

“GOD HAS MADE DEATH A NATURAL PART OF LIFE”

Prayer Requests

Focus

This lie about God is an interesting one. A person can understand why someone might want to believe it. If death is a natural part of life, then we should embrace it rather than run from it. However, this contradicts the human experience. The vast majority of people want to live and will go to every length and expense to eke out a few more moments here on this earth. In Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith, the character named Yoda said, “Death is a natural part of life. Rejoice for those around you who transform into the Force. Mourn them do not. Miss them do not.” In other words, “Get over it!” This lie is a coping mechanism for death. As always, we will see that the Bible has a far better answer for death!

Is Death Natural?

- 1) Death is separation. The Bible speaks of three kinds of death – Spiritual Death; Eternal Death; and Physical Death. What kind of death (separation) does each verse describe below?

_____ *“By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return” (Genesis 3:19).
“The dust [the body] returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit [soul] returns to God who gave it” (Ecclesiastes 12:7).*

_____ *“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins” (Ephesians 2:1).
“the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so” (Romans 8:7).*

_____ *“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels’ ” (Matthew 25:41).
He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power” (2 Thessalonians 1:8,9)*

- 2) Evaluate the statement: “This life is hell!”

Why Death?

“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people . . .” (Romans 5:12).

“The Lord God said, ‘The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever’ ” (Genesis 3:22).

- 1) For what reasons is the lie “God has made death a natural part of life” so dangerous?

- 2) What is God’s plan for death?

- 3) Read 1 Corinthians 15:20-22,55-58. Respond to someone who says, “You don’t need to believe in the physical resurrection of Jesus.” (Think of the comfort you have because Jesus is risen indeed!)

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ⁵⁵ “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸ Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

What happens when I die?

- ❖ *“The dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it” (Ecclesiastes 12:7).*

- ❖ *“Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment . . .” (Hebrews 9:27).*

- ❖ *“Jesus answered him, ‘Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise’ ” (Luke 23:43).*

- ❖ *“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. ²⁵ I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. ²⁷ And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. ²⁸ “Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned” (John 5:24-29).*

- ❖ *“who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body” (Philippians 3:21)*

Discussion

- 1) Think of at least two belief systems regarding death that stem from this lie.

- 2) How would belief in this lie affect a person’s outlook on life?

- 3) Read Revelation 21:3,4. Agree/Disagree: The Christian doesn’t fear death.

“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” (Revelation 21:3,4)

Hey, what about?

- 4) ...recognizing people we knew on earth.

- 5) ...our relationship with our loved ones.

- 6) ...being sad if a loved one is not there.

- 7) ...knowing what is happening on earth.

- 8) Agree/Disagree: God's promise of sending Jesus was his plan B because of sin.

If there is time

Below is an adaptation of a children's book titled *The Fall of Freddie the Leaf*. It is written by Leo Buscaglia. As you read the story, jot down the answer to this question: What are the messages this book wants to teach about death? (If we do not have time in class, you can look at page 6 of this study guide for some thoughts to the answer.)

THE FALL OF FREDDIE THE LEAF

Spring came. Freddie, the leaf, was born on a branch of a tall tree along with hundreds of other leaves. Together they danced in the breeze and played in the sun.

Daniel was the largest leaf and Freddie's best friend. He explained to Freddie that they were part of a tree in a park and about birds, the sun, and the moon.

Freddie loved being a leaf. In summer many people came to the park. "Let's all give them some shade," said Daniel. "Making people happy is part of our purpose in life."

Old people sat under the tree and talked. Children ran around and laughed. It was fun to watch them.

Summer passed and fall came. The leaves turned red and yellow. They were all very beautiful. One day some of the leaves were blown off by a strong cold wind. The leaves became frightened. "What's happening?" they said. "It's the time for leaves to change their home," Daniel said. "Some people call it dying."

"Will we all die?" Freddie asked. "Yes," Daniel answered. "Everything dies." "I won't die!" said Freddie.

But his friends started to fall one after another. Soon the tree was almost bare. “I’m afraid of dying,” Freddie told Daniel. “We’re all afraid of things we don’t know,” Daniel said. “But you were not afraid when spring became summer, or when summer became fall. Changes are natural.”

“Will we return in spring? Freddie asked. “I don’t know, but Life will. Life lasts forever and we’re part of it,” answered Daniel.

“We only fall and die. Why are we here?” Freddie asked again.

Daniel said, “For the friends, the sun and the shade. Remember the breeze, the people, and the colors in fall. Isn’t that enough?”

That afternoon, Daniel fell with a smile. Freddie was the only leaf left. The first snow fell the next morning. The wind came and took Freddie from his branch. It didn’t hurt at all. As he fell, he saw the whole tree for the first time. He remembered Daniel’s words, “Life lasts forever.” Freddie landed on the soft snow. He closed his eyes and went to sleep. In the tree and the ground, there were already plans for new leaves in spring.

Closing Prayer

END TIME

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Jerusalem the Golden

1 Je - ru - sa - lem the gold - en, With milk and
 2 They stand, those halls of Zi - on, All ju - bi -
 3 There is the throne of Da - vid, And there, from
 4 Oh, sweet and bless - ed coun - try, The home of

hon - ey blest— The sight of it re - fresh - es The
 lant with song And bright with man - y an an - gel And
 care re - leased, The shout of them that tri - umph, The
 God's e - lect! Oh, sweet and bless - ed coun - try That

wea - ry and op - pressed. I know not, oh, I
 all the mar - tyr throng. The Prince is ev - er
 song of them that feast; And they who with their
 ea - ger hearts ex - pect! Je - sus, in mer - cy

know not What joys a - wait us there, What ra - dian -
 in them; The day - light is se - rene; The pas - tures
 lead - er Have con - quered in the fight For - ev - er
 bring us To that dear land of rest; You are with

cy of glo - ry, What bliss be - yond com - pare.
 of the bless - ed Are ev - er rich and green.
 and for - ev - er Are clad in robes of white.
 God the Fa - ther And Spir - it ev - er blest.

Text: Bernard of Cluny, 12th century, abr.; tr. John M. Neale, 1818–66, alt.
 Tune: EWING (76 76 D) Alexander C. Ewing, 1830–95, alt.

Answer thoughts to “If there is time” question:

One review of this book states: “This beloved classic from New York Times bestselling author Leo Buscaglia...has helped thousands of children and adults come to grips with life and death.” Yet, what is its message:

- **Simply that death is natural (i.e., “circle of life”).**
- **Death isn’t painful.**
- **No one can say what happens after death.**
- **Don’t fear death without any hope to base that on. This is the basis for the claim that this book “has helped thousands of children and adults come to grips with life and death.” It simply says, don’t look at it as being bad or unnatural. Isn’t this what people have done with sin. If I don’t want to feel guilty for what I do, just don’t consider it bad or unnatural.**
- **Purpose in life is nothing more than making other people happy (really make me happy).**
- **This is the message of secular humanism: that humanity is capable of morality and self-fulfillment without God.**
 - o **Secular humanism is what is taught in our public schools and universities. It is proclaimed from radio and television. It turns man into his own god and denies the existence of the one true God.**

So, if someone states: “God has made death a natural part of life,” we can answer by saying...

- **Death was never part of God’s natural plan in his perfect creation. If you have ever watched someone die, you will realize how unnatural it is.**
- **We were created to live and death came only as a result of sin. But God shaped human history to destroy death!**