

You Don't Die When You Die

Jesus made some unusual statements. Consider what he said to a woman named Martha: "The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live" (John 11:25).

If you take that statement at face value, it sounds contradictory. *If you die, you won't die.* What?? That sounds like something out of one of the zombie movies and series that have flooded popular culture in recent years.

So which is it? Do I die or do I live?

Human history is full of attempts to find a fountain of youth or at least increase our lifespan. There are scientists committed to the study of longevity called—surprise!—longevity scientists. Their goal is to find ways to increase the average lifespan.

I've got to be honest. I don't want to live a long life. I mean, a loooong life. I turned sixty last year, and within a month, I saw three different doctors for three different reasons. It's like my warranty suddenly ran out. My mother died last month after many years of ailments and pain, mostly related to just age, and she said on several occasions she was ready to die and go Home. Who wants to live a long life if that's in the future?

Of course, we know what Jesus meant with His statement, "The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live." This physical life ain't all there is. According to Barna Research, 81% of Americans believe there is life after death. That large percentage of the population, though, would differ on what exactly life-after-death means. Jesus is clear: Belief in Him is the key to having eternal life. That means, conversely, that eternal death awaits those who do not believe in Him.

Our physical bodies wear out. All the kale, vitamin supplements, and workout regimens won't change that. Your warranty will give out. But that's not the end of the story for the follower of Christ.

"There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is different from that of the earthly ones. There is a splendor of the

sun, another of the moon, and another of the stars; in fact, one star differs from another star in splendor. So it is with the resurrection of the dead: Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption; sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power.... The dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. For this corruptible body must be clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal body must be clothed with immortality" (1 Cor. 15:40-43,52-53).

I'm hesitant to use the phrase "new and improved" to describe our bodies after we die. Too many advertisements have jaded me to the shout "NOW NEW AND IMPROVED!" I buy the new product, and it seems just like its old counterpart. And sometimes the new is *not* better than the old. Who really thinks all the design changes to the original Mustang were an improvement?



I cannot say what our new physical bodies will be like, but I'm pretty confident in saying we won't miss our old ones! "What no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human heart has conceived—God has prepared these things for those who love him" (1 Cor. 2:9).

It may be that 81% of Americans believe there is life after death, but it is only those who trust their lives and futures to Christ who can look forward to a never-ending life in a physical body beyond anything we can imagine.

"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live. Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26).

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