
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: **What did Jesus mean when He said, "Let the dead bury the dead"?**

Luke 9:59-60

59 Then He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."

60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God."

At first this passage seems to portray Jesus as being a little bit unreasonable. It first appears here is a young man whose father just died and he would like to attend his father's funeral, but as soon as the funeral is over, he will come to work for Jesus. That seems like a reasonable request and it would seem at first that Jesus is being a little bit unreasonable to deny this request.

But on closer examination, we see that Jesus was not being unreasonable at all. This young man's father was probably not dead yet – he was probably only sick. The young man was wanting to stay home with his ailing father until he died and then he would bury him and begin to follow after Jesus. Since this is what was probably happening, it is understandable why Jesus would say what He did.

FIRST: Who knows how long the father would linger before finally dying.

SECOND: If this young man wanted to wait till his father died, what is there to prevent him later from wanting to wait till other relatives died also. In other words, people will always have sick relatives. If men put off following the Lord until there are no sick relatives, then no one will follow the Lord.

THIRD: This passage is teaching that there are priorities in life. Men have to choose what is most important in their lives: God or family. The Bible teaches that God and His business is more important than family – because God is the Creator and it is to Him that we must all stand before to be judged on the last day (2 Cor 5:10). God, because of who He is, deserves first place in the lives of people. Family must come second.

FOURTH: When Jesus said, "*Let the dead bury their own dead,*" He meant that there were other members in the family of this young man who were spiritually dead. They had chosen not to follow after God's way and because of that they were dead spiritually (Eph 2:1). Yet, even though these other family members were dead spiritually, they were still alive physically and they could watch over the ailing father until he died.

The passage which sums up this story best is:

Matthew 10:37

37 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

If men want to be saved in heaven and live in heaven with God eternally, they have to learn that nothing is more important than God and His way. The choice is up to each man. God does not force anyone to serve Him, but men must remember that there are consequences when they choose not to serve God. Men do not "have" to serve God, and God does not "have" to save them.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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