



Berean Christian Fellowship

DEVOTIONAL 164.0

October 13
2017

To Lay Down Your Life—P3

“Simon Peter said to them, ‘I am going fishing.’ They said to him, ‘We will also come with you.’ They went out and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing” (John 21:3 NASB).

Marriage is ultimately about self-sacrifice, laying your life down for your spouse. It is often at this realization that some people walk away from it rather than lay down their self-centered needs and desires for the needs and desires of their spouse—they love their lives more than those they profess to love. Marriage is a declaration that you will care about your spouse’s needs and desires as much, if not more, than your own. As Paul says, *“each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself”* (Eph. 5:33a), and *“one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife...[similarly, a wife is concerned with] how she may please her husband”* (1 Cor. 7:33-34).

Jesus, *“loved the church and gave Himself up for her”* (Eph. 5:25b). *“We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us”* (1 Jn. 3:16a). Every Believer is spiritually joined to Jesus as the Bride of Christ, and *“the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him”* (1 Cor. 6:17). To his Lord, Peter vowed, *“I will lay down my life for You.”* Jesus answered, *“Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times”* (Jn. 13:37b-38). Like many a newlywed, Peter declared his commitment to Jesus by vowing self-sacrifice—a vow Peter would break that very night under real-life pressure, just as many newlyweds discover their vows and declarations often fall short when the tests of life come and they must decide which they love more—their “life” or their spouse. When it

came to it, Peter denied even *knowing* Jesus.

In John 21, Jesus is resurrected and tells Peter, *“Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you”* (Jn. 20:21-23). But rather than laying his “self” down, Peter soon went back to his old life—his passion before Jesus. We are inherently selfish because of our fallen natures, and we often choose our “life” over those we profess to love. *“But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach”* (Jn. 21:4a). Here, Jesus confronts Peter’s act of self-fulfillment, and He pointedly asks Peter if he loves Him with a committed love. Peter misses the point by declaring his “affection” for Jesus. Jesus cuts to the point by contrasting Peter’s former, self-fulfilling life with a glimpse of his future self-sacrificing life: *“when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go.”* Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, *“Follow Me!”* (Jn. 21:18-19) Jesus is confronting Peter’s unwillingness to lay his life down for Jesus when the rubber meets the road—for One he even professed he would die for. As Peter began to understand the cost of relationship, perhaps he remembered: *“He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal”* (Jn. 12:25), *“and he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me”* (Matt. 10:38).

Jesus laid His life down, literally, for Peter, for you, and for me, so that we could be His Bride. He is more than worthy of us! Is the Bride laying down her “life” (her desires, passions, dreams, and perhaps even her actual life) for Him? Is her concern in the world to please Him? May each member of the Bride consider. Even so, Amen.

Explore more devotionals, articles, sermons, and music from the Body of Christ—also sign up for the bi-monthly Newsletter and learn more about the Berean Christian Fellowship and its ministry, the Berean Lamp—by visiting us at www.bereanlamp.org