



The
FLOW
Adult CURRICULUM

#37

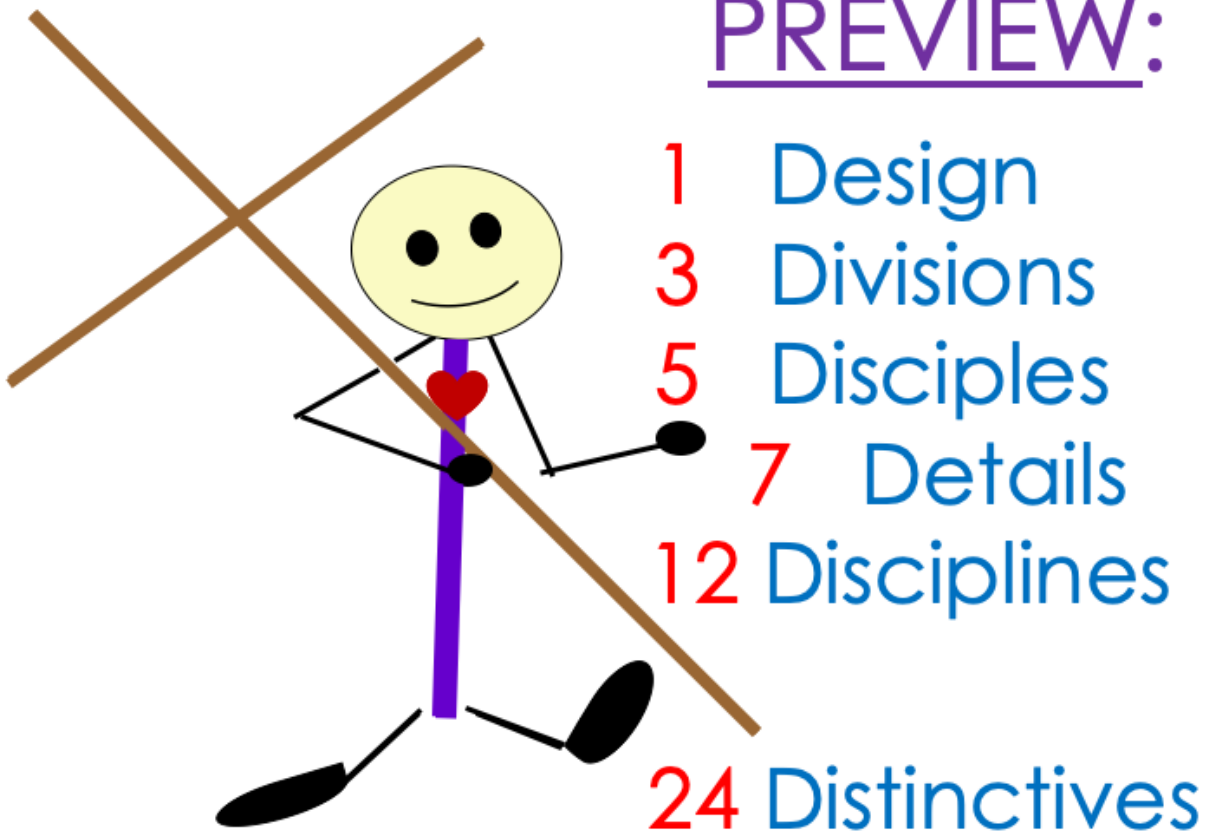
Dying To Self

Galatians 2:20

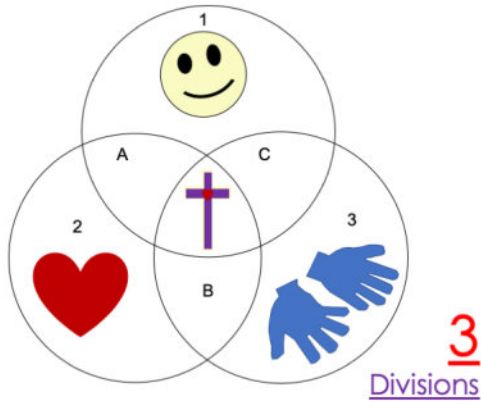
(Come And See Christianity book pages 100)

The FLOW

PREVIEW:

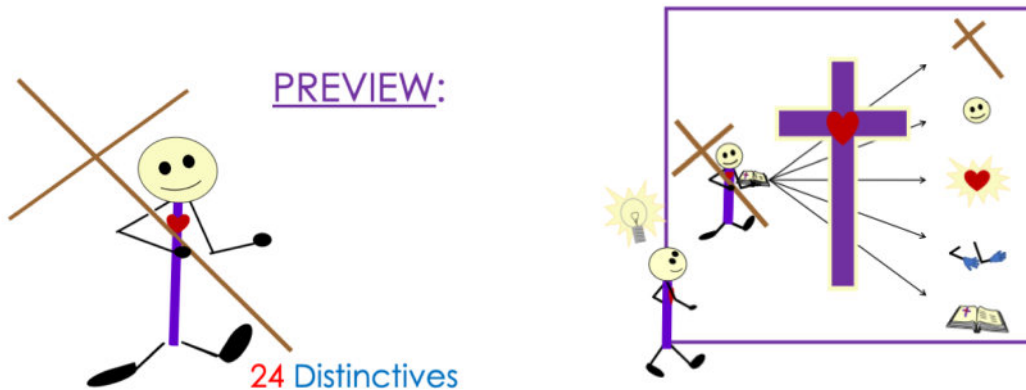


SECTION SIX: 12 Disciplines



The Disciple's "Hands" put into **action** the **truth** & **love** of God's Word, God's will, & God's ways. In short, when **each Christian's Head, Heart, & Hands** are united in purpose & power, the family of God is **living** as the **Body of Christ!**

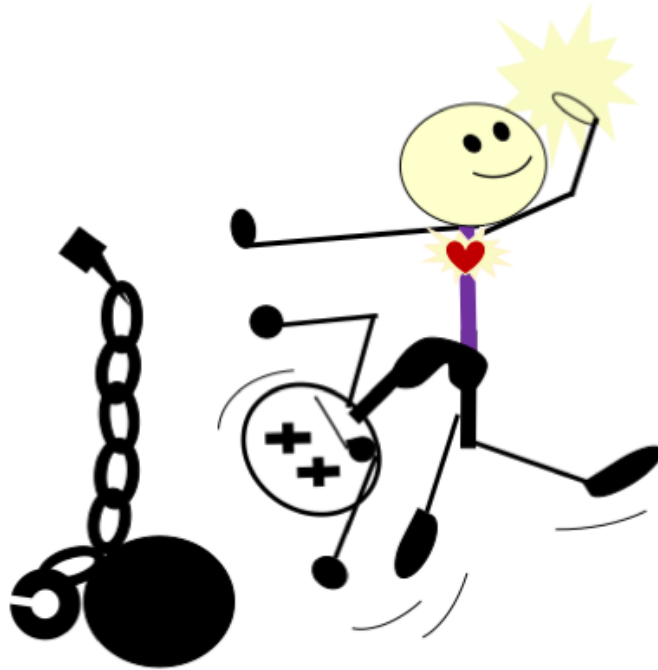
24 Family Distinctives:



24 DISTINCTIVES:

The “**distinctives**” are a family portrait... When you add God’s Word, God’s Spirit, God’s Truth, God’s love, and God’s people all together, the **distinctives** are what **we look, love, & live like :-)**

We are...



Dying to self

INTRO:

As we begin to **see the beautiful, biblical portrait of Christ's faith-filled family** defined and described by God's Word, will, and ways, it is critical to remember that the Holy Bible is to ALWAYS BE our ultimate source, authority, and interpreter in ALL things pertaining to one's understanding of reality and application of truth in love.

Remember,
The biblical Church is Christ's missional family...
Moreover, God's Word reveals our Father's will and His family's ways.

[2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correction, and for training in righteousness, [17](#)so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Here are ***24 defining & describing HANDS-on DISTINCTIVES of Christianity:***

True Christians are biblically, miraculously, intentionally, missionally, and imperfectly...

1. ***Responding to grace***
2. ***Repenting of sin***
3. ***Trusting the Bible***
4. ***Obeying God's Word***
5. ***Growing in Christ***
6. ***Living Spirit-led***
7. ***Praying for guidance***
8. ***Following by faith***
9. ***Dying to self***
10. ***Carrying our cross***
11. ***BE-ing The Church***
12. ***Loving one another (truly loving one another)***
13. ***Equipping the saints***
14. ***Exemplifying supernatural unity***
15. ***Ministering as ambassadors***
16. ***Discerning matters shrewdly***
17. ***Worshipping God vertically***
18. ***Experiencing Him horizontally***
19. ***Proclaiming the Gospel (no matter what)***
20. ***Fishing for men***
21. ***Making disciplined warriors***
22. ***Winning spiritual warfare***
23. ***Loving our King***
24. ***Serving His kingdom***

PRAYER:

LORD, we seek to bless You with all that is within us. Help us here, we pray, to be that blessing as we come to better understand You and Your eternal truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). Help us to see with Your eyes and love with Your love, all that You would reveal to us through Your Word, Your will, and Your ways. May we grow in our grasp of Your realities, Your means of restoration, and Your mission of reproduction. In the holy name of Jesus, we pray. Amen and Amen

CONTEXT:

Macro

This lesson marks another major transition point in our curriculum's eye-opening explanation of Christianity. By way of review, we began in Section One with the reality of Almighty God having 1 Divine DESIGN (also known as a biblical worldview and the eternal application of Jesus Christ's Gospel). In Section Two, we addressed the 3 DIVISIONS (Head, Heart, and Hands) that make up the "being" in every human being. Next, in Section Three, we demonstrated how Christianity accounts for, defines, and describes all of humanity, every person, past, present, and future. We noted that all people can be identified as one of the 5 DISCIPLES – Lost, Lover, Learner, Leader, or Lifer. Moving forward, Section Four revealed, engaged, and explained the 7 fundamental DETAILS of God's Divine DESIGN... because **we all need to know what we need to know**. To be more specific, those seven truths are: The Foundations, The Framework, The Facts, The Fight, The Faith, The Family, and the truth about Forever.

Then, in Section Five, which we just completed, our focus shifted from HEAD based truths to 12 HEART shaping exercises or disciplines - each having the potential to strengthen one's personal relationship with Christ, His Church, and their collective mission: bringing God glory by finding & growing more glorifiers.

We used the acronym **J.E.S.U.S.'S. P. S.W.O.R.D.** to outline and harmonize a biblical, missional, and intentional methodology for growing in God's love - & His loving witness. The 12 HEART DISCIPLINES are: **J**ournaling... **E**ating-nothing (fasting)... **S**cripture-intake... **U**nderstudy of Scripture... **S**tewardship... **S**olitude... **P**rayer... **S**erving... **W**orshipping... **O**utreach... **R**elationships... and **D**evelopment.

Now, our curriculum and study will transition to The HANDS. This is where **Christians demonstrate to the world that Christ is in their worship & witness**. Whereas our time spent in the HEAD sections (1-4) focused on the truths that Christians need and seek to LEARN, and our concentration on the 12 HEART DISCIPLINES of section 5 helped us to grow in God's LOVE, our sixth and final section will **walk through the 24 DISTINCTIVES, which explain & exemplify how Christians are to faithfully LIVE... and fully BE The Church... together** – all by God's grace & ALL for His glory!

God's Word puts it this way:

"Let us not love with word and tongue but in action and truth." – 1st John 3:18

And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, [47](#)praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. – Acts 2:46-47

I. **DISTINCTIVES are FRUIT:**

It is important to realize that God’s miraculous and authentic **Christian DISTINCTIVES are the FRUIT of saving grace and faith** (Ephesians 2:1-10). As Jesus described in John 15, people can do nothing outside of their abiding in Him and obeying His Word, will and ways. In short, there will be no fruit unless one remains attached to and provided for by the true Vine and divine Root. With that said, a cautionary note is worth sharing here, beware the counterfeits that abound around the world. ***Plastic fruit is deceptive vs. DISTINCTIVE!***

Galatians 5:22-25

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

II. **DISTINCTIVES are FAMILY:**



DISTINCTIVES, by definition, are those “distinguishing characteristics that are notable for having a special quality, style, and/or attractiveness” (Dictionary.com).

When it comes to God’s family, the true Church, each Christian and their individualistic DISTINCTIVES are as unique as their potential. At the same time, in the same way that a billion unique snowflakes can be combined to make a single snowstorm, or countless swatches of scrap fabric can be sewn together to make a single quilt, so it is with God’s family. The LORD creates His Christian family with a both/and combination of DISTINCTIVE uniqueness, as well as DISTINCTIVE love and defining unity.

Christianity’s DISTINCT family (ecclesia) has a DISTINCTIVE unity (koinonia).

“By this all people will know that you are My disciple, if you have love for one another.”
– John 13:35

“The more genuine and the deeper our community becomes, the more will everything else between us recede, the more clearly and purely will Jesus Christ and his work become the one and only thing that is vital between us.”

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

III. **DISTINCTIVES are WITNESS:**

The most biblical and healthy understandings of Christianity will include an embrace of two overarching and DISTINCTIVE purposes. Namely, per God’s Word, will, and ways, every Christian has received miraculous, saving grace, as well as the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to:

1. Bring glory to God.

1 Corinthians 10:31

*So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do,
do all to the glory of God.*

2. BE Christ’s witness.

Acts 1:8

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, **and you will be My witnesses** in Jerusalem (locally), and in all Judea and Samaria (regionally), and to the end of the earth (globally).”*

God’s DISTINCTIVE people have been filled with His Holy Spirit for the express purpose of living DISTINCTIVE lives. When the world sees the LORD’s loving family living out their divinely empowered and God-honoring worship, work, and warfare, the resulting fruit will serve as a faithful witness, built with supernatural, grace-based, and missional DISTINCTIVES.

“God created me—and you—to live with a single, all-embracing, all-transforming passion—namely, a passion to glorify God by enjoying and displaying his supreme excellence in all the spheres of life.”

- John Piper

The Christian Distinctive

What distinguishes Christianity from all other religions is that it is a *revealed* religion. Christianity is not about our search for God or our means of finding him. Christianity is not a religion that works its way upward. It is all about God coming to us — God in grace making himself known to us and making a way for us to enjoy fellowship with him.

And so, at the very heart of Christianity is, simply, a message — a message from God to us about what he has done to bring us to himself.

If Christianity is distinctively revealed religion, then it is also uniquely *authoritative*. It does not offer itself as the best and highest of human thinking about God or even the best or most successful of human efforts to know God. It professes to be nothing less than the unique word from God, his very own self-disclosure and the record of the actions he has taken in Jesus Christ to bring us into fellowship with himself.

One of Rudyard Kipling's characters declares, "The heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone; He don't obey no orders unless they is his own." That is to say, human religions lack authority — they form their own ideas and "discover" their own beliefs.

By contrast the Christian is "under orders," because unlike human religions, Christianity is a revealed religion — divinely revealed. We Christians are not our own touchstone of truth, and we do not confuse our ideas about God with His own self-revelation. We learn truth about God not from "inner lights" within ourselves but from God's own objective Word.

And apart from this external authority, there is no Christianity. This, at bottom, is Christianity's leading distinctive.

And so, we **Christians prize Scripture as God's Word. We joyfully submit to it. And we enthusiastically proclaim its message of grace in Jesus Christ to the world.**

- Dr. Fred Zaspel

Micro

As Christians die daily, they live eternally!

Luke 9:23

“Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross (an instrument of death) daily and follow Me.” - Jesus Christ

***The faithful Christian’s miraculous living
is fertilized by their missional dying.***

God’s means of delivering us from sin is not by making us stronger and stronger, but by making us weaker and weaker. That is surely rather a peculiar way of victory, you say, but it is the divine way. God sets us free from the dominion of sin, not by strengthening our old man but by crucifying him...

Watchman Nee

Message

What does the Bible mean by “dying to self”?

The concept of “dying to self” is found throughout the New Testament. It expresses the true essence of the Christian life, in which we take up our cross and follow Christ. Dying to self is part of being born again; the old self dies and the new self comes to life ([John 3:3-7](#)). **Not only are Christians born again when we come to salvation, but we also continue dying to self as part of the process of sanctification.** As such, **dying to self is both a one-time event and a lifelong process.**

Jesus spoke repeatedly to His disciples about taking up their cross (an instrument of death) and following Him. He made it clear that if any would follow Him, they must deny themselves, which means giving up their lives—spiritually, symbolically, and even physically, if necessary. This was a **prerequisite for being a follower of Christ**, who proclaimed that trying to save our earthly lives would result in our losing our lives in the kingdom. But **those who would give up their lives for His sake would find eternal life** ([Matthew 16:24-25](#); [Mark 8:34-35](#)). Indeed, Jesus even went so far as to say that **those who are unwilling to sacrifice their lives for Him cannot be His disciples** ([Luke 14:27](#)).

The rite of baptism expresses the commitment of the believer to die to the old, sinful way of life ([Romans 6:4-8](#)) and be reborn to a new life in Christ. In Christian baptism, the action of being immersed in the water symbolizes dying and being buried with Christ. The action of coming out of the water pictures Christ's resurrection. ***Baptism identifies us with Christ in His death and resurrection, portraying symbolically the whole life of the Christian as a dying to self and living for and in Him who died for us*** ([Galatians 2:20](#)).

Paul explains to the Galatians the process of dying to self as one in which he has been "crucified with Christ," and now Paul no longer lives, but Christ lives in him. Paul's old life, with its propensity to sin and to follow the ways of the world, is dead, and the new Paul is the dwelling place of Christ who lives in and through him. This does not mean that when we "die to self" we become inactive or insensible, nor do we feel ourselves to be dead. Rather, ***dying to self means that the things of the old life are put to death, most especially the sinful ways and lifestyles we once engaged in. "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires"*** ([Galatians 5:24](#)). Where we once pursued selfish pleasures, we now pursue, with equal passion, that which pleases God.

Dying to self is never portrayed in Scripture as something optional in the Christian life. It is the reality of the new birth; ***no one can come to Christ unless he is willing to see his old life crucified with Christ and begin to live anew in obedience to Him.*** Jesus describes lukewarm followers who try to live partly in the old life and partly in the new as those whom He will spit out ([Revelation 3:15-16](#)). That lukewarm condition characterized the church of Laodicea as well as many churches today. **Being "lukewarm" is a symptom of unwillingness to die to self and live for Christ.** Death to self is not an option for Christians; it is a choice that leads to eternal life.

– GotQuestions.org

BIG IDEA: **DYING TO SELF is the Christian's grace-based, perpetual process of intentionally & righteously denying all forms of sin & self-rule.**

PREVIEW:

1. DIE
2. "ING" (DYING)
3. TO SELF

TEXT:

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

1. DIE

Illustration:

John 3:3

“You must be born again.” - Jesus The Christ

*You will never glory in God
till first of all God has killed your glorying in yourself.
C.H. Spurgeon*

Explanation:

Galatians 5:24

*Those who belong to Christ Jesus
have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

At the risk of overstating the obvious, **“DIE” is DYING’s root word...** No surprise... Yet, herein, there is a subtle theological truth that gets at the very core of defining and describing genuine Christianity. In application, the roles & relationship between the two words (DIE & DYING), are missionally progressive & principled in much the same way as The Gospel’s theological terms... “saved” & “sanctifying” relate to one another.

Think about it this way... to “DIE,” a one-time event, is to be made ready for salvation and resurrection, or more on point, to be “born again” (John 3:3). On the other hand, the perpetual process of “DYING,” an process & pattern of ongoing surrender, empowers & exemplifies, the Holy Spirit’s sanctifying work in the life of God’s people – a.k.a. the genuine Christians... The God-honoring, blood-bought, biblical Church.

This subtle distinction but deep theological truth must be understood, based on God's Word, because one cannot be biblically sanctified who has not yet been biblically saved. And to be clear, no one can be biblically DYING who has not yet biblically DIED TO SELF... In short, the Messiah's miraculous and missional, narrow path (Matthew 7:13-14) is marked by God's drawing (John 6:44, our death (Galatians 2:20), and exponentially-multiplying, supernatural fruit that is born out of the Christian's daily DYING (John 12:24).

John 12:24

Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

Reader beware... when Jesus declared that ***“you must be born again,”*** by definition, **the “again” requires a death...** otherwise, the living will be a continuation of the old life. Consequently, a helpful question that gets at the fullness and foundation of DYING TO SELF (and all of Christianity) is to ask: ***“Can you tell me about your spiritual funeral? When did you die to self?”***

If and when a true Gospel-death and miraculous, born again, life has been confirmed, then, and only then, can the Christ-follower be trusted to demonstrate spiritual growth through their gracious, supernatural DYING.

Application:

Check to see if you have biblically DIED TO SELF.

2 Corinthians 13:5

Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

There was a day when I died; died to self, my opinions, preferences, tastes and will; died to the world, its approval or censure; died to the approval or blame even of my brethren or friends; and since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God.

George Muller

2. "ING" (DYING)

Illustration:

*If worship is right because God is worthy of it, it is also the best of all antidotes to our own self-centeredness, the most effective way to "disinfect us of egotism," as one writer put it long ago. In true worship we turn the searchlight of our mind and heart upon God and temporarily forget about our troublesome and usually intrusive selves. We marvel at the beauties and intricacies of God's creation. We "survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of glory died." We are taken up with God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit...
Because we are normally so turned in on ourselves, we will not find this easy. But we have to persevere, since nothing is more right or more important.
*John Stott**

Explanation:

"ING" is a suffix, an ending on a word... By definition, the addition of "ING" to an English word transforms that term into an active verb. In fact, at times, the adding of "ING" goes beyond initiating movement, all the way to describing perpetual motion... a process that starts but never ends. Such is the case when DYING TO SELF biblically bridges the gap between Christians FOLLOWING BY FAITH and CARRYING OUR CROSS.

To put this in focus, consider the New Testament's contrast between Judas and Paul... Judas looked great, seemed polished, was trusted as the Apostle's Treasurer; moreover, he was selected, disciplined, and sent out on mission by The Messiah... Jesus even washed Judas' feet in the upper room. By contrast, Paul was a poster-child for everything that is wrong with misguided "religion." For starters, he was notorious for persecuting the early Church. He sought and arrested many of the first Christians, seeking to stop the Christian Church before it could seem to get going. Scripture tells us that pride-filled Paul went so far as to hold the coats of those who would stone Stephen to death, thereby marking Paul as one in active attendance at the Bible's first recorded Christ-following martyrdom.

What's the point? One man was great and the other was gruesome. Right? It's obvious, right? Wrong! **Both men were gruesome sinners** in need of a Savior.

The eternal contrast between Judas & Paul is grounded in their responses to Christ's defining grace and His Gospel call to DIE TO SELF. Like the Rich Young Ruler in Matthew 19, Judas refused to surrender all, even while seeming to be "on staff" with Christ's evangelistic crusades. Paul, on the other hand, when supernaturally confronted, called out, and visually crippled by Christ (Acts 9), quickly and whole-heartedly DIED TO SELF, and then lived DYING the rest of his days, all in the purposeful pursuit of glorifying the LORD – no matter what!

Judas' unwillingness to DIE killed him; whereas Paul's daily, thankful DYING lead to his eternal life and missional living! May we collectively commit to perpetual DYING so that we may together BE forever living. All by God's grace and ALL for His glory. Amen and Amen

I have now concentrated all of my prayers into one, and that one prayer is this, that I may die to self and live wholly to Him.
C.H. Spurgeon

The reason why many are still troubled, still seeking, still making little forward progress is because they haven't yet come to the end of themselves. We're still trying to give orders, and interfering with God's work within us.
A.W. Tozer

Application:

Forever remember the famous and faithful words of **Jim Elliot**:
***He is no fool who gives away what he cannot keep,
to gain what he cannot lose!***

The deeper we are willing to enter into the death of self, the more shall we know of the mighty power of God, and the perfect blessedness of a perfect trust.
Andrew Murray

None of us are there yet, but if we each have this attitude, we will put to death our reactions to criticisms and offenses. And though we may still stumble, we will learn that carrying the cross is not merely dying to self; it is embracing the love of Christ that forgives the very ones who have crucified us, that the battle that comes against us has actually driven us into the embrace of God.

Francis Frangipane

3. TO SELF

Illustration:

***The greatest burden we have to carry in life is self.** The most difficult thing we have to manage is self. Our own daily living, our frames and feelings, our especial weaknesses and temptations, and our peculiar temperaments, – our inward affairs of every kind, – these are the things that perplex and worry us more than anything else, and that bring us oftenest into bondage and darkness. In laying off your burdens, therefore, the first one you must get rid of is yourself. You must hand yourself and all your inward experiences, your temptations, your temperament, your frames and reeling's, all over into the care and keeping of your God, and leave them there. He made you and therefore He understands you, and knows how to manage you, and you must trust Him to do it.*

Hannah Whitall Smith

Explanation:

The true Gospel is a call to self-denial, not self-fulfillment.

John MacArthur

What do you want? In John's Gospel, chapter 1, verse 38, Jesus asked His first would-be followers that defining question... To this day, as intended by Christ, no more revealing inquiry has ever been posed. Think about what an honest answer tells us about the heart of the respondent...

Any answer to the question: “What do you want?” that excludes the ultimate goal of God being glorified... is, at best, insufficient, at worst, sinfully self-absorbed. While that may seem shocking to some, it is the simple truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). That being said, let us hear it from God (2 Timothy 3:16-17) Himself. ***“So, whether you eat or drink, or WHATEVER YOU DO, do all to the glory of God”*** - 1st Corinthians 10:31.

Now, in light of God’s Word, will, and ways, we can see why it is so missionally important to biblically DIE (and keep on DYING) TO SELF... In short, ***we and our wants will keep getting in our own way***. Praise God for the equipping and empowering gifts of His Scriptures, Spirit, and Church, *“everything we need for life and godliness”* (2 Peter 1:3).

Finally, please take to heart these closing words of loving exhortation. ***Watch out! Even the “wounded” self is well equipped to sabotage & derail one’s walk, worship, & witness! Band-aides and rehab won’t work here. We need to DIE and keep on DYING TO SELF each & every day.***

Make no mistake, the battle will rage on. The world will entice you to sin, your flesh will be prone to wonder, and the Devil, along with his demonic minions, will be prowling around, looking for opportunities to deceive and devour you (1 Peter 5:8). No worries! *Fear not* (the most repeated command in all the Bible), when Jesus declared “It is finished!” on the cross, the eternal war was won – Amen. What that means, in practical, missional application, is that the **Christians are never more powerfully living then when they are actively DYING TO SELF... all by God’s grace and all for His glory!**

Application:

If you’re not hungry for God... you’re probably full of yourself!
Anonymous

If we look carefully within ourselves, we shall find that there are certain limits beyond which we refuse to go in offering ourselves to God. We hover around these reservations, making believe not to see them, for fear of self reproach. The more we shrink from giving up any such reserved point, the more certain it is that it needs to be given up. If we were not fast bound by it, we should not make so many efforts to persuade ourselves that we are free.

Francis Fenelon

CLOSE:

*Paint Jesus Christ upon your canvas, and then hold Him up
to the people; but hold Him up so that not even
your little finger can be seen.*

Edward Payson

*Father, I want to know Thee, but my coward heart fears to give up
its toys. I cannot part with them without inward bleeding, and I do
not try to hide from Thee the terror of the parting. I come trembling,
but I do come. Please root from my heart all those things which I
have cherished so long and which have become a very part of my
living self, so that Thou mayest enter and dwell there without a
rival. Then shalt Thou make the place of Thy feet glorious. Then
shall my heart have no need of the sun to shine in it, for Thyself wilt
be the light of it, and there shall be no night there.*

In Jesus Name, Amen.

A.W. Tozer

For What?

*The one misery of man is self-will, the one secret of blessedness is
the conquest over our own wills. To yield them up to God is rest and
peace. What disturbs us in this world is not "trouble," but our
opposition to trouble. The true source of all that frets and irritates,
and wears away our lives, is not in external things, but in the
existence of our wills to the will of God expressed by external things.*

Alexander MacLaren

So What?

*I am a committed to-the-death devoted follower of Jesus
Christ. I am not a mere 'fan' who will walk away when I don't like
what he asks me to do or when my 'self' disagrees with
his solution to a problem in my life.*

Katherine Walden

Now What?

We must die if we are to live. There is no spiritual life for you, for me, for any man, except by dying into it. Have you a fine-spun righteousness of your own? It must die. Have you any faith in yourself? It must die. The sentence of death must be in yourself, and then you shall enter into life. The withering power of the Spirit of God must be experienced before his quickening influence can be known: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it." You must be slain by the sword of the Spirit before you can be made alive by the breath of the Spirit.

- Charles Haddon Spurgeon

Now we begin to see why repentance is a uniquely Christian path of liberation from self. All great religious traditions recognize that the deepest desire of the human heart is for freedom from inner oppression. We feel "conditioned": bound by the chains of our habits and compulsions, our likes and dislikes, our fears and guilt, our inability to love. Our great tragedy is that we so often mistake these habits and compulsions for our true self. ... Our false self must die, so that we can find our true self, the self which God meant us to be and which he created in his image and likeness.

-Irma Zaleski,

PRAYER

Dear heavenly Father, thank You so much for the Truth and Love of Your Word, will, and ways. Please help us to absorb and apply ALL that You have shared and commanded in the Bible. May our heads be infilled with Your defining Scriptures, for the express purpose of informing, inspecting, and inspiring our sanctified hearts and serving hands.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen and Amen

Support Sermon:

"Adjusting To God"

Galatians 2:20

March 8, 2009

Sermon Series: Experiencing God