

**Week 3: A Purpose We Must Pursue – The Church Multiplied**

**Day 18: Dying to Multiply**

**The Passage:** John 12:20–36

**The Focus:** “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me.” (John 12:24–26 NASB)

**The Meditation:** “If it dies, it bears much fruit.”

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**Empowering Truths:** Most Christians live powerless lives because they are unwilling to die. The essential prerequisite to resurrection is death. No death, no resurrection.

The same can be said for the Spirit’s empowerment. His power flows to dead people. It is also true for multiplication. You must die to multiply.

In John 12 Jesus points first to his own death and resurrection. As the Son of God he will have to die to multiply sons and daughters of God. But Jesus immediately connects this reality to the essentiality of the spiritual death of his followers (12:25). “Hating our lives” is absolutely countercultural. It strikes us as masochistic.

Yet Jesus uses this language to call us to follow him. He’s not beckoning us to a self-hate but a self-death; dying to selfish desires that destroy God’s destiny for our lives; a relinquishing of dreams centered in our ego instead of in his joy; a daily surrendering to hear and follow his lead.

My wife, Deb, is a master gardener who started the first community garden in the infamous city of Compton, California. She knows how to make seeds grow and multiply. Seeds must be planted and “die” to bring life.

For twenty years, fear, comfort, selfishness, pride, and misdirected dreams kept Deb from even driving into the adjacent city of Compton. Now she is “laying down her life” for this beautiful community. What changed? She will tell you she decided to be planted and die. This “surrender” is bringing great joy to her and to the neighborhood.

The apostle Paul had the most multiplicative ministry in the early church. This empowerment undoubtedly had its origin in his personal mantra found in Galatians 2:20: “For I have been crucified with Christ.” This is the empowered life Jesus calls each of us to in Luke 9:23: “Take up your cross daily,” meaning a “daily death to selfishness.”

Our daily death to what culture (even Christian culture) ascribes value to—fame, comfort, power, pleasure, money—is what positions us to multiply. It is only when we are dead that we can freely give ourselves away to others without thinking, What’s in it for me?

The Message paraphrases John 12:24 this way, “Listen carefully: Unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground, dead to the world, it is never any more than a grain of wheat. But if it is buried, it sprouts and reproduces itself many times over.”

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**Power Truth:** We must “die” to multiply. Our daily surrender is essential to daily empowerment.

**Our Prayer:** Lord, I confess I don’t want to become nothing so you can be everything. I don’t want to fully decrease so you can fully increase through me. Forgive me. Empower me to follow your example and die so I can release the multiplicative power of your kingdom. I choose the power and beauty of surrender today and each day. Be multiplied through me

