ICON

THE EMPOWERING INVITATION OF THE CROSS

It Won’t Work

PART 1

Introduction

We all want to win. We want to succeed, accomplish things, and make progress. But sometimes our determination to win costs us something far more valuable. Jesus introduced a radically different way of living - one that often seems counterintuitive, risky, and even foolish. What if the way of the cross isn't just something we're supposed to believe, but a way we're supposed to live?

Discussion Questions

1. **Read Matthew 4:8-10 and Luke 4:5-8.** What exactly did Satan offer Jesus, and what was the condition? Why do you think this particular temptation might have been appealing?
2. **Read Deuteronomy 6:12-13.** Jesus quoted this passage in response to Satan. What was Moses warning the Israelites about, and how does that help us understand why Jesus rejected Satan's offer?
3. **Read Luke 9:23.** Jesus identifies three requirements for anyone who wants to follow him. What are they? What do you think it means to deny yourself and take up your cross daily?
4. **Read Luke 9:24-25.** Jesus presents a startling paradox about winning and losing. How does his definition of success differ from the world's? Where do you find yourself tempted to pursue things that ultimately won't matter?
5. **Read 1 Corinthians 1:17-18.** Why would the message of a crucified Savior seem foolish to the world? How does the cross demonstrate God's power, and what does that reveal about his way of accomplishing things?
6. **Read Luke 9:23-25 again.** Think about a recent disagreement or conflict in which you felt the need to win, prove yourself right, or get your way. What might have been different if you had approached that situation as a follower of Jesus? What makes choosing to lose so difficult?

This Week’s Challenge

The cross isn't merely a symbol of what Jesus did for us. It's an invitation to a different way of living.

This week, whenever you find yourself in a disagreement or conflict, pause and silently ask yourself:

"What would choosing to lose look like in this situation?"

You don't necessarily have to act on it yet. Just consider the possibility that choosing not to win might actually be the better way.

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