

Do You Know How To Die?

Introduction. Death is one of the last subjects most people want think about and many people often refuse to think about death unless they forced to.

Now if we could refuse to die, then perhaps refusing to think about death could be justified. But one of the most stubborn and undeniable facts confronting everyone is that we will all die one day. Only those living until Jesus comes can escape death.

Since we can't escape death and since thinking about it can help us live better (Ecclesiastes 7:2), I'm asking you today to think about dying and how we can learn to die from Jesus on the cross. Because He was the Son of God, in some ways His death was absolutely unique. But it is still possible for us to learn how to die from Him.

I. We Learn That Death Is Common To All

- A. When Jesus became man He knew that humanity and dying go together (Hebrews 2:9; 9:27). He knew He would someday die.
- B. Even though Jesus knew He would eventually die (and that death would be painful), He didn't avoid thinking or talking about it (Matthew 16:21; Mark 8:31). He didn't become bitter or lose interest in life because of it (John 9:4-5).
- C. The fact of impending death can easily make Christians bitter and despondent. Job saw God's actions against him as intentional and it filled him with bitterness (Job 9:18). This can affect our service to God (Hebrews 12:15).

II. We Learn That Death Is Not The End

- A. Jesus knew death was just the separation of the spirit from the body (Luke 23:43, 46; James 2:26). Jesus died knowing death wasn't the end and that He would be raised (Mark 9:31).
- B. Of course, the same understanding now will give us the faith to find comfort as we approach death (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18).

III. We Learn To Prepare For Death In Life

- A. Jesus spent His life doing the Father's will (Luke 2:49-50; John 8:29; 9:4). The result was that when His life was over He could say with satisfaction, "It is finished" (John 17:4; 19:30).
- B. Ultimately, there are only two possibilities for each of us in life and death:
 - 1. To live serving God so we can face death with our purpose and mission in life fulfilled (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Colossians 1:28).
 - 2. To live indifferent or rebellious toward God and die having wasted life by going in the wrong direction (Isaiah 65:2-7; Luke 12:15).
- C. Instead of ignoring God until the moment of death and then frantically seeking His help, Jesus shows us to live in constant fellowship with God (1 John 1:5-7; 4:6, 15). Then it will be natural to turn to God when life inevitably ends.

IV. We Learn To Die Without Resentment Toward Others

- A. This wouldn't make it right, but if anyone ever had reason for resentment and bitterness toward others, Jesus did.

- B. He was hated without cause; rejected by those He came to save; scourged, mocked, betrayed, and deserted; and, He was the only one who didn't deserve to die. In fact, Pilate found no fault in Jesus (John 18:38).
- C. Yet thru His suffering and death, there is no hint of hatred toward others (Luke 23:34; cp. 1 Peter 2:23).
- D. Should Christians die differently from Jesus in this respect? I think we all know the answer is "No."
 - 1. As I think about stepping into eternity without hatred and resentment toward others, the only sure way to die without hatred and resentment is to live without them (Ephesians 4:31-32).
 - 2. The time to root hatred and resentment out of your heart is now (Galatians 5:19-21). Be crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20; 5:24).

V. We Learn To Die With Scripture In Our Hearts

- A. It is very significant that two of the last statements Jesus made were quotations from the Old Testament (Matthew 27:46 [Psalm 22:1]; Luke 23:46 [Psalm 31:5]; cp. 26:54).
- B. Jesus made scripture His guide and support throughout His life (cp. Matthew 4:4, 7, 10), and so the scriptures sustained Him in the hour of death.
- C. It is sad how some ignore, neglect, and despise the scriptures throughout their life then grasp for them in death. Some find little consolation in the scriptures in death, but maybe the reason why is they never trusted or confirmed them in life.
- D. If you make scripture a permanent part of your heart, you can lean on them when death draws near (Psalm 119:105, 130). This is the way we prove we're spiritual people.

Conclusion. We really can learn how to die from Jesus. We learn to accept death without bitterness as the common lot of all men. We learn that death is not the end but the separation of the spirit and body. We learn to prepare for death by living in constant fellowship with God. We learn to live without hatred and bitterness so we can die without it. We learn to live with scripture in our hearts so we can die with the confidence they give us.

The fact is, when the hour of death finally comes to us, how we die will probably be a reflection of how we lived. If we lived without God we can expect to die without God. If we lived without faith we will probably die without faith. If want to be sure you die in hands of God today, you need to live in fellowship with God every day.

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