

Whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. Luke 14:27.

What it's not.

Contrary to what a lot of people think, your "cross" is not a burden -- like a health problem or an irritable person; something that we have to endure and cannot change!

This is big!

When God in His Word has said something over and over and over again, that means it's important! He is trying to get something through to us that He knows will make our lives oh so much better. See, most people think God's ways are only to keep us from having any fun. **But that is a lie from Hell!** God loves you so much and wants you to have a wonderful and abundant life! His Word tells how to get in on it, and this "cross" issue is major to it.

Follow the thread.

There is a common denominator; a single thread that winds its way through the following verses. See if you can find it. Luke 9:23, "If anyone desires to come

after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."

Matt.16:24-25, "Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.'"

Gal.5:24, "Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires..."

Rom.12:1, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God..."

Rom.6:6, "Knowing this, that our old man (old, unrenewed self; Amp. Bible) was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin."

Rom.6:11-12, "Reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey its lusts."

Gal.2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Rom.8:13, "If you live according to the flesh, you will *die*. But if by the

Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live." (Life without God is spiritual "death" according to Eph.2:1+5, and Col. 2:13.)

I Pet.2:24, "Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree (cross) that we, having died to sins might live for righteousness ..."

Here's some help.

Let's look at some of those cross verses in the Amplified Bible. Luke 9:23 says, "And He said to all, 'If any person wills to come after Me, let him deny himself -- that is, disown himself, forget, and lose sight of himself and his own interests, refuse and give up on himself -- and take up his cross daily, and follow Me (that is, cleave steadfastly to Me, conform wholly to My example...'"

And Gal.5:24, "And those who belong to Christ Jesus, have crucified the flesh -- the Godless human nature -- with its passions and appetites and desires."

What did you see?

Did the Holy Spirit show you the thread? Did you find the common theme?

Something has to die. What is it? The older versions of the Bible call it the “flesh.” Actually, that term refers to a combination of our soul and body, or rather **the desires** of those two. Many great people of God have used the words *soul* and *spirit* interchangeably, as if they are synonymous. But they are not the same, according to I Thess.5:23 and Heb. 4:12. Also, the Greek words for *soul* and *spirit* verify that. The soul is the mind, will, emotions, memory; the thinking and feeling part of us. In other words, it’s **what we want, what we think, and what we feel**. That’s the soul. And according to all the preceding verses, that’s what has to die.

But How?

That’s a good question! You are no doubt thinking, That’s what I am! How can I lose sight of that?!! Gal. 5:16 says to walk in the Spirit and you’ll not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Or, Follow the Spirit and you’ll not gratify the desires of the flesh. That sounds like if you concentrate on obeying the Holy Spirit, you’ll not have to worry about stopping a bad habit.

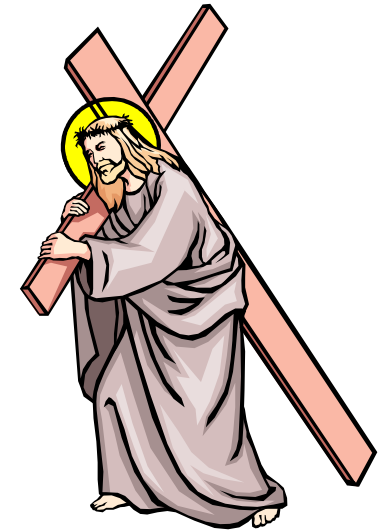
And Luke 9:23 gave us a good suggestion when it used the word “daily.” Did you ever have a science teacher in school show you an empty glass and ask you how to get the air out of it? The

answer you know -- put something else in it! It’s the same way with this. It’s all about your mind and what’s in it most of the time. There are plenty of verses that tell us to keep our minds on God, good things, His Word, praising, or praying. That’s how we are supposed to be occupying our minds at every spare moment. Here are a few scriptures for this. Josh.1:8, Psa.1:2-3, Prov. 4:20-23, Isa.26:3, Phil.3:19 + 4:8, Col.3:1-2, Rom.8:5-6. Rom.12:2 speaks of renewing our minds, and says that’s the way to be transformed into a better person; actually like Jesus. Another way this can all be said in one word is surrender, complete and total surrender of yourself to God and His will for you. That would be death to selfishness, wouldn’t it?

But what’s in it for me!

PLENTY! You may have noticed some in the reading of this brochure. The paragraph under the heading, *This is big* contains some reasons. And the verses earlier in this column have plenty. Also, in the verses in the main body of this paper were several verses that expose God’s seemingly backwards way of thinking; if you lose your life for Me, you’ll find it. **God has a wonderful and fulfilling life planned for you here**, far better than you could imagine or ever accomplish on your own. Surrender is the way to get there.

WHAT’S My CROSS?



A mini Bible study
By Cheryl Boone