

Dead Man Walking or Walking Dead Man - Who are you?

The term ‘dead man walking’ comes from those who are on death row in prison and when their execution day has arrived, they’re escorted out of their cell to walk down the hall to the death chamber. The guard while escorting them says out loud, ‘dead man walking’. Although alive, the prisoner is dead to any personal hopes, dreams and future. Jesus was that man too. The Apostles were those men. Jesus though alive, had the death sentence to give himself as the sacrificial lamb to take away the sins of humanity so that we can have full access to a personal relationship with him and our Father God. The things of this world had no hold on Jesus, tempted in every way yet He was without sin. Paul says in Galatians 2:20; *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”* Romans 6:11; *“Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* Galatians 5:24; *“Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires”*. The Apostle Peter says in I Peter 2:24; *“and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.”* If we’re dead to the world and our own way, we’ll have no desire to get off the straight and narrow path as Christian and Hopeful did. In essence, they hadn’t totally died to the world so they would be called ‘walking dead men’.

We’ll see four fundamental things that have prepared Christian and Hopeful for their imminent captivity by Giant Despair, they are; **self-interest, carnal leadership, vain-confidence and neglect of the means of grace**. Christian and Hopeful had just come out of a long period of refreshing by a beautiful river; eating, sleeping, reading and drinking from the Word of God and prayer that strengthened their spirits and growing in grace. They were invigorated to keep on their journey. How sly the devil is to plan a deceptive detour ahead of them. Proverbs 14:12 is very clear, *“There is a way that seems right to a man but its end is the way of death.”* We quickly can forget our past trials and lessons after we’ve been blessed with long times of refreshing and peaceful prosperous times. As the path they’re traversing starts to harden and become troublesome, discouragement sets in, that’s only because it’s hard on their ‘flesh’. They want the easy, soft and cushy road that doesn’t cause discomfort to their flesh. The devil whispers in their ears, ‘you don’t have to endure this hardship, look for an easier way that’s comfortable that can lead you to the same place.’ The grass looks greener on the other side of the fence, it’s another meadow called By-Path-Meadow. In today’s terms we could maybe say it was another ‘bunny trail’, to get them off track and diverted from their purpose. They were ‘walking dead men’.

But notice that there is a deterrent to the other path - a fence - and they have to physically cross over it. You have to make a conscience decision to get off the straight and narrow pathway; it doesn’t ‘just happen’. They assumed that because it ran parallel to the straight and narrow path they were on, it would lead them to the Celestial City. The Holy Spirit will cause road blocks and deterrents to keep you from pursuing easier things, whether we heed those warning or not is our choice. Proverbs 4:25-27 says; *“Let your eyes look straight ahead, and your eyelids look right before you. Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established. Do not turn to the right or the left; remove your foot from evil.”* It’s amazing how we can rationalize our decisions to something easier isn’t it. When we’re downcast and disheartened, it gives way to sin we’d normally reject. Here, one temptation makes way for another and another!

Being spurred on by **Vain-Confidence** who has also been diverted, the three continue into the night, but as his name portrays, Vain-Confidence falls into a deep pit – another snare of the devil - to be dashed to pieces because he couldn’t see where he was going because he depended on his vain, human, logical confidence. Had they realized who he was, they could have easily turned back quickly to the straight path, but they joyously followed this deceived man. Do you see how sin takes you from bad to worse? It now starts causing dissension between Christian and Hopeful who are in the blackest of nights as a storm breaks out and flood waters rise to cover the path. Christian’s **carnal leadership** is revealed and repented of, because he knows he should have been wiser as he was already a mature believer. He sought his own personal comfort and **self-interest** to get off the hardened pathway from which they had come and hence misleading his brother. I Corinthians 10:12 says; *“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”* James 1:14 also says; *“But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.”* They were ‘dead men walking’, enslaved

to the flesh. As I shared earlier from [Romans 6:11](#); *“Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

They come to find out that this detour they had taken was actually in Giant Despair’s territory who lived in Doubting Castle. The scenes are very explicit and lengthy, but there are a few things I’d like to elaborate on. First we have to keep it forefront in our mind that they’re in this situation because of their disobedience and walking in the flesh. They’re believers who got themselves into this mess. What does a giant of despair do in your life?

- Prowls around	- Brings depression and remorse
- Defers hope and trust	- Lies to you saying there is no way out
- Imprisons and binds your mind and thoughts	- Lies to you saying you’re beyond the grace and mercy from God
- Makes you go crazy and rages against you	- Brings pain and affliction
- Is a horrible captivity	- Brings distress and causes doubt
- Makes you feel abandoned by God	- Terrorizes you
- It flees when the light of truth is revealed	- Prompts suicide!

All of these are a smoke show of the truth! How many counselling sessions could be cancelled if Christians would realize that they’ve gotten off the straight and narrow in their walk with Christ and have opened the door to despair and all they need to do is repent? How many needless suicides could be thwarted by words of hope to a despaired soul? The spirit of despair is real but NOT invincible as this giant and his wife portrays. Why is so much effort made for these men to commit suicide? Suicide is a mockery against God! It’s self-murder and is prohibited by God. It’s a heinous crime to extinguish the life of a person made in God’s image. To self inflict this upon oneself is even a greater insult to God. Suicide/self-murder is homicide which is much more arrogant and destructive when you compare it to a murderer who kills another person but can’t kill that person’s soul. Suicide kills the body and soul. If a murderer’s end is hell, why think that those who commit suicide will inherit ease as the Giant is implying to Christian? Suicide involves cowardice and moral desertion. In short, if Giant Despair would kill them, they would be viewed as martyrs which the giant didn’t want, if they committed suicide they’d mock their creator and heavenly Father which the giant (devil) wanted. Do you know that even Jesus was tempted to commit suicide? It happened in Matthew 4:5-7; *“then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, ‘If you are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you.’...Jesus said to him, ‘it is written again, ‘you shall not tempt the Lord your God.’”* Jesus resisted this temptation and so can you!

Now, here is the AMAZING thing in the end. ALL ALONG... they had the key to get out of Doubting-Castle. What was the key? The embedded Word of God in Christian’s heart! Think about that! In the midst of their sin, failure, imprisonment etc., God had still made a way of escape for them. I Corinthians 10:13; *“No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is FAITHFUL, who will NOT ALLOW you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will PROVIDE THE WAY OF ESCAPE also, so that you be able to endure it.”* Oh what grace and mercy our heavenly Father has to us! How many Christians are in bondage to not only despair but other vices of the devil, and yet God has given them the keys to get out? You’ve been given authority over ALL the power of the devil because Jesus has given you His name and authority to use! Luke 9:1; *“Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over ALL demons, and to cure diseases.”* Luke 10:19; *“Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over ALL the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”*

In closing, I want to share again what I did at the beginning; Are you in despair because you have you followed your own self-interests, been led astray by carnal and unwise leadership, followed vain-confidence and neglected the grace of God to be able to continue to press on regardless of how comfortable you are or how difficult the journey seems to be right now at this temporal moment? Despair will be broken over you in Jesus name if you repent of your sin or sins that led you away. Grace is available to you; grace is the Lord’s favor – freely extended to give Himself away to people (because He is “always leaning toward them”)!

Are you a dead man walking or a walking dead man? I hope the first. [Romans 6:3-11](#).