



THE CRUCIFIXION OF SELF (PART 1) **by Dr. Daniel O. C.**

He who reigns within himself and rules over all his passions, desires and fears is more than a king. When it comes to self, we look more for men's approval than for needed correction and help. One of the hardest secrets for a man to keep is his opinion of himself. Therefore, it is not success that God rewards but always the faithfulness of doing His will.

Our "self" needs to be crucified. Our "flesh" needs to be sentenced to death. Our "fallen nature" needs to be totally abandoned for the godly nature. Our "past" needs to be forgotten to embrace the future that God has prepared for us. Are you willing to crucify your flesh? This topic will show you how you can crucify the self.

To be crucified means "to be fixed in a place from which freedom of movement is curtailed or restricted". This simply means that you would not do what you are not supposed to do. Therefore you will fall in line with God's purposes and will for you. Another explanation, of being crucified is "to have everything about, you restrained and regimented". This means, that you will be so controlled and led by the Spirit of God that you do not allow the dictation of flesh to move you to take actions which you are not supposed to take.

Crucifixion of life or self is a proof of a true converted Christian. Self destroys every spiritual perspective of life. This will cause the person to look inwardly instead of outwardly.

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Romans 6:6

Knowing this, that our old man was, crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

The “old man” in Romans 6:6 refers to self-life (I, me, my, mine) and the fallen nature. This is the nature which we inherited from the devil at the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. It also refers to man’s wilfulness to rebel and to disobey the Almighty God. Just confessing to be a Christian does not deter the flesh or the old nature from raising its ugly head against you from time to time. If you have not learnt how to crucify the self, you will always make the mistake of letting self be in control.

Take heed to Galatians 5:17 warning about the flesh fighting against the Spirit. This means that there are times that you want to walk in the Spirit but your flesh overwhelms you to act in flesh.

Galatians 5:17

For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

The old nature wants to dethrone our desire to obey God and not to walk in the ways of God. For example, you may say that you do not want to oppress people but you end up doing so.

Galatians 5:24

And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

CRUCIFIXION OF SELF LEADS TO THREE CONSIDERABLE POINTS

Galatians 5:13

For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

1. THE CRUSHING OF SELF LIFE

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Just as the nut or seed of a fruit cannot be seen or revealed until the shells are crushed, likewise our inner spiritual beauty cannot be radiated until self is crushed. The “durian” fruit cannot be eaten unless its thorny shell is first prised open. Likewise, our “self” needs to be crushed before the world can see the beauty of Christ radiating within us. Unless “self” dies, we cannot bring forth fruit. Except we die to self, our lives will have no challenge to the world of darkness.

John 12:24

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.

Self is always wanting something great for itself. It is difficult to be a pioneer when “self” is not dead. Self likes to be in the place where the ground has already been tilled, seeds sown, fruits ripened which have been harvested by others and they are just there to enjoy it.

Self is always seeking for honour. As a minister, are you always seeking for honour and respect from people just because you have a title? Self wants to be identified and acknowledged. Does this describe you? Self is always looking for flattering words, exaltation and praise of man. Do you enjoy when you are being praised but if someone were to find fault in something about you, you immediately grow pale? When you exalt yourself, you will be abased. Seek the exaltation of God rather than from men.

- Self wants to be in control of everything.
- Self wants to be acknowledged for everything about it and its works.
- Self seeks for notice and not for Christ to be noticed.
- Self is an enemy to the work of the cross. It does not like the cross because by drawing near, its ugliness is exposed.

Therefore, deal self a death blow in Jesus’ name, Amen!

Philippians 2:3

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

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Do you esteem others better than yourself or do you let your selfish ambition and conceit rule you? Many times self will rule peoples' life and they proudly say: "I will teach someone a lesson they have never learnt." How many times have you said that to your neighbour? Believers absolutely have no lesson to teach others except the lesson that Jesus our Lord and Saviour has taught us. What is the lesson? It is the lessons of **humility, love and forgiveness.**

Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God taught us all the lessons on humility and forgiveness when He took water and washed the feet of His disciples exhorting them to do the same. When you are dealing with people, avoid self.

Different Faces Of Self

Self have many faces. It can take various forms:

a) False Friendship

Do you know that someone can befriend you with ulterior motives in their heart? Have you come across a friend who betrayed your trust making known to others the secrets you confided in him / her? You trusted your friend but he or she let you down by exposing your weakness to others.

b) False Partnership

Self can come in the form of false partnership where they promise to bring the money for investment but later the partnership turns out to be a thorn in your flesh. False partnership seeks to destroy and rob all that belongs to you and the company. They deceive people with smooth words that seeks to destroy.

c) False Peace

Another face of self is when people ask to reconcile with you for all past misunderstandings without any sincerity in doing so. They come with Judas' kiss – seeking to betray you.

d) False Agreement

It can also come in the form of false agreement. These people may outwardly say that they have come to stand in agreement with you for the vision that you have but in reality, they have hidden agendas in their heart. Therefore, beware of

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false agreement. Always look before you leap so that you will not fall into the trap of false accord.

e) False Smile

Self can come in the form of a false smile. It is the sheepish smile that has already condemned you to others without you knowing about it. They smile at you without you realising that behind their facade is nothing but betrayal. Be careful of such people.

f) False Unity

False unity is another area of self. It can strike relationships between a man and a woman but later on, one would have found out that he or she has been cheated. An example of false unity is illustrated in Genesis 11:1-6. It is termed as false unity because they only came together to make a name for themselves which means that it is for their vain glory. They were seeking to exhibit their power and pride to be able to build a tower that reached the heavens.

Genesis 11:1-6

- 1 *Now the whole earth had one language and one speech.*
- 2 *And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there.*
- 3 *Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar.*
- 4 *And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."*
- 5 *But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built.*
- 6 *And the LORD said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them."*

False unity is not a good unity. Sometimes we may see unity among people, but it may be false unity when it is self-seeking. Some ministers start a church based on the reason that they want to make a name for themselves. A church must not be started based on this reason but rather to build up God's kingdom.

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Have you ever taken a critical look at your actions to find out what is in your heart? Search your heart if you have a secret desire to make a name for yourself in whatever you are doing or if you truly want God to be glorified. Check your motives when you are relating to your boss, colleagues, spouse, family and friends. Is it clean and pure or do you have ulterior motives behind it? God sees your motives as much as He sees your actions. God hears your heartbeat as much as He hears your voice. Nothing is hidden from God.

If you are in leadership, are you there to lead people or to boss people around? For those who are in the worship ministry, do you sing to show people how good your voice is or you really seek to praise the name of the Lord? When you are asked to take charge of a department, do you have the motive to show people that you can lead better than others or do you sincerely desire to serve? Whatever you want to do in life, take a critical view of the whole issue and the motives of your heart towards it.

2. THE BEARING OF CROSS DAILY

Mark 8:34-38

- 34 *When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.*
- 35 *For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.*
- 36 *For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?*
- 37 *Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*
- 38 *For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."*

People are not willing to crucify the self because they do not want to give up their bad habits, secret sins and evil desires. They are not willing to bear the cross daily. When you bear the cross, you endure indignities and shameful treatments in the hands of other people. Although those treatments are unpleasant, yet you

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should endure them as good soldiers of Christ Jesus. Unless you go through the valley of humiliation, you will not be humble.

A rewarding cross bearing therefore demands endurance and patience. Some believers do not know that there is a cross to bear. They think every day is for smiles and laughter. A little thorn in the flesh upsets them emotionally and causes them to flare up. They forget that the Christian life is filled with many crosses to carry. There is no crown without a cross. There will not be victory unless there is a battle to be won. To carry our cross means that we need to endure the little disappointments that we face daily. Such endurance is a proof of self-crucifixion.

- a. Self always tries to avoid the way of cross.
- b. Self cannot accept godly correction.
- c. Self gets upset easily with even a mild rebuke.
- d. Self always make unnecessary arguments.
- e. Self chooses not to die but it must be put to death.
- f. Self withdraws from fellowship of believers because of little misunderstandings.
- g. Self always fights back in revenge.
- h. Self always wants to shun the fellowship of one with whom it once had a face off.

But Jesus said, *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. (Luke 9:23).*

3. BONDED SLAVE TO CHRIST

After you have died to self, the next level is to be a **bonded slave** to Christ. Do you know the meaning of being “a bonded slave”? The Greek word “doulos” means “bonded servant”. When self is crucified, then you will set yourself apart. Sanctification starts with the realisation that you do not belong to yourself any longer but to God. When you are set apart, you do not behave the way you did before. You no longer go wherever you like or talk whatever you want but your words, actions and deeds are being guided by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 6:13

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And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

Romans 6:16

Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?

You willingly become a bonded slave of God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Your simple desire becomes "Not as we will but as God wills." Your will is to do what He wants and not what you want. When this happens, your inward man will grow deeper in the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

- 19 *Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?*
20 *For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*

Consecrated For Sanctification

1 Thessalonians 4:3-4

- 3 *For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;*
4 *that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honour.*

1 Thessalonians 4:7-8

- 7 *For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.*
8 *Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.*

Before you are sanctified, you need to consecrate yourself. To consecrate yourself for sanctification, you must take note of the following **three** things:

1. Cleansing of Oneself

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2. Christlikeness in One's Life

3. Covenant Relationship

1) Cleansing of Oneself

Before sanctification can take place, there must be cleansing. Look at the examples of the Apostles. They were born again and their names were written in the Book of Life, yet their interactions and conversations with one another reveals some blemishes that showed that they were not totally conformed to Christ. At various times they exhibited selfishness, pride and bitterness, which proved that they needed urgently to be cleansed from all filthiness.

Isaiah the prophet knew the Lord. Yet when he saw the glory of the Lord, he realised that he was a man of unclean lips and that he dwelt among people of unclean lips.

Everyone needs to be sanctified, otherwise Christians are in danger of entangling with sin every moment. Hearts will not be pure and minds will be defiled if there is no sanctification. Church and ministers of God, if you really want to be sanctified, you must deal with the selfish demand of respect, honour and praise from other people. Are you ready to deal with this important issue? God delights in cleansing us from all filthiness. He cleanses His children so that they become a peculiar people to Himself. The Lord cleanses His people to become people who will pray like the psalmists.

Psalm 51:7

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Psalm 51:10-14

- 10 *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*
- 11 *Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.*
- 12 *Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit.*
- 13 *Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You.*

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14 *Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, the God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.*

You cannot be cleansed until you desire the Lord more than social status, money, worldly possessions, material things and more than what the world can offer.

Psalm

42:1: "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God."

There must be a deep longing for the cleansing. It is the longing that overrides every other need in one's life (*Psalm 73:25*). The kind of sanctification you get largely depends on the extent of your consecration (*Matthew 7:7-8*). If you desire sanctification, then consecrate yourself now. God did it to Enoch, Samuel, Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Paul, Peter and many others. He will do it for you too if you are willing.

2) Christlikeness in One's Life

Ephesians 4:22-24

22 *That you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,*
23 *and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,*
24 *and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.*

Sanctification makes you Christlike in your temper, disposition, action, words and deeds. It makes you yield your body, soul and spirit to God and obey Him fully at all cost.

3) Covenant Relationship

Hebrews 10:16-17

16 *This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: "I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,"*
17 *then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."*

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God's word written on the tablet of your heart, desires, thoughts, disposition, plans, aspirations, ambitions and relationships would be totally in line with the covenant relationship with God. Your heart becomes tender and soft, loving and compassionate. Therefore, crucify your flesh, be sanctified and be in covenant relationship with God so that others may see Jesus Christ in your life, the hope of glory.

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