



# Learning How to Die

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**I**t has been pointed out that one of the tasks of life is to learn how to die well, that is, to go where we would rather not go, to love when we know it will cost, to offer ourselves even when we know we will be used. If we die a bit every day, sometimes with struggle and sacrifice in those situations that may call for such, then at our final moment we will be able to stand before that specter face to face and not run, simply because we have met before and have been able to walk away the victor.

Dying well does not mean we do so without fear. Courage blossoms when we stand in a field of fear. Even the Lord Jesus "offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears" to God, as the Letter to the Hebrews notes. Dying well does not mean we do so cleanly. Dying is often messy, and it is always an uprooting that disrupts and scatters everything nearby.

Nor does dying well mean we do so in control of the event. That is what is so devastating about death. It has complete and total control. At its best and at its worst the only way to die well is to say "yes" to it every time it demands our submission. And like the eye of stillness at the center of the hurricane, it is at the heart of death where we embrace resurrection and where the holy offers life. It is where we can have a deep encounter with the Lord Jesus. ●

## Reflect

***Can you accept the little deaths  
along the way as preparation  
for the final passing from this life?***

*Unless a grain of wheat falls to  
the ground and dies, it remains  
just a grain of wheat; but if it  
dies, it produces much fruit.*

JOHN 12:24

