

Chapter 8: Relationship with Death

Part 55: Small Deaths

Begin with silence and a time to share together.

Death is a difficult subject because it represents all that would destroy and obliterate us. We usually keep it far away from our daily round. At times it breaks into our consciousness, but most of the time it is distant.

What we fail to see is that we are dying every moment. Small deaths are constantly closing down our experience of life. Our bodies age and grow less capable year by year. The mind and intellect which is said to be in its prime at eighteen becomes forgetful and slower. Our attitudes harden and generally there is less flexibility about us. Though we cannot see it over weeks or months, looking back over years we can easily see the changes, the effects of the little deaths that we die each day.

The fear of the loss of our youthfulness and capabilities usually causes us to try to hold on to them, being rigidly possessive or compensating for the loss in some way. Self improvement courses are always popular.

Jesus counters this by saying, 'If you try to save your life you will lose it, but if you lose your life for my sake you will find it.'

This is the miracle of living in Christ: he transforms death and makes of it new life and new beginning. So each little death can become a new opening and possibility. The condition is that we do not hang on to life but let it go, or 'lose' it, as Christ would say. So letting go of

- false security
(the husk or seed breaking open)
- binding memories
(repenting, forgiving, forgetting)
- rigid attitudes
(becoming flexible and open to other ways)
- fear
(turning fear over to God in awe)

opens us to the possibilities that God packs into each moment.

Often, times of goodness come after difficult or dark experiences. When we can see and receive them as part of the same process, then we can co-operate with God in the growth, rather than fight the downs and over-exaggerate the ups. Our lives can then be more consistent.

- Spring flowers come after the winter blight.
- A new person comes after the pain of childbirth.
- Nothing is wasted, but all is used for the new life.
- The fire burns away the waste and leaves the gold.



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- New life comes out of the old.
- The eternal happens now.

Reflect on what you are needing to let go of and what needs picking up.

What needs to die so that new life can emerge?

This week, live with life and death and see if you can accept the process as God's way of renewing His creation. Discuss the difficult areas with God.



Sergio Milandri has a Masters in Personal Formation and has been a relationship mentor in South Africa for over 25 years. He and his wife, Elizabeth, live in Hout Bay, Cape Town, and run the Sans Pareil Retreat Centre from there.

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