



PREPARATION FOR DEATH FOR THE TERMINALLY ILL

A *terminally ill* person is sometimes defined to be anyone who has *6 months or less to live*. This guide to dying for the *terminally ill* is especially for such people, but **not limited to only such terminally ill people!** In truth, it is relevant for *all* people, because each of us already has a *terminal illness* in a sense which will result in physical death one day, even if it is decades down the road. Therefore, we all need to get serious about preparing for *death*—the inevitable for even the healthiest among us at this moment.

THE TERMINALLY ILL ARE UNIQUELY BLESSED!

For those who have been recently diagnosed with a terminal illness, that disturbing knowledge could actually be God showing great mercy! How? By helping to make that person to be acutely aware of his near departure from this life to the afterlife **so that adequate spiritual preparations can be made**. Many die suddenly without this, but that's not you! You have been granted a special opportunity to *prepare for death* and what will follow—the Judgment:

Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face **judgment** (Heb 9:27)

The typical inadequate preparations that are made by the terminally ill only involve:

- a hospice,
- funeral and cemetery arrangements,
- getting their will in order,
- etc.

Sadly, those common preparations are grossly incomplete. Why? They lack the most crucial aspect of getting ready for our inevitable departure—the spiritual aspect to get a *purified heart* and to be at peace with God. So how does one prepare spiritually to die and enter eternity? That must be the main preparation which needs to be made. To have a purified heart at the point of death means *there is no need to fear death*. That is because you are going to *paradise* because you are at peace with God. An example of such a person making peace with God was the dying thief who made those vital spiritual preparations to die, found peace with God and was going to **paradise** at the end of his life:

Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” Jesus answered him, “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:42, 43)



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Again, nothing could be more profoundly important for you than this urgent matter. **Death is not the end, but the beginning of another phase of your eternal existence.** That is why the right spiritual preparations are so important. Salvation is as important as eternity is long! Here is what you need to do:

THE KEY

■ Repent (Turn from Sin) and Place a Submissive Faith in the Lord Jesus For *Salvation* To Obey and Serve Him

That is the key. God is *holy*. He has wrath and anger over sin and *shows no partiality*. Hence, the sin must go by getting forgiven God's way. Whoever you are, **humble yourself before God.** Realize that you are in serious trouble with God because of your sins, which he knows all about. There are *no secret sins* before his eyes. *Sincerely* ask him for mercy and forgiveness. **Commit your heart to him. Turn from all known sin.** Ask God to also reveal anything in your life that needs to change. Do it today. Don't delay. Tomorrow may be too late. No one is guaranteed another day:

Or do you not know that **the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?** Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but **you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.** (1 Cor. 6:9-11, NASB)

Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. **Humble yourselves before the Lord,** and he will lift you up. (James 4:8-10)

But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, "**God, have mercy on me, a sinner.**" I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. (Luke 18:13,14)

I tell you, no! But **unless you repent, you too will all perish.** (Luke 13:3)

You refuse to come to me [Jesus] to have life. (John 5:40)

I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must **turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.** (Acts 20:21)

If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, **he was thrown into the lake of fire.** (Rev 20:15)

The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. **They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.** (Mat 13:41,42)

Search your heart for any sin each time you go to bed (and on a daily basis until you depart). Be honest with yourself and God. Be assured he knows you better than you know yourself! Again, **there are no secret sins.** It's far better to remedy all things now than to have anything against you. If you offended someone, ask him/her for forgiveness and say you're sorry. Sin provokes God to anger, but **he delights to show mercy** to the *repentant* (Micah 7:18). Again, **sincerely ask for mercy and forgiveness and turn from wickedness.** God wants you to come to him:

In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, **search your hearts** and be silent. (Psa 4:4)

... **make every effort** to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. (2 Pet 3:14)

Make every effort to **live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.** (Heb 12:14)

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. (Prov 28:13)

Note that confession of sins is to be done *to God* (Psa. 32:5), not a priest.

Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, **“I will confess my transgressions to the LORD”**— and **you forgave the guilt of my sin.** (Psa 32:5)

DEADLY SINS

For various listings of sins that will prevent anyone from entering God's kingdom, please ponder 1 Cor 6:9,10; Rev 21:8; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 5:5-7; Rev 22:15; Mk 7:20-23; etc. Here they are for your convenience, except the first one, which has already been cited:

But **the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars**—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death. (Rev 21:8)

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: **sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like.** I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Gal 5:19-21)

For of this you can be sure: **No immoral, impure or greedy person**—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them. (Eph 5:5-7)

Outside are **the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.** (Rev 22:15)

Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will **anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.** (Rev 21:27)

For from within, out of men’s hearts, come **evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.** All these evils come from inside and make a man “unclean.” (Mark 7:21-23)

Sin is the problem and needs to be viewed as a **poisonous rattlesnake.** Turn from sin. Make the necessary vital changes as already mentioned. That will prove to be the BEST thing you ever did for yourself.

A MATTER OF THE HEART

Give the Lord Jesus supreme reign over the throne of your *heart*:

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is **no other name** under heaven given to men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)

Once made perfect, he [Jesus] became the source of eternal salvation for all who **obey** him (Heb 5:9)

so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring **eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.** (Rom 5:21)

He [Jesus] is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:2)

He made no distinction between us and them, for he **purified their hearts by faith.** (Acts 15:9)

Blessed are the **pure in heart,** for they will see God. (Mat 5:8)

MAKE RESTITUTION IF POSSIBLE

Not always is it possible to make *restitution*, but if possible, give back or pay back what you have which belongs to another, just as Zacchaeus was willing to do.

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will **pay back** four times the amount.” Jesus said to him, “Today **salvation** has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.” (Luke 19:8,9)

Jesus said salvation came to Zacchaeus. That is the goal. He got what you need. So you need to have the same attitude and change, which he demonstrated to be *prepared to die*.

FORGIVE ALL PEOPLE WHO HAVE SINNED AGAINST YOU

You must forgive others who have sinned against you, so that God will forgive your sins:

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. (Mat 6:14-15)

To hold hatred, bitterness or a grudge against another for any reason will harm you much more than the other person who wronged you. Remember, you are trying to prepare for death. Please know, **your multitude of sins against God were much greater and more frequent than what others have done to you!** You must forgive people who have sinned against you to be forgiven:

Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you? In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. **This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.** (Mat 18:33-35)

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. **Forgive as the Lord forgave you.** (Col 3:13)

TESTIFY

Tell others **unashamedly** that Jesus is your Lord and that you have turned from sin to serve him. Acknowledge him before others and he will acknowledge you before the Father.

If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. (Luke 9:26)

Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. (Mat 10:32)

I tell you, **whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God.** (Luke 12:8)

For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you **confess and are saved.** (Rom 10:10)

BE WISE

Spend as much time as possible *directly in the Bible* each day. It is **final authority**. Put into practice what you find there. Keep your mind on God as much as possible and behave in a way which is pleasing to God. Your eternal future depends upon what you do with that message. Saturating your mind with God's word is vital, especially at this time. Hence, don't be distracted by TV, radio, the newspaper, etc. Lock your mind on God and his truths:

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and **puts them into practice** is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. (Mat 7:24)

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. (James 3:13)

He replied, "My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and **put it into practice.**" (Luke 8:21)

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Tim 3:16,17)

For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but **the word of the Lord stands forever.**" And this is the word that was preached to you. (1 Pet 1:24,25)

ENDURE TO THE END

There is **no eternal security** or once saved always saved. The followers of Jesus must endure persecutions to the end of our lives to enter God's kingdom. If you were previously saved at an earlier time in your life that might no longer be the case, since **the righteous can die spiritually** (Rom. 8:13; James 1:14-16; 5:19,20; etc.) **It is where you are at the end of your life which determines your future beyond the grave, not if you were ever born again.** Remember that spiritual truth:

All men will hate you because of me, but **he who stands firm to the end will be saved.** (Mat 10:22)

We have come to share in Christ **if we hold firmly till the end** the confidence we had at first. (Heb 3:14)

THE BIG PICTURE

Consider the big picture, which includes your existence beyond the grave. This life is very tiny, even microscopic, in comparison to a very long eternity. Your eternal soul will exist *forever* either in a **paradise environment or a place of fiery torment**. We must all face death. You are not alone. So don't have a pity party. The rest of us will soon be following you! **Death is nothing to be afraid of, if you made the proper spiritual preparations. JESUS is your sure hope.** Cleave to him. Love him and commit yourself to serve him throughout eternity.

SUMMARY

In summary, doing those important steps at the end of your life will ensure you a peaceful voyage into God's paradise presence, which is something to get excited and happy about! **Death is the beginning, not the end.** The main points cited were:

- Repent and place a submissive faith in the Lord Jesus for your personal salvation. Continue to guard and examine your heart every day to make sure it remains *pure* and *clean* before God.
- Keep the Lord Jesus as the ruling King of *your heart*. Keep him as your **first** love.
- Make restitution to all you can.
- Forgive all others who have sinned against you. (All people have been sinned against. You are not alone. Many have been sinned against much worse than you!)
- Acknowledge and testify about Jesus before others. Don't be ashamed of him.
- Be wise by putting God's word into practice.
- Endure to the end for salvation.
- Consider the big picture—eternity.

The victorious servant's attitude is reflected by what Paul wrote:

If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. (Rom 14:8)

God will be glad to have **YOU** in his presence since your heart is pure!

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. (Psa 116:15)

The future beyond the grave for the *pure in heart* will be in a *paradise* musical environment, which includes great peace, joy and love in the presence of God Himself and righteous people. **The unrighteous will not be there!**