

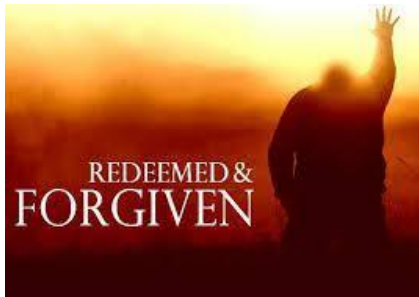
The importance of continually “dying to self”

(A key to realising our God given potential in life)

- Dying to self is part of being born again; the old self dies and the new self comes to life

(John 3:3-7)

(2 Corinthians 5:17)



- However once we come to Christ we need to continue to die to self as part of the process of sanctification, so that we become more like Christ over time

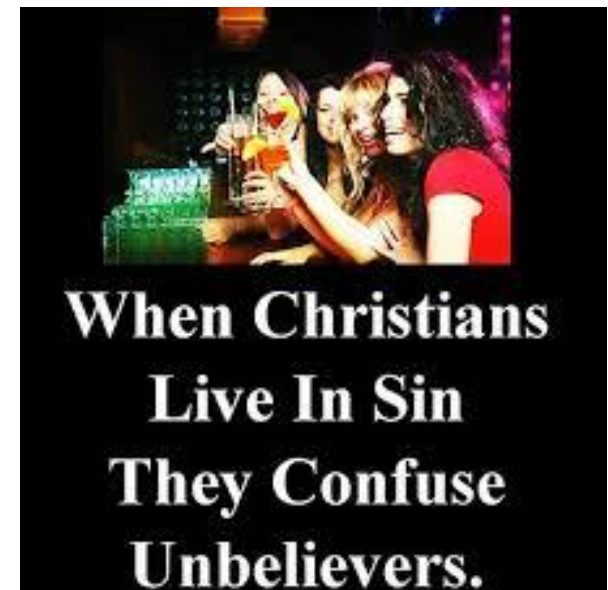
Jesus rebuked the Lukewarm church in Laodicea. We see this in Revelation 3:14-16 & 19

“And to the [a]angel of the church [b]of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: ¹⁵ “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither [c]cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.” **(Revelation 3:14-16)**

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.[d] Therefore be [e]zealous and repent.” **(Revelation 3:19)**



- Being “lukewarm” as a Christian is a symptom of being unwilling to die to self and to live for Christ



- **God has the best plan for our life**

Jesus Himself said,

“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. *I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*” **(John 10:10)**

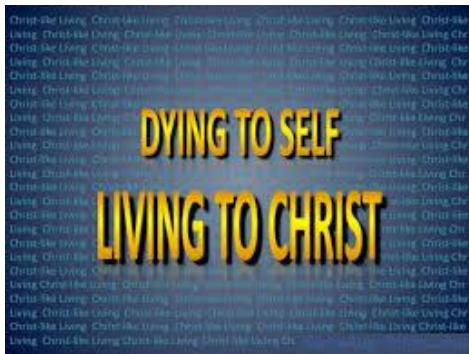
The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,” **(Ephesians 3:20)**



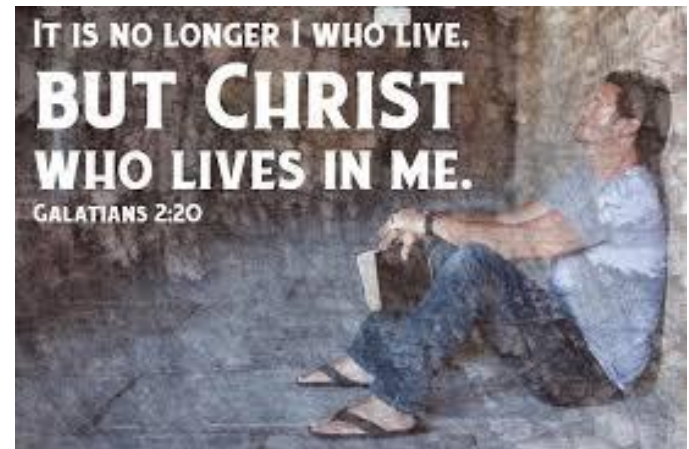
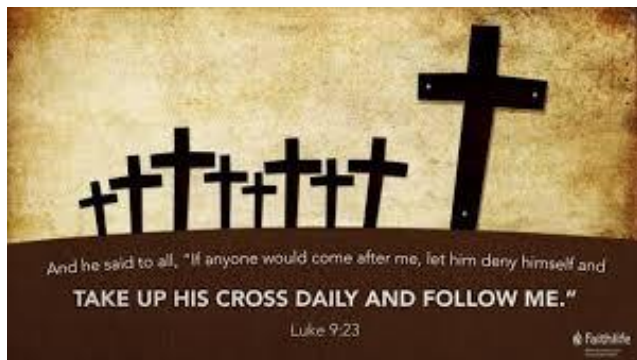
- **God is not limited by ability, only our availability**

- Though God has much planned for our life, without a continual clear cut commitment to dying to self and living for Christ, we will invariably be *drawn away from God's plan for our life* and bear little or no fruit in our life



- Jesus Himself continually emphasised that true discipleship involved renouncing selfish ambition and living whole heartedly for Him

Jesus said, “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.” **(Luke 9:23-25)**



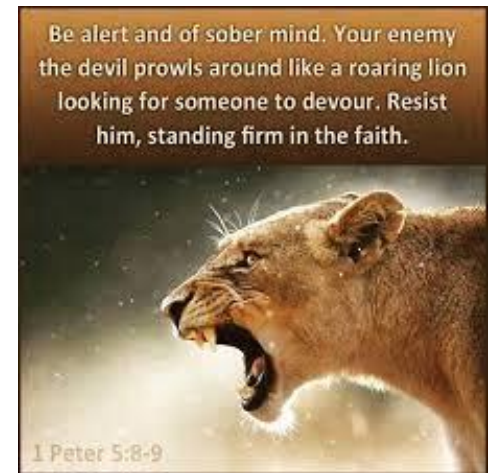
Jesus also said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honour.” **(John 12:24-26)**



- There will be a continual ongoing warfare on every believer's life as the enemy, the Devil, tries to stop believers from making an eternal difference in the lives of others

The Apostle Peter wrote,

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.” (1 Peter 5:8-9)



- We also have our own fallen fleshly human nature that will always try and get us to focus on ourselves and what we can get out of life

Jesus emphasised the consequences of this in His explanation of the Parable of the Sower when He said,

“Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, and the cares of this world, the *deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.*” (Mark 4:18-19)



- Both the Devil and our flesh will continually try and draw us away from living wholeheartedly for the Lord



- For this reason we need to continually choose to put to death our fallen human nature (self) and choose to live wholeheartedly for the Lord
- The more we make this choice the easier and more natural it becomes over time



- The Apostle Paul was committed to living for Christ. He had counted the cost of discipleship and was prepared to do whatever God called him to do in life



This is why the Apostle Paul wrote,
“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” **(Galatians 2:20)**

The Apostle Paul also wrote,

“For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but **through love serve one another.**” (Galatians 5:13) “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.” (Galatians 5:16-17)



- **How we need to learn to continually CHOOSE to walk in the Spirit and to be guided by the Holy Spirit in the way that we live our life**

There are many benefits that come from learning to die to self. These include;

- i) **We experience God's peace in a greater way as we are better able to know and flow in His will and plan for our life**

In the book of Isaiah we read,

“You will keep him in perfect peace, *whose mind is stayed on You*, because he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever, For in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting strength.” (Isaiah 26:3-4)



- **When we die to self we are far more able to hear from God as we seek Him for counsel and direction in life**



In the book of Jeremiah we read,

**“For who has stood in the counsel of the LORD,
And has perceived and heard His word? Who has
marked His word and heard it?” (Jeremiah 23:18)**

- **Having inner peace is one of the indications that we are in the centre of God’s will for our life**

Jesus Himself said,

“Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will *find rest for your souls*. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” **(Matthew 11:28-30)**



ii) We have greater purpose in life. God's plan for our life is the best in the long run

- God is able to open up greater doors of opportunity when our lives are yielded to Him

The word of the LORD came to the Prophet Jeremiah in prison, “*Call to Me*, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.” (Jeremiah 33:3)

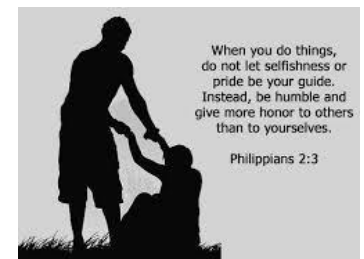


iii) We are able to more easily work together with others so that we achieve much more in life. Our God given destiny will always be outworked in connection with other believers

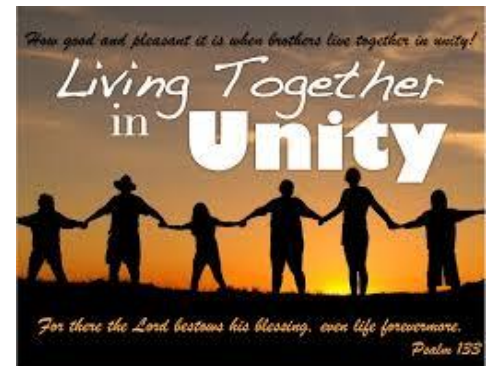


This is why the Apostle Paul wrote,

“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.” **(Philippians 2:3)**

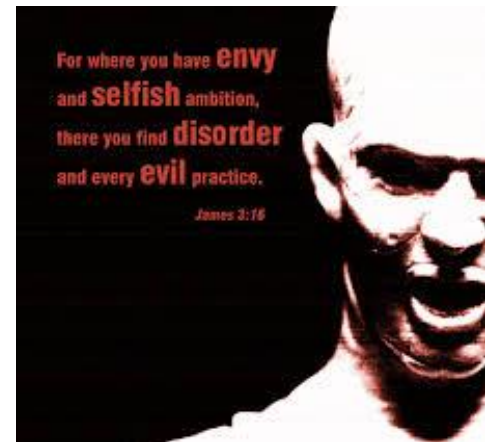


- God will divinely connect us with others so that we can fulfil our God given destiny in life and help others to become all that God has planned for their lives. We all need one another
- Continually renouncing self centred ambition and living for others helps us to work together in unity with other believers, so that we can see God's blessing upon our lives in a greater way



God commands a blessing where brethren dwell together in unity (Psalm 133:1-3)

- On the other hand, whenever self gets on the throne of our heart there will always be strife and problems. *We must always seek for unity*
In the book of James we read, “Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the **meekness of wisdom**. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.”
(James 3:13-16)



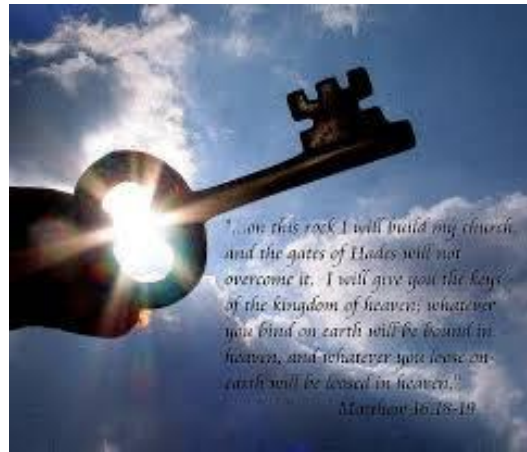
iv) We grow in Christlike character so that we shine in a greater way in our world for Jesus

Jesus Himself said,



“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*” **(Matthew 5:14-16)**

v) Life is less complicated as we see God opening and closing doors for us as we allow Him to lead



In the book of Proverbs we read,

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.” (Proverbs 3:5-6)

vi) Our relationships with others are enhanced and enriched



- Our relationships with others will be far more healthy when we are more focused on meeting the needs of others than what we can get out of our relationships. This is definitely counter culture
- We are now living in a generation in which all the focus is on what we can get out of life and where our attention is more and more on our self. No wonder we have so much depression and relationship problems in the days that we are now living in



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Do nothing from rivalry of conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.” (Philippians 2:3 ESV)



In the book of Proverbs we read,

- **“A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity.” (Proverbs 17:17)**
- **Friendship is at its best, not in times of prosperity but in times of trouble. The more we die to self the more sincere we will be in our relationships with other**



Jesus Himself said, “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.” **(John 15:13)**

Jesus also said, “Yet is shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” **(Matthew 20:26-28)**



- **Jesus is our example of what sacrificial love is**

vii) We will consistently make right choices in life that are in line with God's unfolding will for our life



In the book of Proverbs we read, “Commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established.” (Proverbs 16:3)

In the book of James we read, “If any of you lacks wisdom, *let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach,* and it will be given to him.” (James 1:5)



viii) Our lives will bear much eternal fruit

- Jesus made it clear that He chose us that our lives could bear much eternal fruit. God's desire is that our lives would make a great difference in the lives of others for eternity

Jesus said, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.” **(John 15:16)**



ix) We are able to fulfil God's destiny and plan for our life



King David wrote,

“Trust in the Lord, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. **Delight yourself also in the Lord**, And He shall give you the *desires of your heart*. Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass.” (Psalm 37:3-5) **AND**

x) God promises to meet our every need in life when we put Christ and the things of the Kingdom of God first in our life

Jesus Himself said, “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’

Or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’

For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For

your heavenly Father knows that you need all

these things. But seek first the kingdom of

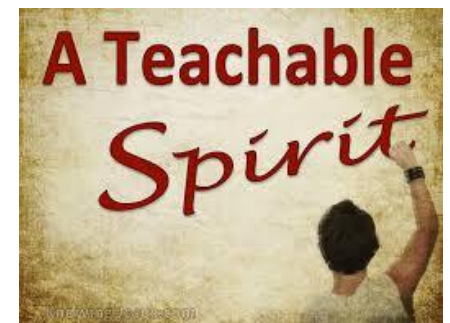
God and His righteousness, and all these

things shall be added to you.” (Matthew 6:31-33)



When we have learned to consistently die to self it will be reflected in the following ways;

- There will be greater joy and peace in our heart, even during the trials of life
- We will have more patience with others
- **We will have greater contentment in life**
- We will not be easily offended by others
- We will have a teachable spirit
- We will have a greater love and compassion for others



- We will have a greater “others focus” and a greater willingness to lay down our lives for others

WE RISE
BY LIFTING
OTHERS

- We will have greater stability in our life when our lives are fully surrendered to Jesus Christ

- **Our focus will be more on the eternal things than the temporary things of this life**

- We will maintain a right attitude even when inconvenienced



- We will be more quick to forgive others

- We will be more tolerant of others
- We will be less prone to depression
- God will be able to more easily guide and direct our steps in life, and
- We will reflect the fruit of the Spirit in our life



The Apostle Paul wrote, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22-23)

- Finally, we will have a greater desire to invest our lives for the Kingdom Cause and to help others to come to Christ

Jesus Himself said,

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” **(Matthew 6:19-21)**



- So in conclusion, there has never been a better time than now to break open our lives for the Kingdom Cause. There is a world in need of hope
- Every believer has the potential to make a great difference in this world for eternity
- **God has a unique plan for every believer's life**

The Apostle Paul wrote,

**“For we are His workmanship,
created in Christ Jesus for good
works, which God prepared beforehand that we
should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:10)**



- Every believer can make a great difference in this world for eternity
- We look at people like Billy Graham, Reinherd Bonnke and Mother Teresa who were simply prepared to devote their lives to the Kingdom Cause. All of them have been used in a great way by the Lord to make an eternal difference in the lives of many
- God never looks at our ability, but simply our availability. Are we prepared to lay down our lives for the Kingdom Cause?



- When we respond to God's call upon our lives He empowers us to fulfil all that He has called us to do



- The simple question is, “Are we prepared to break open our lives to live for a cause greater than just what we can get out of this life?”
- Are we prepared to fully invest our lives for the Kingdom Cause in which are workplaces and neighbourhoods become our missions fields? Are we available to serve the Lord and others with our gifts and talents?

- God has uniquely gifted every believer for a time such as this to impact our world for eternity

The prophet Isaiah wrote,

“Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying:

“Whom shall I send,

And who will go for Us?”

**Then I said, ‘Here am I! Send me.’
(Isaiah 6:8)**



- **Are you too today prepared to respond to God’s call upon you life and fully invest your life for the Kingdom Cause from this day on?**

- Just believe that your life through the power of the Holy Spirit, can make a great difference in our world in the times that we are now living in



I will finish with the words of Jesus,

“For the Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.” (Matthew 16:27)

One day we will be rewarded by the Lord for our service to Him during our time here on earth