



W.o.W. – Word of the Week

Willing! Willing to die? Willing to live?

February 16, 2022

Serious Christians want to understand discipleship. In recent years, I have received an increasing number of questions about discipleship. What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus Christ? What does a faithful follower look like? Many of us Christians are looking inside ourselves and trying to understand the demands of discipleship. But our W.o.W. is not “discipleship.” I am giving context for today’s word. Consider the phrase, “Ready, willing and able.” Willing to do what? Context is everything. Our context is discipleship. Are we willing for Jesus? Willing to die? Willing to live?

Are we willing to live for Jesus? William Stekel said, “The mark of the immature man is he wants to die nobly for a cause. The mark of the mature man is he wants to live humbly for one.”

Many of us have been asked, or have asked ourselves, the question, “Would I be willing to die for Jesus?” While we may not know for certain, in our heart of hearts we want to believe that we would be willing to make the sacrifice. We affirm that we would die for Christ.

Frankly, I wonder whether God's people in the twenty-first century are as willing to die for him as were those in the first century; but I believe that many today would die for him. If there existed a power that could demand that we either deny Christ or die, I believe many would refuse to deny him.

The problem of the church in the twentieth-first century is not whether we will die for Christ, but whether we will live for him.

Much of the energy of our preachers, teachers, and elders is consumed in trying to get people who have already named the name of Jesus to live for him. We have learned to live for ourselves. We think more often about what we can get out of life than about how much of our life we can give. We are willing to serve Jesus if it is not too expensive or does not demand too much time or energy. There are multiplied factors that are part of the explanation. Why do church leaders have to spend so much time trying to get Christians to live for Jesus?

How committed are we in living for Jesus?

Consider how few Christians are active in evangelism. Many in this world will live and die never having heard a word about Jesus because too many of God's people will live and die without ever having spoken a word about Jesus. Evangelism is often left to those who have dedicated their lives to preaching the gospel, yet Jesus clearly defines making disciples as a part of discipleship, a part of living for him. His command to preach the gospel to every creature was given to all followers; it is not limited to preachers. Saving the lost is part of living for Jesus; none can doubt that there are multitudes needing to be saved!

All of God's children must imitate Jesus and make the Father's business their business in order to live for Jesus. It will not enough to hope that the lost will be saved—if someone else saves them. Or to pray that the lost will be saved—and that someone else will save them. If our heart is following Jesus’ heart, we do not want anyone to be lost eternally, and we will find within ourselves the heart to spend more time and our effort to win the lost.

The questions challenge us. Many Christians today live and die without having a part in the salvation of any other person. **Perhaps we would die for him, but are we willing to live for him? Disciples are willing!**