorder and irregularity or annoyance, when you can stand face to face with waste and folly and extravagance and spiritual insensitivity and endure it as Jesus endured it—That is dying to self.

When you are content with any food, any offering, any clothes, any climate, any solitude, any society, any interruption by the will of God—That is dying to self.

When you can never care to refer to yourself in conversation or to record your own good works or itch after commendation. When you can love being unknown—That is dying to self.

When you see your (sister) prosper and honestly have her needs met and can rejoice with her in spirit and have no envy or question God why your own needs are far greater and unmet—That is dying to self.

When you can receive reproof and correction from one of lesser stature than yourself and humbly submit inwardly as well as outwardly, feeling no rebellion or resentment rising in your heart—That is dying to self.

By John MacArthur

