

John 12:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

Analysis

Jesus extends the principle to disciples: loving one's life loses it; hating life in this world preserves it eternally. The paradox challenges worldly values—self-preservation destroys, self-sacrifice saves. 'Hating' life means subordinating temporal existence to eternal priorities, not literal self-hatred. This radical discipleship call requires counting this world's life as loss compared to eternal life (Phil 1:21). The principle explains martyrdom's logic—those who die for Christ gain eternal reward. It challenges American Christianity's comfort-seeking. True life comes through losing life for Christ.

Historical Context

Martyrdom was reality for early Christians. Jesus' teaching prepared disciples for persecution's cost. 'Hating' in Semitic idiom means 'loving less,' requiring radical prioritization (Luke 14:26).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does this paradox challenge contemporary Christianity's focus on self-fulfillment?
2. What does 'hating' life in this world practically mean in your circumstances?
3. In what areas are you loving this world's life more than eternal life?

Interlinear Text

ό	φιλῶν	τὴν	ψυχὴν	αὐτήν	ἀπολέσει	αὐτήν	καὶ
G3588	He that loveth	G3588	life	it	shall lose	it	and
	G368		G5590	G846	G622	G846	G2532
ό	μισῶν	τὴν	ψυχὴν	αὐτήν	ἐν	τῷ	κόσμῳ
G3588	he that hateth	G3588	life	it	in	world	this
	G3404		G5590	G846	G1722	G2889	G5129
εἰς	ζωὴν	αἰώνιον	φυλάξει	αὐτήν			
unto	life	eternal	shall keep	it			
G1519	G2222	G166	G5442	G846			

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 10:39 (Parallel theme): He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

Mark 8:35 (Parallel theme): For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

Luke 17:33 (Parallel theme): Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

Matthew 16:25 (Parallel theme): For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

Luke 14:26 (Parallel theme): If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

Revelation 12:11 (Love): And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Acts 20:24 (Parallel theme): But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

Matthew 19:29 (Eternal Life): And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

Ecclesiastes 2:17 (Parallel theme): Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

Acts 21:13 (Parallel theme): Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

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