



**DEATH**





## **How not to Die**

**1**

Do not postpone repentance.

**2**

Do not hold bitterness against anyone.

**3**

Do not depend on your wealth.

**4**

Do not leave your dear ones in confusion.

**5**

Do not give place to depression.

**6**

Do not ever contemplate suicide.

**7**

Do not become lazy.

**8**

Do not stop sanctifying yourself.

**9**

Do not be horribly afraid of death.

**10**

Do not grieve without hope.



## How not to Die

### Introduction

- Death: One of the most unpopular subjects.

But —

Nothing is more certain than death;  
nothing is more uncertain than the time of dying.

Death is the greatest fact of life.

Life is a journey from birth to death.

- C.H. Spurgeon (1834-1892), the Prince of Preachers:

“He who does not prepare for death is  
more than an ordinary fool; he is a mad man!”

- John Newton (1725-1807), a Crusader against slave trade:

“We are in the land of the dying;  
we shall one day be in the land of the living!”

Joshua put it this way —

*“This day I’m going the way of all the earth”*

Josh 23:14a

- Martin Luther (1483-1546):

“Every man must do two things alone:  
he must do his own believing,  
and his own dying!”

- Christ bore our sins;  
believing that blesses us with salvation  
(1 Pet 2:24)

Christ tasted death for everyone;  
believing that prepares us to face death  
with confidence (Heb 2:9c)

■ Death is No.1 killer.

Because no one can be cocksure about his lifespan,  
we must be ready to die anytime.

Matthew Henry (1662-1714), the Bible Commentator:

“It ought to be the business of everyday  
to prepare for our last day!”

■ Even though death is an enemy of mankind,  
it serves several good purposes.

One of them is that it destroys the distinctions  
among people in the society:

— *slave vs. master* (Job 3:19)

— *wise vs. fool* (Eccl 2:16)

— *good vs. bad* (Eccl 9:2)

■ Dr. Nelson Bell (1894-1973), a Missionary to China,  
the father-in-law of Dr. Billy Graham:

“Only those who are prepared to die  
are really prepared to live!”

■ The Biblical view of death is quite different from the worldview;  
therefore we need to unlearn a lot in this subject.

That’s why, *How **not** to Die*

## **How not to Die**

### **1. Do not postpone repentance.**

■ A quote:

“Do not expect to repent at the 11th hour;  
you may die at 10.30!”

Some people quote the dying thief;  
but hardly anyone gets such an opportunity—  
Lk 23:39-43

The Biblical teaching is that we have  
no control over the day of death —

Eccl 8:8a ... *no one has the power to retain spirit*

■ The Bible speaks of 3 kinds of death —

□ Spiritual death

Gen 2:16,17 ... *surely die ...*

Rom 6:23 ... *wages of sin is death.*

This is disruption in the fellowship with God.

This spiritual death has come on all mankind—

“*All have sinned ...*” (Rom 3:23)

□ Physical death

On the day of the first sin Adam died spiritually;  
his physical death followed subsequently.

Gen 3:19 ... *return to dust*

This is the separation of spirit and soul from the body.

i.e. Termination of physical life

□ Eternal death

This is also called “*second*” death.

Rev 20:13-15; 21:8

... *dead delivered ... judged... lake of fire...*

This is eternal separation from God and torment in hellfire.

- If a person repents of his sins and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ and obeys God's Word, he will escape second death —

Jn 8:51 ... *most assuredly ... not see death*

His name gets registered in the Book of Life.

This is called "Rebirth" — "*Born again!*"

If you are simply born once, you'll die twice;

If you are born twice, you'll die only once!

- When should we repent?

*"Now!"*

— Acts 17:30 ... **now** *commands all men to repent*

:31 ... *judgment*

— Solomon with his practical wisdom has told us when to repent:

Eccl 12:1-7 ... *in the days of your youth*

He points out declining strength, failing vision, trembling hands, arthritic joints, forgetfulness, loss of hearing, loneliness and fear of increasing frailty!

May be you think you have already become old —

but you are "younger" today

than what you will be tomorrow!

When an old man is saved,

his "soul" alone is saved;

when a young person is saved,

both his "soul" and "life" are saved!

God can of course make up for the wasted years (Joel 2:25)

- Another reason why we must not postpone repentance is that life is short!

Biblical pictures on the “brevity of life” —

Job 7:6 ... *swifter than weaver’s **shuttle** ...*

Psa 90:5b,6...**grass** growing in morning; withering in evening

Psa 144:4 ... *passing **shadow***

Js 4:14 ... **vapour** that quickly vanishes

- We normally think that we will die only after we become pretty old;

but “sudden” death is simply too common.

“ஆறிலும் சாவு, நூறிலும் சாவு!”

It can be due to —

- Accidents

Lk 13:4 ... *Tower of Siloam fell ... 18 died ...*

:5 ... *“unless you repent ...”*

- Natural calamities like

earthquakes (Mt 24:7b) ... *“in various,*

*not just in a few, places!”*

eg) Tsunami

- Sudden diagnosis of a terminal illness:

heart attack, cancer, ...

- A warning against postponement of repentance —

Prov 29:1 ... *often reproved ... suddenly destroyed*

God keeps on sharpening His sword everyday —

Psa 7:11,12 ... *God ... angry ... sword ... bow ...*

- Some folks postpone repentance because they think there would be a chance after death —

They quote 1 Pet 3:19,20

— But this was a unique event when Christ descended into the lower parts of the earth after Resurrection before Ascension.

— “*Preached*”

Preaching can be either the promises of God or the punishment of God. The text implies that Jesus justified to the disobedient spirits why they were destroyed in the flood.

The clear-cut Biblical teaching is —

Heb 9:27 ... *appointed ... die ... judgment*

Father Abraham told the rich man that the gulf was too “*great*” to allow anyone go from Heaven to Hell or Hell to Heaven (Lk 16:26) ... “*fixed!*”

■ Repent today!

— A Heaven to gain and a Hell to shun!

— Tomorrow may be too late!

— Say no to the devil and yes to God!

— A final call: 2 Cor 5:10 ... *judgment*  
:20,21

*Therefore reconcile with God!*

(See also Pages 40-42)

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## **How not to Die**

### **2. Do not hold bitterness against anyone.**

■ Someone said:

“In a world where death is,  
we should have no time to hate!”

■ Just like we must not postpone repentance,  
as we saw in the previous chapter,  
we must not postpone reconciliation with men also —

- We are expecting to “see” the Lord face to face at death —  
Heb 12:14,15 ... *peace ... bitterness ... see the Lord*

There may be so many legitimate reasons  
why we find it difficult to make peace  
with certain individuals;  
but the fact that we are going to face the Lord  
should drive us to reconcile with them and others.

- The earthly altar speaks of the “spiritual” presence of God;  
we will soon be ushered into the “literal” presence of God—  
Mt 5:23,24 ... *altar ... first reconcile ...*

■ Heaven is the land of the “forgiven.”

i.e. The ultimate ground on which anyone is  
given entry into Heaven is God’s “forgiveness.”

When we are forgiven,  
we must not leave behind anyone “unforgiven!”

- Jesus: the first statement while dying —  
Lk 23:34 ... *Father, forgive them ...*

- Stephen: while dying —
  - Acts 7:60 ... *Lord, do not charge them ... fell asleep*  
*“loud voice”* — Not casual!
- St. Francis of Assisi, 13th century:
  - “It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
 and it is in dying we are born to eternal life!”
- We are going to literally join  
 the “*general assembly*” of all saints in Heaven;  
 how can we meet anyone there with bitterness?  
 Heb 12:22,23 ... *general assembly ... justified*  
 (=forgiven)
  - “Remembrances” will be there!  
 Abraham to Rich man ... “*Remember ...*” (Lk 16:25)  
 Heaven: A land of surprises! (Mt 8:11,12)  
 Expected ones absent ... unexpected ones present!
- The Bible often connects our “love” for people  
 with the “end” of our life —
  - The end can be either death  
 or the Second Coming whichever comes earlier —
  - Acts 24:15,16 ... *Resurrection ... good conscience*
  - Phil 4:5 ... *gentleness ... Lord at hand ...*
  - Js 2:13 ... *mercy ... judgment ...*
  - 5:9 ... *grumbling ... Judge at door*  
 :8b ... *Lord at hand*
  - 1 Jn 4:17 ... *Love gives boldness at judgment.*

The commonest regret of most folks at the end of their lives:

“I should have loved people more!”

- Fights and rifts have not been uncommon among men of God; but towards the end of their lives their hearts were softened (melted) and they got reconciled —

- Jacob took the initiative to reconcile with Esau—

Gen 32:3 ... *Jacob sent messengers ...*

:6 ... *Esau “also” coming to meet*

It was following this initiative by Jacob, God blessed him with a heavenly vision and experience at Peniel (vv 24-32)

- Another beautiful scene of reconciliation was between Joseph and his brothers —

Read Genesis 45

v2 ... *Joseph wept aloud.*

v5 ... *no anger or bitterness or vengeance*

This reconciliation not only saved the family people of Joseph in the famine; but paved way for Jacob to utter prophetic words about the 12 tribes of Israel (ch 49) — then he died (v33).

How do you think the story would have ended if Joseph had acted in bitterness against his brothers?

- Rift between Paul and Barnabas over John Mark at the commencement of Paul’s second missionary journey. But Paul got softened and he wrote pleasantly about them towards the end of his life —

2 Tim 4:6 ... *my departure at hand ...*

:11 ... *Mark useful to me ...*

Col 4:10 ... *Mark the cousin of Barnabas ...welcome*

Our hearts have to become larger and larger  
as we grow older and older— (Ezek 41:7) New Temple  
... *wider* ... as the structure grows

- Though reconciliation towards the end brings down  
God's blessings,  
the ideal is to maintain love and affection throughout —
  - David and Jonathan  
Even though Jonathan's father, Saul,  
literally hounded David!
  - Jesus and His disciples (Jn 13:1)  
Even though their behaviour was so discouraging!  
... *He loved them to the end*

Growth in love should be to the extent of  
being ready to die for others —

1 Jn 3:16 ... *As He ... lay lives for brothers*

On the eve of my heart surgery, 1996,  
a few friends prayed,  
"Lord, take my life but spare Stanley annan!"

- Several physical diseases have psychological causes —  
Outstanding among them: anger/bitterness/unforgiveness  
Already old age brings in so many ills;  
why add to them? (1 Pet 3:10,11; Psa 34:12-16)  
... *see good days ... tongue ... evil ... guile ...*
- A concluding thought:  
The beginning and end of our life are comparable  
to sunrise and sunset.  
Let not our life end with anger and bitterness —  
Eph 4:26 ... *let not the sun go down on your anger ...*

(See also Pages 38-39, 98-100, 198-201, 255-258)

## How not to Die

### 3. Do not depend on your wealth.

- The Bible connects riches too often with death —

1 Tim 6:7 ... *brought nothing ... carry nothing out*

When Job lost all his wealth, this was his testimony —

Job 1:21a .... *naked I came ... naked I return*

This was the conclusion of King Solomon in his wisdom —

Eccl 5:15 ... *carry nothing away ...*

- The Bible is not against **having** riches;  
but it warns us against **depending** on riches —

1 Tim 6:17 ... *not to trust in **uncertain** riches*

*but in the **living** God*

It's actually "foolishness" to trust in riches —

Lk 12:15-21 ... *covetousness ... You fool! (v20)*

— dependence on riches (v19)

— God's rebuke (v20)

- On the other hand, there are several examples of men  
who were rich but they did not depend on riches —

- Abraham

Gen 24:35 ... *greatly blessed ... gold ... silver ...*

But his heart was not on them —

Heb 11:9 ... *sojourned as in a foreign land (detached)*

:10 ... *Waited for God's city*

:16 ... *a better country ... Heaven*

□ Job

Job 1:3 ... *the richest man in the East in his time*  
(comparable to Mukesh Ambani in India)

But he did not idolize the riches —

Job 31:24-28 ... *gold my hope ... kissed my hands*

□ Joseph of Arimathea

Mt 27:57 ... *a rich man*

But he was *looking for the Kingdom of God*—

Mk 15:43

He was not attached even to his tomb —

Mt 27:60

He gave it away to bury Jesus.

■ God may bless us with increasing riches;

but we must not set our hearts on them —

Psa 62:10b

The question is not whether we have riches;

but whether riches have us!

How can we know this?

What occupies our minds?

What are we preoccupied with?

Phil 3:18-21 ... *belly ... status ... earthly things*

... as against *heavenly citizenship*

■ Practical exhortations concerning “riches” and “death” —

□ Do not overaccumulate wealth.

Mt 6:19-21 ... *treasures on earth ... heaven ... heart*  
“*Treasures*”— accumulated wealth,

not just money for livelihood

It leads to arrogance —

Js 4:13-16 ... *buy ... sell ... profit ... vapour*

As we approach the end of our lives as well as the end of the age,  
we must ask ourselves —

“Is it time to multiply wealth?”

2 Ki 5:26b ... Elisha’s question to Gehazi

Contentment is the greatest “*gain*” (1 Tim 6:6-8)

More will never be enough!

□ Give liberally to the needy.

Corrie Ten Boom, that saintly lady said:

“The measure of a life is not its duration but its donation!”

Apostle Paul’s stern command to the rich —

1 Tim 6:17-19 ... *rich in good works ... ready to give*  
... *share ... good foundation for future...*

When a man dies he clutches in his hands  
only that which he has given away in his lifetime!

At death we leave behind all we **have**,  
and take with us all we **gave!**

Riches not given away are only to our hurt —

Eccl 5:13 ... *severe evil ...*

Why did the Rich man go to hell?

Stealing? Murder? Adultery? No!

He did not care for the beggar, Lazarus.

(Lk 16:19-31)

Uplift the poor thro’ your riches —

Js 1:9-11 ... *poor ... exaltation ...*

If your riches are earnings thro' corruption,  
either you must return to the wronged  
or give away to the poor —  
That's the message of Js 5:1-5 ... *gold ... silver ... fraud ...* (v4)

■ Concluding exhortation:

If you have riches, let them be like flowers on a dead body —  
Col 3:1-3 ... *died ... things above ... not on things below*  
Those flowers mean nothing to him!

Sing: *This world is not my home;  
I'm just a passing through;  
My treasures are laid up  
Somewhere beyond the blue;  
The angels beckon me from Heaven's open door;  
And I can't feel at home in this world anymore!*

Heb 13:14 ... *We have no continuing city here ...  
we seek one to come!*

(See also Pages 52-54, 104-106, 435-440, 563-565, 676-679)

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## How not to Die

### **4. Do not leave your dear ones in confusion.**

- Though death is common to both young and old, we are primarily addressing the “elderly” or the “senior citizens” here.

Let’s begin with what God told King Hezekiah —

2 Ki 20:1 ... *sick unto death ... set house in order*

The same statement repeated in Isa 38:1

Read the entire 38th chapter of Isaiah

where the narrative is in greater detail.

You may not be struck with a deadly disease like King Hezekiah; but this is a message to anyone who has passed middle age and is at the evening of his life!

- Let’s look at certain practical aspects of “*setting our house in order*” —

- Writing a will

Making a will does not mean lack of faith.

The Biblical usage of the word “will” is in good sense—

Heb 9:16,17 ... *testament ... death ... in force*

— Joseph made provision for all the members of his father’s family

Gen 47:5,6 ... Pharaoh’s instructions

50:19-22 ... Joseph’s assurance

— David provided for his father and mother though he was the last son

1 Sam 22:3,4 ... arranged to dwell in Mizpah

- The Bible teaches that parents must save for the children      2 Cor 12:14b
- While writing a will, be impartial.  
Treat boys and girls alike.  
In fact, girls can be given more  
    because ours is a male-dominated society.  
Injustice to women is too common.
- Remember God's Kingdom in your will.  
Let them work and come up.  
Not everything for the children.  
Do not leave behind your wealth to be used  
    by the Antichrist.  
My will: 1/3 for our daughter;  
    2/3 for God's work and the poor
- Do not keep on postponing the writing of the will.  
Remember the confusion caused  
    in Isaac's family because of delay:  
    Gen 27:1,2... *too old... dim eyes...*  
    Esau vs. Jacob  
Read the entire chapter to understand the confusion.
- Give guidance to the family members about relationships—
  - Jesus gave John as a support to his widowed mother  
    Jn 19:25-27 ... even though His aunty was  
    there to be a company for her!  
    What a scene!
  - Don't instruct your spouse about his or her remarriage.  
Let them decide for themselves.

Even in the Jewish male-dominated society,  
Apostle Paul gave freedom to widows —  
1 Cor 7:39 ... *liberty ... wish ...*

In Resurrection there's only "reunion"  
and being like angels, and not as marriage partners!  
(Jesus taught this when the Sadducees asked Him about  
the woman who married 7 brothers one after the other)

Mt 22:23-30

— Give general guidelines to the unmarried children  
about choosing life partners;  
but don't dictate to them whom to marry!

— Missionary call  
Do not hinder your son or daughter  
from obeying God's call  
*"Let the dead bury their dead"* (Lk 9:59,60)

□ Setting your house in order also includes instructions  
concerning your dead body

— Register your organs with reliable Hospitals and agencies.  
Why bury your eyes, kidneys and liver  
which can bless someone?

Tell your family members about your registration  
and what to do **immediately** after your death.

— A husband told his wife:  
"If I ever become so ill that only machines can keep me  
alive, please tell the doctors to pull out the plug!"

That is wisdom.

That says it all.

How about Euthanasia? (கருணைக் கொலை)

This is generally opposed by Bible believers.  
But allowing a natural process of death to run its course  
is not wrong, by discontinuing extreme medical measures.

— A word about funeral:

In the strict sense, burning or burying makes  
no difference;  
it becomes “dust to dust” and “ashes to ashes.”  
The Bible written in Jewish culture speaks of  
a decent “burial.”

Where to bury?

Jacob’s charge: Gen 49:29

You may tell your family about your desire.

My wife and I have told our daughter:

“Bury us wherever convenient!”

Instruct the family not to go for expensive tombs —

Amy Carmichael: Just a bird bath

Ida Scudder: “No statue for me!”

Tell your people not to keep the body for long  
expecting or praying to be raised—  
how such acts have brought dishonour to God!

□ Do not leave the family in debts.

Do all that’s possible to clear the debts in your lifetime.  
God does not always perform miracles as in the case of  
the prophet’s widow whom we meet in 2 Ki 4:1-4 (Elisha)  
*jar ... oil ... vessels ... debtors*

## How not to Die

### **5. Do not give place to depression.**

- When we refer to various stages of life, we say —

Childhood memories  
Youthhood temptations  
Old-age “problems”

Yes, old age is not easy —

Psa 90:10 ... *seventy ... eighty years ... sorrow*  
Eccl 11:8 ... *many years ... days of darkness ... many*

That’s why the Psalmist prayed —

Psa 71:9 ... *Do not cast me off ... old age ...*

- The causes of worry and depression in the old age are numerous—

- Declining health

2 Cor 5:1-5... *a building from God*  
“GROAN” ... *habitation from Heaven*  
... *clothed with life*  
... *ordained by God (v5)*  
... *Holy Spirit the guarantee*

Rom 8:18 ... *present suffering ... future glory*  
:23 ... *eagerly waiting ... redemption of body*

Even a prophet like Elisha, with a double portion  
of the Spirit, died of sickness (2 Ki 13:14a)  
Even his dead bones could resurrect a man (v21)

In the light of eternity, suffering is for a short while —

Job 14:1 ... *few days ...*  
16:22 ... *few years*

*“We do not lose heart,”* because afflictions are  
*“but for a moment”* —  
2 Cor 4:16,17

C.S. Lewis (1898-1963), a Christian philosopher:

God whispers in our pleasures,  
speaks in our conscience,  
but shouts in our pains!

□ Problems in the family

— Rebellious children

eg) Samuel’s sons

1 Sam 8:1-3 ... succeeded him in the ministry,  
but sold out to corruption

Though Samuel did not neglect his family:

1 Sam 7:15-17 ... *home ... altar ...*

... though Samuel was one of the two men  
through whom God expressed His displeasure  
over Eli’s leniency towards his sons — 1 Sam 3:13

After you have done your best, leave the rest in the hands of God.

The adult children have their own accountability.

— Marital problems of children

We do our best in settling our sons and daughters in marriage;  
but conflicts set in.

eg) Two daughters-in-law of Isaac

Gen 26:34,35 ... Esau’s Hittite wives

But Isaac went on with some positive things —

a) Instructed Esau to bring some hunt meat  
to receive his blessing (27:1-4)

b) Instructed Jacob to choose a wife  
from his own people (27:46-28:2)

— Disrespect and ill-treatment by children

One of the last days' signs predicted by Apostle Paul:  
“*without natural love*” (Rom 1:31; 2 Tim 3:3)

Knowledge increases but love decreases.  
“*Knowledge without love puffs up*”  
1 Cor 8:1

Our youngsters, most of them, are rich in computer knowledge,  
but paupers in natural affection and practical wisdom.

First and foremost it affects the parents.

Prov 19:26 ... *mistreats and chases away ...*

Don't feel bad if you have to spend  
the rest of your life in an old-age home.

Beware of children who try to empty your purse —

Prov 28:24 ... *robbing the parents*

Don't give away to the children all your savings and properties;  
keep a portion with you—

This is practical wisdom and prudence.

□ Other reasons for worry and depression could be —

Unanswered prayers  
Unfulfilled desires/dreams  
Unsolved puzzles  
Unsettled matters

These will give rise to doubt, unbelief, loss of assurance  
and confidence.

God's promise:

Psa 56:8 ... *prayers in book ... tears in bottle*

Solution: *Trust IN GOD ... IN GOD ... IN GOD ...*

(vv 4,10,11)

George Muller (1805-1898)—

Prayed for 40 years for two drunkard friends.

They got converted by his funeral sermon,

and became missionaries overseas.

- The only way to come out of the depressing mood is to remember God's blessings of the past —

Isa 46:9,10 ... *Remember ... declaring end from beginning*

Yes, everything will be according to His "*counsel*"

When we *forget not the benefits* of the past,

we will be *renewed like the eagle* —

Psa 103:1-5

Go thro' your diaries!

Count your blessings — instead of your crosses;

Count your gains — instead of your losses;

Count your health — instead of your wealth;

Count on God — instead of yourself !

An old man's conviction:

I shall not mind the whiteness of my hair,

or that slow steps falter on the stair,

or that young friends hurry as they pass,

or what strange image greets me in the mirror —

if I can feel as the roots feel in the sod,

that I'm growing old to bloom before the face of God!



Keep on praising God —

Psa 104:33,34 ... *sing as long as I live ...*  
*I'll be **glad** in the Lord!*

Make the confession of Jesus yours —

Acts 2:25-28  
*... foresaw the Lord always before My face ...*  
*rejoiced ... hope ... not leave My soul in Hades ...*

Thank God for the troubles you don't have!

- A hymn by Richard Baxter (1615-1691):

*Lord, it belongs not to my care*  
*Whether I die or live;*  
*To love and serve Thee is my share,*  
*And this Thy grace must give.*

*If life be long, I will be glad*  
*That I may long obey;*  
*If short, yet why should I be sad*  
*To soar to endless day?*

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## How not to Die

### 6. Do not ever contemplate suicide.

- In the previous chapter we studied about depression and worry; when these are not properly handled, man thinks of “suicide” as an option. What does the Bible say about it?
- The Bible does not directly forbid suicide; but it abounds with examples and principles to tell us that “Suicide is never God’s perfect will for anyone!”
  - Let’s first look at the **examples:**
    - Abimelech (Judg 9:50-57)  
King of Israel for three years  
Result of his wickedness
    - King Saul (1 Sam 31:4; 1 Chr 10:4)  
This was when he lost his sanity and stability.
    - Ahithophel (2 Sam 17:23)  
He hanged himself when his plot against David failed.
    - Zimri (1 Ki 16:17-20)  
A commander of chariots:  
burned himself with fire  
following his evil deeds against God.

In the NT, there’s only one case:

- Judas Iscariot (Mt 27:5)  
Out of remorse he hanged himself.  
Jesus called him the “*son of perdition*” (Jn 17:12)

Apostle Peter comments:

*“Judas fell from apostleship by transgression”*  
(Acts 1:25)

None of these men were in the state of “godliness”  
when they committed suicide.

**And** there’s no record in the Bible of any godly man  
committing suicide.

— Prophet Balaam, while blessing the people of Israel, said:

*“Let me die the death of the righteous;  
let my end be like his!”* (Num 23:10b)

Looking at the above examples of suicide  
how can we take it as an option?

— *The “death of saints” is precious in the sight of the Lord*  
(Psa 116:15)

This cannot be suicidal death.

□ Next we will look at some Biblical **principles**  
to be considered relating to suicide:

— Even before the 10 Commandments were given,  
God was against taking someone’s life:

Gen 9:6 ... Reason: *God’s image*  
Then in Ex 20, *“You shall not kill!”*

One may argue that this is about killing another person;  
don’t I have the right to take away my “own” life?

No, because we don’t belong to ourselves —

1 Cor 6:19,20 ... *bought with a price ...  
glorify with body ... spirit ...*  
“Body” comes first!

2 Cor 5:10...*judgment according to what's done on "body"*

— The Bible teaches,

*Our times are in "God's" hand* (Psa 31:15a)

We cannot take it in "our" hands.

— Life is a "gift of God" from beginning to end;

He does "everything beautiful in its **time!**"

He knows what to do and when with our lives.

It's His prerogative! His sovereign will!

Eccl 3:11-13

□ On the face of these Bible examples and principles  
we conclude—

"Suicide is wrong in the sight of God!"

The secular law also is against suicide.

■ At the same time,

desiring death is not uncommon:

— Moses (Num 11:15)

When people asked for meat,

and he found the task "*too heavy*" for him.

— Elijah (1 Ki 19:4)

Sitting under a juniper tree

while running for life against Jezebel's threat

See, two outstanding prophets!

God did not listen to their prayers!

On the other hand,

He conducted Moses' burial!

He took Elijah away without death!

— Job (Job 7:15,16)

*“I loathe my life!”*

(There are numerous references to “death”

in the Book of Job/3:21,22; 6:11; 10:18,19)

Job’s desire was because of his agony and misery.

— Jeremiah (Jer 20:14-18)

He even cursed the day of his birth:

*“Why did not God kill me from the womb?”*

This was because his ministry was becoming more and more unpopular because of the toughness of his message.

— Jonah (Jon 4:8)

When the plant withered

and the east wind caused him severe headache.

- These men “desired” death, but they did not “attempt” suicide.

Suicidal tendency is demonic —

eg) Mt 17:15,18 (epileptic) ... *fire ... water ...*

The devils make even animals to commit suicide

(Lk 8:30,33) *“pigs ... drowned”*

- Treat suicidal tendency like any other temptation!

- Both Simon Peter and Judas Iscariot sinned against the Lord. Both of them regretted deeply.

One turned to Jesus with tears of repentance;

the other killed himself in remorse.

Whatever be the sin, turn to God;

He is abundant in mercies.

*“Life and death”* placed before us;

*choose “life!”* (Dt 30:19)

- May be an incurable disease which keeps wasting your body—

Remember the words of Job:

Job 19:25-27 ... *skin .. flesh ... my eyes ...*

*“How my heart yearns within me!” (v27)*

This has been the “yearning” of saints —

2 Cor 5:1-3 ... *earthly house ... destroys ...*

*groan ... desire ... Heaven ...*

- May be a total failure in job/business —

eg) Jailor in Philippi (Acts 16:23-34)

*“Do yourself no harm!” (v28) ... loud voice!*

It ended as “salvation” for the entire family!

(See also Pages 700-703)

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## How not to Die

### 7. Do not become lazy.

- It is natural to slow down when you become old.  
But slowness must not lead to idleness.  
“An idle mind becomes the devil’s workshop.”
- The Bible abounds with examples of men and women who were active in old age—
  - Noah was more than 500 years old when God called him to build the ark (Gen 5:32; 7:6)
  - Abraham was 75 years old when God called him (Gen 12:4)
  - Moses was 80 years old when God called him to leave Sinai and return to Egypt to lead the people out (Acts 7:23,30)
  - Barzillai was a “*very aged man*” of 80 years when he helped King David in his flight due to his son’s revolt (2 Sam 19:31-39)  
He gave David “protection” and “provisions”—  
escorted him across Jordan (19:31)  
gave him provisions (17:28,29)  
If he had said he was too old to do all such things,  
David and his men would have perished!
  - Zechariah was quite old but he kept on serving as a priest (Lk 1:7,8)
  - Anna was a widow of 84 years but she kept on serving God “*in the Temple*” with fastings and **prayers** night and day! (Lk 2:36-38)

- Apostle Paul was quite old but he continued his ministerial tours —
  - (Phile 9,22) ... *Paul “the aged”*  
*“a guest room ...”* to rest during travels
- Examples of active men and women in old age are plenty in history also —
  - Michelangelo was composing poetry  
 and designing structures at 89.  
 He was painting ceilings on his back on a scaffold  
 while nearing 90.
  - Webster wrote his famous Dictionary when he was 70.
  - John Wesley, at 83, was annoyed that he could not write more than 15 hours/day. At 86 he was ashamed that he could not preach more than twice a day!
  - Mother Teresa, a heart patient with so many ailments, kept ministering to the unwanted and unlovable until she died at 87.
  - Mother Brand, even in her 80s and 90s, visited tribal villages in Kolli Hills being carried by men.
  - My father, a retired Army Officer, was selling Bibles and hymnbooks till the day prior to his death.
  - My mother was visiting families, praying for them and raising funds for missionary work, until she could walk or write no more.
- The Bible’s call to keep ourselves busy till death is unmistakable —
  - Eccl 9:10 ... *Whatever your hand finds to do ...*  
*no work in the grave*
  - Jn 9:4 ... *I must work ... day ... night ...*





- He wrote to Timothy just before his death (2 Tim 4:6-8)  
It became a Pastoral Epistle.
- Peter wrote just before his death (2 Pet 1:13,14)  
It became an Epistle of Warning  
against false apostles and teachers.
- John wrote the Book of Revelation  
when he was in his nineties.
- Moses spoke the entire Book of Deuteronomy  
on the day of his death (Dt 1:1-4; 31:2; 32:48-52)  
*"I am 120 today!"*
- Amy Carmichael spent her last 36 years  
bedridden due to the fracture of a leg;  
during this period she wrote 1000s of letters,  
wrote another 13 books, more poetry.
- Dr. E. Stanley Jones, at 87, in spite of a stroke,  
dictated his last book, *The Divine Yes*.

These writings written with maturity and wisdom  
will immensely bless the future generations.

- Communicate truths to youngsters and nextliners.
  - Job 8:8-10 ... Bildad said: ... *Enquire ... consider ...*  
12:12 ... *wisdom with aged men ...*
  - *Count the towers ... tell next generation* (Psa 48:12-14)  
Read the last words of  
Moses, Joshua, Jacob, Samuel, David,  
Jesus, Paul, Peter, ...
  - Peter endeavoured to make provisions for folks  
to remember timeless truths (2 Pet 1:13-15)

- Make arrangements for the work to continue.
  - Moses, no entry into the Promise Land, but appointed the next leader and gave sufficient instructions to people.  
Dt 32:48 to 34:9
  - David, not allowed to build the Temple, but made sufficient provisions for the building (1 Chr 22:1-8).  
“*He did the will of God ... and slept!*” (Acts 13:36)
- Do voluntary work in charitable and religious organisations.
- Keep doing whatever domestic works you can.
  - Francis of Assisi, while mowing his garden, was asked what he would do if he were suddenly to learn that he was to die at sunset that day. He answered, “I would finish mowing my garden!”
- St. Patrick’s Prayer (4th century) —
  - God, be in my head, and in my understanding;
  - God, be in my eyes, and in my looking;
  - God, be in my mouth, and in my speaking;
  - God, be in my heart, and in my thinking;
  - God, be at my end, and at my departure!
- If you follow these principles, you will *bear fruit in your old age also* (Psa 92:14)
  - Your “*works*” shall follow you for rewards  
(Rev 14:13)

## How not to Die

### **8. Do not stop sanctifying yourself.**

- George Whitefield (1714-1770), Prince of Open-air Preachers:

“Take care of your life;  
the Lord will take care of your death!”

- Casualness invariably leads to backsliding.

The Bible tells about so many Kings and leaders  
who started off well but did not finish well —

A classic example was Solomon:

1 Ki 11:4 ... *went after other gods* ...

— A question asked by youngsters to an old Preacher  
of 85 years:

“When will these lustful temptations stop?”

Answer: “I’ll tell you when I come to that age!”

We never become too old to be tempted.

— C.T. Studd (1862-1931), a missionary to Africa

Reading an old Bible with a lantern  
when his eyesight was dim ...

“I’m trying to find out if I have left out  
any commandments of God!”

(Read one of his poems on pages 790 & 791

— As we grow older in our walk with God,  
the light becomes brighter and brighter (Prov 4:18)  
So we can see our sins and shortcomings more clearly,  
especially the sins of “omission.”

eg) Job: Beginning — Job 7:20 *“Have I sinned?”*  
Towards end— 42:5,6...*repent in dust and ashes.*

■ A Biblical call:

Ezek 18:30-32 ... *“Why die?”*  
*“Turn from all transgressions”*

Death is the result of sin in general;  
but we can avoid it as a direct punishment for any specific sin.

- King Saul ... Unfaithfulness  
Deviation from God’s Word  
(1 Chr 10:13,14)
- Ananias & Sapphira ... Dishonesty in money matters  
(Acts 5)
- King Herod ... Stealing God’s *glory*  
(Acts 12:23)
- Lord’s Supper ... Failure to *discern the Lord’s Body*  
(1 Cor 11:29,30)

■ As we get older, our arteries become harder;  
let it not become so with our heart!

- David’s prayer  
Psa 39:4 ... *my end ... how frail ...*
- King Hezekiah’s testimony  
Isa 38:15-17 ... *walk carefully (=softly)*

— Irritation, spirit of complaining, intolerance,  
loss of sweetness...all these are characteristics of  
old age

The prayer of an old saint:

God, grant me the serenity  
to accept things I cannot change;  
courage to change things I can;  
and wisdom to know the difference.

- The apostles did most of their writings  
towards the end of their lives.  
Reference to non-stop sanctification figures out  
prominently in their writings.
  - John
    - 1 Jn 3:2,3 ... *this hope ... purifies himself ...*
    - Rev 22:11b ... *righteous ... holy ... still ...*
  - Peter
    - 2 Pet 1:4 ... *promises ... divine nature*
    - :5-7 ... *add + + + + + + ...*
    - :10,11 ... *be even “more” diligent ...*  
*for an entrance ... Kingdom*
  - Paul
    - 2 Cor 5:8,9 ... *absent from body ....*  
aim: *“pleasing the Lord”*
    - 1 Cor 9:25-27 ... *prize ... imperishable*  
*crown ... discipline ... disqualified*
    - 1 Thess 5:21-24 ... *test ... abstain ... sanctify*  
*completely ... called you is faithful ... shall do it!*
- Beware of backsliding towards the end of your life —  
Heb 10:35-39 ... *confidence ... endurance ...*  
*if anyone draws back ...*
- Suppose, due to whatever reason, you have lost  
your passion for holiness, ask God to restore it to you —  
Isa 42:3 ... *bruised reed ... smoking flax ...*
- A glorious promise:  
Rom 8:30 ... *foreknew ... predestined ...*  
*called ... justified ... glorified!*  
Isa 57:2 ... *peace ... rest in beds ... uprightness*

(See also Pages 267-269, 332-334, 540-542)

## How not to Die

### **9. Do not be horribly afraid of death.**

- The “fear of death” is the commonest among men —

The Bible acknowledges it:

Heb 2:14,15 ... *to deliver from fear of death ... all lifetime*  
the very purpose of birth and death of Christ

Even the Psalmist was not free from it—

Psa 55:4 ... *severely pained ... terrors of death*  
116:3 ... *pains of death ... pangs of Sheol ...*

But God’s view of death is quite different from man’s —

Man sees death as something to be avoided;  
God views it as something to be anticipated.

Man sees death as a gloomy, dark night;  
God describes it as a glorious new day.

Man sees death as the end of the journey;  
God sees it as the beginning of the best journey of all.

- The Bible treats death with dignity:  
it calls death as “*precious in God’s sight*” (Psa 116:15)

Look at the various analogies of death —

- A sleep

Jn 11:11-13 ... *Lazarus sleeps*  
1 Thess 4:13 ... *fallen asleep*

- A ship leaving the shore

Phil 1:23 ... *to depart*  
2 Tim 4:6 ... *my departure*

□ An exodus

Lk 9:31 ... *departure of Jesus*

2 Pet 1:15 ... *my departure*

□ Removal of garment/putting off the tent

2 Pet 1:14 ... *put off my tent ...*

2 Cor 5:1 ... *earthly house ... tent ...*

□ A sowing

1 Cor 15:42-44 ... *sown ... raised ...*

That's why Christians announce the death of a believer as  
“promoted to glory!”

□ Death is not extinguishing the light;

it's putting out the lamp because the dawn has come!

□ John Bunyan (1628-1688) of *Pilgrim's Progress*:

“Death is but a passage  
out of prison into a palace!”

- Fear of death is usually because of the unknown future.  
One's belief about the afterlife affects his attitude to death.

Let's look at certain Biblical passages on the afterlife  
of a believer in Christ —

□ Several things Daniel did not understand,

even after mighty, heavenly revelations — Dan 12:8,9

But he was asked to go peacefully into the eternal future

(v13)

□ Our bodies go to the dust, but our spirits go to God!

Eccl 12:7 ... *to God who gave it!*

□ From *corruptible* to *incorruptible*

1 Cor 15:42-44



*Corruption* ► *Incorruption*  
*Dishonour (decay)* ► *Glory*  
*Weakness* ► *Power*  
*Natural body* ► *Spiritual body*  
*Man of dust* ► *Heavenly man* (vv 48,49)  
What a wonderful explanation!

- Christ has ascended  
not only to be seated near the Father,  
but also to prepare a place for us!  
He said with deep feelings of understanding—  
Jn 14:1 ... *Let not your heart be troubled ...*  
:2 ... *If it were not so ...*  
:3 ... *You may be where I am ...*

- This is what Apostle Paul exclaims —  
1 Cor 2:9 ... *eye ... ear ... heart ...*  
:10 ... *God has revealed ...*  
A portion of it in the Book of Revelation.  
When we actually see it,  
we will exclaim as Queen of Sheba:  
“Not a fraction was told!”

*Now we know in part, but then ...*  
1 Cor 13:12b

- When the world bids us “farewell,”  
Jesus is there with words of “welcome!”  
Mt 25:34 ... *Come ... blessed ... Kingdom*

This welcome was accorded to Stephen —  
Acts 7:55 ... He was not even an Apostle!  
(Acts 6:5)

This welcome is for every child of God.

- This has been the longing of the OT saints —

Psa 73:24,25 ... *receive me to glory ... but You!*

Fanny Crosby (1823-1915):

Blinded within weeks of birth due to wrong medication—

When asked whether she desired to be healed,

she replied, “The first person I want to see is JESUS!”

A Vacation Bible School chorus:

*Heaven is a wonderful place;  
Filled with glory and grace;  
I want to see my Saviour’s face;  
Heaven is a wonderful place!*

D.L. Moody (1837-1899):

The earth is receding;  
Heaven is beckoning;  
This is the Day of my Coronation!  
O death! how sweet!

- The Holy Spirit is the “*guarantee*” for these blessings:

2 Cor 5:5

“*guarantee*” = down payment

Background: Carpenter ... log ... sent by sea...

- David in Psa 23:4 ... *shadow of death ... You are with me*  
John Wesley at deathbed: “The greatest of all is God is with us!”
- It is this understanding that made Apostle Paul to declare —  
Phil 1:21 ... *To live is Christ; to die is GAIN!*  
:23 ... *To be with Christ ... FAR BETTER!*

- We are to simply surrender our spirits into God’s hand —
  - Jesus: *“Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit!”*  
(Lk 23:46) ... *“loud voice”*
  - Stephen: *“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!”*  
(Acts 7:59)
  - Martin Luther’s dying words:  
He said thrice: *“Into Thy hands I commend my spirit;  
Thou hast redeemed me, O God of Truth!”*
  - Fanny Crosby’s hymn: *“Blessed Assurance”*  
*Perfect submission, perfect delight!*  
*Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;*  
*Angels descending bring from Above*  
*Echoes of mercy, whispers of love!*

■ **Additional Thoughts**

- Strictly speaking, a Christian is not looking for his death; but for the *“blessed hope”* (Tit 2:13; 2 Tim 4:6-8)
- We can make a general prayer:  
*“Lord, don’t take me in the midst of my days!”*  
Psa 102:23,24
- Paul confessed before death while awaiting death:  
*“O death, where is your sting?”* (1 Cor 15:54,55)
- Just as *“death and hades”* could not *hold* Christ, they cannot overpower the Church, the Body of Christ, of which we are members (Acts 2:24-28/Mt 16:18)
- Extreme fear of death indicates a weak relationship with God.
- Don’t be afraid of death, but be concerned about the afterlife (Lk 12:4,5).

## How not to Die

### 10. Do not grieve without hope.

- The first 9 lessons are for those who are to die; this 10th lesson is for the **breaved**.
- Grieving over the dead is not wrong.

The Bible nowhere has condemned mourning —

- Abraham mourned for his wife (Gen 23:2)
- Joseph mourned for his father (Gen 50:1,7)
- David for his son Absalom (2 Sam 18:33-19:1)

Note his deep feelings.

- Jesus went to a deserted place to grieve over the death of His coworker, John the Baptist (Mt 14:12,13)
- “*Jesus wept*” for His friend, Lazarus (Jn 11:35)  
Even though He knew He would raise him!

- The Church lamented over Stephen (Acts 8:2)

- If Epaphroditus had died,  
Paul would have had “*sorrow upon sorrow*” (Phil 2:27)

We may not only mourn for our loss,

but we are to mourn with those who mourn —

Rom 12:15b ... Don’t criticize them with questions like,  
Don’t you have faith?

- But we are not to grieve “*without HOPE*” —

Paul’s specific teaching on this subject:

1 Thess 4:13 ... *ignorant ... sorrow ... without hope*

He gives some “inspired information” as against the “ignorance”  
:14 ... *Just like Jesus rose again ...*

This is not an imagination,  
but he speaks *“by the Word of the Lord”* (v15)

v16 ... The Lord’s descent  
A celebration and jubilation —  
*“shout ... voice of an archangel ... trumpet”*  
v17 ... Rapture of saints alive  
*To be “ALWAYS with the Lord”*  
v18 ... *comfort with THESE WORDS!*

This was the prophetic expectation of King David also —  
2 Sam 12:22,23 ... *I to the child ... not the child to me ...*  
The death of believers is a temporary separation  
for the permanent reunion with other believers.

- Grief will be more if it’s an “untimely” death —
  - For God’s children there’s no untimely death.  
God calls them Home when their job on earth is over.  
We will not die one minute before or after  
God’s appointed time! Because, *our times are in His hand!*  
(Psa 31:15a)

According to Biblical report, Moses died too young —  
Dt 34:7 ... *120 years ... eyes not dim ... strength unabated*  
But he had finished his job!

- God in His wisdom and foreknowledge may decide  
for the person to die *before bad days* — Isa 57:1,2

- Grief will be intolerable if children die —
  - eg) Mt 2:16 ... *Bethlehem and all its districts ...*  
*Herod ... killed male children ... 2 years ...*  
*:18 ... lamentation ... weeping ... great mourning*  
*Rachel ... she lost more than one child!*

Be comforted knowing —

The children go straight into the Kingdom,  
whether they are born to Christian  
or non-Christian parents.

Mt 19:14 ... *Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*

18:10 ... *“Their angels” ... face of My Father ...*

- Don't worry even if you don't get the body for burial —
  - Rev 20:13a ... *The sea gave up the dead in it.*  
(because no aircrash those days!)
  - Several martyrs were burnt alive into ashes — 1 Cor 13:3
  - Some martyrs were eaten up by animals!
- Don't ever attempt to communicate with the dead —
  - Clearly prohibited in the Scriptures (Dt 18:11,12)  
*... abomination to the Lord ...*
  - Our only source of guidance is the Word of God (Isa 8:19,20)  
*God ... Law ... Testimony ... light ...*
  - We cannot pray FOR the dead.
    - *Once to die and then judgment* (Heb 9:27)
    - *Baptism for the dead* (1 Cor 15:29)
    - Only an illustration, not an apostolic doctrine
  - We should not pray TO the dead.
    - Only one Mediator between God and man  
1 Tim 2:5; 1 Jn 2:1
- Can we visit the tombs of the dear ones?

The Bible does not prohibit it.  
Peter, on the Day of Pentecost,  
speaks of the *“tomb of David” still with them!* (Acts 2:29)

The Jews whitewashed it periodically.  
*“whitewashed tombs!”*

It's ironical that several of those who oppose visiting tombs travel all the way to Israel to see an empty tomb!

Do not offer anything to the dead at tombs — Psa 106:28

This is paganism.

■ A Promise:

“No more tears after death would be swallowed up”

Isa 25:8a ... *wipe away tears ...*

Rev 21:4 ... *wipe away ... former things passed away*

*New Heaven and New Earth*

(See also Pages 704-707)

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