



# Berean Christian Fellowship

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## The Martyrdom of the Christian Life

**“Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Romans 6:11).**

Early Christians had an idea that there were different types of martyrdom. While they got a little carried away with their imaginations, the principle is Biblically sound in as much as physically dying for Christ is not the only form of “dying” for Him that we are to do, nor even perhaps the most important.

To lay down your life for Jesus is deeper than putting your life on the line and being put to death for His name. This is an ultimate test of our Faith in Him, and is precious in His sight, but the Scriptures are clear that we are to die for Christ even while we are alive. How do you die, yet stay alive? Well, we die to ourselves and live for God. We lay down our lives for Him, and we become “living” sacrifices. What does that mean? We are dead to our human desires, wishes, dreams, and lusts—dead to other men’s rules and regulations—dead to our flesh and dead to sin, alive only to the will of God. *“Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God”* (Col. 3:2-3), for *“He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed”* (1 Peter 2:24). We are to live for Him and not for ourselves. Only Jesus did this perfectly, but God has made Him our example to emulate.

In a conversation with Jesus, Peter illustrated how we sinful mortals misunderstand what it means to lay down our lives for God. *“Peter said to Him... ‘I will lay down my life for You.’ Jesus answered, ‘Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times’”* (John 13:36-38). Peter offered to lay his life down for Jesus, meaning he’d die for him, but Jesus countered by pointing out that this didn’t mean anything if Peter wasn’t will-

ing to lay his life down for Jesus, while Peter was alive. You see, Peter thought being put to death for Jesus was the greatest thing he could do for Jesus, but Jesus was saying, “Peter, in your life, while you are living, you are denying me—how is that laying your life down for me? And if you deny me in life, how will you affirm me in death?” God desires us to die to ourselves and live for Him while in this life.

What is more, Scripture tells us we are to die like this daily! Paul tells us that our bodies are literally God’s temple on earth: *“Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”* (1 Cor. 3:16). And just like the physical temple on earth where sacrifices were offered year round, we are to sacrifice our lives, day after day—not as atonement for sin and not for our Salvation, but to please God as our means of worship: *“Present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship”* (Rom. 12:1b).

Jesus is our example. He laid His life down from birth—dead to everything except the will of His Father. No thought, word, or act of His was willful. He did nothing for the sake of His flesh—not a single heartbeat for sin was in His chest. *“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me”* (John 6:38). While He lived on earth, the life He lived, He lived to the Father—and then, when it came time, He laid His life down in death for the will of the Father to pay with His sacrifice for the consequence of sin for all who entrust themselves to Him. Similarly, *“if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s”* (Rom. 14:8).

In our walk in this world, may we lay down our lives for God and our neighbors (First and Second Commandments), putting to death the sinful deeds of the body and its fleshly lusts—becoming living sacrifices that are alive only to God’s will for as long as we are alive in this world. This is the martyrdom of the Christian life, and what it means to worship God. Amen.

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