

## **PRINCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST SERIES**

### **THREE BLESSINGS OF SELF DENIAL**

John 12: 24-26 *“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me, and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.”*

One of the key principles in ministry, I have always shared that two principles on success in the ministry for God, No.1 is to know the bible like the back of your hand. No matter what schools you have been through, no matter what the logical training you have received or the lack of it. Whether you have gone to bible school or not, if you know the bible like the back of your hand, it is an asset that will help you to succeed in the call of God for your life.

No.2 is to know the Holy Spirit like the closest person on earth. If you know the Holy Spirit the prime mover of our life and you hear His voice, sweet and gentle at all times then you would be able to be and do what God wants you to be and do.

But there is a third principle involves which is one of the major principles of Jesus' life. That ministry cannot really begin until we die. Die to self. There is no possible ministry for Jesus, through Jesus and in Jesus until we die to ourselves.

II Cor.4 Paul speaks about that same principle but in a different manner. II Cor.4: 7-12 *“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed,*

*always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you."*

Now Paul is speaking in different words what Jesus said in John 12: 24 that unless grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it cannot bring forth much fruit. We live in times and days when so much is done for Jesus but not really for Him because there is a side motive sometimes for doing something for God. Either it is self-glorification or showing off in a Christian sense and in a church sense or sometimes there are selfish desires involved. Like Paul said, some preached out of gain, some preached out of different reasons for their own success or to build their own ministry. And I have heard it many times. Some of the most selfish people on earth say that they are not building their own ministry but actually they are. God knows the heart and I want you to know that in heaven's record and as far as heaven is concerned, we can hide it from man, we can even say something very different from what our hearts meant but God knows whether you have died to that. And as long as you have not died to self, your ministry and service for God is not pure. I know there is an objective incident when we looked back at the cross and say we have been crucified with Christ in Galatians 2: 20 but at the same time in I Cor. 15 Paul says we die daily. Here in II Cor. 4 he says in verse 10, always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus Christ. So he partook of what it means to die to the Lord Jesus Christ daily. There is no ministry until we have tasted what dying to self means. There is no resurrection power until there is crucifixion on the cross.

There is too much done in the name of Christ and in the name of Christianity and in the name of churches. There are too many things done that are not done with the sole purpose of glorifying the Lord. You know it because the Holy Spirit doesn't anoint. You know it because the flesh stick out like a sore tongue and it stinks in God's presence. Unless we die Jesus cannot live in us. But most of the time we don't die completely. We die in percentages. Some die to self 10% thinking that is their tithe. Some die 20%, some 30%, some 40% and it's rare to die 100%. But God wants us to die completely. I know what it is to die to self. I know what it is to say no to the things of the flesh. Say no I can't cross the line or to say no to many areas because God has put us through the heat and through the fire and we die. It was not easy to die. I remember in the early days of ministry, we were facing so much persecutions and being called all kinds of names under the sun. And I was there on a little hill praying and God said to me, "Son, just die." I say, "God, there are thousands of things that people who say of me and they are not

true. People who do things that should not be done especially they are born again." I said, "God you know." God replied, "Son, just die." And I took one little stone and the Lord said, "That will be your tombstone." Every time you have a hard time, every time when you are misunderstood, Jesus was misunderstood. When you are persecuted against, I want you to take that stone and remember to die. There has been times when I held that stone up when the things that I have done and I felt that O God that's just not fair. The Lord just led me to that stone and I remembered the day that I die. I remembered what it was like to die. I only think, do and believe what Jesus believe and let Jesus in your life rise up to respond.

Kathryn Khulman before she stands up to minister, before she could minister she died a thousand deaths. We speak about revival, my friends; I think very few people know what it means. You roughly know what it is but you may not really know what it means to die a thousand deaths. She talked about the time in her life, the struggling with things that the Holy Spirit was convicting her and she walked and walked down the street with tears running down her eyes, not knowing where she was going. Losing her way. Just walking and walking until one day she came to a dead end street. And she said, "Lord, that's just like my life, dead-end street, nowhere to go." And she said, "God, if you can take this life and use it whatever you will, then use it, O God." God has anointed that woman with that anointing that has touched millions of people. Time Magazine even came out and called her 'The One Woman Shrine of Lourdes'. Thousands and possibly millions of people have been affected by her life.

Your life cannot bear fruit until it dies. You say, "Yes I have got this gift I want to build my ministry," "Yes I have got this thing to do," die to your own plans. "Yes, I need to meet my needs and I need to do this," die to your need for security. "I need to promote my ministry," die to your desire for fame. "Yes I need to find a place," die to your own wisdom. "Yes I need to know this person so that he can help me in my ministry," die to your dependency on others. Unless we die there is no real ministry. Any ministry that is done out of a self that has not died is not recorded in heaven. For Jesus says, they already have their reward. If you want the real pure stream of ministry, you have to die to your selfish and self-centered motives.

There is so much in Christianity today that is pleasing men that is for men. Sometimes I look at big huge meetings and gatherings and there they are trying to please man. Nobody was concerned about Jesus and what He thinks. Nobody was

concerned about the Holy Spirit, whether the Holy Spirit wants to do those things or not. We got all these programs and we say we got to do this. O yes, this official person needs to do this. We have to die. There is so much done in the name of Christianity, in the name of Jesus, out of flesh. Self has not died. I tell you one day we are going to come face to face with the Lord Jesus Christ for everything that we have done. Those who seek to do things out of self other than a pure desire to please Jesus and obey the Spirit, I tell you pleasing and obeying God the Spirit may not be easy. Sometimes when you seek to please God and please Jesus you may be disappointed. Sometimes when you seek to please God you may displease man. Always something is done out of self and we all say O this is for Jesus. It's all for the church. We have excuses and excuses but God sees the heart. God sees the real motives. God sees what we really want to do. That we cannot hide. We are coming to the last days in this last move of God when God will not put up with flesh and self. God says we must die; I want to share with you three little points to test whether you have already died to self.

See it's easy to say theologically we have died in Christ and we have been crucified with Him in Christ and seize that as an objective experience. But here is where it goes beyond the icing on the cake. In I John 3: 14-15 *"We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. (now listen here) He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hated his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him."*

Firstly, if you don't love those who hate you, if you don't love those who were your enemy, if you don't love those who cheat you, disappoint you, if you cannot find it in your heart to love them, all you want to do is to be angry at them, all you want to do is to revenge them, all you want to do is to do something to justify yourself, if that's your feeling, you have not died. You have not passed death and into life because I know what it is, my friends. From the very day God called me, I went into the seminary and I had fire burning in my heart. I wanted revival. I was not satisfied with mediocre Christianity. We say we love Jesus but we don't really love Him. I wanted the real thing and there were two people there. One of them was Anne who was from East Malaysia. Another one was Michael. They were my seniors in the seminary. We were together. They had experienced the revival in their homelands. Here was I hungry for revival. We used to pray together for revival. And I remember when we were praying, one day he laid his hands on me and he started crying. I was just new in the seminary, I was new in the ministry and he laid his hands on me and he started crying. He says, "You are going to go through much persecution much more than others who had been called." He cried and cried. I never understood what he meant but after that time,

I was expelled from the seminary. The Baptists said something about me, which was not true. And then later on when we move among the Pentecostals, they began to say things the same way and I found that people had a lot of insecurity.

It's easy to look at something happening and say it is alright but what happens if that were you? I came to God and said, "Lord, who am I? What am I? How is it that I have it different from other people?" I was infamous among the Baptists. I was infamous among the Pentecostals. Then I was infamous among the top people. I moved with them for some time and just because I chose to follow what I believed to be God's Word, I took my stand when I know that something is right, they gave me the left leg of excommunication. There came a time when I cried twenty-four hours. You don't know what it is to cry. I came to a point I thought people wished me dead so that I won't trouble them anymore. I cried twenty-four hours non-stop. I said, "God if you don't strengthen me take me home. I can't stand it anymore." I know what it is to die to self. But this is what God did. God touched the inner most of my heart.

My friends, I never felt one bitter moment. I never felt non-forgiveness in my heart for I forgive for the misunderstanding, for the rumors that spread. And I knew it was God in His mercy and the love of God that has been something, that has been steadfast. There I remember at the end of forty days fast, I was so hungry for God. I sought Him. At the end of forty day fast, in the early morning I heard the voice of Jesus, it sounds like music. Jesus' own voice and I can recognize it every time He calls me. I know His voice is different from the Holy Spirit. I know His voice. I tell you when the Son of God allows His sweet voice to raise. I was in the Baptist parsonage and in the early hours of the morning, I heard His voice waking me up. And He only said three words, He said, "I love you." I felt like my whole being burst when the love of God came. I never up to this day any of those persecutors that come to me now. I still receive them like my own long lost brothers because the love of God came and I am here to tell you that if you don't walk in love, you have not died. I knew what that dying process was like. I knew what it was like to pass from death to life. I mean some of you wouldn't work with certain people because they have hurt you in the past. You haven't died. So you will find excuses not to be with those people anymore. You haven't died. Unless out of our hearts come the pure love of Jesus and all you want to do is to love back in return. All you want to do is just keep loving. Yes, they hurt you but you keep loving. Yes, they stabbed you but you keep loving. Yes, they punched you but you keep loving.

Just like Jesus when they took Him on trial, when they spit on Him, when they punched Him, all He did was keep loving. When they put the slashes on his back, all He did was love them. When they make Him carry the cross on His wounded back climbing up the hill to Golgotha, it was painful and the women cried because they knew how unfair it was, but Jesus said, women, don't weep for me but weep for those here in Jerusalem. On the cross, when they nailed Him to the cross, when they hung Him up, they still hated Him; they hated Him so much that they were mocking Him. I mean under normal circumstances, a man who has already suffered so much, even if that person were guilty, you don't make them suffer anymore. But they came right under the cross and they mocked, they jeered Him. They said, "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." I want you to know He had the power to come down from the cross. It was not the Romans nails that nailed Him to the cross. Peter tried to save Him from the cross and took the sword and cut off somebody's ear and the Lord Jesus said, "Put off thy sword. Don't you know that all I have to do is to call My Father and He will send me twelve legions of angels?" One angel can slay an army. He said, "I have got twelve legions of angels." It was not the nails that kept Him there. He could have freed Himself anytime but the love was bubbling out from His side and He says, "Father forgive them for they know not what they have done." If you have not been able to love in return for hate, you have not died to self. That's the first test.

I John 4: 18 *"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because involves torment."*

Fear is the force by which the devil has controlled this world. In Hebrew 2, it tells us how Satan by the power of death, by the fear of death put all men subject to bondage, yet that spirit of fear in many of its little forms is still ruling the hearts and the minds of the people in their thinking and in their decision making. The only way to be free from that spirit of fear is pray for the Spirit of love to be in your life.

The second reason why we need to die to self is to pass from death to life. Some of us know what it is to die. There are all kinds of things thrown against us; you feel that dying process coming on you. You feel wounded, you feel hurt, you feel crushed in your inside but my friends, God doesn't want you to just stay there. He wants you to pass from death to life. And if you were to allow the love of God to flow on your inside and let that self dies, you will pass from death into life. When that grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, its life will come out and produced other lives, other seeds and other new plants came and more seeds are

produced. That was like Jesus' life.

Secondly, when you have died, you are freed from fear. People who have self will always have fear. The only way to eradicate fear is to eradicate self. People who have no self are the most fearless people on earth. When you are not afraid of dying, you are not afraid to do anything. When you are not afraid of being hurt you are not afraid of anything. When you don't care for money, you don't care for fame, you don't care for anything, you are not afraid to obey God. But when you care for fame, you care for money; you care for your self-reputation, then you will not be able to fully be what God wants you to be. For fear will still reign in your life. You will be having the fear of losing your money, fear of losing your reputation, fear of losing your worldly goods here.

Have fear reigning in your life? In order to be freed from fear, you must die to self. Only death and dying in the Lord will free us from this fear. I want you to know that in this move that God has for us, we must be freed from fear because fear will prevent us from moving into the things of God. Doubts and unbelief are children and by-products of fear because people are afraid.

Story of June Davis. One day the Lord wanted to take her to heaven and this is what happened. *He spoke to me in the spirit as I was being transported to heaven. He said, "Enter into My gates with thanksgiving and into My courts with praise." That very second before my eye, I saw Pearly Gates glittering with many colors. These gates were huge columns decorated with sculptures across the tops, which arched together in a semi-circle over the door to form the opening. Below and in between these gates is one huge golden door, which fit into these doors. It was filled with beautiful sculptures. I would notice this because I was a sculptress at one time. Around the outside edge of the door where they fit into the arch column and down into the center of it, a brilliant golden orange and yellow light was shining through. When I first came to those gates through a mist, it makes the gates look like they were made of oyster shell pearl. After observing all these, the door began to open inward. The immensity of the door was evident because of the smallest of the figures I saw standing inside the door. When this door opened the glory of God shone in such brilliant. It was like looking at the sun without burning your eyes. When I begin to pass through these gates, I cried "O Lord, I am afraid." Immediately I was conscious on kneeling on the cold terrazzo floor in the room of the hostel. Why I was afraid I couldn't understand. Maybe it was the awesomeness of this occasion. The next minute I thought I really blew it because I became fearful.*

Fear will always be there until you have died totally and you couldn't care less anymore about your life because you have died. You have only concerned about Jesus and Jesus alone. When the Spirit of God starts moving in our life, firstly, you would be passing from death into life. When we began to have the prayer meeting here where hundreds of people begin to come, be prepared, Satan will have some people criticize you. They will say this and they will say that. Be prepared, there is no enlargement without some sort of testing. Somebody is bound to say something negative, something is about to happen to you but whatever takes place, focus your love on Jesus. The Lord told me a secret one time. He said, "Son, if you can have the love for a million souls, I will give you a million souls. If you only have the love for ten souls, I will only give you ten souls. If you can have the love for one hundred souls, I will give you one hundred souls." How much love do you have? Is it just for one or two of you close ones? Look around you, the world needs love and unless you are a lover of people first of all, you can't be a minister to people. The Lord told me, "Son, if you have the love for a million people, I will give you a millions and if you could grow to have the love for a billion people, I will give you a billion souls."

Loving people is very hard on the self. Parents you know what is like to love your children. You have to be selfless. You got to give up things, sacrifice for them to have something. You got to give up your time. You got to give up some of your finances in order to finance them. You see, you can't love when you are selfish. Loving people is not easy. It takes selflessness to love people. And then you enlarge it; you got to love people who have different characters, different imperfections. You know what it is. It's far easy to keep a pet dog then to love people because a pet dog won't come and complain. No matter how you shout, how you kick the dog, the dog will still come to you. I once saw a car sticker that says, "The more I know people, the more I love my dog." But people are different; it takes dying to self to love people. In your prayer meeting if your heart grows to love one thousand people, you will have one thousand people there. The day your love grows to love one million people, one million people will be there. The love of God must be perfected that we can pass from death to life.

Firstly, dying to self means loving people. Secondly, dying to self means being freed from fear. If there is the fear of the future you haven't died to self. If there is the fear in any form you haven't died to self. If there is fear of man it's your own self-consciousness, you haven't died to self too. All fears work through self. If self could die then there is no more fear. You are free from the devil and your words carry an authority that will overcome the spirit of fear. In this world you

could either live in fear or in faith. There is no half way. When you have freed yourself from the spirit of fear, there is something about the words you speak. There is something about the life you live. There is something about the action you do that breaks the spirit of fear from people's life. When you have overcome fear, you have overcome the highest weapon of Satan. In other words you would have overcome Satan himself. When you have overcome fear and the key is no. 2 in dying to self.

Thirdly the dying process must take place for the resurrecting process to flow in.

*II Cor.4: 16 "Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."*

Only when you die to self will the glory of God come in your life. You could be the best musician in town but if self doesn't die, the glory of God has departed. But the moment self die, your music becomes glorious. You could be the best preacher in town, filled with knowledge and oratory but if self is present, my friends, there will be no glory. God is very careful as long as the self is there. There was one time in Israel, when the glory of God departed in fact twice, once was in Ai. The Ark was stolen, was taken away by the Philistines, and things was disastrous. I mean the Israelites lost the Ark; the glory of God had departed. Another time was in the time of Ezekiel, when the glory of God departed. My friends, do you know how to get the glory of God back? Let me tell you this from my heart. It's no point wasting another ten years of your life and ministry, trying to do something for God that had no glory. I don't know about you but I can't live without that glory of God. I would rather have the glory of God then anything else on earth.

The glory of God can only come when you die to self. Not just intellectually die but until something on your inside knows that is no longer you but Christ who lives in you. It is only and only then that God will call to His angels in heaven and say, "Bring the glory of God down there because now there is a vessel who seek only My glory, who will not steal My glory, who will not steal My honor." My friends, Moses tried to do his ministry like many other people today. They try to do their ministry, like Moses after 40 years filled with ability and got the right vision.

They got the right commission but they haven't died to self. It took 40 years before he dies and he said, "Who am I, Lord?" He knew that he had died. There is so much done in the body of Christ of people who had no glory. What is the use of having a temple without the Ark? What is the use of a church without the glory of God? What is the use of home fellowship without the glory of God? What is the use of a multiple ministry, radio, TV, books without the glory of God? What is the use of all the wealth in the world without the glory of God? The glory of God can only come when you die completely to self.

Like Peter praying for those disciples in I Peter 5 think it not strange for these fiery trails that has come on my life, for when you are proven and tried then the Spirit of glory will come on your life. I want the glory of God more than anything. Which is why I don't play games. I don't like to sit in inter-church committees anywhere, where all they want is talk about man's things and man's ideas. I don't waste time. Other people can do it. I live for revival. I live for Jesus. I only want to bring the glory back to the church. I don't care whether I am famous or infamous. My words that I speak to you from my heart, my friends, if we don't have the glory of God, it's no point having a priesthood, it's no point having any semblance of religion or Christianity if we don't have the glory. We need revival. We need God. Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it cannot bear much fruit. Unless you die, you will not bear much fruit. Watchman Nee gives a very simple equation for ministry: Ministry = Revelation + Suffering. No revelation of God in your life, no suffering in your life means no ministry. Pure and simple.

How do we know we have died? We know we have died by finding if these three principles are present in our lives. They will also bring us the three blessing of dying.

No.1 if you die then you can really love. You know that you have died and passed through that stage into the resurrection power when you could love your brethren. Don't you think it's the greatest thing to love? To me it's more important than anything because the greatest commandment in I Cor.13 the greatest is love. People may quarrel with one another. If they only know you can go anywhere on this earth and they don't learn how to love you haven't grown. You can transfer your residence from one place to another but if you haven't learned to love, you will be back to square one. Paul said in I Cor.13 the greatest is love. This is why I consider the highest call in any life is the call to love. It's not just to be so concentrated on winning souls. If you don't love people you cannot win souls. You

will lose as many as you try to win. It's not just trying to build a great church, although that's our vision but then we don't forget the things that are fundamental.

My friends, the first blessing if you will die is you will be able to love people the way Jesus loves. Don't you think that's the greatest blessing to be like Him? Before Jesus ever healed anyone, before Jesus ever won any soul, He says for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Before Jesus healed anyone, before Jesus ever won any soul, love was in His heart. Such love that He says, "Father I am willing to give up all the glories in heaven." He was willing to die to all the glories that He has to come down to live as a man. Just because of His love. His healing and His salvation were just because of His love. There is faith, there is hope, but the greatest is love. Unless you die you cannot love. But when you die, there is a supernatural love that comes and fill you and you can love the way God loves. You can love the way Jesus loves and that same love will touch many other lives like the apostles. Paul began to love the way Jesus loves, that he changed his entire generation. Men and women of God in every generation when they caught a vision of that love, they are able to love like Jesus loves. They have always changed the generation they live in because the greatest is love. That's the first blessing, when you die you are able to love.

The second blessings; when you die you are free from the devil completely. The devil cannot touch people who are full of love. He doesn't know how to handle love because he doesn't have love. And fear cannot rule you, which is why if you are filled with the love of God, one tiny word from your life, you don't have to shout and scream like people do, "Come out in Jesus' Name." Although sometime you can scold the devil. All you have to do is to say in the Name of Jesus and demons will flee. It's because fear cannot live together with agape love. When agape love comes out from your life, demons tremble, devils flee. You will be free from fear permanently and forever. You will be immune to anything of the devil. The devil cannot touch you nor harm you because when you walk in perfect love God is there. The devil doesn't dare to come near where God is. For God is love. You are like in Psalm 91, dwelling in the secret place of the Most High under the shadow of His wing. You know what His wings are. His wings are the wings of love. When you are in His love, no devil, no enemy, nothing can touch or harm you neither plague, nor sicknesses or diseases nor death when you have perfect love. I am sorry to say that if your love is not perfect, the enemy can touch you. Fear can touch you. Which is why sometimes people get all kinds of problems. They were not made perfect in love. Perfect love cast out fear.

No.2 if you die to self, you will receive the blessing of being freed from fear and everything of the enemy. You live immune from all the power of the enemy. You will tread on scorpion and serpent and they shall in no wise harm you.

No.3 if you die to self, the glory of God will be on your life. We read of prophecy that say the glory of God shall cover the earth as the waters cover the earth. I am sorry to say the glory of God cannot come on anything that has a smell of self and selfishness inside. It can only come whenever self dies. How He love to fill each and every vessel with His glory. When we look back at the bible days and we say how can those people live without the glory of God? Ask yourself today in the church age, how can you live without the glory of God? Yet there are a lot of Christians going around on their own steam, on their own self who is living without the glory of God. A lot of churches, a lot of ministries are going on in their own steam. A lot of things are not for God but for man and they are living without the glory of God. In one day in the presence of God is better than a thousand days. My friends, one second in the glory of God is worth a million years. Where are the highest points in Israel? When the glory of God was there. When the glory of God came upon Moses tabernacle it was their highest. When the glory of God came upon Solomon's temple it was the high point. This is the third blessing of dying to self.

This is the principle of Jesus Christ. He died to self, that's why He could love completely. He died to self, that's why the devil cannot touch Him all His life and even after He give Himself the devil still couldn't touch Him. He resurrected from the dead, that's why Jesus had the glory of God. He died to self. Will you and I follow after His footsteps?