



PRAYER IS THE MIGHTIEST FORCE — 2 Chronicles 7:14

Prayergram®



Challenging Christians to Pray — January/February 2016

“Dying To Self,” What Is It?

Several years ago, I wrote, a book entitled, **“The Forbidden Zone,”** an exposé on “dying to self.” Undoubtedly, the book has helped many the world over and I give God all the glory and honor. There are tons and tons of religious books out there. **Why another one?** To answer that question, may I ask: **“When was the last time you read a book on ‘dying to self?’”** Of course, you know the answer.



Writers compel their readers to ponder life’s intriguing mysteries. They know exactly who they are writing for and how readers can benefit from their writing. In this age of hype and self-promotion, writing or even talking about “dying to self” is suicidal. It is so controversial and detrimental to one’s religious image. I believe it is high time this provocative subject was brought into the religious arena.

Dying to self is not the most popular subject among Christians today, in part, because it is very costly and probing. Another reason for its waning popularity is that many Christians demand books on **“personal happiness,”** not on **“personal holiness.”** Some people write books in order to impart their personal views and solutions. But for me, it is not the views which are important; it is the message overall. The message is what you’re trying to communicate. A message should get into people’s inner being, into their consciousness, into their lives, and more importantly, the message has to penetrate their hearts.

When I was a lad, I used to hang around my uncle’s sugar mills where huge steel cylinders with blunt spikes pulverized the cane as it came off the conveyer belt. Likewise, a real Christian pulverizes his/her own “ego” and inveterate pride by placing himself/herself on the conveyer belt of God’s

grace and mercy to be pulverized by His infinite love. Dying to self is a process quite necessary to the survival of one’s spiritual existence. Yet many people think it is reserved for the chosen few—doled out at birth to theologians, mystics, and Christians who wear berets. But the truth is that **God has given each one of us the measure of faith.** It is up to us how we want to use our God-given potential to overcome spiritual roadblocks put in place by years of unbelief and rebellion.

Every believer has the potential of becoming a bond-servant of Christ. This unique spiritual evaluation will give us a fresh perspective on the self-centered life. Then we’ll recognize and overcome the spiritual lassitude and traditional habits that can stifle our potential and learn how to implement and take advantage of the opportunities buried in the difficulties and challenges we face daily. There are many who think that the dying-to-self experience is old-fashioned, and it has no place in an age where we place self on a pedestal. Who are these people who stand as a barricade in the way of spiritual excavation? I can’t say for sure. All I know is that every day, thousands of Christians worldwide ponder ways and means on how they can add spiritual vigor and vitality to their daily existence. Regardless of what the ardent critic among us might say, I, for one, have come to the rude awakening that dying to self is the most rewarding and satisfying Christian journey that one can embark on, and this spiritual exercise should be practiced by all those who yearn for an “intimate walk” with the Lord, not precipitously but systematically.

Something majestic is happening to Christians the world over. Many are becoming increasingly aware of the wretchedness of the self-centered

life. There is, after all, something infinitely glorious about making a free will choice that will determine the course of our spiritual journey. It is probably the most delightful way I know for us to stay in touch with our Lord as we sojourn in this earthly pilgrimage. A move is on! Many spirit-drained Christians are coming back to their first love. These believers have rejected the sham of half-baked Christianity. They now pleurably acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord of their lives. They have discovered that intimacy with the Lord is possible, and His words are true. **Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me** (Mark 8:34b).

There are many precious Christians—saints of God. You probably know some of them. Perhaps you may be one yourself who doesn't sit around wishing for a closer walk with God. They love God supremely and passionately, and they are wanton in their spiritual appetites, choosy in their selections, unflinching in their commitments, and they go all out to fulfill the desire of their Commander-in-Chief, the Lord Jesus Christ. So self-forgetting are these blessed people of God that they are seemingly oblivious to religious and social pomposities. **I thank God for these selfless, non-applause seeking, and unassuming Christians who know how to conquer the world through the power of the cross. Isn't that exciting and exhilarating?**

The logical minded person would tell me that I'm talking about a subject that has been dead for a long time. But that's precisely the point! Sure, the obituary for "dying to self" has been written many times over by theological experts. **But I say kudos to all those who long for this precious experience—dying to self.** The Lord has given us both a positive and negative duty. We're to keep His Word and not deny His name. He will make a way for all those who so honor Him. We're not going to be heart-broken about the sinfulness of the land until we see the rebellion in our own hearts. The Lord doesn't

use a set standard or one-size-fits all approach, but rather He takes each and every one of us to a "customized walk." We need to escalate our passion for the Lord.

Everyone encounters difficulties with the flesh, but if we're saturated with God's strength, we'll undoubtedly reduce or eliminate its various propensities that attempt to stifle our walk with God. Frankly, there is an inexpressible joy in doing the will of God. Every believer ought to form an unbreakable bond with his Lord—mind-to-mind, heart-to-heart, precept-to-precept, and psyche-to-psyche—that will solidify his/her walk in the confinement of God's perfect will. **The Forbidden Zone** shows how one can go beyond the "bluff and fluff" of today's religious sensationalism. Walking with God calls for deeper answers and that should not be minimized by anyone. **The Christian "walk" must go beyond how one looks and talks.**

Death to self or else! That's God's requisition! If you are a believer and have never placed yourself under the Lordship of Christ, you need to consider self-examination, and the result will be absolutely breath-taking. We all need a spiritual jolt every now and then to get us going. I am not writing about someone else; it is about us—you and me—a personal exposé about struggles and passions as we attempt to cultivate a meaningful relationship with the living God. Seldom have we allowed the Lord to plough into our inner-soul, delving profoundly with personal brokenness as honestly as possible. Here we are talking about dealing with "self," the untamed enemy of one's soul. We are pretty much aware of our spiritual stagnation and yet we can't get a handle on the dilemma of extricating "self" from the throne of our lives.

In this blessed walk with God, we will learn how to yield ourselves to the ever entreating voice of the Spirit. This precious walk is made possible by the atonement of Christ, and it is open to all those who call upon Him in the spirit of true humility and brokenness.

Okay, I admit it! This article (from **The Forbidden Zone**) may seem just a little bit self slashing! But, after all, that's what "dying to self" is all about!
I invite you to explore with me this precious walk.

Read the Book that puts you in the Zone

Foreword by

Dr. Donald B. Ruthenberg

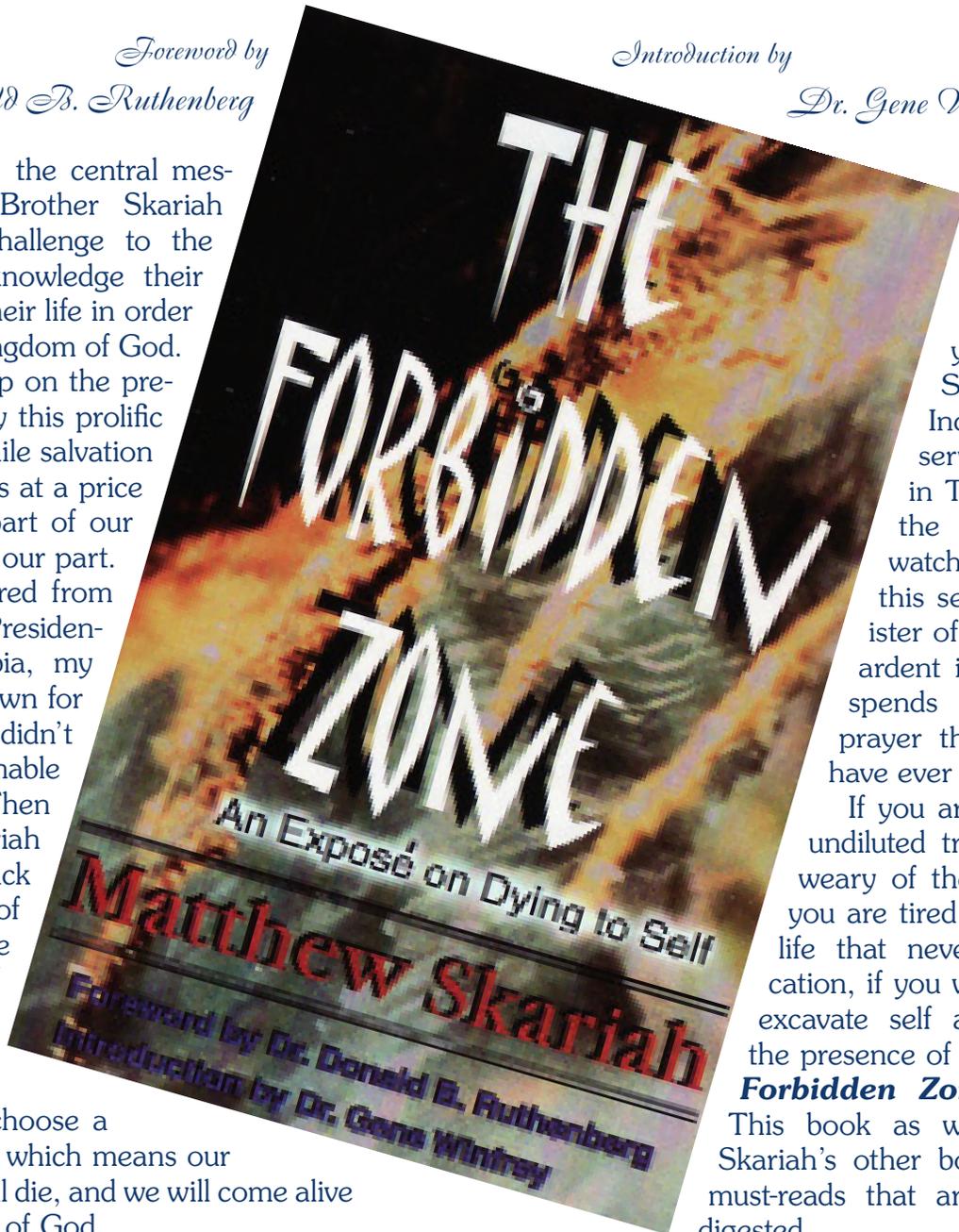
Introduction by

Dr. Gene Winfrey

In this book, the central message that Brother Skariah poses is a challenge to the reader to acknowledge their need to lose their life in order to gain the Kingdom of God. It is a follow-up on the previous books by this prolific author that while salvation is free it comes at a price both on the part of our Savior and on our part.

When I retired from the College Presidency at Columbia, my ego was let down for a few days. I didn't have a definable identity. Then Brother Skariah brought me back to my sense of worth and value as a child of God.

The author in this book is asking us to choose a new life for us which means our inner "ego" will die, and we will come alive with the Spirit of God.



Early in my 63 years of ministry, I was introduced to a young Matthew Skariah from India who was serving the Lord in Tulsa, OK. Over the years, I have watched God bless this servant and minister of the gospel and ardent intercessor who spends more time in prayer than any man I have ever known.

If you are searching for undiluted truth; if you are weary of the status quo, if you are tired of a self-driven life that never finds gratification, if you want to learn to excavate self and experience the presence of God, then **The Forbidden Zone** is for you. This book as well as Brother Skariah's other books should be must-reads that are savored and digested.

Dr. Donald B. Ruthenberg
Former President of Columbia College

Gene Winfrey, Th.D.
Founder of Antioch Bible College & Seminary

TO ORDER THIS AND OTHER BOOKS

By Matthew Skariah

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Are We Carnal?

by Matthew Skariah

Carnality is born out of rebellion and rebellious people are always looking for ways to rationalize sinful tendencies from a standpoint of pseudo logic.

Some Christians take carnality to breathtaking new heights in their quest for social acceptance and freedom of choice, not realizing that our freedom comes from God. They disregard the admonition of the Lord concerning the danger of rebellion and defiance against His

will and purpose. They rather go with the flow merely for the satisfaction of appeasement by acting as apologists for carnality and as purveyors against godliness. Is it any wonder they have lost all vestige of credibility they may once have had? They have abdicated their true spirituality in life for the purpose of gaining fame and popularity.

True spirituality is not dogma proliferated by a religious bureaucracy, but a life of 'power and purity'—an intensely personal existence lived in conjunction with the will, purpose and plan of God. A humble life will always be defined by its transparency, rather than its proclivity to carnality. Remember, placing unwarranted emphasis on the flesh can sabotage even the most seasoned Christian. Carnality must be purged if our life is to remain fruitful in the service of the King.

Carnality impedes spiritual growth.

IMAGINE, George Muller, God's humble servant, a remarkable man of "faith and prayer," and my spiritual inspiration, urging believers of his day to use their credit cards or asking permission to draw a certain sum each month from their checking account, to support the work of the orphanage that was entrusted to his care!

Today's evangelical Christianity has fallen on hard times. To walk with God at any age, one needs a sense of 'candor and unmitigated passion' for spiritual truths. We can reason our way through an airtight theology; but we need to faith our way through a 'living and vibrant' experience which will magnify our Lord in a world of doubt, skepticism and mistrust. Let's not supplement God's providence by scheming and planning! The life of Jesus is not a life of mistrust, doubt, cajoling, marketing and playing psychological mind game, but a life of "faith, simplicity, passion, devotion, power and purity" lived daily in uncontested obedience to His will and purpose. Let's trust God without the smallest admixture of doubt and fear! Faith is trust without reservation. The only way to overcome doubt is to exercise more faith in God. Our heavenly Father is not broke and His treasury is full and overflowing. God's grace stimulates our generosity. The words of the apostle Paul, "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel" (Acts 20:33). Covetousness is not in concert with the teachings of Christ.

Thoughts to Ponder

by Matthew Skariah

"If we love Christ much, surely we shall trust him much."

—Thomas Benton Brooks



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