Dear Jewel,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions. You asked what true cross bearing is.

Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." (Matthew 16:24)

Jesus is telling his disciples that if they want to follow his example, they must deny their own self wills, just as he did, by sacrificing earthly interests and ambitions. Since the cross was known as an instrument of death, Jesus used this illustration to impress on his disciples what complete commitment to him meant - sacrifice and self-denial. It meant the death of self-will. The cross represents the trials, difficulties and disappointments that the Christian encounters as he places God's will ahead of his own will.

 "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it." (Matthew 16:25) Here Jesus is saying that nothing in this life is worth keeping if it means losing eternal heavenly life to which the Christian was called. It is interesting to note that actual death and physical persecution for Christians were real possibilities in the past and still are in some parts of the world today. In other places, the cost of cross bearing may be exacted emotionally rather than physically. Nonetheless, although following Jesus does not necessarily mean physical death, the Christian should be willing to die or suffer anything rather than deny Jesus.

What is true cross-bearing? It is the cost of being a disciple of Jesus, which involves commitment to the point of giving up our hopes, dreams, possessions, even our lives if need be. This is the only acceptable attitude of a true disciple of the Lord. "And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:27)

We hope we have answered your question. Be sure to sign up for CQ Rewind at www.christianquestions.com. The service is free without obligation and will provide you with scriptural perspective on many questions and topics.

Sincerely,

Christian Questions