

# Iron Skin and Kerosene Breath

## *The Deceitfulness of Worldly Freedom*

### Ecclesiastes 1:1-2

We live in a culture prizing personal freedom above all else. Satan has convinced most people their notions of freedom are bringing them joy and fulfillment. Again, the Willie Nelson song, *Pancho and Lefty*, voices a poignant commentary on the deceitfulness of Satan's wiles: "Livin' on the road my friend, is gonna keep you free and clean. Now you wear your skin like iron, your breath as hard as kerosene."

Submission and self-denial are actually the keys to freedom. This great paradox is given by Jesus, "He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for my sake will find it" (Matt. 10:39). The results of the two choices, self or Jesus, are as stark in their contrast as anything could be!

### Being God When You Are Not

- Beginning strategies, why change a successful approach (Gen. 1-6; I Jn. 2:15-17)?
- What greater appeal could there be to selfishness than the ability to be a god?

### Upside-down Truth

- Loss is gain (Matt. 10:39; 16:25; Mk. 8:35; Lk. 9:24; 17:33; Jn. 12:25)
- Giving is the key (Acts 20:35)

### Making Room

- We cannot be Christ-like without making room in our heart for Jesus (cf. Lk. 9:23; I Pet. 3:15)
- Christ-likeness is the positive potential of self-denial (Rom. 8:29; I Cor. 2:16; II Cor. 3:18; Gal. 2:20; 4:19; Eph. 3:16-17; 4:11-16; Phil. 2:5; Col. 1:24-29)

Let us not be deceived. The secret to a life of true success is found in self-denial. Satan continues to use his old tricks. There is a new factor, however. Satan has been beaten by One representing us. We are now well armed to find victory in Jesus (Rom. 8:31-39)!