

SESSION 4

WE DIE WITH CHRIST

Death to self is the first step in following Jesus.



WORSHIP

READING PLAN

Continue exploring the Book of Acts throughout this week. Use the space provided to record your thoughts and responses as you read.

Day 1

Acts 13:1-41

Day 2

Acts 13:42-52

Day 3

Acts 14:1-28

Day 4

Acts 15:1-41

Day 5

Acts 16:1-24

Day 6

Acts 16:25-40

Day 7

Acts 17:1-34



DYING TO SELF CLARIFIES OUR PRIORITIES

What's your main priority in life? Followers of Jesus know that God *should* be their primary priority, but it's always helpful to review the recent trajectory of your life and make sure that is the case.

For example, have you funneled a great deal of your time and energy into acquiring money? Or possessions? Do you often dream about achieving fame—or idolize those who have achieved it? Have you based your concept of self-worth on another human being? Or on your position or status as a professional? Do you strive for power or spend a lot of energy seeking to be in control? All of these have proven effective in usurping God's place as the primary priority in our lives.

How would you describe your primary goal or priority in recent months?

What are some signs or symptoms that appear in your life when you begin drifting away from God as your main priority?

As we've seen throughout this session, regaining a focus on dying to self is an excellent way to elevate God and His kingdom as our primary focus. The Scriptures also make it clear that dying to self is a necessary element in moving away from the sinful habits and patterns described above:

² Set your minds on what is above, not on what is on the earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with the Messiah in God. ⁴ When the Messiah, who is your life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. ⁵ Therefore, put to death what belongs to your worldly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these, God's wrath comes on the disobedient, ⁷ and you once walked in these things when you were living in them. ⁸ But now you must also put away all the following: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and filthy language from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self.

COLOSSIANS 3:2-10

What's your initial reaction when reading this passage?

What are some habits or practices that need to be “put to death” in your everyday life?

What are some habits or practices that help you “put on the new self”?

Before Christ, you did what you wanted. Before Christ, you traveled where you wanted. Before Christ, you made the final decisions in every aspect of your life—or at least you thought you did. Now that you've experienced Christ, you have a new Master. And the consistent call from Scripture is that you embrace His authority to set the plan for your life.

Read the following passages of Scripture and record what they teach about the process and benefits of dying to self.

Romans 12:1-2

Galatians 5:22-26

2 Timothy 2:8-13

To follow Jesus as Lord means that we die to everything we want and seek to discover and obey everything He wants. It means Christ has the final say in the affairs and direction of our lives. He is our Savior, and He is our Lord because ultimately He is the King of kings and Lord of lords.



DYING TO SELF PREPARES US TO GO ON MISSION

Take a moment to review the major themes you've covered so far in this study:

- **Session 1:** Jesus Christ is our salvation. His disciples serve as witnesses to that salvation.
- **Session 2:** Jesus came to serve God and set us free. Jesus calls us to serve God and serve others.
- **Session 3:** Jesus suffered and sacrificed. Jesus calls us to suffer and sacrifice for others.

You can see the pattern that's been developing throughout the study. Whenever God reaches into our world to bless us in some way, He calls us not to hoard that blessing, but to extend it outward to others.

What are some of the primary ways God has blessed you?

What steps have you taken to extend those blessings to others?

The same principle holds true for the blessing (and responsibility) we've described in this session as dying to self. We've seen that dying to self helps us maintain our focus on God and keep Him as our primary priority. The apostle Paul reminded us of that truth in the Book of 2 Corinthians:

¹⁴ For Christ's love compels us, since we have reached this conclusion: If One died for all, then all died. ¹⁵ And He died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the One who died for them and was raised.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-15

How do these verses connect with the concept of dying to self?

But we must remember that the purpose of dying to self goes beyond simply our own benefit. Indeed, when we set ourselves in line with God, we join Him in His mission to redeem the world. Look at how Paul continued his train of thought:

¹⁶ From now on, then, we do not know anyone in a purely human way. Even if we have known Christ in a purely human way, yet now we no longer know Him in this way. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things have come. ¹⁸ Everything is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed the message of reconciliation to us. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, certain that God is appealing through us. We plead on Christ's behalf, "Be reconciled to God."

2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-20

Make no mistake: dying to self *is* an incredible blessing. Have you considered what a privilege it is to live as a "new creation" (v. 17)? To know that your old self has "passed away" and that "new things have come"? You have been reconciled to God! You are part of His kingdom once again.

Therefore, take pains to prevent yourself from hoarding that blessing.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, God has given us "the ministry of reconciliation" (v. 18). Of course, we don't have the ability or the authority to reconcile people to God—only He can accomplish that. Yet He has enlisted us to help in the process by serving as agents of the gospel. To use Paul's phrasing, we are "ambassadors for Christ" who have a specific role in proclaiming the good news of salvation. "We plead on Christ's behalf, 'Be reconciled to God'" (v. 20).

How confident do you feel in your role as an ambassador for Christ?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not confident					Very confident				

What specific steps can you take to be more active in proclaiming the gospel message this week?