

The Opposite of Living

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I saw a quote from one of Dan Winkler's lessons from PTP in Sevierville last week that really got my attention. He said, "EVIL spelled backwards is LIVE. Evil is the opposite of living."

It is a simple play on words, but it points to a truth Scripture teaches again and again. Sin promises life, but it always leads in the opposite direction.

From the beginning, Satan tried to convince people that disobedience to God would somehow give them more. In the garden, the serpent told Eve that eating the forbidden fruit would open her eyes and make her "like God" (Genesis 3:5). Sin appeared to offer something better. What it actually brought was shame, separation, sorrow, and death.

God had already warned Adam, "for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (Genesis 2:17). Satan made disobedience sound like a better way to live. God knew it was the road away from life.

Paul makes that contrast clear in Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Notice the contrast. Sin pays wages, and those wages are death. God gives a gift, and that gift is life.

We sometimes think of sin mainly as breaking God's rules. Scripture certainly teaches that "sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4), but its damage goes even deeper. Isaiah told Israel, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God" (Isaiah 59:2). Sin separates us from the One who gives life. That helps us understand why Scripture consistently connects sin with death. When we turn away from God, we turn away from the source of life itself.

That is why Jesus came.

He said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Jesus was not promising a life without hardship. His own disciples would face suffering, persecution, and loss. He was offering something far greater: reconciliation with God, forgiveness of sin, freedom from its slavery, and the hope of eternal life.

Paul describes this new life beautifully in Romans 6. When a person is baptized into Christ, he is united with Christ in His death so that "we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). Christianity is not simply giving up certain sinful habits. The gospel calls us to leave the old life behind and begin a new life with Christ.

A few verses later Paul writes, "Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:11).

Dead to sin. Alive to God.

Those words reveal just how different the life Christ offers is from the life sin promises. Sin often presents itself as freedom. Yet Jesus said, "whoever commits sin is a slave of sin" (John 8:34). What looks like freedom can quickly become bondage. Sin promises that we can live on our own terms, but eventually we discover that sin has terms of its own.

God's commands, on the other hand, are sometimes viewed as restrictions that keep us from enjoying life. Scripture presents them very differently. They come from the One who created us, loves us, and knows what life was meant to be. John wrote, "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3).

God is not trying to keep us from life. He is leading us into it.

That makes Dan Winkler's statement worth remembering: "EVIL spelled backwards is LIVE. Evil is the opposite of living." The spelling may help us remember the lesson, but the truth behind it comes from Scripture. Sin may promise pleasure, independence, freedom, or fulfillment, but it cannot give what only God possesses.

Every time sin draws us away from God, it draws us away from life. Every step of faith and obedience draws us closer to the One in whom true life is found.

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).

If we want to truly live, we must stay close to Him.