

# Deny Yourself Bible Discussion

Eric Smith – 5/11/2009

## Opening Questions

*These questions are to establish, that some self-focus is necessary in life...*

- What are some of the first concepts children learn?
  
- What are some of very first skills children are taught?

*This question illustrates that if self-focus becomes the rule, it results in harm to the selfish person and others...*

- What was one of the major causes of the recent economic downturn?

## Read Luke 9:23-25

<sup>23</sup>Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. <sup>24</sup>For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. <sup>25</sup>What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?"

- So how is this that we are taught throughout our lives to look after ourselves and our self-interests, and we build our self-identities and then along comes Jesus and he says we need to deny that?

*Some of the answers were:*

- Unless self exists and is defined, there isn't really anything to deny or sacrifice
- If we are consumed by our self, then there is no room for God
  
- What about the exclusionary sound of Jesus' command – that unless you deny yourself you cannot follow me...

*One of the answers was:*

- It's not that it is indicated as a punishment; rather, if Jesus said he was heading west, and you headed east, it was just impossible...

## Do interactive activity with numbered sheets of paper and video.

- Explain as you have everyone show the random letters that this is how it would be if everyone only acted in their self interest and did not deny themselves.
- Then, show people the numbers and ask everyone to sort them.
- Once sorted, ask everyone to hold up the letters with the #1 on the back. Then the #2 and so on...
- Explain at this time, that this is how it would be if we were following Jesus, and the Scriptures – not doing only what we wanted, but obeying.
- No one should be looking at anyone else's letters, or even their own...
- Play back the video tape and clarify the exercise

## Discuss:

- When we deny ourselves, we become part of something larger than anything we could do if only self-focused.
- We gain purpose
- We become part of an accomplishment that sometimes we don't even fully understand, but that's why we have to trust!