



Death To Fleshly Activities

For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. —Romans 8:13, esv

Have you done much camping in the deserts, in the mountains, or in the forests? It can be a lot of fun. Growing up, my dad took our family camping pretty often just like his dad did. But if you have camped out much, along with the adventure and the beauty to be observed, you've probably noticed how ferocious and dog-eat-dog nature can be out there. Things can get very violent among the animals in the wilderness, as each creature gets hungry and seeks to survive. Life and death, breeding and feeding, hunting and being hunted—that's all it seems to be about out there in the wild forests, deserts, seas, lakes and jungles. A mountain lion craftily stalks a defenseless little deer and then pounces. A croaking bull frog snaps up a tasty water bug with its sticky tongue; a snake coils in the leaves, waits and then strikes at a passing rodent—man, that's why my wife will never watch the National Geographic channel with me. It fascinates me, but she cries and screams every time she sees the blood and guts. It's interesting, but she doesn't want any animal to experience pain or death. To be honest I don't either, but guys are just wired differently. We love to see how things really are out there, even if it gets kind of gory.

Have you ever seen a beautiful white feathered crane with its long legs walking slowly through the shallow river marshes among the reeds? Then it stands motionless... silently... patiently, near the river bank with its long beak poised like some kind of tribal spear that's precisely aimed and ready for the kill. In all happens in a second and then this tall fowl quickly takes flight with a flopping fish as to tear apart and feast upon... before another animal can come steal it away.

High overhead a turkey hawk circles and floats effortlessly on the updrafts of the wind, watching for a field mouse to emerge from its burrow, then it stealthily swoops straight down to grab the furry creature with it's talons. It's history. That bird can live and hunt for another day. I saw this playing-out just yesterday, not too many miles away from our Dallas home.

Even a pack of skinny scraggly-haired coyotes continue to exist at the expense of the unfortunate rabbits that are also out foraging for munchies ...or for unattended stray lap dogs in the neighborhood. My parents live on a hill near the beach and have to be cautious every time they take their dog Nikki out for a walk, for the domestic pet numbers are now dwindling there.

Nothing survives very long out in the wilderness unless some other creature dies. That's fact. Yes, this is simply how life on earth is perpetuated post-adamic fall, but in the future Kingdom Age things will change for the good and become more harmonious. I think my wife will rest a lot easier when Jesus returns to rule on this earth.

Fear of obeying or dying in Him must go. Because Jesus Christ has physically risen from the dead, He is the One who has the last word in matters of life and death!

This idea of life and death today extends beyond nature too; to our daily Christian experience. God expects all of us to put to death the evil deeds of the body so that we may live. The Apostle Paul commanded, ***“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: in the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him”*** ([Col. 3:5-10](#)).

I say mortify all false teachings of fleshly people masquerading as Christian preachers! Christian, use discernment and don't believe all those televangelists who say you just need to have a demon cast out of you every time you are tempted. They want you dependant upon them and their type of “deliverance ministry.” The Bible commands, ***“Submit to God. Resist the devil”*** ([Jam. 4:7](#)). It warns, ***“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world”*** (1 Jn. 4:1, nkjv). And it admonishes, ***“Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil”*** (1 Th 5:21-22). Sure a lost person could possibly get a demon inside of them, that's why they need to get in Christ today! Light can have no fellowship with darkness. The Bible says that ***“your life is hid with Christ in God”*** ([Col. 3:3](#)). And perhaps you're wondering where Christ is located? The Bible says He is seated ***“in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named”*** (Eph. 1:21). And He's inside of you. So if he is far above every demon, how could one ever be in you?

The Bible also teaches you that the interests of your fleshly nature must give way to the interests of God's Spirit—which calls for a choice on your part—or else the interests of the Spirit will unfortunately succumb to the interests of your flesh (check it out in Romans 8). We could say that in the forest of your own inner life, something must always die so that something else that's good can live.

What's most dear to you; what's your master passion? What do you talk about the most; what do you live for? Is it a wing or a weight? Has it become detrimental to your relationship with Christ or with your own family? Are you getting bitter or better? Is it hindering you in fulfilling the call that God has for your life? If so, die to it!

God is not some kill-joy, party-pooper wanting to take all good things away from you, but He does expect you to give up whatever hinders your spiritual growth and maturation. He wants you to properly prioritize and remove what hampers your own ministry (upwards first and then outwards) ...and listen, He can help you with this.

Peter spoke of the appropriateness of both Jesus and Christians dying in this manner stating, ***“He himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness”*** (1 Pet. 2:24).

“He will swallow up death in victory: and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off faces...” (Isa. 25:8).

We can't be committed to Christ and to the world at the same time. If Jesus is Lord of your life, you won't want to live for self. Face it; we can't be filled with God's Spirit if we are at all costs simultaneously protecting the life of self-interest. That's why our Lord told us so pointedly that we will need to die daily to ourselves if we are

going to walk with Him. I'm not talking about suicide of your physical person here—that's selfish and cowardly!

Listen to what Jesus voiced, ***“Then He said to them all, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?’”*** (Lk. 9:23-24).

Is there any life so blessed as one lived for Christ alone, when the heart from self is emptied, and instead becomes His throne?

—Anonymous

But is this *dying* a one-time event for Christians? No way! Christ said we'd each need to take up our cross *daily*. The cross wasn't for pool-side lounging at the resort on! We each must continually choose what we must die to, so that Jesus as Lord is free to live big in and through us.

Inside, when He is living LARGE and in charge, that's when abundant life overtakes us! The Apostle Paul experienced this. He exclaimed, ***“I die every day—I mean that, brothers—just as surely as I glory over you in Christ Jesus our Lord”*** (1 Cor. 15:31, niv).

Christian, always remember that this world system¹ has an ally in you! It's your carnal or fleshly nature that you must constantly die to. All three allies—the world, the flesh and the devil—work hard together, but not for good. So don't let them bring you down! Personally, I've never been tempted to do anything where my old nature wasn't totally rooting for me to take part in it, even though it would be very destructive. That's how it is for all real Christians.

And Paul could relate to this battle when he said, ***“For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice... O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!”*** (Rom 7:15-19, 24-25).

Paul reasoned with Christians saying, ***“If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God”*** (Rom 8:11-14).

Please die to your own agenda; to your own plans. To live in the Way, we must die to our own way! What do you have to be afraid of when you dedicate yourself fully to God? Jesus said, ***“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”*** (Jn. 11:25-26). He's talking about physical resurrection now. What God wants alive—you and I in Him—can't remain in the grave very long.

Is Jesus [Lord of your life](#), or do you have a pet fleshly habit—a hindering “bondage” of some sort? Don't feed it? Deny yourself. Don't nurture or make provision for such addictions; for your grudges, for your sinful cravings. No way! Here is how you deal with such: STARVE THEM TO DEATH!

Perhaps you have a pastor with a dead vision; a leader with no heart to reach the world for Christ? Have you met with him for prayer and to discuss this? Can he be entreated with the Word, with gentleness, and humble respect? Have you prayerfully appealed to him? If he is not *born again* or *spiritual* according to 1 Corinthians 3 and 4—if he is worldly, carnal or perverted, then ditch him. It's as simple as that. Your assignment is not to resurrect a dead body (a local church). Only One can do that. It's not to kill your God-given vision either. If your church is determined to be sick, then leave it. Become an active part of a healthy Bible teaching church that takes the Great Commission seriously, instead of a sick religious one. Love God more than your vision, church and habits. Ask Him to lead you to a congregation that's awake with a strong pastor who leads and rightly feeds from the Scriptures as he lives the life.

If man hasn't discovered something that he will die for, he isn't fit to live.
—Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Sure, we need to be flexible with our leadership. In a local church, there's a time when God will use a particular kind of a ministry program, but then that time passes. Unfortunately, it often becomes a tradition for many veteran attendees who often have a hard time letting go of an old program. Some even become willing to sacrifice everything—even long term friendships—just to fight to keep certain programs going, when everyone should simply be thankful for what God did in the past and then just let it die a natural death. Strong churches aren't like that and no church will ever outgrow our worldwide mandate to spread the Gospel! Flocks that don't evangelize fossilize and Christ rebukes churches like that. To the one at Sardis He said, "***I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead***" (Rev. 3:1, nkjv).

New people indeed don't grasp why it's so important to the seasoned saints that the church stagnate and cling to what they should have already buried. Why would any Christians want to put their old dead program on life support systems and attempt to keep it going by siphoning off much needed monies from other growing departments of the church that do evangelize ... simply to subsidize what *used to be* blessed of God? With God's grace and help we can learn to let ludicrous programs die a natural death, instead of trying to keep things going and looking good by artificial means.

So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you (Colossians 3:5, nlt).

I say that we should allow any department of any church to die if it is not involved in three important ministries: **1.) Exaltation**—the biblical worship of the Lord, rather than merely playing patty cake and existing. Mere horizontal living under the sun gets so moldy! **2.) Edification**—building up the believers with sound Bible teaching through all the counsels of God, until they become mature reproducing disciple-makers ... for the ministry of *building up* is not an end in itself. Here's the last one: **3.) Evangelization**—tactful witnessing by word and deed worldwide to catch people alive for God's Kingdom! Yes, to use a business term, I'm talking about *closing the deal* with unbelievers in a winsome way for the purpose of [winning them](#) to a saving faith in Jesus Christ. Bold Christians sharing the Gospel is still God's primary way of saving lost people!

We never outgrow these things! When we get back to Bible principles, we'll get Bible results! You see, soul-winning is the natural outgrowth of health—the byproduct of sorts—stemming from proper importation and application of the Scriptures in regards to the first two disciplines I mentioned. And you'd be surprised how few do these things.

British Bible expositor, Alan Redpath, said, *"It is possible to have a saved soul and a lost life."* How true! In other words, it is possible to be saved and forgiven of one's sins but to waste one's earthly life by not serving or witnessing for Christ. Don't let your years be wasted!

In church therefore, the most thoughtful thing that a Christians could do, would be to die to the deeds of the flesh and their own way and allow the departments that neglect these three areas to simply pass away, rather than to prolong their inevitable demise. In no way do I mean that we neglect the babies, the weak, the widows, the disenfranchised or the hurting people. We include them and start to export quality edification now (as a result of our vertical connectivity), with an end in mind. Please find out what He would have you do and go to it. You can trust Him!

What are you aggressively sowing to these days? What are you dying to? Paul said, ***"God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting"*** (Gal. 6:8, kjv). Why take on corruption instead of life? John warned, ***"For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever"*** (1 Jn. 2:16, nkjv). Paul said, ***"Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh"*** (Gal. 5:16). Why not judge yourself, before you must enter the highest court of justice—the Great White Judgment Bar of God? One day soon, Jesus will either be your defense Attorney there or your Judge, and He will win. He always does; remember the cross that He died on. You must decide, but do it while you're still sucking air in or it will be too late. That's how you can win with Him and avoid the [second death](#).² You are so loved; please choose [LIFE](#)!³

With all due respect may I ask you: are you dead spiritually ...merely [thinking you're a Christian](#)? I've been talking to you about Someone who can fix that ...if you're willing. Why not now? If you hang on to your life [you'll lose it](#), but if you lose your life to Him for the Gospel's sake, you will find life everlasting!⁴ Nothing is more important! Are you really a child of God who is led by His Spirit? [You can be](#) this moment! Don't procrastinate; check out all the evidence piled up that corroborates all that I'm saying. Talk it over with God today, while this is still in your mind. History is His story and real science never contradicts the Bible!

Do you have a prayer request? Would you like to share with us what God is doing in your life? [Contact](#) us today!

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¹ *The World system* is everything about this life on earth [exterior from your person if you can keep a worldly mindset out] that opposes the Work of Christ. Yes, when I say "this world," I really don't mean this globe—this planet earth, which belongs to God and one day soon will be ruled over by Jesus Christ in the Millennium. And when a Christian speaks of his or her *fleshly nature*—"their old nature," let me explain what that means. Christian, that's everything about you [interiorly] that opposes the work of Christ in your life (study Exodus 17:7-16; 17:14 & 16; Gen. 36:12). If you use Bible terms around unbelievers, you have got to help them understand what you mean. Maybe you remember reading about how, *"Timna was a concubine of Esau's son Eliphaz and she bore Amalek to Eliphaz"*. Well, Ameleck represented something that wasn't good for the children of God (He represented fleshly living). That story can be very helpful for Christians today, because fleshly living is prevailing in many churches today that want to teach anything but the Bible and preach anyone other than Christ. It's a real bad witness! To fish for souls well, you must be born again and spiritual. We each must conquer our old nature and walk in the Spirit. Yes, Ameleck is a type of the flesh in the Old Testament.

² Meditate upon: Rev 2:11; Rev 20:6; Rev 20:14 and Rev 21:8.

³ See Deut. 30:19.

⁴ Read Matthew 10:39; Matt. 16:25; Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24; Luke 17:33 and John 12:25.