

3ABN SABBATH SCHOOL PANEL
003 - LESSON – MONDAY - January 12, 2026

TO DIE IS GAIN

2 Corinthians 10:3-6 (NKJV) “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. (4) For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, (5) casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, (6) and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.”

What is the basis of the spiritual war we wage, and what are our weapons?

ALL WEAPONS, GOOD OR BAD – ORIGINATE IN THE MIND:

THE MIND IS THE SEAT OF ALL RESOURCES:

1. The Mind Reflects the Spiritual Condition of the Heart:

- a. The mind is the battlefield where spiritual decisions are made; it mirrors what rules the heart—either the Spirit of God or the flesh.
- b. Good: A renewed mind aligns with God’s will.
- c. Bad: A carnal mind resists God and leads to death.
 - i. Romans 8:6-7 (NKJV) “For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (7) Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.”
 - ii. Proverbs 23:7 (NKJV) “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. “Eat and drink!” he says to you, But his heart is not with you.”
 - iii. Matthew 15:19 (NKJV) “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”

The thoughts we entertain reveal whom we truly serve.

The mind cannot remain neutral—it is either surrendered to Christ or dominated by sin.

Satan uses criticism, betrayal, embarrassment, fear, peer pressure, and a host of similar tools that Christians should never employ. We are, instead, to use love, mercy, peace, gentleness, longsuffering, kindness, and self-control.

Our most powerful weapon, judiciously used, is “the Word of God” wielded by the Spirit (Eph. 6:17, AMP), because only God can bring the truth home to a person’s heart. We are merely the instrument that God uses to accomplish His purposes.

Read Philippians 1:21, 22. **How do we understand Paul's point, especially in the context of the great controversy?**

Philippians 1:21 (NKJV) "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. (22) But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell."

1. This verse is not about dying and going to heaven, it reveals the transformation between the natural and the spiritual life.

Romans 6:11 (NKJV) "Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

John 12:24 (NKJV) "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."

Because the battle is spiritual, we're in a war of ideas and values. Yet Christ has won the victory at the cross for us, and as long as we stay connected to Him, we can never be defeated, even if we are killed. Paul surrendered his life to whatever happened to him here on earth, however unjust, because he entrusted his life and his future to a higher court.

As Christians, we should not fight so much for our rights as for what is right. It's not "might makes right," but "right makes might."

2. The Mind Must Be Renewed by the Holy Spirit

Truth:

- Genuine transformation begins in the mind.
- The Spirit of God reshapes our thinking, desires, and moral reasoning.

Good: The renewed mind discerns truth and resists conformity to worldly values.

Bad: A corrupted mind blinds the conscience and distorts spiritual perception.

Scriptures:

- Romans 12:2 — "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind."
- Ephesians 4:23 — "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind."
- 2 Corinthians 4:4 — "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers."

Lesson:

- Sanctification begins in the thought life.
- The Holy Spirit purifies the mind so we can think like Christ and act like citizens of heaven.

3. The Mind Can Be a Source of Peace or Turmoil

Truth:

- The mind that stays focused on God experiences peace;
- The mind filled with anxiety, fear, and sin loses stability.

Good: Trusting minds rest in divine peace.

Bad: Distracted, double-minded thoughts lead to confusion and unrest.

Scriptures:

- **Isaiah 26:3 — “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You.”**
- **Philippians 4:7–8 — “The peace of God... will guard your hearts and minds... Whatever is true... think on these things.”**
- **James 1:8 — “A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.”**

Lesson:

- What the mind dwells on determines the condition of the soul.
- Peace is not found by changing circumstances but by changing thoughts.

4. The Mind Determines Eternal Destiny

Truth: The final battle between good and evil takes place in the mind—it decides allegiance.

Good: The mind of Christ leads to obedience and eternal life.

Bad: The reprobate mind rejects truth and becomes enslaved to sin.

Scriptures:

- **Philippians 2:5 — “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.”**
- **Romans 1:28 — “God gave them over to a reprobate mind.”**
- **Colossians 3:2 — “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”**

Lesson:

- **The mind determines direction.**
- **Direction determines destiny.**
- **Salvation begins when we surrender the mind to Christ.**

Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.” — John 12:24

So, yes — there are stages of “**spiritual death**” that every Christian must go through to truly grow. Let’s look at them biblically and practically 📌

1. Death to Sin — The Crucifixion of the Old Nature

Scripture: “**Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.**” — Romans 6:6

What it means:

- This is the **first stage** of spiritual death — **when we die to our old sinful life.**
- The moment a person accepts Christ, **they experience spiritual death to sin and new birth into righteousness.**
- We stop identifying with who we were in Adam and start identifying with who we are in Christ.

Spiritual Growth: You **begin learning to say no to sin and yes to the Spirit.**

“Likewise reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” — Romans 6:11

2. Death to Self — The Denial of the Flesh

Scripture: “**If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.**” Luke 9:23

◆ **What it means:**

- This is the daily cross — a continual surrender of our own will, ego, and desires.
- It’s where pride, self-reliance, and personal ambition die so that God’s Spirit can fully lead.
- Paul lived this out when he said: **“I die daily.” — 1 Corinthians 15:31**

Spiritual Growth:

**This stage develops humility, obedience, and dependence on God.
It’s where maturity is formed — not by comfort, but by continual surrender.**

3. Death to the World — The Detachment from Earthly Glory

Scripture: “**Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**” — 1 John 2:15

“The world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” — Galatians 6:14

What it means:

- This is **where the believer becomes detached from worldly values, pleasures, and priorities.**
- It’s a spiritual separation from anything that competes with Christ’s kingdom in our hearts.
- You no longer measure success by worldly standards, but by faithfulness to Christ.

Spiritual Growth:

This stage produces eternal perspective, contentment, and unshakable peace.

We begin to live in the world but not of it (**John 17:14–16**).

Summary of the Three Stages of Spiritual Death that Lead to Growth

Stage	Death To	Key Scripture	Growth Result
1. Death to Sin	The old sinful nature	Romans 6:6	Freedom from sin’s power
2. Death to Self	The fleshly will and pride	Luke 9:23	Daily surrender and obedience
3. Death to the World	Earthly attachments and ambitions	Galatians 6:14	Heavenly mindset and spiritual maturity

Outcome: Spiritual Resurrection

When we experience these “**deaths**,” God raises us into newness of life:

“If we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.”
— Romans 6:5