

# The Cross and Self

## Consider the Condition:

**1. Satan worshipped at the shrine of self, He said, "I will...., I will...., I will....," as he desired to take God's place.** When Adam and Eve fell into sin they desired for self what Satan offered -- wisdom, to be like God, to be independent of God, to do their own thing!

**2. The centrality of the sin problem is the problem of love of self. We serve our selfish, willful ways and desires.**

We often worship another God rather than the God of heaven... that is, we kneel at the shrine of self -- there we serve a "*pitied, petted, and pampered self-life.*" All self-righteousness, self-esteem, self-glory, self-vindication, and fatal self-pity -- these and 10,000 other manifestations of self are but the myriad branching of that deeply rooted tree of self.

F. J. Heugel says: "*We are so addicted to self, s wrapped up in self, so entwined with self, so infatuated with self, that our spiritual natures cannot be centered in God by means of a deep union of love without a violent contradiction of our old natures. This is the secret of the Cross. It does violence to corrupt human nature. It slays the old flesh, the self life.*" (Gal. 2:20; Rom 6:6; 11-14, 16-18)

**3. The victorious believer will become aware of many forms of self which must be dealt with.**

***We shall discover:***

- In our service for Christ, self confidence and self-esteem;
- in the slightest suffering, we see self-saving and self-pity;
- in the least misunderstanding we respond with self-defense and self-vindication;
- in our lot in life we find self-pleasing and self-choosing;
- in our relationship it is self-assertiveness and self-respect;
- in our education it is self-boasting and self-expression;
- in our desires is self-admiration and self-congratulations;
- in our failures, self- excusing and self-justification;
- in our spiritual attainments, self-righteousness and self-complacency;
- in our public ministry, self-reflection and self-glory.

**In life as a whole we witness self-love and selfishness; the flesh is an "I" specialist.**

*"In the Palace of Wurtzung there hangs a hall of glass. It is called the Hall of a Thousand Mirrors. You enter -- a thousand hands are stretched out to meet you, a thousand smiles greet your smile, a thousand eyes will weep when you weep; but they are all your hands, your smiles, and your tears. What a picture of the selfish man! Self all around, self multiplied and he is deceived" -- (Mantle)*

**4. By birth we are creatures of habit.** By birth we are selfish, and by long practice we have lived to please ourselves. We have long been debtors to certain fleshly tendencies. We settled down that it must be this way.

We may always have been a murmuring, complaining Christian. Maybe you sulk and feel sorry for your "*sad, sweet self.*"

## The Glorious Answer in Christ Jesus:

To one who asked George Muller the secret of his service, he replied "*There was a day when I died;*" and as he spoke, he bent lower, until he almost touched the floor.

Continuing, he added, "*Died to George Muller, his opinions, preferences, tastes, and will; died to the world, its approval or censure; died to the approval or blame even of my brethren or friends; and since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God.*" (Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6: 6, 11, 14; 7:18; 8:13, 8:1-4)

**1. The verdict has gone forth, the sentence has been given,** the only cure is repentance, crucifixion, death with Christ. I must **die daily**... I must die to self and be alive to Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit desires to work this death in me.

**2. We can't cast self out!** Christ rendered the selfish, sinful flesh nature crucified in His crucifixion. We must reckon this to be so. (Rom. 6:11-14)

**3. Victory over sin was laid deep in the depths of death -- Christ's death for us.** The Holy Spirit begins His triumphant teaching of the believer's victory over sin by one terse, striking, graphic phrase, "**death to sin.**" Notice in Romans 6 the Spirit's emphasis on this death to sin: "*dead to sin*" (v.2); "*dead unto sin,*" (v. 10); "*dead indeed unto sin*" (vs. 11).

**4. There is utter folly in self-effort.** You may pray all night in order to have God's blessing... but in spite of all your agonizing and strivings you will find your resolutions only so many ropes of string. We may have been filled with disgust and shame and secret weeping over our inward wrongness. You would desire to take sin and self a prisoner, and lock him up, but you find you are the captive -- except for the answer in the power of the Cross, the finished work of Christ. (Rom. 8:9-13)

***The victory is not through suppression of sinful desires, nor through eradication of the old nature, nor yet any self effort -- God's way of victory is through crucifixion -- deliverance by putting it to death.***

There is a vast difference between reckoning myself dead to sin and reckoning sin dead to me. Every attempt to make sin dead to me, is self-effort, or struggle, or make-believer, and it is not following the Scriptural truth.

God says I am to reckon myself dead to sin. If I am willing to be rid of sin and self controlling, let faith fasten on the fact of my death to sin through my actual life-union with Christ. I am IN CHRIST, in Him I am to consider myself dead to sin, I don't need to any longer obey it.

We have been baptized by the Spirit into Christ, (Rom 6:1-3). He made me one with Himself. I am identified with Him. He not only died *for me*, but I died *with Him*. He took me with Himself into death, and His death was my death to sin.

### What Reckoning Means:

**1. Reckoning, in order to be real, includes self-renunciation.** Our reckoning is doomed to failure unless we renounce self. In the power Christ's death I must refuse my old life. I must refuse to allow self to lord it over me.

**2. Reckoning also includes rejection of sin. "Let not sin therefore reign."**

(Rom. 6:13-14) Sin has no claim over those united to the Crucified and sin "*shall not have dominion*" over those who yield themselves entirely to the Holy Spirit. (I Pet. 2:24; Rom. 8:5)

These days of war remind us afresh of the man who reported to his commanding officer, "*I have taken a prisoner.*" His commander said, "*Bring him along with you.*" "*He won't come,*" complained the soldier. "*Well, then come yourself,*" replied the officer. "*I can't. He won't let me,*" was the final acknowledgment. I fear there is a great number of Christians whose victory is no deeper than that. All Christians have been indeed freed from the power as well as the penalty of sin.

**Have we entered into victory over self?**