

"I Die Daily"

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From Glory to Glory



Character development is said to be the most important work ever entrusted to human beings. During the next hour, we will explore both our privilege and our responsibility to become Christ-like in character. Join us now for this powerful time of personal renewal as Pastor Stephen Wallace takes us "From Glory to Glory."

Welcome back, my friends. We are right in the midst of a very important passage of Scripture. We are seeking to understand how we can **fight and win the good fight of faith** {1 Tim 6:12}, against this opposition factor of evil: evil comprised of the author of evil, Satan, but especially the battle is against the inborn evil of the natural heart, self - self, with all of it's inherited and cultivated tendencies. How we **fight the good fight of faith** requires us to understand what faith is. You can't **fight the good fight of faith** unless you know what faith is; and so we've been working on a definition for faith, and we've come to recognize that faith is inseparable from the Word of God. **Faith cometh by hearing, hearing the Word of God** {Rom 10:17}, and there's life-giving power in God's Word, creative power in God's Word. That's how this whole universe came into existence. **"He spake and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast."** {Ps 33:9}

No ordinary word, the Word of God, and what we must do is hear what God's Word says, then believe that God has power to bring into reality that which He declares; and thirdly, give Him permission to do so in our lives, and then fourthly do what? Act on that Word, knowing that we will receive His power to carry out His will, as we cooperate with Him.

Now with that insight, and we illustrated it in Abraham's experience, we are going to the particular command that our Prince Immanuel gives us in this spiritual battle: **"Let not sin reign in your mortal body;"** {Rom 6:12} and we noted that that command begins with the word, what? **"Therefore,"** which signals a conclusion; and so we asked ourselves, if we, by faith, are going to keep sin from reigning in our mortal bodies, where would we go to hear God's Word, believe that He has power to make happen what He says, and give Him permission to make happen what He says in our lives? Where would we go to do all that? We would go to what has been said just prior to the word, **"therefore."** Okay? Now, that took us to **Romans 6:1**, and we have been working our way through those verses, and we came down to a challenging verse, and that is **verse 6: "Knowing this that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be,"** what? **"done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin."** The King James, by the way, says here, **"that the body of sin might be,"** what? Do you have a King James in your lap anyone? **"...destroyed."** Be careful there! Both **"done away with"** and **"destroyed"** almost sounds as if this **"old man"** is history, he's gone, he's eradicated... don't have to worry about him any more. Is that what Paul is really saying? That's the question we need to address at this point.

But again, **spiritual things are only what,** my friends? **...spiritually discerned.** {1 Cor 2:13-14} So you pray for me, I'll pray for you, and let's pray for ourselves, that the Holy Spirit guide us in this very important study.

Father in heaven, how important it is to rightly divide the Word of Truth. Please Lord, forgive us for our proneness to be self-sufficient when it comes to studying Your Word. We really desperately need Your help. We cannot possibly have a life-changing understanding of the truth, unless the Spirit of Truth is guiding and directing us in this study, let alone have an accurate understanding of the

truth. Please Father, by Your Spirit, guide my thoughts and words. I want to speak truth and only truth. By the same Spirit that enables me to proclaim the truth, enable each one here to grasp it with the intellect, to embrace it with the affections and to submit to it with the will, that we might experience its liberating power in our lives. Please, Father, grant this prayer, for I ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

"...knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with..." Is that to imply or does that mean that at baptism the **"old man"** is eradicated? If he were eradicated, would Paul bother to exhort us just six verses later, **"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body"**? {Rom 6:12} Now that doesn't make any sense, does it? I mean, if it were gone at baptism, we wouldn't even have to worry about not letting it reign, would we? So what is this word? What does it really mean? It's very helpful, in the margin of the New King James Bible, we have a marginal rendering, it's this: Instead of **"done away,"** it says, **"rendered inoperative."** **"Rendered"** what? **"inoperative."** My dear friends, I strongly recommend that as the understanding of this Greek word. Other translations, I forget which ones they are now, translate this rather unique Greek word - it's used, I think, only once in the New Testament, right here. Other translations, have translated it **"rendered powerless," "rendered inoperative"** or rendered what? **"Powerless."** In other words, the old man is made impotent; do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} So that he can no longer rule over us, his reigning power is taken away, but not his remaining presence. Are we all together on that? His reigning power is taken away, but not his remaining presence.

When is the remaining presence of this opposition factor called the flesh removed? When is that taken away? **"In a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trump,"** {1 Cor. 15:52} **when this mortal puts on immortality and this corruptible puts on incorruption.** {1 Cor. 15:54} **When this vile body is changed and fashioned like unto His glorious body.** {Phil 3:21} Then, but not till then, is the remaining presence taken away but the reigning power is taken away at baptism; and if you want to keep the word "done away with," as it's rendered in the New King James, or if you want to keep the word "destroyed," as it's rendered in the King James; apply that to the remaining power, not the remaining presence of sin. Are you with me? The reigning power is done away with and destroyed at baptism. The remaining presence is done away with and destroyed at when? ...at glorification. Are we all together?

You see, my friends, there are really three dimensions to the sin problem.

Note this in your margin, it may prove helpful to you later on. There's the **Required Penalty** for sin, there's the **Reigning Power** of sin; and thirdly, there's the **Remaining Presence** of sin. All **"RPs"**... I need all the help I can get... memory device. Required Penalty, Reigning Power, Remaining Presence.

There are also three dimensions to the sin solution. What are they called? The sin solution to the required penalty is called **justification**. The sin solution to the reigning power is called **sanctification**. The sin solution to the remaining presence is called **glorification**. Are you all with me? And God deals with the reigning power during the sanctified life, which begins at - symbolically, anyway - at what? Baptism. It actually begins before that because we don't die to sin in the water. We simply symbolize in the water, hopefully, what has happened in the mind--hopefully.

By the way, the servant of the Lord tells us that **many who are baptized are buried alive.** {6BC 1075.7} They're what? **They're buried alive.** In other words, the **old man** just took a deep breath, went under water and said, *"Keep a low profile, he'll get over this; she'll get over this, just hang in there;"* and sure enough, she or he did and shortly after baptism, sin was right up on the throne demanding its own selfish way again. That's often the case, isn't it? Now, please know that **"done away with"** or **"destroyed"** is appropriate to use if you understand it applying to the reigning power, but don't apply it to the remaining presence; that doesn't happen till glorification.

Here though is the question: On what basis, or how is it that the reigning power of the inborn evil of the natural heart is destroyed and taken away at baptism? On what basis? On the basis, my dear friends, of our having the privilege of reckoning it to be what? Dead. Amen? Reckoning it to be what? Dead. Listen; let's read on. Verse 7, **Romans 6:7, "For he who has died has been freed from sin."** Interesting. If you have died, you've been what? Freed from sin. You see, a dead man can't rule over you. **"The dead know not anything."** {Eccl 9:5} Amen? A dead man can't control you. **"For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all."** Who does that include? Every human being on the face of the earth. **"For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all. But the life that He lives, He lives to God."** Verse 11: **"Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be,"** what? **"dead indeed to sin, but alive to God,"** where? **"...in Christ Jesus our Lord."**

Now, please notice, we are to reckon ourselves to be dead. Why does it say, **"Reckon yourselves to be dead"**? Because it's by faith, and what is faith? **"The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."** {Heb 11:1} Follow me, please. Even after baptism, as we look within ourselves, do we see a **dead old man**? I don't know about you, but I sure don't. I see an **old man** that harasses me every day of my life. It's my biggest enemy; it's the biggest pain in my neck. That's where all of my temptations come from. Is a Christian tempted? Yes. Where does temptation come from? **James 1:14: "Each one is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own lust."** That's the **lusts of the flesh!** {Eph 2:3} Is a Christian tempted? Yes! You see, the flesh is continually lusting against the Spirit, even in a born-again Christian. Why? Because that flesh nature still remains and it's not content though to just remain, it wants to what? It wants to reign. After all, it's been getting its way for "umpteens" years, and it's kind of unhappy about being denied, isn't it? ...and it wants you to indulge it, like you used to in the *"good old days."* Come on... and so it's constantly trying to get you to fulfill its lusts, that it might thereby, what? Reign; and when we look within ourselves, we see this **old man** harassing us and it doesn't appear to be very dead, does it?

But my dear friends, what is faith? **"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."** {Heb 11:1} We are not to walk by sight; **we are to walk by,** what? **Faith,** {2 Cor 5:7} and what does faith do? Faith operates, not on the basis of what we see, but faith operates on the basis of what we hear. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} **Faith cometh by,** what? **Hearing. Hearing** what? **The Word of God** {Rom 10:17}; and when what we see is contradicted by what we hear in the Word of God, which is the greater reality, the higher truth, that we must operate on the basis of? The Word of God; do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} So in spite of what I see, I am to operate on the basis of what I hear, and the Bible tells me that **I am dead indeed unto sin in Christ Jesus.** {Rom 6:11} So I must act accordingly. Amen? {Amen} I must **reckon that old man to be** what? **Dead,** and send that lust, that desire, that temptation instantly back to the grave where it came from. Amen? {Amen} Because that man is dead... and I have no business letting a dead man enthrone himself in my life. Are we all together on this?

Brother, sister, please understand... This is so important to grasp, and it's even more important to experience. It's even more important to experience. You see... work with me here. If after baptism... if after baptism, we go on fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, and letting sin reign, what's our problem? One of two things: either we don't really believe that we died to sin in and with Christ Jesus, or if we claim that we really did die to sin in and with Christ Jesus, and yet we still let sin reign, I have to conclude that we have a very mistaken concept regarding the state of the dead. Amen? {That's right} We're very confused regarding the state of the dead. Do you see why it's so important to have your theology right? When it comes to the state of the dead? In your practical Christian experience? What is the reality regarding the state of the dead? **"The dead know not anything;"** {Eccl 9:5} and where do

you do your knowing? In the mind. So if you really **believe that your old man is dead**, you aren't even going to think like you used to any more. Amen? You're not even going to think like you used to any more... let alone talk and act, because **the dead know not anything**. Their mind is not functional any more; they don't think thoughts any more, and when those old, selfish thoughts come to your conscious thought life for consideration, which is what temptation is all about; instantly repulse them and send them back to the grave where they came from. That, my dear friends, is how you **fight and win the good fight of faith {1 Tim 6:12}**, and it all happens, where? Between the right and the left ear, in the privacy of the mind... where only you and God know what's happening. Are we all together on this?

This is a private battle. It's a spiritual battle; it's a battle for the conquest of the mind; and by faith, you refuse to let your thoughts indulge the **lusts of the flesh**, and you grab them and you **bring them into captivity to the obedience of Christ. {2 Cor 10:5}** Do you see that? That's our goal, isn't it? In this spiritual battle, what is our goal? It's to be **bringing** what? **...every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ**, and you do this by **fighting and winning the good fight of faith**.

Now please notice, immediately after verse 11, **Roman 6:11, "Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord."** What is the next word in verse 12? **"Therefore!"** Therefore, on the basis of this marvelous privilege, of **reckoning yourself** what? **...dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God in Christ Jesus**. On the basis of God's Word, that says to you that you died in and with Christ Jesus, and your faith that has accepted that Word, and believed that God has power to bring into reality that which He declares and gives God permission to make it happen in your life, and then proceeds to act on that word. On the basis of that kind of faith, keep sin from reigning. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen}

Please brother, sister, you've got to take that fourth step, though. You've got to not only **(1) hear God's Word**, not only **(2) believe** that God can make it happen, not only **(3) give God permission** to make it happen, but you've got to proceed to what? **(4) ...act on it**; you've got to proceed to act on it. You have got, in the strength of Christ, to repulse those fleshly lusts that keep gurgling up from that grave. Send them back, send them instantly and consistently back... by **fighting the good fight of faith**. Are we all together on this? Do we understand how this works? Again, how long will we have to do this? **From the cross to the crown. {RH, Nov 29, 1887 par. 12}** Why? Because, my dear friends, until we receive that crown, we don't have holy flesh. We don't have holy flesh. It's unholy and it has unholy desires. Therefore we must continually repulse them... continually. **Fight the good fight of faith.**

You see, let me describe it this way for you. The Christian is living in an overlap of ages. He's living in this present age and he's living in the age to come. Understand this, please, this is important. He's living in this present age, in that he was born of the flesh. **...and whatsoever is born of the flesh is flesh, {Jn 3:6}** and will remain flesh until when? Glorification. So this age goes from birth to when? Glorification. Are you following this? Now, when we are **born again, born of the Spirit**, we are a new creation, **a new creature {2 Cor 5:17}**, and we begin life in Christ, which is how long? Life eternal; and we are in a sense then, living in the age to come. Are you following this? We are living in the age to come, and how long will that go? - forever; and that begins at the point of true conversion. Okay? But, do you see what we've got here? From conversion to glorification, **from the cross to the crown**, we are living in the overlap of these two ages. We have our carnal experience, and we have our spiritual experience, and during that time, what do we experience? The conflicting desires of both of those natures. **The flesh is lusting against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are what? Contrary one to another {Gal 5:17}**, all the way through. **"From the cross to the crown,"** we have this constant conflict going on. That's why the spiritual battle is as long as the Christian experience on planet earth; and how do we keep sin from reigning? - by **fighting the good fight of faith. By reckoning ourselves to be alive in Christ Jesus and what? Dead to sin. {Rom 6:11}** We

reckon ourselves to be spiritual even though we still are what? Carnal; and **reckoning ourselves to be spiritual, we walk according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh.** Are you with me?

But if we are going to walk according to the Spirit, we need to think according to the Spirit; and so as we learn to govern our thoughts in the power of the Holy Spirit, and refuse to indulge the lusts of the flesh, even in the realm of our thoughts, that enables us to walk according to the Spirit; and it is here, my dear friends, that we learn to walk the way we will walk forever in the age to come. But we've got this conflict going on until glorification. Notice how inspiration speaks to this that I've just described to you. **Signs of the Times, October 1, 1895: "But though we are carnal," "...though we,"** what? **"are carnal."** You see, that is the reality that all of us are stuck with as still living in this present age. Okay? This present age has not stopped yet, and it's not over until when? **"...this corruptible puts on incorruption and this mortal puts on immortality."** {1 Cor 15:53} So until that moment, we are what? We are carnal. Okay? Now listen: **"But though we are carnal, we are to,"** what? **"reckon ourselves..."** We are to what? **"reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."** That is what we do by faith; and my dear friends, learning to do that on a moment-by-moment, daily basis is how we **fight and win the good fight of faith.** {1 Tim 6:12} Are we all together? Oh, I pray that that is understood.

2 Corinthians 5:7: "For we walk by faith, not by sight." You cannot, I cannot, live in this life on the basis of what our senses tell us. We have to live in this life on the basis of what God's Word tells us. Our senses will tell us that we are carnal, but God's Word tells us that **we have been born of the Spirit, and that we are dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.** So let's, by faith, believing God's Word, believing that He has power to make it happen, give Him permission to make it happen, and then act on it. Amen? Act on it and thereby keep sin from reigning. Keep from fulfilling it in its lusts where? In the mind, in the mind; and keep grabbing those thoughts, those runaway thoughts. Grab them by the nap of the neck. Don't let them indulge the lusts of the flesh even in the realm of your fantasies, and **bring them into captivity to Jesus by reckoning yourself dead indeed to sin, but alive unto God in Him.** It's so important to understand how that works, my dear friends. You see, it's doing this, that we crucify the flesh with its passions and desires. **Galatians 5:24,** under Lesson 25 there: **"...and those who are Christ's have,"** what? **"have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."** Question: Do they only do it once, though? Do you only crucify the flesh with its passions and desires once, my friends? Oh, no, a thousand times no. You must do it, how often? Daily. You must do it daily. Paul in **1 Corinthians 15:31** says, **"I die,"** what? **"I die daily."**

Now you might ask yourself, *"Well, wait a minute, how come we have to die daily?"* Well, my dear friends, it's not, *"Once dead, always dead,"* is it? Why? Because we're not really dead! We only **reckon ourselves to be dead...** Are you following this? ...and we have to renew our faith-reckoning of ourselves to be dead, every day! That's how faith grows. It's not an empirical reality; it's a spiritual reality. What we see is an **old man** that's alive and well and harassing us. But we must, every day, reckon him anew to be dead by accepting anew Christ's death to sin as our own. Are you with me? This is what it means to **be crucified with Christ.** {Gal 2:20} It's to **reckon ourselves to have died with Christ on His cross.**

Youth's Instructor, December 22, 1886: This explains how we crucify the flesh with its passions and desires, and what's involved. **"The Christian warfare does not mean play; we are not engaged in mimic battles, fighting as one that beateth the air..."** {1 Cor 9:26} She's quoting Paul there. **"There is a constant warfare to be maintained against the evils and inclinations of our own natural hearts. We must not pick and choose the work most agreeable to us; for we are Christ's soldiers, under His discipline, and we are not to study our own pleasure. We must fight the battles of the Lord manfully. We have enemies to conquer that would gain the control of all our powers. Self-will in us must die; Christ's will alone must be obeyed. The soldier in Christ's army must learn to endure hardness, deny self, take up the cross, and follow where his Captain leads**

the way. There are many things to do which are trying to human nature, and painful to flesh and blood. This work of self-subduing requires determined, continuous effort. In fighting the good fight of faith, obtaining precious victories, we are laying hold of eternal life. This warfare requires most strenuous effort, the exertion of all our powers. We are to crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts." Remarkable summary there of this **good fight of faith**, my friends, and what does it require? **Strenuous, determined, continuous effort**. This is serious business, brother, sister; and it is learning to do this, that alone enables us to obey Christ's command; and what does He command us to do in **Matthew 16:24**? "**Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him,'**" what? "**deny himself,**" how? "**and take up his cross and,**" then what? "**follow Me.**"

Work with me on that. Please notice and please realize... that if we are ever going to get into the Kingdom, we have got to follow Christ, right? He is there and if we're going to get there, we've got to follow Him. But please recognize that we are naturally headed in the opposite direction, aren't we? Self is hell-bent to self-destruct through self-indulgence. Therefore, if we are going to follow Christ and have eternal life, we have got to deny self. Isn't that what He says to do? "**If anyone desires to come after Me, let him,**" what? "**deny himself.**" Okay, Lord, how though? How do we deny self? He tells us, "**...and take up his cross.**" Do you see the truth there? How is it alone that we can deny self? By reckoning self, what? Crucified with Christ. That's what it means to take up your cross.

You know, I remember several years ago, I was with a youth evangelistic team - this was a long time ago - and we were down on the boardwalk at a beach in Florida, and we were witnessing, and I noticed there was a young man walking down the boardwalk with this enormous wooden cross on his shoulder. Now he was quite an ingenious young man, and so to make it a little easier to bear the load, he had bolted a roller skate on the bottom of the cross and he was rolling it along the boardwalk; and of course, he got my curiosity, and I'm sure that's why he was doing it; and I came up to him and asked him, what are you doing this for? ...and he said, quoting this Scripture, "*Jesus says to deny self, take up your cross and follow Him.*" Now, I didn't have time to further explore as to whether or not he thought that he was really doing what Jesus commanded him to do. I hope it was just a gimmick to get people to talk to him. But my dear friends, please know that taking up our cross and following Jesus is a "*spiritual cross,*" and it requires us to **reckon ourselves crucified with Christ**. That's how we take up our cross, and that's how we deny self; and you've got to deny self and take up your cross if you're going to follow Christ. No options, no alternatives, it is absolutely mandatory and necessary.

Testimonies, Volume 2, page 651: "Self-denial and the CROSS." Please understand what this cross is that we must take up. I love this insight. "**Self-denial and the cross lie directly in the pathway of every follower of Christ. The cross is that which crosses the natural affections and the will.**" Very interesting, what's the cross? It's "**that which crosses the natural affections and the will.**" In other words, natural affections, what's that? That's the appetites and passions of the **old man**, the flesh nature; and that **old man** has a will of his own, doesn't he? Now, as we are **pressing on towards the mark {Phil 3:14}, striving to enter the strait and narrow gate {Lk 13:24}**, stay on the strait and narrow path, there will arise many situations where what God asks of us, requires of us, commands us, is contrary to what we naturally desire. In fact, that will always be the case, won't it? The flesh is what? **Continually lusting against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are always, what? contrary one to another. {Gal 5:17}** So what have we got when that takes place? When what God requires of us is contrary to what we naturally want? That is a what? That is a cross, that is a cross.

Now, what are we to do at that point? What can we do at that point? Well, there are only two options. Please understand, there are only two options. What are they? Either we indulge self, deny Christ and **crucify Him afresh {Heb 6:6}**, or we what? ...deny self by crucifying the **old man** through a faith acceptance of Christ's death as our own. That's how we take up our cross and press on towards

the mark. Oh, my friends, please choose to crucify self. Amen? {Amen} ...and do we ever come to the place where we get so sanctified that we no longer have a flesh nature, an old man that needs to be crucified? Do we? No my brother, sister, we do not. Please understand that; we do not.

The apostle Paul, a mature Christian, a godly man, what did he confess? What did he acknowledge? **1 Corinthians 15:31: "I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die,"** what? **"daily." "I die daily"**? Daily the apostle Paul had to die to his natural affections and will, his old man, his flesh nature - daily he had to do that. Notice how inspiration gives us an insight into what Paul meant when he said, **"I die daily." Ministry of Healing, page 452: "The life of the apostle Paul was a constant conflict with self."** The life of the apostle Paul! We're not talking about Saul of Tarsus, we're talking about born-again, converted, mature, godly man, the apostle Paul. **"The life of the apostle Paul was a,"** what? **"...a constant conflict with self. He said, 'I die,' what? 'I die daily.' 1 Corinthians 15:31"** What did he mean? **"His will and his desires every day conflicted with duty and the will of God."** Really? Paul? The apostle? **"His will and his desires every day conflicted with duty and the will of God"**? Did that mean he wasn't converted? Oh, no my friends, a thousand times no. Note the next sentence. This is what made him converted. **"His will and his desires every day conflicted with duty and the will of God. Instead of following inclination, he did God's will however crucifying to his nature."** Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} In other words, though he still had a flesh nature, he didn't allow that flesh nature to have him. It remained, yes, but he refused to let it reign. How? By choosing to **fight the good fight of faith**. Choosing to **reckon it dead and himself alive unto God in Christ Jesus**; and by that faith reckoning, by that faith reckoning, he fought and won the **good fight of faith**, and he was acutely aware that he had to do so, and continually on guard in order to keep from losing his own personal salvation.

You see, it was a very real possibility for even the apostle Paul to lose out on eternal life. That's what he says himself. **1 Corinthians 9:27, "But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become,"** what? **"disqualified."** The apostle Paul, my dear friends! A giant of a mature Christian was constantly concerned about the possibility that this old man that still was in him could eventually regain control, and he would lose his salvation if that happened; and if Paul had that concern, don't you think we ought to have it too? Listen to this statement, **This Day with God, page 277: "Paul was in such constant dread, lest his evil propensities should get the better of him, that he was constantly battling, with firm resistance, unruly appetites and passions. If the great apostle felt like trembling in view of his weakness, who has a right to feel self-confident and boastful? The moment we begin to feel self-sufficient and confident then we are in danger of a disgraceful failure."** Oh, brother, sister, please, know that we too can easily become disqualified if we fail to constantly **fight and win this good fight of faith**. I exhort you with the words of Paul again, **2 Corinthians 13:5, "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith,"** whether you're **fighting the good fight of faith**. **"Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? - unless indeed you are,"** what? **"disqualified."**

And dear fellow Laodiceans, the reason that I have to challenge you again in this regard is that we are terribly self-deceived. Because we have managed to keep from indulging the lusts of the flesh at the level of behavior, because we, with ego-motivation, have managed to maintain a **form of godliness {2 Tim 3:5}**, and keep our behavior in compliance with the **letter of the law {Rom 7:6}**, we have ourselves fooled into thinking we're something we are not. That's why we must what? Examine ourselves, test ourselves, and ask ourselves, *"Am I fighting and winning the spiritual battle - the battle for the governance of the mind, victory over temptation up here?"* Are you hearing what I'm exhorting you to do, my dear friends? Is it well with your soul? Are you fighting and winning the battle where every Christian must fight it - the battle of the mind? **Are you bringing, more and more consistently, every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ? {2 Cor 10:5} Examine yourself, please, whether you be in the faith. Test yourself, unless you are disqualified. {2 Cor 13:5}**

Now, the necessity of daily dying to self is precisely the reason, hear me, it's precisely the reason so few - so very, very few - are on the strait and narrow path that leads to the kingdom, and most of us are off in the ditches. Oh, my friends, **Matthew 7:14: "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that,"** what? **"find it."** **"Few there be that find it."** Why so few? Because the only way you can stay on the strait and narrow is by denying self, taking up your cross and following Jesus. There's no other way, and we are oh so inclined to indulge self, aren't we? Yes. Either to indulge our tendency to self-glorification, which gets us off into the ditch of legalism; or to indulge in the area of self-gratification, which gets us off into the ditch of cheap grace. God help us learn to deny self by taking up our cross and staying on the strait and narrow. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen}

Testimonies, Volume 2, page 687: "The conflict will be close between self and the grace of God. Self will strive for the mastery and will be opposed to the work of bringing the life and thoughts, the will and affections..." What do you hear? Life and thoughts, will and affections, what do you hear? **"Character."** **"Self will strive for the mastery and will be opposed to the work of bringing the life and thoughts, the will and affections, into subjection to the will of Christ. Self-denial and the cross stand all along in the pathway to eternal life, and because of this, 'few there be that find it.'" {Mat 7:14}** You see, my dear friends, it is precisely because there is no **crown wearing without cross bearing {3T 67.1}**, that very few will eventually wear the crown. They are not willing to bear the cross. Please, please recognize if you want to wear the crown, you must be willing to what? Bear the cross. There is no other way.

But I want to encourage you, my dear friends, and I plead with you to understand that the very best way to prepare you for the glory of crown wearing, is the suffering of cross bearing. That is a very important concept and I want to develop that, but I don't know whether we have the time tonight. We may have to do that tomorrow night. But please, if you are ever tempted to resent the fact that cross bearing is required in order to wear the crown of immortality, incorruption... if you are ever tempted to resent that cross bearing is required in order to experience salvation, please consider what Christ did to provide salvation. Did He bear a cross? Oh, my dear friends, and I assure you, the suffering that He experienced bearing that cross, infinitely exceeds any suffering we will experience bearing our cross, infinitely exceeds it. **Testimonies, Volume 3, page 481: "Christ sacrificed everything for man in order to make it possible for him to gain heaven. Now, it is for fallen man to show what he will sacrifice on his own account for Christ's sake, that he may win immortal glory. Those who have any just sense of the magnitude of salvation and of its cost will never murmur that their sowing must be in tears and that conflict and self-denial are the Christian's portion in this life. The conditions of salvation for man are ordained of God. Self-abasement and cross bearing are the provisions made by which the repenting sinner is to find comfort and peace. The thought that Jesus submitted to humiliation and sacrifice that man will never be called to endure, should hush every murmuring voice."** Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} Brother, sister, please don't resent the fact that you must suffer cross bearing in order to have eternal life. Jesus Christ has suffered infinitely to make it possible for you to have eternal life.

I want to encourage you not only to be willing to bear the cross, but I want you to learn to rejoice in the privilege of doing so. Now I know that's challenging, but please recognize that it can be; it can be. We can actually come to the place where we recognize that cross bearing is probably the greatest blessing that God could have given us. Why? Why? My dear friends, it is precisely because it is only through the suffering of cross bearing that we are developing a character, that can be entrusted with eternal life. Please understand this. I used to think that it would have been so much better of God, at the point of conversion, to eradicate my carnal nature, and at baptism to truly have the **old man** destroyed, done away with. But as I began to understand these things better, I realized that it is infinite wisdom on the part of God that has chosen not to do it that way. Chosen rather to leave that **old man**

remaining within every Christian, and requiring every Christian, for the love of Christ, to deny self. Why? Why is that really a wise thing for God to have done? ...and a blessing for us? Because my dear friends, every time we choose, for the love of Christ, to deny self, what are we doing for our character? We are developing a loving, Christ-like character. What is the essence of Christ's character? It's self-sacrificing, self-denying love; and so every time we choose, for the love of Christ, to deny self, we are tremendously helped in developing a Christ-like character. Do you see that? Do you all see that? I insist then, that there is no better way that God could have devised to prepare us for the glory of crown wearing than to require daily the suffering of cross bearing. What is the glory? It's the character, and there is no glory without suffering.

In Scripture, all the way through Scripture, there is a direct connection and linkage between suffering and glory. Look, for instance, at **Romans 8:16, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs - heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we,"** what? **"suffer with Him, that we may also be,"** what? **"glorified together."** Do you want to be glorified with Christ? Then what have you got to be willing to do now? Suffer with Christ! **Verse 18: "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."** Amen? Please don't lose perspective, my dear friends, the suffering of cross bearing is not worthy to be compared with the glory of crown wearing. In fact, what does Paul say in **2 Corinthians 4:17? "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."** Even if we had to suffer every day of our human life, it wouldn't be worthy to be compared with the glory of eternity. Amen? {Amen} So please, don't just be willing to bear the cross, rejoice in the privilege and blessing of bearing the cross. **It's working out for you an eternal weight of glory.** Let's stand for prayer, shall we?

Father in heaven, I thank You so much for Your infinite wisdom in the plan of salvation, and I thank You that You've made it necessary for us every day, for the love of Christ, to deny self by taking up our cross and following Him; and thank You that every time we choose to do that, we are developing His character. Father help us, please, not to lose perspective. Help us to realize that the suffering of cross bearing is not worthy to be compared with the glory of crown wearing. It's just for a moment compared to eternity; and please Lord, help us never, ever to lay down the cross until we exchange it for the crown. This is our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

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We will not have a murmuring thought because we have trials. God's dear children always had them, and every trial well endured here will only make us rich in glory. I crave the suffering part. **I would not go to heaven without suffering if I could, and see Jesus who suffered so much for us to purchase for us so rich an inheritance; and to see the martyrs who laid down their lives for the truth, and the sake of Jesus. No, no. Let me be perfected through sufferings.** I long to be a partaker with Christ of His sufferings, for if I am, I know I shall be partaker with Him of His glory.--Letter 9, 1851, p. 1. (Brother and Sister Dodge, December 21, 1851.) {8MR 340.2}

I am very anxious that you should form good characters. . . . Especially do I charge you, as a mother, to be kind and forbearing, yielding to and loving one another. This will save you many unhappy hours, many unpleasant reflections. You can be happy if you choose. You must learn the important lesson of not always having your own way, but of sacrificing your will and way to gratify and make others happy.--Letter 1, 1860, p. 1. (To Henry and Edson, March 14, 1860.) {8MR 340.3}