

Priming the Pump

1. Begin by reading the Scripture for this week's message, Luke 9:23-27.
2. Do you know anyone, a dear friend or family member, who has given up everything in his life for Christ's sake? What was it like talking to them, hearing from them, learning by their example?

Likewise, do you know anyone such as a dear friend or family member, who has walked away from the faith to pursue the world? How do you talk to them, hear from them, and learn from their example?

Getting into the Word

3. Jesus taught that His followers must deny themselves and carry their own cross at least twice during His ministry, recorded five times in the Gospels. Read each of the other four accounts in their full context and think about what is Jesus emphasizing over and over to His disciples? Also look for any small differences in the narratives. Why do the different authors highlight that others left out?
 - a. Matthew 10:34-39
 - b. Matthew 16:24-28
 - c. Mark 8:31-38
 - d. Luke 14:25-33

Digging Deeper

4. One man in Scripture did carry Jesus' literal cross, Simon of Cyrene, as recorded in Matthew 27:32; Mark 15:21; and Luke 23:26. Simon was *forced* by the Romans into this act, and the Holy Spirit honored him greatly by recording his name three times in eternal Scripture. Has the world compelled a great difficulty in your life for Christ's sake? How do Jesus' teaching and Simon's eternal blessing give you peace, endurance, or motivation to bear this great burden for the sake of the Lord?