

Loving and Hating Life – John 12:24-25

Pastor Chad Wagner

PastorWagner.com/sermons/loving-and-hating-life-1/

PastorWagner.com/sermons/loving-and-hating-life-2/

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. ²⁵ He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.” (John 12:24-25)

- I. In **Joh 12:24**, Jesus taught us that the means of bringing forth fruit is death of self.
 1. If a corn of wheat remains whole, unchanged, in its original condition, and in a safe place, it will produce no fruit.
 2. It is only when that corn falls into the ground and the outer shell dies that the dormant life within it springs forth and produces fruit far superior to itself (**1Co 15:36-38**).
 3. So it is with a child of God.
 - A. Until the old man is put off, the new man cannot emerge and produce fruit (**Eph 4:22-24; Gal 5:22-26**).
 - B. Until our old man with its deceitful lusts is crucified with Christ and we are dead to sin (**Rom 6:5-14**), we will remain stagnant.
 - C. A Christian’s old life is dead, and he is hid with Christ in God (**Col 3:3**).
 - D. A Christian must die to himself daily (**1Co 15:31**).
 - i. We must crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts (**Gal 5:24**).
 - ii. We should be crucified unto the world and the world unto us (**Gal 6:14**).
 - iii. We must deny ourselves and take up the cross daily in order to follow Christ (**Luk 9:23**).
 - iv. We must not live unto ourselves but for Christ (**2Co 5:14-15**).
 - v. Our life and body are not our own (**1Co 6:19**); we were bought with a price, and therefore we must glorify God in our body and spirit which are His (**1Co 6:20**).
 - vi. If we are willing to lose our old life for Christ’s sake and the gospel’s (**Mar 8:35**), we will find the true life which Christ has given us (**Mat 16:25**), and we will save it (**Luk 9:24**).
 - vii. Being crucified with Christ is the means of living spiritually (**Gal 2:20**) and having an abundant life (**Joh 10:10**).
 - E. We should pray that God will examine, prove, and try us to purge off the impurities (**Psa 26:2; Psa 139:23-24; Job 23:10**).
 - F. We should search and try ourselves (**Lam 3:40**).
 4. So it is with a minister.
 - A. A pastor has flaws and baggage like anyone else. He’s made out of the same dirt as others are (**2Co 4:7**).
 - B. He has within him both honorable and dishonorable qualities (**2Ti 2:20**).

- C. If he will purge himself of the vessels of dishonor, he will be a vessel of honor, set apart, ready to be used by God, and prepared to do whatever good work God has for him (**2Ti 2:21**).
- D. But he must go through the painful purging process first in order to bear fruit (**Joh 15:1-8**).
- E. Like the Levitical ministers of old, God will purge and purify His ministers so that they may offer unto the Lord an offering of righteousness (**Mal 3:3**).
- F. “Whenever God means to make a man great, He always breaks him in pieces first.”
- Charles Spurgeon
- G. If a man’s ministry is going to bring forth fruit, it likewise must undergo a purging to remove the wood, hay, and stubble that were built upon the foundation along with the gold, silver, and precious stones (**1Co 3:5-15**).
 - i. The Lord will from time to time “sweep” through the church and try it by fire to burn off the chaff that should not be there.
 - ii. These fiery trials purge out the dross of the church like a furnace purifies precious metals (**Pro 17:3; Pro 25:4; Eze 22:18-22**).
 - iii. Sometimes these fiery trials can be heresies in the church which sweep out heretics like a divine broom, leaving only those who are approved (**1Co 11:19; Deut 13:1-3**) which demonstrate such by being grounded in the truth through reading and studying the Bible (**2Ti 2:15-18**).

II. If a man loves his life, he will lose it (**Joh 12:25**).

- 1. Loving one’s life is not wrong in all cases.
 - A. A man is to love his wife as he loves his own body (**Eph 5:28-29; Eph 5:33**).
 - i. He that loves his wife loves himself (**Eph 5:28**).
 - ii. These verses implicitly teach that it is normal for a man to love his own body and treat it well.
 - B. David loved himself (**Psa 35:17**).
 - C. Darling *n.* – 1. A person who is very dear to another; the object of a person’s love; one dearly loved.
 - D. We are to love our neighbor as ourselves (**Mat 22:39**).
 - E. This commandment assumes that we naturally love ourselves and should not mistreat ourselves.
 - F. The Bible tells us what to do in order to love life and see good days (**1Pe 3:10-11; Psa 34:12-14**).
 - G. These verses make it clear that it is not always wrong to love one’s life.
- 2. Based on the second half of the verse, it is clear that the life that is loved is one’s life *in this world* (**Joh 12:25b**).
 - A. What does it mean to love one’s life in this context?
 - i. This world is characterized by fleshly desires and material pleasures of *this life* (**Luk 8:14**).
 - ii. This world is characterized by the things in this world which men lust after and are proud of (**1Jo 2:15-16**).
 - iii. To love one’s life in this world means to love the carnal and material things of this life and prioritize them over spiritual things.
 - B. What does it mean to lose one’s life in this context?

- i. It can refer to physically losing one's life (**Luk 12:20**).
 - ii. It can also refer to losing the things in this life which brought a man much pleasure, such as his health, wealth, prestige, social status, etc.
 - a. Material things are sometimes referred to as "man's life" (**Deut 20:19**).
 - b. Money and possessions are referred to as one's "living" (**Mar 12:44; Luk 8:43; Luk 15:12**).
 - iii. It can refer to losing the most important thing in this life, which is one's fellowship with God.
 - a. A person who lives in pleasure can appear to be living, but be dead to the things of God (**1Ti 5:6**).
 - b. A church can have a reputation for being lively, but in God's eyes be dead (**Rev 3:1-2**).
 - c. A church can appear to be prospering, but be poor, blind, and naked in God's estimation (**Rev 3:17**).
 - iv. A pastor must keep his body under subjection and deny his flesh if he is not to become a castaway (**1Co 9:27**).
3. I knew a man who experienced what Jesus warned of in **John 12:25**.
- A. I sincerely believe that the man was/is a child of God who is now in heaven.
 - B. He was in the church, but he had a foot in the world.
 - C. The church was important to him, but it came behind his vacation home on the lake.
 - D. In the summer time, he would frequently miss church to be at the lake.
 - E. He had rationalized his decision and would repeat the same old story every time his poor attendance was addressed.
 - F. After several years, things finally came to a head.
 - i. After a very frank discussion with me on a Saturday, he decided he was going to make a change.
 - ii. He did not say what the change was going to be, but one thing was certain to me: the change was *not* going to be more time in church and less time at the lake.
 - G. The next day (Sunday) in church, he took the opportunity he had to give an exhortation to rebuke me (although in a way that only I recognized) for having unrealistic expectations which led to unnecessary disappointment.
 - H. On Wednesday, four days after the meeting about his poor church attendance, he, unbeknownst to me, had planned to head up to the lake again.
 - I. He never woke up that Wednesday morning.
 - J. He loved his life in this world and therefore lost it.
 - K. This was a modern-day Ananias and Sapphira story (**Act 5:1-11**).
 - L. This story should put the fear of God in us all (**1Co 10:11-12; Rom 11:20-21**).

III. If a man hates his life in this world, he shall keep it unto life eternal (**Joh 12:25**).

- 1. What does it mean to hate one's life in this context?
 - A. A man who hates his life in this world hates:
 - i. the pull this world has upon him.
 - ii. the vanity of this life (**Ecc 1:2; Ecc 2:17**).
 - iii. his vain thoughts (**Psa 119:113**).

- iv. his false ways (**Psa 119:128**).
 - v. his thoughts and imaginations which exalt themselves against the knowledge of God (**2Co 10:5**).
 - vi. his pride and foolishness (**Job 42:3, 6; Pro 8:13**).
 - vii. his sin (**Eze 36:31; Rom 7:14-15, 24**).
- B. If we don't hate our lives in this world, we cannot be Jesus' disciples (**Luk 14:26**).
2. What does it mean to keep one's life unto life eternal?
- A. If you hate your weak, sinful, foolish flesh, then your spiritual inward man is winning the battle for your mind (**Gal 5:17; Rom 7:25**).
 - B. When you do that, you are living your life in the flesh by the faith of the Son God (**Gal 2:20**).
 - C. When we live by faith, we have evidence that we have eternal life (**Joh 6:47**) and that we will live forever with Christ in a glorified body (**Php 3:20-21**).