
Dying Is Hard

Larry Teeple

I often recall the lyrics of a song that I listened to as a teen. It was a song of John Fischer that said:

*“Everybody wants to go to heaven
Nobody wants to die”*

*I*t’s so true. *Nobody* wants to die; for dying is painful and hard!



This was confirmed to me as I watched my father-in-law struggle through his last weeks on earth. He had already come to the realization that he was going to die. He longed to be with his Saviour and talked frequently about going to see Christ. However, his aged, weakened body did not easily let him go. When it seemed impossible that he could last even a day more, his body would rally and he would have to face the agonizing challenges of another day in his decaying tent and in a world that was not his home.

Don't we all have a similar struggles when it come to dying to ourselves? Jesus himself said:

"If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it"

(Luke 9:23-24)



Although we find it hard to die to ourselves and lose our life for his sake, there is little question that is our calling. Jesus died for us. If we are followers of him, should we not also die?

Paul makes it clear that the follower of Christ has already embarked on that self-killing journey writing,

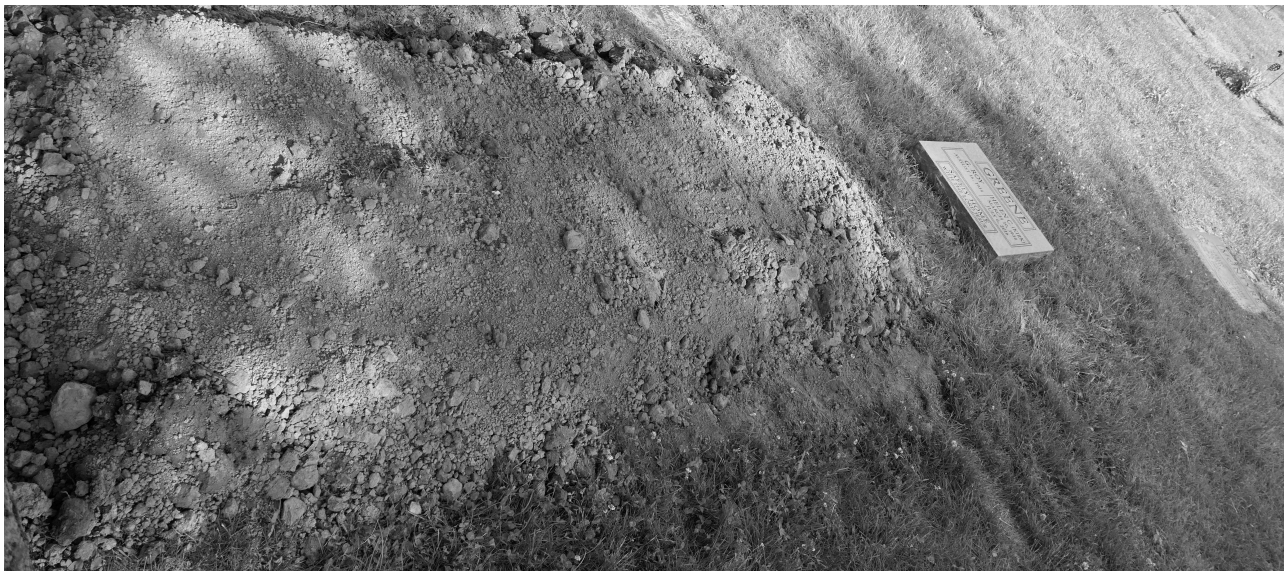
“Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Galatians 5:24)

Are we able to do this on our own? The answer is “no”.

Yet God supplies strength so that we can put to death the flesh that battles against the Spirit that has been placed within us by Christ.

“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness” (1 Peter 1:3)

When my father-in-law breathed his final breath, his last battle with death ended victoriously at that moment. Glorious things beyond our imagination are now his to behold. He struggles no more to die.



Our struggle with dying, however, continues. Are we prepared to persevere to the end? Are we prepared to die to ourself each day?



By God's grace we can. For God's glory we must!