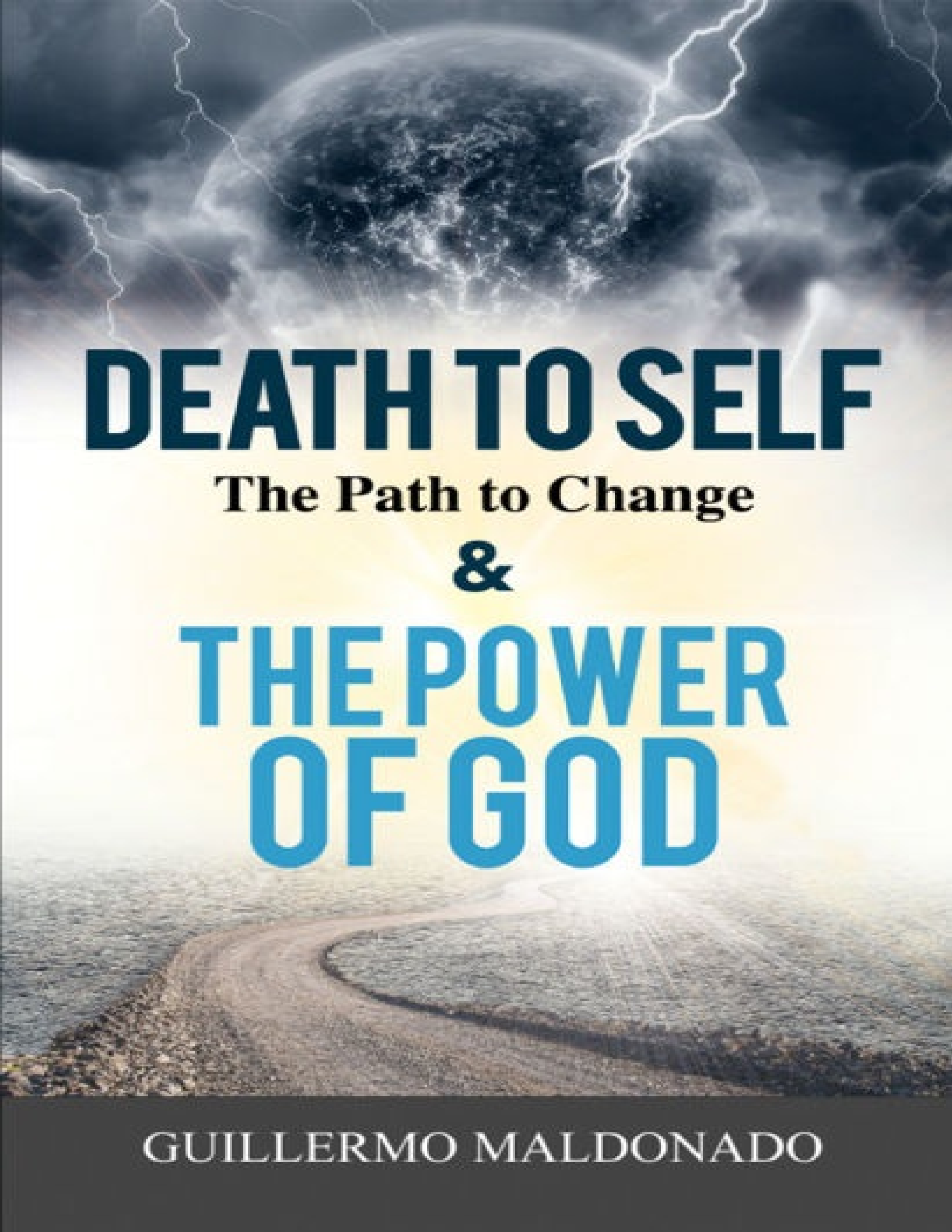




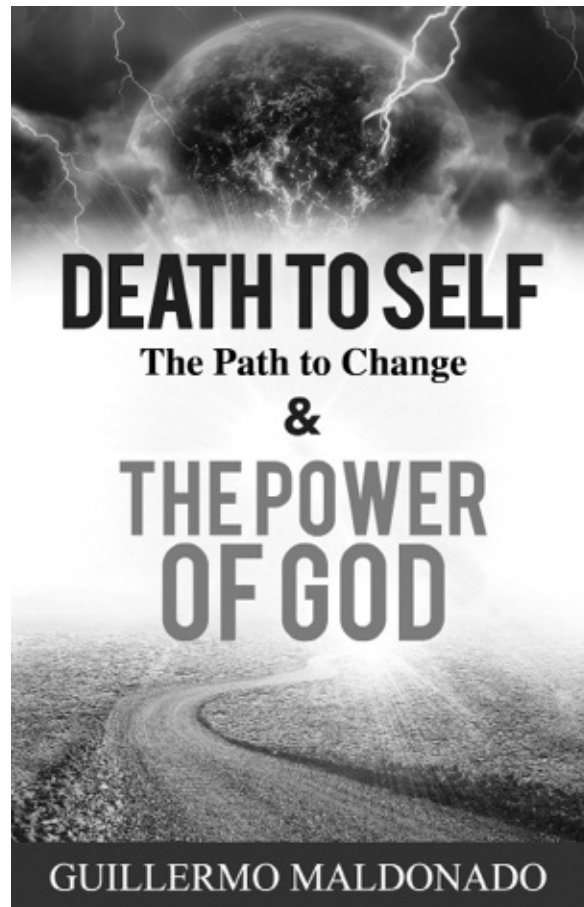
DEATH TO SELF

The Path to Change

&

THE POWER OF GOD

GUILLERMO MALDONADO



Our Mission

Called to bring the supernatural power of God to this generation

Death to Self,

the Path to Change and the Power of God First Edition: October 2015

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Index

Introduction 5

1. The Origin of “Self” 7
 2. The Need of Dying to “Self” 19
 3. Christ, the Great Role Model of Self-Denial 31
 4. The Double Exchange that Took Place at the Cross 37
 5. The Three Stages of Denial, Transformation, and Christ’s Death 46
 6. Consequences and Benefits of Self-Denial 64
 7. Evidence and Signs of a Person Who is Dead to Self 74
 8. Steps to Access Change and the Supernatural Power of God 83
- Conclusion 90
- Prayer to Surrender Your Will and Die to “Self” 93
- Bibliography 95

Introduction

It is of no surprise to anyone that we live in wicked times in which the worth of human life has been lost, where moral integrity has crumbled, and where innocence is trampled in a seemingly cultural way. We live in times where the innocence of children is no longer protected, the moral integrity of our adolescents is not defended, and social responsibility of adults is not expected. What is bad we call “good,” and what is good we call “bad.” We live in an era in which Christianity is persecuted more each day. We have gone from religious freedom and tolerance to a time of open persecution and aggression towards anyone who confesses Christ as the Lord of his or her life. All Christian values today are being questioned and rejected by a society that only seeks not to hear that its conduct is displeasing to God. This generation only wants to hear what aligns with its carnal, selfish, and egocentric desires. It lives for instant gratification of “self” and refuses to accept limitations or restrictions. This is the reason why homosexuality is the right of each individual to decide how he or she chooses to live; why abortion is the right of women to choose what happens to their bodies; why divorce is the right to seek personal happiness; why the love of money is the right of every individual to achieve great accomplishments and to have anything that is desired; why false doctrines in the Church are the result of the right each individual has to interpret the Word of God according personal benefit. We live in a time in which the slogan: “If it is good for you, and it feels good, do it” is practiced regardless of the harm it might cause, the destruction it might leave in its path, or the inheritance of curses it might leave behind. The most important consideration is: “Feeling good.”

Egocentrism is the root of the present moral degradation in our societies.

The Bible says that “...in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!” (2 Timothy 3:1-5). The reason for this bad season is precisely the moral degradation of the human race; moral and ethical corruption and the perversion suffered by the character of the human being, which are

irreversible. The phrase: “*lovers of themselves*,” in Greek, is the word *philautos* (*phileo*: love, kiss)—like lovingly kissing ourselves. This is where depravation of the entire human character begins, because it was not made for selfish love or to turn the “self” into a god or an idol. Therefore, the root of moral depravation is the love of “self”, which means to place one’s self in first place, above anyone else’s need, above the will of God, and above the laws of His Kingdom. This is why the Apostle Paul described them as “*lovers of pleasure*,” which in turn gives them a “*form of godliness*.” In other words, regardless of how good they appear to be, they live to satisfy “self.”

Every person centered on their self is an individual in the process of disintegration.

The Origin of “Self”

In my experience throughout my years in ministry, when it has to do with changing or with receiving greater levels of the power of God, the greatest enemy of Christians is not Satan working directly against them but rather their old nature full of sin, selfishness, and pride—the Bible also calls this the “old man.” The person who confesses Christ as Lord and Savior is born again by the Spirit and his or her name is written in the Book of Life. But from that point forward, that person must begin the process of change and transformation that will allow Christ to grow within. For this to take place the person must endure the process of dying to themselves, through which he or she will surrender the willful nature, the selfish and sinful desires, in order to do the will of God through the fulfillment of the purpose for which he or she was created. This death is what I call “death to self.”

Many Christians still struggle with sinful behaviors and continue to be led by their selfishness in their daily living. They want to release the power of God that Jesus Christ gave them, but they have not learned to travel the path that Jesus traveled. In the beginning of my ministry, I would ask myself the following question: If someone receives healing and deliverance and is blessed by the power of God, how can that person allow his or her miracle to be lost? How can anyone who was rescued from terrible circumstances, where the enemy had held them captive in the world, refuse to sanctify themselves for Him? Why would they continue to steal, lie, commit adultery and immoral acts, witchcraft, or use drugs? Why continue to be prideful, arrogant, and stubborn? Why continue to fight and provoke division, and more? If God is so powerful, why do some Christians never receive the miracles or the change of life that they need? Why are they never able to advance in their spiritual growth, or to develop their calling in Christ, gifts, or potential? As I looked for an answer from God regarding these questions, the Spirit of God led me to the revelation of “death to self.”

In this revelation, I discovered that Jesus is our best role model of dying to ourselves, of total denial to every desire or personal agenda and how this releases greater levels of supernatural power to bring miracles, signs, and wonders to our generation. He is the best example of how we should love the heavenly Father and how to submit our personal will to His will; only this will bring the most glorious manifestations of power that we could ever imagine experiencing in our life and ministry. Knowing this is what inspired me to write this book, because I know, and I recognize, that none of the things that I have been able to accomplish were done in my own strength or could have taken place without death of self—death to my personal desires and to my way of thinking or doing things. I have always had to surrender my will so God’s will could be carried out in my life, my family, and my ministry. The essence of these things has been taking my “self” to the cross of Christ in order to crucify it. You might ask: What exactly is the “self” that I must surrender? Where does it come from?

THE ORIGIN OF “SELF”

In the New Testament we find several names that refer to “self.” These are the most common: “Old man” (Colossians 3:9), the “carnal self” (Romans 7:14), “lust” (James 1:14 - KJ21), “sinful nature” (Romans 7:25 – NIV), “body of sin” (Romans 6:6), “flesh” (John 6:63), or the “body of sins of the flesh” (Colossians 2:11); moreover, some academics label it as the “Adamic nature.” However, I see these as being summed up in one word: “Rebellion.”

When Adam and Eve believed in the deception of the serpent and disobeyed God, they birthed rebellion, sin, and the fallen nature; abandoning, therefore, the eternal life with the Father and paving the way for eternal death with Satan. The Father had ordered Adam to heed the following: *“Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die”* (Genesis 2:17). The instructions were clear, but Satan’s lies took away the authority of the Father. It was there that the seed of what we now call “sinful nature,” “flesh,” or “self” was birthed, but the promise of redemption was already on its way to lead us back to innocence or to the “new man.” “Self” is the seed of Satan or Satan’s child. *“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed...”* (Genesis 3:15). Satan was the first rebellious and disobedient one. This means that “self” is the nature, seed, off-spring, or child of Satan. Jesus established this when the Scribes and Pharisees sought to

take away His authority before the people. He said: *“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it”* (John 8:44).

The “old man” or carnal self was birthed from a lie and deceit of Satan.

The sin of Adam and Eve brought a curse that changed the very essence of human nature. The man and the woman had been created in holiness and absolute purity, in the image and likeness of the Creator. They had the nature and the intrinsic characteristics of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, not only in their external appearance but also in their inner selves. They were one with that divine trinity. The communion that existed between them and God was complete because both dwelled in holiness and shared one spiritual nature or DNA. However, when they accepted the lie and Satan’s temptation, sin changed that nature, and the DNA of mankind became twisted—altered. The sinful nature, rebellion, and hate towards God found in Satan became a part of mankind’s nature. Adam became corrupted physically, emotionally, and spiritually. This is how he transferred sin from generation to generation. Consequently, every human being born on this Earth is birthed with a sinful and corrupt nature. In the Father’s justice, sin brings total separation and death because the wages of sin is death; unpardonable death or eternal separation from the heavenly Father—it was going to be no different for mankind. No one was ever able to revert that perversion in the spiritual DNA of mankind or reverse the sentence; they still can’t. This is why Jesus had to come in the form of a man, to die our death, and to overcome death and Satan: So through His death our sins could be redeemed, and through His resurrection we could get back the eternal life we had lost. This eternal life is reconciliation with the Father and the restoration of our spiritual DNA which is God’s DNA.

Satan’s nature can be summarized in one word: Rebellion. He is the originator of rebellion in heaven and later also on Earth and of everything that produces rebellion. Because of that rebellious nature, *“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way...”* (Isaiah 53:6). The nature of rebellion is nothing more than disobedience; it is the reason why people turn their back on God, why they choose to walk their own path, turn their back on

their Creator, and seek to do their own will; why they seek to satisfy “self,” to please their “sinful nature,” and to govern themselves. Therefore, they behave independently from the Father. They stop having communion with Him, stop being one with Him, and stop carrying out His will on Earth. They become enemies of God and of His Kingdom.

Now, when someone receives Christ, his spirit is born again but his soul remains in the “old nature,” where we find the “old man” or “self” with a rebellious will which is independent and not surrendered; with a mind full of mental strongholds that are contrary to the mind of Christ. The soul must be submitted to a process of change and transformation through which the “self” will experience many deaths. For this to happen, our will must surrender over and over again to the Father, and our mind must be renewed by the Spirit of God. If we understand the aforementioned, then it should be clear that we cannot receive all of the benefits of the finished work of Christ—carried out on the cross—and still remain in sin. Consequently, we will not have access to the power that Christ released on that cross. And without that supernatural power we can neither change nor be transformed, or manifest miracles, signs, or change the reality of sin and the destruction that surrounds us. Without that power, Christianity is pure religion, and we will lack the ability to manifest the Kingdom of God here and now. We need to die to the sinful nature with Christ and be resurrected with Him into a holy life that is pure—a new nature without sin.

PRIDE: THE MAIN ENEMY TO STOP DYING TO “SELF”

When we live according to the “self,” we experience its manifestations in our lives. We exist solely to serve “self,” to provide for “self,” to exalt “self,” and we remain aware of “self”; selfish, egocentric, absorbed in “self,” self-sufficient, interested only in the idolatrous “self” and centered only on the justice according to “self” and on preserving it. We dwell on self-pity and on satisfying the ambition of “self” whose only interest is for “self.” Each of these expressions of the “old man” are rooted in Satan’s pride; the same pride that led the human race to rebellion against the Creator. In Ezekiel, God said this about Satan: *“You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you. By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned... Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor...”* (Ezequiel 28:15-17). Several times in the

Bible, it mentions some of his declarations. For example, *“I will ascend to heaven...,” “I will be like God,” and more.* Such declarations clearly demonstrate the adoration he felt for himself and how his pride had won all the territory in his being.

All sin is based on pride and on “self,” which come from Satan.

To describe the spirit of pride, the Bible refers to a marine animal called Leviathan. The book of Job, chapter 41, describes this demonic spirit that attacks people, families, churches, cities, and even entire countries. *“His rows of scales are his pride, shut up tightly as with a seal; one is so near another that no air can come between them. He beholds every high thing; He is king over all the children of pride”* (Job 41:15-16, 34). According to this description found in Job, we are led to understand that pride entails a solid protection for “self”; one that is difficult to penetrate because, as stated, it is a covering of strong scales placed tightly together. Pride makes people selfish and completely closes them off to anything external, making “self” the only important thing.

The word “selfish” contains a root word and a suffix: “Self” meaning “a person’s essential being” and the suffix “ish” which forms adjectives that denote some type of doctrine, tendency, theory, or system (as in having the qualities or characteristics of). “Selfish” is then the system of the “carnal self” meaning that a person is absorbed in “self”; is full of “self,” disregarding all else. With this we can say that selfishness is worship of “self” or the “old man.” And we know that if anything takes God’s place in our lives, we are practicing idolatry. Pride is the personality of sin, and it constitutes the greatest expression of rebellion in the eyes of God. Satan was thrown from heaven because of his pride or egocentrism. God does not tolerate this in His presence because:

Pride does not allow the person to repent.

Pride never recognizes the error or asks to be forgiven.

Pride never allows for self-confrontation.

Pride never humbles itself (1 Peter 5:5).

Pride leads to mistakes.

Pride twists the truth.

Pride perverts the motivations of the heart.

Pride separates man from the heavenly Father.

Pride is sin and iniquity which cause the perversion of the heart.

As fingers are rooted to the palm of the hand, external sins are rooted to the “self” that has not surrendered to God

Today’s generation is selfish and prideful. It lives centered on self, not sowing good things for future generations. It does not allow anyone or anything to dictate that its conduct is erroneous, that its mentality is leading it down the wrong path, and it refuses to accept being told what to do or how to live. Its only concern is “self” and its demands: *“I want to feel good.” “I want to do what I want to do.” “I want to think as I want, to live as I want, and to be lord of myself.”* Selfishness is the absence of death to “self” meaning that all things exist to please, raise up, praise, and feed “self” in order to keep it alive. It is important to highlight that the “carnal self” is never satisfied. It will always want more, as it perverts the heart with its constant search for self-satisfaction. People get up in the morning wondering how they can be happy. They think: People should pray for me; they should love me; they should feed me. Everything becomes a permanent demand for “self,” and everything has to do with “self.” Selfishness is its personality.

Of course we know that is not the way Christ paved for us. In fact, it is the opposite of that path. However, there are Christians that look for excuses to avoid dying to “self” and to continue satisfying their flesh and never arriving at the point where they will need to die to self. Pride has enthroned “self” in your life disallowing any other king.

James said: *“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed”* (James 1:13-14 KJV). The Latin word for “lust” means “the desire for earthly goods, especially the disordered appetite for dishonest pleasures.” This is practically the same denotation for the word “selfish”; the character of the “carnal self”, which is precisely what pride pretends to protect and is the complete opposite to the character of Christ. This is the reason we need to proceed to die to our self. This is a serious matter! We cannot continue to pretend being Christians and still refuse to die to the selfish nature of sin in order to live for Christ. One of the

most difficult deaths is the death of “self” because it is continuous, and it goes against everything that the world preaches.

While you live on this Earth, you will be required to die to self, daily. And you will die many deaths.

All fears, anxieties, worries, and resentments are rooted in the “self” that has never died; a self that hides behind a spirit of pride, arrogance, and haughtiness. It could be that for an egocentric, in the beginning, sin can be sweet to the taste. This person might think that he or she got away with doing his or her own thing and that this accomplishment is all that matters, but selfishness will eventually cause bile to rise when he or she tries to digest it. When egocentrics try to approach God, they find it impossible to do. When they try to surrender for love, they do not succeed because their god, “self,” does not allow it. We were not created to be the center of the universe or to live according to our own desires. We were created to give of ourselves out of love.

You will never be more in charge of yourself until you completely belong to God.

The place where we most clearly see the chaos caused by refusing to die to “self” and by holding on to pride is in marriage. Coming together in marriage means to join two people into one. For this to take place, both spouses must die to self and begin to think in reference of the other. Therefore there will always be problems when one spouse refuses to die to self; when the selfishness of one, or both, supersedes the love he or she has for the other. The spouse that refuses to die to self might say: “*I am the priority.*” “*What about me?*” “*I am first, second, and third.*” “*I will not be overlooked.*” “*No one will step on me.*” “*I will not be humiliated.*” “*I will not bow down to anyone.*” “*If I am not happy, I will leave and get a divorce.*”

Marriage is where the evidence of the dominion of pride, imposed by “self” on the spouse and on the perfect union that should be established between the two, can be seen. For example, if the husband wants to go on vacation to the seashore but the wife wants to go to the mountains, one will have to give in. but when pride is in charge, there will be arguing, disagreement, and anger. If the husband wants the air conditioner on a low setting but the wife cannot stand it being so cold, the man who loves his wife will give in to meet his wife’s needs. However, if pride is a priority for him, there will be fighting, and the wife will feel unloved. Newborn babies wake up several times in the night crying, who will wake up to

care for the baby? Which of the two will be willing to give up sleep so the other can continue sleeping? Many people fail to understand the true purpose of joining another person in marriage. They enter marriage with the false expectation that all of the needs of their “carnal self” will be met. Hence, when they realize that marriage has nothing to do with satisfying their personal needs and that someone else is demanding attention, a fight to become the center of attention in the relationship begins.

There will always be problems in a marriage when one of the two refuses to die to self.

“My name is Martha Lozano. My husband and I were born in Colombia. We decided to come to the United States the day we lost everything back in our country. Although we were Christians, my husband was unfaithful and loved to party. The change we experienced from having everything to losing everything was so drastic that my husband contemplated suicide, but God used my sister-in-law to prevent this tragedy. I forgave him and suggested that we should start again. And that is what we did by deciding to move to this country.

However, this new place was not all that we had envisioned it would be. I did not feel at home living in Miami. I felt confused, and all I could think about was returning to my country. In a desperate state, one day while listening to a radio program, God broke me. I surrendered my will to the Lord and gave up on my desire to return and began to make every effort to live a good Christian life. A short time later, I was invited to attend King Jesus Ministry, and I loved it so much that even though I had no job, I decided to sign up to serve God there. When they called me, they assigned me to clean the bathrooms! That was a great death for me. Back in my country, I had grown accustomed to having everything and to carry out other types of jobs. Cleaning bathrooms was a very difficult thing for me to do, but I did it. After a while, a position in the Housekeeping Department came up; the night shift. Although it was not precisely what I wanted to do, out of obedience to the Lord, I took the position where I continued to die to self. God changed my character and taught me passion and excellence for all types of jobs, in addition to love and compassion for all people.

This change in me released the miracle in my family. My home was in chaos. My husband and children had turned their backs on the Lord, our finances were in shambles, and I was feeling depressed, empty, frustrated, and lacked identity. But

God began to do something beautiful in me. Every day, at the end of my night shift, I would go into the early-morning prayer held at the church; that gave me peace, tranquility, and trust in God. The change came little by little; I was the first to change. God transformed my character and raised up my faith. He restored my family and raised up the priesthood in my husband. He set him free from the spirit of adultery, gave him the revelation to serve in the church, and showed him the importance of tithing. When my husband began to follow the vision of the church and to tithe, God increased our finances. Our children returned to the Lord, got married, and today they also have Christian homes. It all started when I decided to surrender my will to God and die to my pride, egocentrism, and the “carnal self.”

Now that you understand the origin of “self” and what it produces in your life, in the next chapters you will learn why you need to die to it and what that death involves. Likewise, you will also learn about the benefits produced by that death to your spiritual man and to your ministry or purpose on Earth. Finally, you will see the steps that must be taken to access the supernatural power of God in your life and ministry.

The Need of Dying to “Self”

For as long as I have ministered God’s people, in different areas, I have found that the main problem is not setting the people free but keeping them free; it is not healing them but keeping them healed; it is not releasing the power of God over them but empowering them to help them to do the same works as Christ; it is not enabling them to receive blessings but to remain blessed; it is not pulling them from the world but removing the mentality of the world from them. Many believers, after receiving their healing or being set free, get sick again of the same ailment or become spiritually depressed again in the same areas. Many of them, after receiving Jesus in their hearts, have no idea how to change their lives. They may not even feel the need to change to please the heavenly Father. People want the miracles, the power, the grace, the prosperity, and everything that God has in His hands, but they are unwilling to leave their lifestyles behind.

When I consulted the Lord on this matter, He taught me that the main reason this happens is because Christians receive deliverance, healing or blessings but never change their lifestyles. They want the benefits that come from believing in God without having to pay the price of dying to their old behaviors. They refuse to deny themselves or to “*put off, concerning their former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts*” (Ephesians 4:22). They do not crucify their flesh or sinful nature; therefore, they keep the door open for the enemy to enter and attack their lives and for sin to dominate them. Allow me to warn you: It does not matter how many times you are set free of a spiritual oppression, if you do not close the access door, the demon will always return; the sickness will return, the addictions will return, the sins of the past will return, and the blessing will stop. The key to not losing everything that you have received from the hand of God, which was given to you by the grace and the power of Christ, is death to self—death to your “ego”, your “old nature,” the “old man,” or the “sinful nature.”

The only thing that authorizes Satan to attack our lives is our

disobedience and our lack of death to our old ways.

Apostle John tells us in his gospel that on a certain occasion, Jesus found Himself in the temple before a man whom He had healed; upon recognizing the man, He said to him: “...See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you” (John 5:14). The spiritual realm is real, and we activate it with our obedience—for good—or with our disobedience—for evil. It seems that people in general are always trying to avoid this truth or condition in order to maintain what they have received from God. In this verse, Jesus clearly established that if the man continued in sin, the sickness would return to his body. To accept Jesus in our hearts is to identify with Him in His death and resurrection. There is no way to preserve our old lifestyle and also retain what we have received by His finished work at the cross. We must decide to leave behind sin, and the only way to do this is to die to the “carnal self” given that the wages of sin will always be “death,” and sin is an essential part of “self.” They are inseparable. To eradicate sin out of our lives, we must destroy the source that feeds it or that grants it entrance into our lives; that source is “self.”

Knowing the principles of the spiritual realm, Christ also left us a warning concerning what would happen when we are set free of any demonic influence or oppression: “When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first” (Matthew 12:43-45). This makes it clear that demons occupy a place in our being which they feel belongs to them. We know that space was legally granted to them—be it by our own sin or by the sin of our ancestors. And if we go through inner healing and deliverance if we have applied the work of the cross to the diverse areas in our lives, we are free by the blood of Christ. But in the verse in Matthew, we see that deliverance is not sealed as long as the void left behind by the demons, when they were cast out, remains empty (even if it has been swept and adorned). Note this: The problem is not that the house has been swept and decorated. The problem is that it remained empty. The enemy will return to seek a dwelling place. When he finds it empty, he will try to make himself stronger than before by bringing with him seven spirits that are worse than him in order to claim that space, definitively, and operate from there. The reason for this is

that they will always seek to dwell in the place they consider “home.” This is when the believer must assume the responsibility of allowing Christ to become Lord over all things and to take over that space. The believer that has not died to the “carnal self” has not given lordship of that area of his or her life to Christ. Sooner or later, the oppression will return.

Christ will only be Lord of the areas that you surrender to Him.

One thing is certain: To remain free of all demonic influence, as well as to advance in our path to reach the likeness of Christ, we must go through a process of death to self. We must die with Jesus in order to also be resurrected together with Him. There is no other way to reach everything that God has planned for us to receive on this Earth, to manifest His glory here, and to be relevant in the expansion of the Kingdom.

I feel that the Holy Spirit led me to write this book because many Christians know that they have to die with Christ, but they have not fully understood to what, how, or what it means to “die.” In my experience, I can say that nothing of what God has done in my life, or through me, has taken place without a continuous death of that “old man.” I have had to die, over and over again, to self and to many things in order to see new levels of anointing, power, and glory of God, not only in my family but in my ministry as well. None of the things that the Lord has given me have come from living an easy, comfortable, or convenient gospel for my flesh. Being a “living sacrifice” is a lifestyle for me. In the beginning of my ministry, I would travel as an evangelist to different countries throughout Latin America. Since I still worked in a secular job, what I did was to use my vacation time to travel and preach the Gospel wherever God would send me. I even traveled while my wife was pregnant; this was a true sacrifice for both of us. When we started the church, I used all of our savings to pay for the first months of rent of the church. Though pregnant with our second son, my wife worked at night, cleaning offices in order to pay for the radio program we used to preach the Gospel throughout the city. In different ways, today we continue to present ourselves as a living sacrifice.

THE TRUE MEANING OF DYING TO SELF

The word “sacrifice” is not preached or taught in today’s society; neither is “commitment” or the phrase “death to self.” Everything is based on whether people want to or can, if it is not uncomfortable, if it does not offend, if there is nothing to lose or change in the way we live, or on how we think or act. A gospel of tolerance, not change or even sacrifice, is preached. But the unshakeable truth is that we cannot have the supernatural power that Christ conquered at the cross without a death because, *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me...”* (Galatians 2:20). I am not talking about a physical death; that one was already paid by Jesus Christ. I am talking about sacrifice; not the sacrifice that implies self-inflicting pain or doing long pilgrimages to some far away land but to present spiritual sacrifices, as priests: Sacrifices of worship, praise, prayer, time, money, and of presenting our bodies and renouncing all sin (1 Peter 1:5). Furthermore, I also want to clarify that sacrifices are not made to win God’s favor but to legally release His supernatural power on the earth.

WHY WE BEHAVE THE WAY WE DO

Let us examine our lives. Why are we easily angered? Because someone has messed with our “self.” Why do we lie? Because we think that lying is advantageous for “self” because our “self” resists losing, refuses to be put to shame, or to renounce anything. If we feel that “self” will lose something, that it will look bad, or that it will have to get out of its comfort zone, we lie. Why are we dishonest? For the same reason: Because our lust preserves the life of the selfish and demanding “self.” Why are we impure and immoral? Because we prioritize pleasure of “self” above all else. Why do we feel envy and jealousy? Because someone beat our “self” and obtained what we thought was rightfully ours; this is because “self” will never be satisfied with what it has. It will always want more—it wants what it wants—what does not belong to it and more. Self accumulates and collects, never reaching a desired objective because its appetite is insatiable and compulsive.

Dying to the old you means to deny yourself, every day, to the carnal, selfish, worldly, and rebellious self; the self that wants only what is convenient to its insatiable appetite for this world’s pleasures; the self that seeks temporal

satisfaction and self-exaltation; the self that wants to sleep longer and pray less; to eat more and fast less; to pervert more and not sanctify itself; to sin more and not renounce to sin; that “self” is rebellious to God and refuses to surrender to His lordship (this is contrary to the Gospel of Christ) and makes no effort in establishing the Kingdom of God on Earth. This is the “self” that has to die! As a result of the lack of this death in believers and Christians leaders today, the Church has no power and the blessings it gains are eventually lost. Many leaders today prioritize their well-being, their paycheck at the end of the month, their position, the acceptance of the people and of society around them. They forget, or are afraid, to preach death to the many things that separate believers from the true path taught by Christ. One thing is certain: Without death there is no change, transformation, or supernatural power.

EXAMPLES OF THE MANIFESTATION OF SELFISHNESS IN THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS

The Disciples of Christ experienced situations in which their “self” manifested, and Christ always led them to die. If we were to highlight a few of these situations, here are some examples:

Disciple against disciple (Luke 9:46): The Disciples of Jesus fought amongst themselves over who would be the greatest. These men, chosen by the Messiah, were still in the process of understanding why they had been called. They still believed or expected their “carnal self” to receive some type of reward in the matter; some position in the hierarchy high above the others.

Also, they would argue with disciples that were not in their group (Luke 9:49) prohibiting them from doing the same as they were doing. Their “ego” was not willing to see anyone else to release the power that Jesus had imparted into them. Their vision was not on extending the Kingdom but on satisfying their ego.

Furthermore, we see Jesus’ Disciples having discussions concerning race against race, or racism, of Jews against Samaritans (Luke 9:54), wanting revenge for the offense of not receiving Him. The Samaritan did not want to receive them because they were Jews, and so they asked Jesus if they could command fire from heaven to consume the Samaritans. Jesus

answered them by saying something wonderful: *“You do not know what manner of spirit you are of.”*

Finally, we see the disciples unsure and seeking their personal comfort (Luke 9:59-62). Jesus called them to follow Him and announce the Kingdom, and they gave excuses because they could not die to their selfishness—their carnal self. Believers often experience the same thing. They want to gain a place of preeminence in the church. Their ego demands to be greater among their brothers and sisters, but they do not understand what their calling really is. They reject other believers who lack the power, the revelation, the church, or the impact they have on others. They want those who reject them to be punished, but when it comes to dying to “self” to extend the Kingdom, they are indecisive and firmly hold on to what is comfortable.

People who want Christ while still trying to preserve what is convenient to them, their way of doing things, their ideas and pleasures, will never get anywhere because Christ and convenience of “self” are incompatible. The Disciples of Jesus were still thinking egocentrically; the way a carnal being thinks. They were focused on saving themselves, on positions or winning competitions of “ego” but never on dying to the old man. These are manifestations of the “carnal self” that has yet to die. In Christ’s ministry, everything smells like sacrifice. If we want to be like Him and carry out His will, our existence will also smell like a sacrifice. One reason why people do not commit to God is because they do not want to die to their selfishness.

Selfishness will always be the greatest obstacle to doing God’s will and committing to Him.

The Son of God did not hesitate in telling them what they needed to do: “*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me*” (Luke 9:23). Self-denial means to say “no” to the things we want, think, or feel and saying “yes” to what God wants, feels, and thinks. It means to say “yes” to His will each time and in any situation and condition. Taking up the cross is a daily sacrifice to be made by the “old man”; our flesh. What we know for certain is that we must let go of the soulish life, with its egocentric desires, in order to gain His life, the eternal one, the one that is with Him on Earth as it is in Heaven because “*He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it*” (Matthew 10:39). There are different Greek words that are translated as “life”: *Bios* (G979) which is physical life; *psyche* (G5590) which is the life of the soul (where the will, mind, and emotions reside); and *zoe* (G2222) which is the life of the Spirit. What Christ is telling us is: “If you love your psyche, or life of the soul—what you think, feel, and want—then you will die or lose your *zoe*, or life of the spirit. But if you reject it, you will live the *zoe* life which is eternity with God”. We cannot live the life of the soul and the life of resurrection at the same time. It is impossible for both to manifest in the same person at the same time. One has to die for the other one to live. To find the full life in Christ, we must lose the natural life—of the soul. Everything this world calls “life” is short-lived; its glory is temporal, corrupt, vain, lacking the capacity to be self-sustained. However, if we die to it, we will reach new levels of true life in Christ which is eternal—whose glory belongs to God—incorruptible, holy,

and self-sustained because its source is never ending.

In the Kingdom, death to self is not an option but an inescapable condition to remain in eternal life.

If we regard this as a mandate and not as an option, we cannot stop preaching it, announcing it, and demanding it of the believers, so they can advance in their growth and spiritual maturity. Otherwise, the commitment, fire, and supernatural power will never come to change homes, neighborhoods, cities, and nations to establish the Kingdom of God and His righteousness on Earth.

Apostle Paul also taught about this death when he would write to the believers of the Church in Corinth saying: *“I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.”* (1 Corinthians 15:31). Paul was not referring to a physical death but to death of the “old man”; the Adamic man, the flesh, the carnal self, or ego. In other words, he was referring to everything that is corruptible and mortal. Dying to “self” means to renounce the old habits, the corrupt desires, the bad thoughts, the feelings of anger, wrath, resentment, bitterness which are proper of the demonic DNA inherited through sin. Death to “self” means to renounce our stubborn and selfish will, our personal ambitions, the love of money, and relationships that replace God. It means to surrender the rebellious will against the Father, pride, and living for self. Death to our old ways also means to be empty of ourselves and to let go of the past, jealousy, envy, vengeful thoughts, and unforgiveness in order to allow Christ to live through us, with His sanctified, pure nature and the fruit of the Spirit. This, so living for love and loyalty to the Father and to the life of the Spirit can rise in us. We do this knowing that God knows our desires and that He wants to fulfill them so we can be happy in Him.

I believe it is worth clarifying that the death we have been talking about here refers to more than what was just discussed in the previous paragraph. It goes beyond that, including also death to things that are not apparently bad but that can interrupt the fulfillment of the divine purpose in us. These things may be good but they come between us and the heavenly Father, His love, His forgiveness, His Kingdom, His plan for our lives, and His purpose in creating us. Death to self means to surrender our will in order to see the will of God carried out regardless of the price we must pay or how many deaths we will have to endure. It means to die to the things that we want to do, even if it is good to do it,

in order to carry out what He wants, which is always the best option. We do this because of the revelation of His omniscience and sovereignty because *“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts”* (Isaiah 55:9).

If we love a sport more than we love God, that is the sacrifice He will demand of us. There is nothing wrong with loving or practicing a sport, but if said sport is a priority above God’s plans or it interferes in any way with them, we will have to die to something good to live in the eternal. This reminds me of the testimony of a young man, the son of pastors in Paraguay, and my spiritual children. He told me that he had to die to his greatest love, tennis, to follow the call of God in his life and how this led him to become a great influence in his territory:

“Since I was a child, I have attended church with my parents who are also pastors. I would participate in the worship team but did not really feel love for God. I attended the church services out of tradition. Church was the place where I met with my friends, and that was it! The only thing that really interested me was playing tennis. It was my passion! Tennis was my life! I played well and even participated in international championships. One day, I heard God tell me that He had greater things for me to do than play tennis. I knew that God was talking to me, but I did not heed His words. I wanted to continue in the world of sports because it was where I felt good. After all, I was not doing anything bad. I was not addicted to anything or hanging out with bad people.”

“One day, after a tournament, my hip began to hurt a lot, and I had to stop playing. The diagnosis of the doctors was that I had a rare disease called Epiphysis. They told me that the top of the femur would move out of place causing my legs to become unbalanced. The doctors also said I would never walk again without the aid of crutches, and the only solution was surgery which would require three pins to be placed in the hip. When faced with this situation, I began to get close to Jesus, wholeheartedly. Lying in bed unable to move much, I began to seek His face, to read the Bible, and to pray. One day I said to God: ‘Lord, I want you to heal me. If you do it, I will surrender my tennis career and will dedicate my life to serving You. I will completely surrender to you.’” I was sincere. However, after three months, I was still unable to walk. I continued to trust in Him because I was certain that He would heal me. In the meantime, the doctors would call my father and family members to try and convince them to bring me to the hospital to get the surgery. According to them, if I didn’t get the surgery soon, the situation would deteriorate. But I would say to them: ‘I will not get the surgery. God will heal me.’ One night, my father came into my bedroom, and we both decided to take a leap of faith. Even though I could not walk, I stopped using the crutches. We broke and threw away the crutches and by faith, I began to walk. My hip hurt a lot the first week because one of my legs was already three centimeters shorter than the other, but I kept going—I did not doubt God but continued to trust that He would heal me. Two weeks later, I woke up and started walking normally. I did not feel any pain; my leg had grown! I was able to walk like a normal person! In fact, now I can run and jump without a problem. When this happened, I dedicated my life to keeping my side of the covenant I had made with God. I surrendered my love and passion for tennis to

Him and totally submerged myself into my father's church. When I did this, a prophecy that Apostle Maldonado had given me was activated. The prophecy said that the church would triple in size and the revival would come through the youth. Before all of this, there were maybe twenty young people in the church. Six months after dying to self, we were three hundred. Where before there was no move of the supernatural power of God, now we see powerful and amazing miracles take place. Tennis was not a bad activity to practice, but if I had not died to it I would never have seen the purpose of God carried out in my life."

Christ, the Great Role Model of Self-Denial

Something that has not been understood in many Christian institutes and universities is the subject of divinity and the humanity of Christ. We know, and it is clear, that Jesus was one hundred percent God and one hundred percent Man, but where doubt comes in is in how He did what He did while on Earth—because He was a man but still did miracles. He was a Man but forgave sin, resurrected the dead, and commanded nature and it obeyed Him. To eliminate any doubt, you should know that Jesus was and is God, but He did not operate on this earth as such but as a man that was anointed by the Holy Spirit. He always operated from His humanity or essence of a man. In everything, Christ had to die to His deity and deny Himself so the will of the Father could be carried out in Him, though He was a human being. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit. He came to exist through a righteous, pure, sinless, clean nature, but He was formed in the womb of a woman, a descendant of Adam, who was pleasing to the Lord but who was also under the curse of Eden. Because He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, His DNA did not come from Adam but from the heavenly Father; the same one who had created Adam in His image and likeness, in innocence and without sin. This is why we understand that Christ is the second Adam who came to return the human race to its original divine design. If this is true, why did Jesus have to die? For what did a man without sin have to die?

Christ had to die to the fact that He was God almighty.

The great death that Christ had to endure was the knowledge of being God but having to function as a Man: "Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it

robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men” (Philippians 2:6-7). Can you imagine how it was for Jesus to exit his heavenly realm—where He was omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent—and come into this earthly dimension in a cursed state where He would be limited by time, space, and matter and receive the revelation to ascend into the supernatural realm as a Man? Can you imagine what it meant to have to subject Himself to the knowledge and limited abilities of a fallen race? To come from the Holy of Holies where He was constantly worshipped to descend onto a world in darkness that was contaminated with iniquity, wickedness, and sin in which many wanted to kill Him from birth and where He was rejected in many ways—humiliated, rejected, and dishonored. The King who deserves eternal worship left His glory behind and all of His privileges, rights, and attributes as God and King to come and become equal to us in our mortal condition. He took upon Himself the sinful nature of Adam, so He could be the perfect sacrifice that would buy our redemption.

As it happened to Adam and Eve—they were tempted by Satan—Jesus was also tempted. He had no privileges. What was His temptation? The greatest temptation Jesus had was to reject using His glory or acting as God. However, He overcame that temptation each time because had He not done so, He would not have been able to die for us on the cross. Had He come as God, His fight would have been unfair. His sacrifice would not have been valid. While in the desert, Satan tempted Him three times when He was the most vulnerable and when it was probable that He would give in to the temptation. Jesus had been led by the Holy Spirit into the desert and had fasted for forty days. In this state of loneliness and hunger, Satan came to offer Him food by saying: *“If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread”* (Matthew 4:3). But Jesus rebuked him and did not give in. Since satisfying His physical hunger was not a strong enough temptation, the devil tempted Jesus to manifest His power and prove His deity: *“If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’ and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up...”* (Matthew 4:6).

Again, Jesus rebuked him and did not give in to the temptation of demonstrating His deity and His power. Finally, Satan tempted the Messiah with dominions and revealed to Him what he truly wanted from Him: His worship. With this end,

“Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me” (Matthew 4:8-9). “Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve” (Matthew 4:10). On each of these occasions, Jesus Christ denied Himself. He did not activate His deity to demonstrate to the tempter who He was. The most important thing to note here is that at the end of the temptation the Father sent Him angels to serve Him in the middle of the desert. Jesus refused to negotiate any of His needs with Satan. He waited for His Father’s provision, and the Father provided, honoring His loyalty, faith, and obedience.

Christ demonstrated that temptation is not the basis for demonstrating the supernatural power of God.

While Jesus was on Earth, the enemy always sought to tempt Him in the area of His identity as a Son of God—the second person in the Deity. But each time he said: “*If You are the Son of God...*” Jesus did not answer that He was because He had to die to self as such. He overcame the temptation of telling Satan, in his face, who He truly was because to Christ, the most important thing was to maintain His identity and to live on Earth as the Son of Man and not to demonstrate that He was God. Had He responded saying who He was, He would have given in to the temptation, and the plan of salvation would have failed because He would have boasted of His attributes and rights of His divine majesty. It was easy for Christ to change stones into bread because He had the power to do it, but that was not His purpose.

Can you imagine what it must have felt like to have your worst enemy come and challenge your identity, and you have to deny yourself three times and not react? Jesus knew what He had come to do, what His purpose and destiny were. But He was also clear on the time that each needed to take place. Christ had come to dethrone Satan. He had him in front of Him, challenging and provoking Him. But He knew that neither the time nor the way to defeat him had arrived. It would have been very easy for Jesus to get rid of him by imposing His deity. One gesture and the entire heavenly army would have come to fulfill His orders. However, He faced and rebuked Satan from His position as man, not as God. This kept Him in righteousness before the Father. Jesus did not want to demonstrate anything to Satan. He was not interested in winning any battle, for He knew that He had been born for greater things. Jesus had been born to be the Man who would inflict upon Satan an irrevocable, eternal, total, and irreversible defeat, in the timing and in the way of God the Father.

Sometimes, Christians refuse to die to self because they ignore their purpose on this Earth. They do not know what is on the other side of that death. They do not realize the supernatural power that is released when they die to “self.” They easily surrender to temptations because their eyes continue to be on human power, on earthly dominion, on the feeding of the flesh, on protecting the carnal self, on recognition, status, and social position of any type. To die, over and over again, we need a revelation of the purpose and destiny that God has for each of us.

A principle in which Jesus operated as a Man was self-denial. He did not hold anything back; instead, He completely surrendered.

Perhaps you are wondering how Jesus did miracles, signs, and wonders. The answer holds the wonder of what He brought and taught us. Christ did these things from His humanity, operating as a man anointed by the Holy Spirit. Like me, you or any other believer can do it, too, by the anointing of the same Spirit. Jesus did everything that Adam could do before falling to sin. He walked on water, rebuked the wind, calmed the storm, multiplied the bread and fishes, took money out of the mouth of a fish, and more. He had dominion over the elements of nature and over Satan and all of his works. This means that any believer anointed by the Holy Spirit can manifest miracles and defeat the enemy without operating in the glory of God: any believer is a mere man or woman: A mother, father, or child; a student, business person, worker, or professional; a housewife, politician, governor, and so forth. But the condition remains the same: Die to the Adamic nature.

At the end of His ministry, we see that Jesus again had to overcome the temptation of using His deity. He had to die His last death or deny Himself one last time. The thief that was crucified by His side on Golgotha challenged Him to save Himself and save them too (Luke 23:39). But He denied Himself and denied using His divine attributes. It would have been easy for Him, as God, to destroy everyone and get Himself off the cross, but He did not do it. That was His continual death until the very last minute! He had the power to do it. He could get off the cross and destroy those who had led Him there. Yet, He abstained, denied Himself, and died the death each of us should have died in order to give us His eternal life. He knew that to completely carry out the Father’s mission, He had to humble Himself and shed the last drop of His blood on that cross. He knew that to open the door of resurrection for us, He had to die. And in absolute

obedience to the Father, He took our place and... died. Now it is our turn to die for Him.

The Double Exchange that Took Place at the Cross

In every kingdom, nation, or country there are laws. The Kingdom also has laws, one being the Law of Exchange. This means that something of God comes to us, while something of us goes to Him. On the cross, Christ died His last and cruelest death. But as I said before, He understood why He did what He did. The redeeming Messiah was activating a new covenant which gave way for a supernatural exchange. It was there where our DNA of sin was exchanged for His DNA—holy and without stain. As the Head, the Lord is always the one to initiate things; hence, when He noticed the sin of man in Eden, He took the initiative and provided the perfect sacrifice that would pay for our rescue or redemption. When He initiates something, we must respond. On the cross, Jesus offered His life and dignity. He carried our sins, rebellion, sickness, and misery to give us His forgiveness, holiness, healing, and prosperity. He died so we could live; there, this supernatural exchange took place. However, at the cross, a second exchange also took place, and this exchange is the least preached in the Church today. How does this exchange work?

Death on the Cross: A Double-Sided Road The death on the cross operates under the Law of Exchange where we see a double-sided road that includes the following:

First road: Christ died for us by taking our place on the cross.

With this sacrifice, He made possible the miracle of redemption of the human race because there, One paid for all. *“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all...”* (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

Second road: To complete the Exchange, now we die for Him.

This death implies carrying this fallen nature to the cross by surrendering our will and dying to “self” so He can live in us and through us. *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service”* (Romans 12:1).

The second road is the one I want to cover in this chapter. Since death to self is not a unique event but a continuous and progressive one, it is safe to say that we will receive from God as much as we surrender of ourselves to Him. Which part of ourselves has to die for Christ to live? This part is our carnal self; our sinful nature; the selfish, prideful, and stubborn self. In other words, He will give us of Himself as much as we give to Him in death and sacrifice. How much He lives in us will depend on how much of our selfish nature dies. We are like vessels or recipients that cannot be filled with two different substances at the same time. As we are emptied of one, we will receive of the other. This is why Apostle John said: *“He must increase, but I must decrease”* (John 3:30).

The measure that we have of God will be the measure that we have died to the “old man.”

THE EXCHANGE OF OUR DEATH FOR THE LIFE OF CHRIST RELEASES THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION

No human being could or can die in the place of Jesus because that type of death could only be endured by Him—the only Man without sin. But we can die for Christ, *“That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death”* (Philippians 3:10). The increase of power always depends on a death. After the death of Christ, animal sacrifices are no longer acceptable in the Kingdom, so to be endowed with the power of the Holy Spirit, every new increase of power will always demand a living sacrifice. This sacrifice is the death of the carnal self; of our selfishness, arrogance, pride, egocentrism, comfort, convenience, security, mentality, of doing what we feel like doing, and so forth. If we want to see the Kingdom established, if we want to see creative miracles, deliverance from bondage in people, churches, cities, and whole nations, if we want to manifest the supernatural power of God in massive levels, we will need greater levels of dying to self.

Until our death for Him equals His death for us, we will not have access to the total power of resurrection.

If Christ had to die to His rights and privileges as God, as King of the Universe, if He followed His process of death in the Jordan, in the Mount of Transfiguration, and in Gethsemane, what do we have to die for? Having said this, I want to highlight that there is no limit to what we can surrender daily on the cross. Each of us know what we struggle with on a daily basis. We know what we face and what keeps us from flowing in greater dimensions of the supernatural power of God. In fact, I feel confident in saying that each of us knows what we should die to because we can discern it. Could it be that you have to die to self-pity, to feeling like a victim or wanting to take the place of a victim in any tough situation? You might have to die to sexual desires outside of marriage or, if you are single, do you need to die to the sexual temptation of sexual fornication or immorality continually offered by the world? Do you have to die to anger even when you have the right to get angry? Do you have to die to irate reactions where the only thing that matters is “self” forgetting the rest? Do you have to renounce fear, unforgiveness, resentment, bitterness, and offenses or betrayals you have

experienced? Or perhaps you have to die to the love of money and personal and selfish ambitions which have nothing to do with what God needs of you? Perhaps you have to die to your way of doing things, to what you have learned from others, or to the financial system of this world in order to prosper God's way? Could it be that you have to die to the belief that you can continue sinning because the grace of Christ justifies everything? Perhaps you have to renounce something that is not necessarily bad but that it takes you away from the purpose that brought you into this world? You and I both know what each of us should die to each day because the Holy Spirit shows us all the sacrifice that God demands of us in order to release greater levels of power.

The cross becomes a sign and evidence of our surrender to God.

Christians today tend to preach to the world only one side of the cross: Christ died for us... and that's it! This is the message of salvation in which He takes our place; from there we simply wait the rest of our lives on Earth until we get to heaven—to streets of gold and crystal seas. Everything seems to indicate that while we are on Earth there is not much to do except to pray, worship, and maybe announce the Gospel of salvation to others. But we do not preach the other side of the cross which is the one in which we must die in order for Christ to live in us. This revelation also becomes a necessity when we understand that our own purpose on Earth demands much more than merely waiting for Him to return on a cloud for His bride, the Church.

If we accept both sides of the cross, where an exchange of lives takes place, it becomes easier to understand the three mandates that included the commission of Christ: *“And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”* (Mark 16:15) and *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...”* (Matthew 28:19).

1. The Lord asks that we bring people to salvation. This is the first death.
2. He tells us to baptize everyone who confesses Jesus as their Lord and Savior. This is the second death.

The third mandate was for us to make disciples of those believers. And this constitutes the third death of those who have received *“the right to become children of God”* (John 1:12).

You need to know for who and why you should die because if you don't know it, you will never do it.

A fundamental fact that we should understand concerning the death that Christ demands of us is for whom we are dying. No one can operate the power of God without first discerning the participation of the suffering of Christ. His cross was the place that evidenced or demonstrated His maturity because it required a mature person to be willing to completely die to self.

Maturity and change are based on the law of the double exchange that took place at the cross.

Likewise, for the believer, the cross is a sign of spiritual maturity. We can then say that maturity is the state reached after we understand the fact that our destiny is to die like Christ died, so He can live in us and be able to manifest His glory and Kingdom on this Earth. Do we have enough maturity to understand that death is inevitable to extend the Kingdom and participate in the life of Christ? Do we have the spiritual maturity required to joyfully embrace that death knowing that,

“...to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21)? “Jesus said to His disciples:

‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me’ (Matthew 16:24).

Self-denial is a sign of the participation in the suffering of Christ and the requisite to operate in the power of His resurrection.

“Taking up the cross” represents the willingness to die or to deny one’s self. *“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things” (Philippians 3:18-19).* Believers that do not die to self are enemies of the cross. They refuse to follow Christ to Gethsemane and later to Golgotha. They want to enjoy the benefits of His sacrifice but refuse to participate of His suffering.

Continual denial leads to knowing that we no longer live but Christ lives.

No one knows when the darkest hour of one’s life can come, and we must die to see God at work. The following is the greatest financial testimony that I have seen God do in my years in ministry. But to see it take place, this South African businessman, Lazarus Zim, had to experience the worst moment of his life. I met him when he was bankrupt. He had lost everything: His economy and business had been literally devastated. In his words, he shared this testimony:

“I was the owner and Chief Executive Officer of some of the greatest mining companies and Platinum in South Africa. I had great wealth, a wife, a family, and two beautiful children. Everything was going well for us. We lived a prosperous

life, had private jets, helicopters, and many properties.

In 2008, everything changed when the economy collapsed affecting every financial sector in the country. The first things we lost were the building where we had the headquarters of our business and our jets. Later, one business after the other went bankrupt. By 2012, we had lost the mining companies. The losses were so great that it reached the newspaper headlines and different means of mass communication. We had to deal with really bad press. Our friends disappeared and stopped answering our phone calls. I remember that days would pass without receiving a telephone call. I even thought there was a problem with the telephone lines. No one, not my family, business associates, or friends... no one called us! We suffered rejection and abandonment by everyone—we had to die to so much during that time.

My wife and my daughter had to start working in the business to try to keep it afloat. They also prayed, fasted, read books, and watched different programs of Christian ministries seeking answers; in the years that followed, the situation only got worse. One night, in 2014, I turned on the television set and saw the end of a program hosted by Apostle Guillermo Maldonado: “The Supernatural Now.” I was only able to hear the last five minutes of his teaching about demonstrating the supernatural power of God which is active today. That is when I realized what I needed. From that day, and every day, I continued to watch the preachings of the Apostle on YouTube, and I bought his book, *How to Walk in the Supernatural Power of God*. I watched the services via Internet with my family. At the beginning of 2015, a congregational fast was announced, and I felt the need to travel thirty hours to Miami to bring an offering and join the fast. My wife advised me not to tell anyone our story, not to try and get any help from anyone, but simply to rely and depend on the Lord to grant me a divine appointment with the Apostle. I gathered the money I needed and took off. I arrived in Miami and stayed for two weeks. I attended the services and one Sunday, I saw the apostle, and he said to me: “Son, welcome. This is your home.” No one presented us; it just happened. He gifted me his books, prayed for me, gave me his personal phone number, and invited me to return the following month to the School of the Fivefold Ministry. During that time, I met with him once, and I presented him with my business contracts. Up to that moment, each time I tried to start a new business line, just before closing the deal, everything would fall through, and the business was lost. The apostle looked at them and

said: 'Something here is not right. I see a black shadow over these. There is a curse in operation. Each time you try to do something, you fail. This is generational.' He asked me if the same thing had happened to my ancestors, and I answered affirmatively. My grandfather had accumulated great wealth and fame and then he, too, lost it all.

The apostle began to pray for me and broke the generational curse of failure, delay, and poverty that was in operation over my life. I returned to South Africa and, suddenly, the contract that had been delayed was finally finalized. The most amazing thing was that today, in my country, the people still do not understand what happened. My name is Lazaro, and the media reported a rise in my business with headlines such as: "Lazaro has resurrected." Now I am the principal investor of one of four mayor companies of platinum in the world, valued at two billion dollars. At this moment, I am sowing my earnings into the Kingdom. My family and I experienced a very hard time in which we had to die to many things, among which I can add my pride and ego. But we also had to die to the trust and confidence we had in men and on the natural economic system. The curse that had operated over my family for generations was broken!"

The Three Stages of Denial, Transformation and Christ's Death

Today, different gospels are being preached that supplant the message that Jesus Christ told us to preach. In this day and age, the self-help gospel (which teaches many universal Christian principles—functioning by merely applying it—has replaced the true Gospel. But without the cross or death to “self,” it does not have the life of God. When we live Christianity without the cross, what we have is a religion that rejects Christ and His ways; this is no more than religion, custom, and tradition that separates us more each day from the heavenly Father. The Christians that follow this self-help gospel are unwilling to follow in the Teacher's footsteps. In fact, they use Christ to service their needs. How can we call ourselves Christians if we do not follow Christ in all things? We are very far from the Truth when dying to the “carnal self” is not part of our Gospel! In Christ, our life and confession should be: *“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”* (Galatians 2:20).

This chapter is important for you to understand that life, or walking with Christ, goes beyond merely dying to the “old man” and being born again; other deaths must come after this, which we have to endure to reach our destiny and the fulfillment of the purpose that led God to create us in this generation. The process of denial, in Christ, was daily, but we can summarize it in a process that consists of three stages which are the ones that stand out the most—just like His resurrection also required three stages; three days. These three stages are: Denial, transformation, and death. Let us take a look at each one in more detail.

1. The first stage was Christ’s self-denial in the Jordan.

“When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, “You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased” (Luke 3:21-22). The word “Jordan” means to “descend”; it represents death to “self”; death to the life that was led in order to dedicate yourself to the purpose that the Father gave you when He sent you to Earth. Jordan is where Jesus died to self. There are places you will always remember because they marked the instant you experienced death to self; places where you had to overcome great self-denial to begin walking in the path to the fulfillment of your purpose.

Jesus was a sacrifice for His Father in each death that He endured. We know this because the Bible calls Him the “Lamb of God.” In Jewish culture, a lamb is always a symbol of sacrifice. Jesus was *“The Lamb who was slain”* (Revelation 5:12). In this first stage, He died to the life that He had led up to that moment. We also have to become a living sacrifice for our God. This is the only way we will receive the supernatural power to do everything that He has called us to do and carry forth blessings to our generations.

In the Kingdom there are no shortcuts to the supernatural power. Death to “self” is the only legal path God offers.

Prophetically speaking, Jordan represents:

A portal to heaven

A place of miracles

The place where the next generation begins

A place of transition

A place for new beginnings

The place where the identity as children is revealed

A place of transformation

A place of maturity

THE MOTIVES THAT LED JESUS TO THE JORDAN LITTLE IS KNOWN ABOUT THE LIFE OF CHRIST DURING THE YEARS BETWEEN HIS BIRTH AND THE BEGINNING OF HIS MINISTRY. ALL WE KNOW ABOUT JESUS IS WHEN HIS BIRTH TOOK PLACE, THEN WHEN HE WAS TWELVE YEARS OLD ARGUING THE REVELATION WITH THE TEACHERS OF THE LAW, AND THEN, AT THIRTY YEARS OLD WHEN HE APPEARED IN A WEDDING WHERE HE TURNED WATER INTO WINE AND LATER WENT TO THE JORDAN TO BE BAPTIZED. WHERE WAS HE DURING THOSE YEARS? WHAT DID HE DO? HOW DID HE PREPARE HIMSELF FOR MINISTRY? HOW WAS HIS MINISTRY REVEALED? WE KNOW THAT HE WORKED AS A CARPENTER IN THE BUSINESS OF HIS NATURAL FATHER, JOSEPH. FURTHERMORE, WE KNOW THAT HE PERSISTENTLY VISITED THE SYNAGOGUE SINCE HE WAS A CHILD WHERE HE WAS ABLE TO REGULARLY SEE A SITUATION THAT YEAR AFTER YEAR LED HIM TO GO FOR THE “JORDAN.” THE

YEAR AFTER YEAR LED HIM TO GO FOR THE JORDAN. THE
FOLLOWING MOTIVES LED CHRIST TO DIE TO SELF IN THE
JORDAN:

Frustration with the religious system

Christ presented Himself as a living sacrifice, in the Jordan, because He had reached the point of frustration with the religiosity of His time. He was tired of attending the synagogue, the temple, and see nothing supernatural take place. He was the long-awaited Messiah; the one that all of the prophets had announced. However, though He was finally on Earth, those who had waited and announced His arrival could not see Him. The laws, norms, and religious traditions they had built had become more important for the religious entities of His time than receiving the Redeemer promised by the Father. There was no move of the Holy Spirit. There was no presence of God or manifestation of miracles, signs, and wonders, or any supernatural happening in the synagogues—where it should have been expected to take place. The priests and Scribes were more focused on the rules they had established and on the fear of losing their positions than on receiving the Messiah. They taught a historic God, not the God of now; a traditional God, not a God of power; a distant, absent God of promises but not of fulfillment. From this we can conclude that the greatest enemy of Jesus Christ on Earth was not Satan but the religion that waited for Him to come, sometime in the future, but not now. Religion was the thing Jesus Christ hated most; what He most confronted, fought against, and even cursed. It was what led Him to die many deaths. He knew there was more of God that He as a Man had not yet experienced, but He was determined to manifest Him regardless of how many times He had to die. His decision was made, and He went to the Jordan to die to self in order to bring change.

Every change begins with frustration over a present situation and a death.

Are you frustrated with the religious system? Are you tired of always living the same situation: Not seeing the manifested supernatural power, not experiencing the manifestations of the God mentioned in the Bible? Are you tired of sickness, depression, religion, and not seeing the Lord do new things? Are you sick and tired of waiting for the miracles to take place in the future, but they never arrive? Nothing will ever change until you become frustrated, fed up, and tired of the same things because only then will you be ready to deny yourself. Will you be willing to die to whatever is necessary in order to see change? This is what happened to Jesus. We must become the greatest enemies of the spirit of religiosity and all of its manifestations. But we must also be willing to deny ourselves in order to see change. We cannot allow religiosity to rob us of the presence of God, of His supernatural power, of salvation of our loved one, of health for our bodies, of financial prosperity, of the advance of our ministry, or of the change, power, and deliverance that come from the cross. If you have reached the point of frustration in which you are finally willing to die, then you will love your Jordan. You will willingly descend to it just like Jesus did. Only then will you be joined to Him in His death as well as in His resurrection. You will love what He loves and hate what He hates. If you know the change that will come after your death to “self,” you will surrender just like the Messiah.

The beginning of the ministry of Jesus was marked by His frustration with religion and His willingness to die to Self to see change.

THE PRESERVATION OF “SELF”: THE ENEMY OF DENIAL OF THE JORDAN

All too often, the frustrations that we endure are rooted in something that we should change in us, but we continue doing the same things. There is a part of us that stops us; this part is known as “preservation of ego or the carnal self” or the “art of survival of self.” This is the reason we do not reach a greater dimension. This is the obstacle that stops us. When we reach the point of being fed up of being stagnant we will begin the change and make a difference.

If you are spiritually frustrated and have reached the conclusion that there must be more of God than what you have experienced up to now, you are in the right or ideal moment to die to self by choice and see the new in Him. When you

do this, you will begin to identify yourself with the pain and suffering endured by Christ. The same passion that led Him to surrender to that death, to deny Himself, will be the passion that will lead you to deny yourself. It will be your choice to deny yourself even in the things that may not even be bad or wrong but that are standing in the way and keeping you from seeing the manifestation of His glory and power. You will remove them from your life.

Hunger for more of God

Christ's water baptism at the Jordan was the symbol of His denial of Self, as the Son of Man, the second Adam. When He rose from the water, He had an encounter with the Holy Spirit and was full of the power from above (Matthew 3:16). He had to learn another aspect of Himself by knowing the Spirit of God and with receiving His anointing. If Christ had come as God, He would not have needed that anointing or the divine ability to operate in miracles because He was and is God. We also need to acquire that knowledge of ourselves, as men and women and as God's children on Earth.

You have the capacity to decide how much of the Lord you want. He is infinite in all of His attributes. He can always give more. He has more, but it depends on us how much of that will manifest on this Earth in the now. If you are not hungry or if you are satisfied in your present spiritual level, you will grow stagnant and become naturalized because to reach more there has to be hunger for more and the willingness to surrender even more. If you do not desire more, you will lose your impulse. You will slow down and walk out of the supernatural only to return to a religious routine in the natural. After a time, you will become "old wine"; you will become traditional and religious and acquire a rigid mentality. You will not see revivals or anything fresh or different in your life as a Christian or in your church. It is only when you are willing to deny yourself in the Jordan that the revivals and the "new wine" will come to your territory.

YOU MUST BE WILLING TO DIE TO THE "OLD WINE" TO BECOME "NEW WINE"

There are many leaders that remain in the past; in past revivals, in past miracles, in past moves of the Spirit; hence the reason they will not be a part of the new outpouring of the Holy Spirit because *"No one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine bursts the wineskins, the wine is spilled, and the*

wineskins are ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins” (Mark 2:22).

What is a wineskin? A wineskin was a leather container that was used to store water, milk, oil, or wine. The animal skin used to make this container came from such animals as: sheep, goats, oxen, and camels, when a wineskin was used to store newly fermented wine, it had to be new, flexible, and resistant; otherwise, the wineskin would break and the wine would spill. Old wineskins were placed in water where they underwent a slow, progressive, and consistent process. This process is a typology of how believers must be exposed to the revealed Word of God at all times. The time the wineskins were kept in water ensured that the skin would become soft and flexible. This shows how the Word can change the way we think, until it makes us flexible to change. If we do not submit to self-denial, we will not become new wineskins ready to receive the changes that God wants to do in us and in His church in these last days. When we stop being flexible, we turn into old wineskins. We stop midway because we refuse to continue to the next stage of death to self and transformation. We behave as if we had finished, reached our limit, or ended the race.

One of the greatest obstacles to enter into a new dimension of the power of God is the “I have arrived” mentality.

In my years in ministry, I have reached the conclusion that the greatest temptation for those whom the Lord is using in powerful ways is to think that they have arrived; that they have done all they could do and that there is nothing more of God to manifest or to release on this Earth. It is then that the “I have arrived” mentality comes. This is where nothing more, new, or different is sought after; no more power, revelations, miracles, signs, or marvels that impact the natural and lead more people to the knowledge of God are sought after. The person feels that now is the time to simply dedicate him or herself to maintaining what has been received without seeking to increase, believe, or reach new levels of that power and grace that God has given them. If we surrender to this temptation and stop pushing further, if we stop praying, seeking His presence above all that has been experienced, stop offering sacrifices to God and presenting ourselves as living sacrifice; if we stop worshipping, fasting, and taking leaps of faith, we will inevitably decelerate.

Temptation comes when we see a small victory, or maybe a big one, and we think we have it all; thinking that we have arrived and that there is nothing more

to reach for. I would say that this reveals the heart of man because when we settle for a success of any size, we are thinking more of ourselves than on God or His Kingdom. When we settle it is because our ultimate goal was to satisfy our ambition and fulfill our agenda. If we feel complete, we will not seek greater growth because we will already have what we need to satisfy the self, and we will dedicate our time to maintain it and not lose it. If you identify with this, I invite you to pray to the Holy Spirit and ask for an expansion of your mind and heart so you can see the infinite of His Kingdom and His power and be empowered to bring transformation into more areas. As long as the entire Earth has not heard the Gospel of Christ, there will always be more work to be done and more to be accomplished. The Kingdom of God is always expanding, and the Lord continues to want to fill the Earth with the knowledge of His glory and for more children to enter into salvation. This is His heart, His agenda, which includes every human being who has yet to know Him and who has not experienced His love, forgiveness, restoration, and supernatural power in their lives. When a pastor has God's agenda in his heart, he or she will never stop growing or seeking more and more of Him because he or she will know that the Kingdom is continually expanding. They will know that their purpose is to establish and to extend this Kingdom on Earth until the last day of their existence.

I am a living example of this. I always hunger for more of God and always want more of Him. I am never satisfied. I am always pushing the limits, removing the barriers of growth, of maturity, and seeking greater dimensions of power, glory, miracles, and revelation. The passion to reach the lost, heal the sick, set the captives free, and build the body of Christ continually burns in me. I am an imperfect being who makes many mistakes, but I hunger for God, for His presence, for His Word, and for His will to be done on Earth as it is in heaven. I am happy and grateful with what I have been able to accomplish up to now, but I am not satisfied with where I am. I am not satisfied with all of the miracles I have witnessed. I am not satisfied with the many souls that have been saved. I am not satisfied with the finances, the crusades, or the accomplishments we have produced. I always want more of God! We are a ministry that has built everything debt-free. We owe no one. I could sit back, relax, and enjoy it, but I am not satisfied. As long as there is a soul that needs saving, a sick person that needs healing, a life that needs transformation, and generations still to come to the Kingdom, I want more! Because the Earth must be full of the knowledge of

the glory of God and of the resurrected Jesus Christ and His work on the cross. I consider myself an enemy of religiosity and stagnancy in any area, just like Jesus was. For this reason, I die a voluntary death every day. I empty myself of me, deny myself in order to see Christ grow more in me and to extend His Kingdom and see it advance. I never consider that I have arrived or that I am done because there are always new territories where to extend His Kingdom. And I impart that same passion to all of my spiritual sons and daughters.

Due to the lack of spiritual hunger and thirst, we have a deficit of power and of the presence of God in the church.

2. The second stage is the transformation of Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration

“Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves, and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light... While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!’” (Matthew 17:1-2, 5). This transformation of Christ implied what part of Him died so He could go from operating in the anointing to operating in the glory—always as a Man and not as God—which implies unlimited power.

This is how Jesus paved the way leaving it marked for us to follow. Up to now, the disciples had seen Jesus operate in miracles, signs, and wonders under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, but they had not seen Him surrounded by His glory. This transformation was a greater experience than what had taken place in the River Jordan. There, He had been affirmed as the Son of God, but here He was being affirmed and seen in His glory. This is another dimension; greater than the previous one. And all of this still as a Man! After this transformation, Christ made His triumphant entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:7-9), He purified the temple (Matthew 21:12), cursed the fig tree which was representative of the religiosity of the temple priests (Matthew 21:18-19), and He began to announce His death.

The transfiguration on the Mount marked Jesus' identity as a Man, as the Son of God, manifested in glory.

Christ could have settled for any of the great miracles that He did—Lazarus' resurrection, changing water into wine, and so forth, but His hunger for God, for the supernatural, and his desire to reach the fullness of His purpose and the power to complete it led to His total transformation. His change was undeniable and evident. We must follow His example. We must allow God to transform us so people will not be able to deny that we have been in His glory. Christ did not settle or remained in the realm of the anointing. He made the transition into glory for which another death had to take place.

Transformation is for us the only legal way to the supernatural power of God, which is released in His glory and exercised on Earth according to His will and plans. In His nature, Jesus had no room for conformity or stagnancy. If we have His nature, we must always be willing to experience a death of transformation in order to release greater power and glory of God in our territory.

Death or self-denial was the way for Jesus to accumulate power. This is why God gave Him unlimited anointing.

Sometimes we reach a moment in our life or ministry that we cannot pass; as if we had exhausted or reached the highest level of the anointing we have and realize that to advance to the next level He has for us, we need something more. We need a transformation of mind and heart. That is where the death of transformation comes, and where we receive power to break all opposition and

once again put everything back in motion of advance and conquer to expand the Kingdom into territories that we had not been able to reach before. Perhaps you have already passed the first death in your ministry, family, business, job, academics, character, spiritual maturity, or deliverance. Perhaps you find yourself in need of deciding whether to stay put or to seek a greater level of power or enter into the realm of the glory of God where He moves over every situation and removes all obstacles. What will you decide? Will you remain stagnant or are you willing to experience the death this stage requires?

The next level of power and glory in your ministry is behind your next level of death to all the things that are holding you back. Pastor Lawrence Boikhutso, of Botswana, Africa, had a church with one hundred people in one of the most difficult areas in his territory to evangelize. But he did not settle. Here is his testimony: “I started my ministry two years ago, in Botswana, Africa. One day, I saw Apostle Maldonado in Sid Roth’s television program. When I heard his preaching, I cried out: ‘God, I want that! I want that for my ministry.’ I did not want to settle for what I had already accomplished in God. I wanted more! I wanted His power to do miracles and to grow and multiply. The apostle said he would give an impartation, and I fell to my knees before the television and received it wholeheartedly—the Spirit of God came upon me. From that day forward, my ministry began to accelerate. Six months later, my church went from having one hundred people to fifteen hundred people, and this in a place where the largest church only has one hundred and fifty members. At the end of last year, we had a celebration to which more than four thousand people attended. When I saw the growth take place, I purchased all the books written by Apostle Maldonado. I read them and heard his preachings to learn to walk in the supernatural. One of the most impacting testimonies that I have witnessed since then is the woman who received a call from the hospital to inform her that her mother had died. She did the funeral arrangements and later called me to let me know and to ask me to pray for her. I went to the hospital, prayed for her, and declared life over her mother. The woman who had been declared dead two hours prior came back to life. She resurrected! That day, in front of the television, I died to my old ways of doing things for God. I died to the mentality of things being impossible. I died to self to see God do more than I had ever dreamed.”

3. The third stage was the death of Christ for total surrender of His will when He said: “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done” (Luke 22:42).

This death of Jesus took place in the Garden of Gethsemane. The word “Gethsemane” represents an olive press; there, Christ was pressed to the end. What He experienced was so hard that His sweat was drops of blood. The experiences at the Jordan and the Mount of Transfiguration had not been as intense as the one that took place in Gethsemane where He reached the point in His life in which He had to completely die to His human will. This death included His spirit, soul, and body because He had to embrace physical death on the cross, which was imminent. It was a total death required to recover and return to us the glory that God had given Adam. It is hard to think of Christ as having to struggle to surrender His will. We know He could not face the cross without first completely dying to self—before being pressed. We can say that Jesus first died in Gethsemane and later in Golgotha. In other words, the cross was the external work of a death that had already taken place in His heart when He decided to take the cup the Father had given Him to drink during His prayer in the Garden. He had died to “Self” hours before being betrayed to the Roman soldiers to be tortured and crucified.

For Christ, Gethsemane was the last act of His will, and His decision was self-denial. As a Man, He lived to walk in the will of another: The Father.

Are you pressed on all sides? Could God be demanding a new death from you? Perhaps you have arrived at your Jordan, at your Mount of transfiguration, or at your Gethsemane? Maybe today is the day in where your will must die so the purpose of the Kingdom that is in you can see the light? Could it be that you have something to surrender to God on the altar? Perhaps your business, family, or a close relationship? Could it be something that is of great value to you? Money, a favorite pastime, an activity, or a mindset? Perhaps more time spent fasting, in prayer, or seeking the presence of God or a greater level of sanctity, purity, or innocence? Perhaps a greater level of humility, of faith, of boldness, or of risk-taking? Whatever the demand of death that God is making, do not postpone it. Decide to die to self, right now. Surrender your will to the will of God! Gethsemane was Christ’s final death, and it could also be yours. No one said it would be easy or that it was easy for Jesus, but remember that He did not

do it in the power of His deity. He did it as a man of flesh and bone. He did not take the path of Adam's disobedience. He chose to obey the Father, and with it He opened a new path (Hebrews 10:20). This is the death that we all need to experience in order to carry out our purpose to the fullest; in order to be relevant in the advance of the Kingdom of God. If you want to see the will of the heavenly Father carried out in your life and in your generations, continue to push towards that new place in God: Praying, seeking His face, and choosing to die to your will in the areas that you know you have to surrender today.

Where there is death to self, change is imminent, and the supernatural power is released.

Thinking back to all of the people I know have decided to die to self with the purpose of seeing God work, I remember the testimony of Javier, a spiritual son and famous Rap singer, who has experienced several deaths. In his own words, this is his story: "Professional success began for me while I was still very young. Shortly after my graduation from La Habana University, as graphic designer, I inclined towards following my passion: Music. In 2000, under the name of Javier Voltaje, I formed the Cuban Rap group, Clan 537. Our success grew in just a matter of months. Shortly after, I was signed by Sony Music Europa, a company with which we signed our first contract, and I went to live in Italy. I was there until 2005 until the idea of moving to the United States came to me. With this dream in my heart, I dismantled the group and went to live in Las Vegas. The first year in that city was very confusing. I was practicing witchcraft, Santeria, and had many women; I also used drugs and more. All of these things produced serious problems in my marriage and almost caused me to lose my wife, Gloria. She was a Registered Nurse in Italy and earned very good money in her profession. Her life was settled, but she decided to leave it all behind to follow and support me. I, however, after eighteen years of being with her, was abandoning her for witchcraft, addictions, and adultery. With these things in operation in my life, I soon found myself touching rock bottom. By then I was so addicted to drugs that I was consuming up to three grams of cocaine a day; this addiction was pushing me further and further down into a dark world from where I could not escape.

In this condition, God had mercy on me. One day, while taking a shower, I heard a voice speaking to me saying: 'Tell your friend Emir Lopez what you are doing.'

Emir Lopez is a Christian man who helped me in my career. By then my wife was three months pregnant carrying our first son, Christian. I said to her: 'Tomorrow, our lives will change.' I told her this to calm her down but the truth is that I was in great pain and had the strong desire to die. Her answer to me was: 'Your son is moving.' Those words allowed me to feel the love of God for the first time in my life.

The next day, I spoke to my Christian friend, Emir, and received Jesus as my Lord and Savior; my transformation started at that moment. For five years I attended a Christian church where I was helped and taught to renounce many bad things. During that time, the Lord prospered me and increased my faith. One day, in 2010, I turned on the television set and saw Apostle Guillermo Maldonado preaching. His message was different than any I had heard about God up to that time. My wife and I began to attend King Jesus International Ministry, every Sunday and Thursday, through the Internet. In one of those services, the apostle made a call saying: 'Abandon what you have and come and seek your calling.' We took that word, literally, and decided to move to Florida and join the King Jesus Ministry's vision.

We arrived in Miami in 2011, with our two sons and my mother who had just arrived from Cuba. It was very hard in the beginning because we had to sleep on the floor of a small apartment owned by my sister-in-law. Our beginning was so difficult that I considered returning to Las Vegas, but God would speak to me over and over again through the apostle. My career as a singer began to take off and soon I was recording the CD "Con la Verdad de mi Tierra," (With the Truth of my Land) which helped in the recovery of my finances. I started to travel to different countries and my CD was nominated for the Latin Grammys. You could hear it in every radio station. This opened the door for me to sing next to Pitbull in his tour in Mexico. Together we had a great concert in Cancun, in the Futbol Stadium Quintana Roo, where more than 15,000 people came together. But something happened to me there. At the end of the event, instead of feeling happy and celebrating, I felt that something in me had changed. While I sang, God showed me that I was promoting sin in the people that was in attendance. I could see the young people, women, and men doing drugs, drinking, and practicing sexual perversion. I felt that I was provoking and contributing to their behavior. I returned to Miami repenting of my actions and willing to immediately renounce my contract and secular music. And I did! Since that day,

I have completely surrendered to God my career as a professional singer. I no longer care about money or fame. I had decided to die to these things and obey what I had felt from the Lord to do. I never stepped on another platform to sing that type of music. In 2013, I released my first song for the Kingdom: “Hay Solamente un Rey” (There is Only One King). This song was played in Christian radio stations around the world. We had asked God to allow us to serve Him better and more, and He heard our prayer. Now my wife and I are spiritual leaders in the King Jesus Ministry. We are both mentors, we have several Houses of Peace (Small Groups), we serve in Missions together with the apostle, and work in evangelistic events where many souls are always saved. The talent and experience gained in our secular life was surrendered to God, and He has entrusted us with a great calling to serve close to our spiritual father (he has guided us through the path of maturity and commitment to the Kingdom and the vision of our House. Our daily living has become a glorious life in Christ. Our marriage was totally restored, our children are being educated in the values of the Kingdom of God, my business is doing well, and above all else I feel great joy in serving Him. My music is a way to take the message of love, salvation, and hope to new generations.”

Consequences and Benefits of Self-Denial

First, let us briefly review the consequences that come when we freely decide not to die to the selfish nature of sin, the “old man,” which is contrary to the one that resurrects with Christ. Then we will look at the benefits of doing it. When we choose not to die to the carnal self, the consequences are the following:

The flesh or sinful nature grow again.

There is no such thing as staying in one place without returning to old sins or getting distracted with the vain things in life. Refusing to die the next death allows the spirit of this world to seduce us, producing the spiritual deceleration that will lead us from the supernatural to the natural.

When we stop dying to self, we stop changing and being transformed.

We need to live in a state of continuous change and constant transformation. If we want to be like Christ, in His image and likeness, we need to form His character in us; to love what He loves and to hate what He hates. We must make effective His death through our own.

We lose spiritual perception.

When we reject to die to “self,” our spiritual perception weakens because it depends on our connection with God. When we reject to die a death that He demands of us, we stop seeing things as He sees them and feeling things as He feels them. We lose contact with His heart and with the very essence of His existence.

When we stop dying to the “old man,” we fall back in to our old habits.

It is easy to pinpoint when a Christian experiences this because it immediately becomes plainly evident that he or she is once more tending to the rights of the flesh, justifying every action with all types of excuses. This is why we

should never take a step backward in the process of self-denial.

We lose sensitivity to the presence of God.

When the heart is set on other interests or priorities, when death to “self” stops being a priority, we go to the House of God and His presence no longer moves us. Our prayer life dries up, becoming routine, or disappears. If you are experiencing something similar, this is a strong warning that you have refused to die to self; then “self” is once again taking control of one or more areas in your life.

When we stop dying to self, we become spiritually stagnant.

Spiritual growth is always connected to self-denial. Choosing not to die daily is a straight path to stagnancy.

We turn mechanical and rigid in everything we do.

In these conditions life and the activity of the Spirit are lost, and we begin to function in relation to past glories; always remembering what God did in the past but having nothing new in the present. This is a sign of an impending death.

When we stop dying to self, we lose the blessing we have received.

God’s blessings are connected to obedience and with the life of God in the believer. If we refuse to obey the demands of death made by the Father, the blessings will dilute and eventually be lost.

We return to old habits and mentalities.

The enemy will again find access to our mind and begin to sow thoughts of fear, doubt, conformity, impossibility, rejection, and more; these are the same things that were uprooted from our mind through death to self. In other words, we return to our previous condition.

We will not be able to maintain our healing or deliverance.

Inner healing and deliverance that is received from God come from the work of Christ on the cross; from His death and resurrection. If we choose to stop dying together with Him, everything that is produced by His death at the cross will be lost. Demons will then return to find free entry into our life and what is described in Matthew 12:43-45 will take place.

The flow of supernatural spiritual activity will cease.

When we choose not to die to self an immediate deceleration of our spirit is produced, and every supernatural activity ceases in our daily living. Miracles are replaced by future hope empty of the life of God. Transformation of lives is replaced by legalism. Deliverance is replaced by human psychology or counseling. Salvation is replaced by religion, and so forth. Without a continuous sacrifice upon the altar, sooner or later stagnancy and deceleration will come which will produce a return to the natural and to curses. We know that the natural is the supernatural in deceleration, and the supernatural is the natural in acceleration. When we lose speed in the supernatural in our lives, we descend once more into the natural realm—the realm dominated by time, space, and matter. Little by little, sin creeps in. this activates cycles of curses that separate us from the blessings of the heavenly Father, His will, purpose, and destiny. Under curses, we cannot bear fruit in the Kingdom of God.

When we stop dying to self, we cannot exercise our faith.

Faith is the currency in heaven; of eternity. When we stop dying to self, we end up in eternity without resources.

The supernatural power of God requires a voluntary death which is the emptying of one's self.

BLESSINGS OF SELF-DENIAL

Just like everything that God demands, there is purpose—a reason why—in self-denial or dying to self. Furthermore, there is always a blessing that accompanies this submission of our will to God. Let us take a look at some of those purposes and blessings:

Self-denial is the most effective way to continually maintain the blessing.

In most cases in which people cannot retain their blessings, or are unable to retain their healing and deliverance from the bondage of the past, it is because they no longer practice self-denial to their carnal pleasures and sinful will. They have stopped crucifying their flesh and passions; hence, they return to their past condition or worse. This is the reason the Biblical counsel says: *“Put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt*

according to the deceitful lusts” (Ephesians 4.22). On the other hand, the benefit of dying to self makes it possible for us to remain free and blessed because “you will know the truth and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32).

The condition to be free and remain free is to die to self.

Change and transformation are permanently maintained.

No transformation or change is permanent if we do not renew our mind and deny ourselves continuously. There is no such thing as being transformed once and that’s it. The first transformation that takes place when we are born again is only the beginning of the process. The transformation produces changes that can only be sustained if we continue dying to self, every day, constantly, and progressively. If we want to retain the change that God has done in our lives, we must die a new death.

3. Access to the presence of God is kept open.

The thing that gives us access to the presence of God is the blood of Christ, but what maintains that door open is our daily death. And the reality of the manifestation of that presence will be according to the death of the carnal self. Our physical body keeps us aware of the earthly reality to which we are subjected. Therefore, while we refuse to die to that reality, our physical or natural life— our carnal self will become more real to us than God. This means that we are our own reality which is aware of “self” more than aware of the Lord, His presence, and His plans. Our “self” is more real to us than the presence of the Lord. In other words, we live for our carnal self. This is the same as saying: *“I want my own reality; my own presence and not God’s.”* But when we die to “self,” the presence of God becomes more real, and it becomes easier to experience and to enter into it to operate the will of the Father on Earth as it is in heaven. We can conclude that the only thing that stands between us and the next level of power that God wants to lead us into is our lack of dying to our old man.

Death to “carnal self” will always grant you access to the power and the presence of God.

Dying to self makes it easier to walk in the spiritual realm.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the initiation and the activation of the

spiritual realm within us. This realm lives in us through the Holy Spirit. We are aware of God in us. From now on, what is real is what is on the inside and not what is on the outside. When we are aware of God within us, things on the outside are no longer real because what's real on the inside determines what's real on the outside. What we see with our physical eyes is the projection of what we see on the inside. When we die to self, we have less flesh; we are crucified—dying to “self.” We then become more sensitive and capable of perceiving the spiritual dimension at a deeper level (Galatians 2:20). We live in a dimension that is above the corrupt natural dimension from where it is easier to release the supernatural onto this world. In simpler words, we are more aware of God; therefore, we can discern His will and manifest His power with greater effectiveness on Earth. Our life gains a greater sense of eternal purpose, and we become more relevant in our generation.

Knowing and perceiving in the spiritual realm come from a place of death to self.

When we die to self, spiritual maturity accelerates.

“But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Hebrews 5:14). One sign of immaturity is selfishness, which has a foul smell before God. Immature people are always thinking about what is convenient to the carnal self. Their selfishness is at the center of everything; their comfort and conformity. Maturity reveals death to their “ego.” In other words, death to self is measured not by the level of faith but by the level of maturity that has been developed. When a man is mature, God gives him an assignment, and from there he is on the path to carry out his purpose on Earth. So do not be surprised when God presents you with opportunities to die to self, daily, because through those deaths you will be fulfilling your purpose. This is the only legal way to do it. Therefore, instead of complaining or self-pity, take these opportunities, and God will lead you to a new level of maturity, power and glory at home, at work, at church, and everywhere you go.

6. Death to self gives us access to the supernatural power of God.

“Thus says the Lord: Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls” (Jeremiah 6:16).

Dying to self is one of the ancient paths to the supernatural power of God. When there is a voluntary death of the “carnal self,” power is guaranteed.

Jesus did not receive power to exercise His ministry until He was willing to die—keep in mind that He had no sin. People today want the power and the presence without renouncing to anything. They want to continue full of themselves, submerged in their selfishness, and expect God to work for their selfish causes. In these conditions, if they were to receive the power it would not be to bless the people but for their own glory; for the satisfaction of their own desires and ambitions. This is very dangerous! This is why God blocked Adam's access to Eden. His selfishness had made him dangerous to himself, and he could no longer exercise that power until he died to his rebellious and disobedient "self." The instant that Christ, the second Adam, had an encounter with the Holy Spirit, He was empowered and authorized to carry out His assignment on Earth. God the Father filled Him with His power because He was willing to die to self. He will do the same with you when you are willing to follow in the Messiah's footsteps.

God empowers you where you die to self. The more you die to the old nature, the easier it will be to access the supernatural power.

I have endured this process and continue enduring it. In each level of death, I have seen greater levels of manifestation of the power and glory of God. Not long ago, I traveled with my Mission team to Mississippi where we experienced an extraordinary demonstration of His supernatural power. Prophet Brian Carn invited me to his "Visitation Conference" in Jackson, Mississippi, to preach on how to work and operate in miracles. I took twenty of my evangelists to help me minister the miracles and demonstrate that God can use all of His children. What God did that night was powerful. After preaching, the power of God fell over that place and in a matter of an hour, over one hundred miracles had taken place. Everyone who received a miracle were already Christians, God's children, who decided to receive their miracle and take what belonged to them. Blind eyes were opened, vision problems were healed, and deaf ears were opened. A woman who had metal screws in her ankles testified that she screws turned into bone; all trace of metal disappeared. Another woman, Paulette Hawthorne, testified that in 1995, due to a bad fall, she had broken her left leg just above the ankle. She underwent surgery, and the doctors had to insert a metal plate which was welded to the bone and could not be removed because it was too close to an important nerve. The plate caused her constant leg pain. During the time of ministering,

she was completely healed. The intense pain disappeared completely! Many people experienced deliverance, hernias disappeared, and many were healed of pain in different places of the body. Metals that were surgically placed in the back were gone, swollen legs were healed, and two women stood up from the wheelchairs. One of these two women, Pat Cooke, had cellulitis in her feet and ankles since the age of ten. The infection was so great that she could hardly walk without help. She had been hospitalized several times because of it. But in an instant, she was healed and began to run all over the altar.

Two testimonies in particular stood out from among the rest. A bishop from Chicago, John, had traveled to support the conference. Three months back he had been diagnosed with glaucoma in his left eye. His vision was so blurry that he had to buy a telephone with special, big letters to see them. While we were ministering, right where he was seating, he felt the fire of God burning him. He touched his eyes while I declared the supernatural power of God to heal and when he removed his hands from his eyes, he could not see. Again, he placed his hands over his eyes and the same thing happened. Determined, he believed by faith and placed his hands on his eyes the third time, while the fire of God still burned him. When he stepped forward to share his testimony, he said: "I believed by faith that I had received my miracle and removed my hands from my eyes for the third time and looked at my phone, and I was able to see it clearly!" I shook my wife and told her: "Honey, I can see the letters that I could not see before! I am very happy to have received healing in my eyes."

Riva Manfree, also at the meeting, had traveled from Alabama to attend the event. She testified that she had been a diabetic for over forty years. Since she was twenty years old, she had to inject herself with insulin twice a day. She had had angioplasty, two stents, a balloon, five bypasses, and open heart surgery. She depended on a walker to stand up. As a believer, she had gone to the altar many times in the past twenty years to receive her healing. She had never given up on her faith in God to heal her. On the morning of the conference, her glucose level was 300 and by faith, she decided not to inject the insulin after she had her lunch. By the end of my preaching, when I made the altar call for the sick, Riva prayed, received her miracle by faith, and her body began to violently shake in the chair under the power of God. By faith, Riva tested her glucose level and for the glory of God, it had gone down to 99 without the help of insulin. Riva testified of her miracle and let go of the walker. She was able to move around the altar without

losing her breath or feeling any of the symptoms of the illness. She was supernaturally healed!

Evidence and Signs of a Person Who Is Dead to Self

Wit everything we have seen up to now, we are able to form an idea of how we can distinguish a person who has died to self—someone who dies to “self” daily in order to allow God first place in his or her heart. Let us first detail, in a practical way, the evidence or signs of this type of person; someone who is useful in the Kingdom and who God can be trusted with power, access, blessings, change, and supernatural transformation. A man (or woman) who is dead to self...

Has no personal will.

Jesus did not have His own will. He did everything that the will of the Father demanded “*Then Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner’*” (John 5:19). Can you say the same thing today? If not, are you willing to die your next death to make this a reality?

Serves with the right motives.

Someone who has died to their old nature will always serve thinking of the people. They wholeheartedly want to supply the needs of others. There is a fire on the inside to carry out the will of the Father on this Earth. They want what God wants and for the reason that He wants it. They seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness in everything they do.

Surrenders to the heavenly Father and to delegated authority.

The choice to submit is a clear sign of death of self in the believer. It means that the rebelliousness of the carnal self has been uprooted and replaced with humility and spiritual maturity in Christ. It signifies that Satan has nothing to do with that person (John 14:30).

Has no personal agenda.

The person who has died to “self” has rejected every plan and personal, individualistic, and selfish ambition. He or she no longer cares to make a name for him or herself on this Earth but to be relevant for the Kingdom; if he or she has to make a name for him or herself, let it be in eternity.

Is not easily offended.

Someone who has died to self is not easily offended because the hook the enemy had in their flesh has disappeared with the death of their carnal self. This is one of the most precise ways to measure death to the carnal nature. If you are easily offended, your flesh is still alive and in control.

Does not allow emotions to control him (her).

Having reached spiritual maturity produced by death to “self,” this person has also acquired the use of personal dominion. The decisions made and reactions taken don’t occur because of what he feels, thinks, or wants but because what he knows is right, which is the will of the Father; and because he is wise. His decisions and actions do not depend on how he or anyone else feels but on what he knows must be done.

Has less bad thoughts because he (she) no longer thinks of himself but on God. His mind has been set free from every oppression of thoughts that the enemy sends as darts to our mind. He has taken all of his thoughts

captive to the obedience of Christ and now has the His mind. When we have the mind of Christ, the enemy has no place in our thoughts because our mind is focused on the fulfillment of the will of God on Earth for here and now, every day.

Is passionate for doing the will of the Father. Making himself (or herself) more like the Son of God, he reaches the point of having hunger and thirst for doing just His will and nothing else. He is willing to suffer more deaths as long as the end result is seeing His will carried out. He never feels like he “has arrived” or that he is finished. He knows that as long as he lives, he should die to self so Christ can live in him and extend His Kingdom on Earth.

Is someone in whom God can fully trust. Since he (she) no longer lives for self, does not impose his will, is not led by the heat of his emotions, and has matured spiritually and emotionally, the man (or woman) who has died to “self” is worthy of trust. Here is when God trusts him the fullness of His purpose on this Earth. Jesus received the trust of the Father because He died all of the deaths commanded to Him. Prepare yourself for the next death because the Father will demand it as He did with Jesus!

Is and remains under authority. No one who has died to self is incapable of submitting to authority. In fact, this person will seek it, desire it, and move in that continuous subjection because he (she) has received the revelation of what it means to do it. And each time he submits to authority, a greater level of power is released. This was the reason why the Father had to raise Christ from the dead, because He died under authority. And that same authority under which He died was the one that had to resurrect Him. Death to self represents total obedience and submission to God, beyond what his old nature tells him. Therefore, God will raise your life, family, ministry, and business when you place yourself under His authority, or under delegated authority, because the Father will only be able to raise someone who has died for Him, out of obedience to His will. If you continue arguing and resisting His authority, you have not yet reached the point of death to self where you can be raised by the authority on Earth and by the Lord. God is waiting

for you to submit to His authority, be it direct or delegated, to lead you to your next level of power.

A man dead to self does not argue with authority but submits to it.

Practices sacrifice as a lifestyle.

This person has learned to continually give sacrifices on the altar of God because he (she) knows and understands that it is a function of a Kingdom priest. Furthermore, he has revelation of what it means and what this sacrifice releases in the spiritual realm.

Walks the extra mile and puts forth the extra effort.

This person is willing to make the extra effort; to sacrifice, pray, and worship more; to carry the burden and give more of him or herself for God and His Kingdom. This is the only type of believer that can mark a difference on this Earth.

Is not defensive when criticized.

The person who had died to “self” does not defend himself (herself) when criticized because he understands that his Defender is God and will suffer with joy whatever the price that must be paid to extend His Kingdom. When you are criticized, does it bother you, and your reaction is to defend yourself? Being defensive is a sign of not having died to self. Are you dead to criticism? Are you dead to persecution? Are you dead to defamation? I am highly criticized, rejected, defamed, and persecuted because of the nature of my ministry. But thank God and thank the deaths He has sent me because I am beyond all of these. I no longer care about such things because to me it is more important for Christ to continue saving, healing, setting the people free, prospering them, and extending His Kingdom through me. I am dead to criticism, hate, rejection, and defamation! I know that a supernatural ministry will receive supernatural persecution; therefore, I do not defend myself or react to criticism. If I wanted to do it, I have television and radio at my disposal. But I am dead to that! I no longer live for me or because of me. What I do is bless those who criticize me. *“But one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 3:13-14).

Lives a different reality.

This person sees everything from an eternal perspective, not the natural perspective, acting by eternal principles and values and not temporal ones. The reality of this person is eternal truth that comes from heaven and only this directs his or her life, decisions, actions, and attitudes.

Cannot be resisted by Satan.

A person dead to “self” is empowered and full of authority to exercise it against Satan and cast him out. Satan can resist and defy anyone whose “ego” is enthroned because he knows that they lack authority against him. But when Christ sits on their throne, no demon can face them.

Does not hold on to anything that God gives him (her).

This person does not deny the Lord anything; does not hold on to anything, keep anything, or feel accomplished in and of himself. His entire life is open and made available to the Father, to His plans, and to His demands. He has total confidence in Him and does not deny Him anything. He is willing to give God everything he possess and everything he is.

Is committed and surrendered to God.

To this person, the Father is everything; his (her) beginning and end; his reason for existing; He is Lord and Master of his life, good, days, time, being, gifts, and possessions. He is willing to do and to give whatever it takes for God. His commitment is that of a person who has no other motive in life other than Him: God.

In conclusion, if you are dead to something that used to be a temptation to you, that something will never again surprise you or find a way back into your life. Rather, it will find the door closed. You will no longer react to that temptation because you are dead to your selfish desires. To say it in clearer terms, if you are dead to offense, you will not get offended when you are insulted, lied to, abandoned, and so forth. If you are dead to pride, you will no longer be arrogant or haughty. You will no longer protect your ego. If you are dead to love of money, no amount of it will be able to buy you off. If you are dead to sexual immorality, you will not respond to temptation in any shape or form. You will only respond to temptation when your “carnal self” is alive. If you are dead to everything that used to be a temptation and that gave way to Satan to have a place in your life, now he will find himself without a foothold each time he wants to come against you. The “carnal self,” your old nature, will be dead and not have anything on you (John 14:30).

When we grow tired of allowing the enemy to have a hold of us, when we decide to die to self by surrendering our whole self to God, He can give our life a total

turnaround. The following story is told by Nicole Lacasse, born in North America, who had to surrender her past and present to God, believe that He could change the horror she had lived, love her as her heavenly Father, and surround her with people who would genuinely love her. “My grandfather abused me and my sister since we were five years old. This caused me to grow up with much anger, unforgiveness, depression, and bitterness. I felt rejected and empty to the point of constantly desiring to take my life and end with everything once and for all. I also felt hate against my father for leaving us unprotected. When my sister told my mother that my grandfather was abusing us, we moved away to the house of one of my mother’s friends. There I began to get sexually involved with that woman’s daughter; another ten-year-old child; I have been bisexual since then. In all honesty, nothing satisfied me. I felt alone and empty. By the time I was thirteen years old, I was using drugs and drinking. My father was an alcoholic and drug addict, but when my mother realized that in addition to this he was also unfaithful, she left him. Soon afterwards, she got involved with another man who was also a drug addict and an alcoholic, just like her. That man was incapacitated and did nothing due to his drug addiction. He was home all day and would abuse my mother in every way a woman can be abused. My sisters and I grew up alone, confused, and feeling lost. While trying out different lifestyles, I fell in love with a young man and got pregnant. His verbal and physical abuse caused me to fall deeper into drug abuse and pills. My drug consumption was so great that I lost the baby. By the time I was sixteen, I was living with this man and was pregnant again with my daughter. When I found out that he was cheating on me with my sister, I left him and went to live with my mother and started my lesbian lifestyle again. I would feel more secure with women because they did not abuse me physically. In time, I fell in love with another man, got pregnant again and had my second daughter; but he, too, eventually began to abuse me. Feeling desperate with my situation is how I met Jesus and accepted Him. I felt better afterwards but did not really surrender myself to Him. A short time later, I got back together with the father of my oldest daughter, and once again I returned to drugs and the lesbian lifestyle. In fact, I committed adultery because I was having a sexual relationship with a married woman. Two years later, I felt the need for a radical change in my life. I asked the father of my eldest daughter to take me to King Jesus Ministry. During the service, a worship leader sat next to me and from that moment, she became my mentor. She was of great help to my husband and me, encouraging us to stay

with the Lord and renounce our old life. She took us to a deliverance retreat where we were set free of drug addiction, alcoholism, anger, rejection, unforgiveness, bitterness, depression, and the lesbian lifestyle. We received the revelation of the importance of marriage and decided to get married. This decision was a difficult one for me to make because I had to die completely to the mistrust I felt towards men. Now we are a Christian couple committed to Christ and to our church. I renounced the judgment I had against the apostle—all the bad things I had been told about him. The only thing I knew of a father was addiction, abuse, and abandonment. But I died to all these things and was able to experience something I had never experienced: Paternal love and the wise counsel of a father. I do not know what happened, but I had never been able to look at a man the way I saw my spiritual father. During his preaching, I received God's identity as my loving and all-powerful Father and the identity as Apostle Maldonado's spiritual daughter. I am very happy today. I never had a father, and now I have two! Thanks to the fact that I died to my opinion and past experience, for the first time in my life I was able to sit and listen to my "father" and even enjoy his discipline. For the first time I felt that I mattered to someone. Now my husband and I are very happy because here at King Jesus, we have a family that loves us; a spiritual father and mother that only want our well-being; a mentor who is always there for us to hear us out; and brothers and sisters in Christ with whom we have a great time and mutually protect. I thank God because He has transformed our lives. Thank God we have left that hell of drugs, alcohol, and sexual immorality; that life is dead to us. And our daughters will never know that world. I declare it in the name of Jesus; amen!"

Steps to Access Change and the Supernatural Power of God

Before we close this book, we will learn what steps we need to walk the path that will lead us to change and to the supernatural power that come after we die to the “carnal self.” We will travel this road of self-denial, of dying to the old nature, and begin to live the life in the Spirit—the one Christ lived.

- 1. Commit to die to self by presenting your body as a living sacrifice**
(Romans 12:1).

Everything God does on Earth requires a commitment. God sees the death of the “carnal self” as the supreme commitment.

When dying to self is not a lifestyle, God sees it as lack of commitment on our part. Self-denial is a decision and a commitment that only we can make; neither God, our pastor, leader, nor our spouse can do it for us. No one can! Each one of us must make the decision and the commitment to die to self; this is a decision only we can make for ourselves. God will give us the supernatural grace to do it.

Death to self is not an event; it is a constant and continuous lifestyle that can only be carried out by the supernatural grace of God.

WE ARE A HOLY PRIESTHOOD CALLED TO OFFER UP SACRIFICES

Throughout Scripture, God says that believers are like kings and priests; “*You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ*” (1 Peter 2:5). What are those sacrifices? The sacrifices that all priests of the Almighty should present are: Prayer, worship, offerings, intercession, and our bodies for His service,

fasting, and our “carnal self” in obedience, submission, and death. These are not sacrifices to earn the favor or grace of God but, as priests, it is our duty to do it. Each time we sacrifice praise, worship, offerings, prayer, fasting, and death to self, we get closer to Him, and He releases His power—a man cannot get close to God without understanding what He wants.

***Sacrifice means getting close to God. The real nature of death is sacrifice.
Nothing is a sacrifice until it dies.***

If you want God to give you the power and the grace to die to “self,” decide and commit to your next level of death. Anyone who commits to God has to die to something. This means that your next level in life is associated to a death. Could it be that you have to die in your marriage relationship to avoid ending up in divorce? Would you die sleeping late to wake up early and spending time in the presence of God and seek His face? Abraham had to die to his son, Isaac, the son of the promise whom he had to wait twenty years to be born. Had he not done so, he would have limited the blessing that God wanted to give him and his generations. The heavenly Father had to die to Self to surrender his Son, Jesus Christ, in rescue for us all. Are you ready to commit to God and to die in areas of your life that you had resisted surrendering? God is ready to receive your sacrifice and also to reward you.

2. Continually surrender your will to God.

Since the day the fall took place in Eden, until today, God seeks just one thing in man: His will. When man (woman) surrenders his will to God, every bad influence that was attached or connected to him has to fall. In other words, when he surrenders his will, the bad things that are rooted in it will leave his life. You have the ability to choose to whom you surrender your will: God, your carnal self, or Satan.

Regardless of the stage in life you are in now, there is always something you can surrender to God, something you do not ask God to remove because the instant that you surrender, everything then becomes the property of God Almighty. When you experience situations or areas that you are unable to handle, He takes them; therefore, these are no longer within your power to resolve except in the power of God. Your situation is now under control. He takes from you the things you could not handle.

Surrendering your will is not instantaneous; it is progressive, gradual, and of your own free will. For those who surrender, their will is broken and will never tell God, “I can’t.”

Each time God asks you to do something, it has to do with surrendering your will to Him. And each time you resist doing what God has asked you to do, it is a part of your life He does not have and that you have to surrender. Surrendering your will is a minute by minute, an hour by hour, and a day by day event. It means to surrender each thought or desire that crosses your mind and take it captive to the obedience of Jesus Christ. Surrendering your will is not easy. In fact, the instant you do it, you will face something you will not want to face; hence, it is a death.

Jesus received what He did because He surrendered His will to the Father and denied Him nothing. If you want power, you must be willing to die because you cannot carry something that you are not willing to die for. As you read, I want to pray for you. *“Right now, as God’s servant, I bind every power of the enemy and influence on your will. I take authority over the root that causes rebellion against authority. I uproot it and declare that you are free to surrender your will.”* Now it is your turn. Repeat after me: *“Father, in the name of Jesus, I come before Your presence. I open up my heart because I want more of You, of Your presence, anointing, and glory. Of my own free will, I surrender my will to You. I crucify my flesh and declare myself dead to self. I declare myself dead to the “carnal self,” to my flesh, and my corrupt desires; to what I want, feel, and think. I surrender my will to Your will, to Your Word, to Your Spirit in order to be changed and transformed. I will be continually empowered to do Your work. I will see the unusual and the supernatural in a greater dimension. I will manifest Your power while I go through life. I make a pact and commit to subject myself to the authority of the Word. As a servant and a child of God, I will exercise power and authority because I am under authority under which You have placed me. I will never rebel but will submit to You and to Your will; in the name of Jesus; amen!”*

3. Submerge yourself in the baptism of love

The Scripture mentions different types of baptisms: Water baptism, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the baptism of fire. But there is also the baptism of love. The word “baptize” means to “completely submerge something in a substance”; “to cover from head to toe as when you submerge in water, and the

water completely covers you.” When you receive the baptism of the love of God, you are completely submerged in the same; after which you reach a place of total “absence of self.” The opposite of love is egocentrism. If you are full of yourself, you will be unable to feel the pain and suffering of others. The only thing you will be able to feel is the selfish demands of your flesh. This is one sign of the spirit of this age; a total lack of interest and insensitivity for someone else’s pain. No one cares about the need of another. In the baptism of love, death of “self” takes place; here is when you give God permission to be Him in You and to love with His love. Only then will you be born a servant in the image and likeness of Christ.

Death to self is evidence that a baptism of love has taken place.

If you know that deep inside of you there is still selfishness and love to self; that you feel no empathy for the love of others and you do no care for others, you desperately need the baptism of the love of God. When you are empty of yourself, of the old nature, no curse can remain in your life; then everything the Father wants to do is possible. In the baptism of love the acceleration of the Kingdom takes place because the will of the Father flows freely. Without the baptism of love, you cannot be like Christ on Earth (1 Corinthians 13:1-2). It is a waste of your time to want it any other way. This world needs to experience the genuine and true love of God through each one of us.

There are things in the spiritual realm that can only be done from a position of being dead to self.

Choose to lose the selfish life of the flesh to win the abundant life of the Spirit.

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life” (John 12:24-25). You are that seed, and you can do anything you want with it. You can keep it just for you, hold on to it simply to admire it, hide it, dry it up, or even drown it. But you can also decide to plant it and make it die for Christ; then it will bear much fruit. God says, “This is your decision.” As always, He allows you to choose and to exercise your will freely. The world is full of people who feel alone. In fact, you can feel alone standing in the middle of a crowd, with your family, or in a large or small church. The reason for loneliness has nothing to do with the amount of people that surround you but with not being willing to be the seed that lands on the earth, dies, and bears fruit.

Many people are holding on to the grain, the seed, and remain alone, frustrated, and sad. Egocentrism can cause people not to give up their lives for others—for Christ. The only alternative is to let go of the seed and forget it; to place the seed in the ground, abandoning the fear of losing it. You must lose control of the seed just like Christ did because *“By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren”* (1 Juan 3:16). This means not eating so another can eat; not sleeping so another can sleep; not asking things for ourselves in order to ask for others; not thinking of ourselves first, so we can think of others; letting go of our lives so others can live.

***We do not know how to live in the Spirit until we attend our own funeral;
the funeral of our old man.***

Christians spend too much time resisting death or surrender because we fear that death. We feel that we will lose something very important. The idea of losing control of our lives frightens us. Fear is irrational because it leads us to protect ourselves when we feel that something could harm us or take something important from us. “Self” has its own defense mechanisms of self-protection and self-survival which we must break, one by one, until they are all left inoperable and we can surrender that life on the cross of Christ. This is why it is vital for us to lose the fear of death; the natural death and the death of self. The seed principle can also be applied to us because if it dies, a new life will be born to bear abundant fruit according to the seed that died. When we die to self, the new life that is born is eternal, abundant in God—Christ in us is the life we can share and multiply in others; the life that bears fruit and multiplies infinitely in the preeminence of His love.

CONCLUSION

Finally, you can go to a hundred counselors, attend every conference, and visit many churches; you can read all the books in the world, be one of the best preachers, go through inner healing and deliverance, break every personal curse or generational curse, but if you do not die, there will be no change or transformation in your life. You will lose everything that you have won in God and His supernatural power will not flow legally in your life. Decide, right now, to die to self! Remember that you are surrendering, dying for Christ and His purposes in this world; just like Christ died for you and for your sins.

A death in God always requires a resurrection. Therefore, if you die to self, you will gain access to the divine power of the resurrection.

Dying to self will lead us to a new level of manifestation of the person of Christ in our life and through us. It makes it possible for us to maintain our deliverance; therefore, we will live free of curses, sin, oppressions, bondage, iniquity, wickedness and more. It helps us to maintain our changes and advance in the transformation that will lead us to be more like the Father, in His image and likeness. Dying to “self” grants access to the supernatural power and the presence of God where we receive immeasurable blessings. There we will be able to walk easier in the spiritual realm and reach the maturity needed to operate the power and the love of God.

Once our seed dies, in its due time, it will produce a hundred-fold more of that fruit, according to its gender. In other words, fruit with the same DNA. You will produce abundant fruit to feed the world full of rejection, pain, and affliction; a world tormented by sin, pain, and suffering. Christ died, planted His life, and produced millions of seeds of Himself. You and I are these fruit, and we carry in our essence the potential of multiplication of our specie. And we know that our specie is the same as that of God's. Therefore, our fruit will be real, permanent, and a blessing for today and for the future. Now all of these grains should fall on the ground and also die and bear fruit in order to continue the cycle of reproduction, making them light to the world in darkness and in need of God, His grace, mercy, love, and salvation.

If you are a carrier of the supernatural power of God and of the glory of God, your life should be a continuous sacrifice just as Christ's life was a living sacrifice. Others cannot be led to the reality of power without first dying to self, daily; there is no other way of doing it because the increase of power will be as progressive as the death of the old nature (Ephesians 3:20). When Christ lived on Earth, He acquired the power through the different deaths He experienced. He never stopped dying, until the day He reached the ultimate death and was able to release the power for His resurrection. In other words, to resurrect in power, we must die first. We can measure the anointing of a person according to how much that person has died and vice versa. When a person dies to self, God cannot deny His power because each death automatically releases a new measure of His supernatural power. What is the next level of power you need to release for your family, business, or ministry? Which death should you die to set you free? Are you willing to enter into a greater dimension of power and of anointing? Then you should be willing to die to self.

The measure of anointing and power that operates in us is directly proportional to our daily dying of self. This is the principle of the law of exchange.

You must die to birth the one who is dead in sin; to bring salvation to the lost, health to the sick, freedom to the captives, sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, deliverance to the oppressed, and so forth. My prayer is that none of you reject the offer that the Lord is presenting you today, here and now. If you surrender without reservations and totally commit to Him, the other side of that death or self-denial is a life full of the presence and the glory of God, of supernatural power, of fullness in all things, of rewards and blessings.

Decide right now! Your death is today because your children and this generation need to experience the Kingdom of God and Jesus Christ through your life; do not wait any longer! The time is now!

Prayer to Surrender Your Will and Die to "Self"

PRAYER TO SURRENDER YOUR WILL AND DIE TO "SELF"

If you have decided to begin the process of death to self so God can fulfill His will in your life, repeat this prayer each time you have to die to any new death:

“Heavenly Father, I recognize there are areas in my life in which I have been living selfishly for me. I understand that not only do I have to die to sin but also to my carnal self so Christ can grow in me and flow through my life. I offer my body as a living sacrifice. I offer my “self” on the altar to make it die. I deny myself and renounce my selfish will to live completely for You and carry out Your will. I no longer want to live for the flesh or to carry out a personal, selfish, and natural agenda in this world. I want what You want. I desire Your holiness, Your power, and Your glory. I want to establish Your Kingdom and extend it as Christ did. I do not want anything else! Give me of Your supernatural grace to die to self, to my pride, and to access Your power that changes lives, renews minds, and transforms the human heart because I live for You and Your will on this Earth, in this day and age and in the territory where You have placed me. Today I die, so you can live, to be useful in Your Kingdom, to follow the path that Jesus paved for Your children. I receive Your grace to die to my flesh—my “carnal self”; this not in my strength but in Yours. I pray this in the name of Jesus Christ; amen!

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