

Can't I Just Live in Sin and Convert on My Deathbed?

Can I just live my merry little life free of biblical restrictions and place my trust in Jesus on my deathbed?

“Yes, but ...”: That’s how evangelist Billy Graham recently responded to a similar question.

“My cousin has always lived kind of a wild life, but he says he isn’t worried because he plans to turn to God just before he dies, and he says God will forgive him and let him into heaven. Is this right?” the reader asked.

Graham detailed a wise response:

The Bible says that God is willing to forgive anyone who turns to Him in repentance and faith and sincerely puts their faith in Jesus Christ for their salvation—even at the last minute.

Do you recall that when Jesus was crucified, two criminals were executed with Him? One of them mocked Jesus and refused to believe in Him. But the other man confessed that he was a sinner and in faith he asked Jesus to save him. He only had hours to live—but still Jesus promised to receive him into heaven. He declared, “Today you will be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43b).

Your cousin, however, is unwise in thinking he can turn to God at the last minute and be saved; in fact, he is in grave spiritual danger. For one thing, we can’t truly receive Christ without sincerely repenting of our sins. But if he’s unwilling to do that now, what reason does he have for thinking he’ll be willing to do it later? Jesus’ first sermon included these words: “Repent and believe the gospel!” (Mark

1:15c).

But he is in grave spiritual danger also because he has no way of knowing if he'll even have an opportunity to repent. A sudden heart attack or stroke ... a fatal car accident ... a natural disaster—every day, people die with no warning. Pray for your cousin that he will face the foolishness of his ways and give his life to Christ. The Bible says, “Look, now is the accepted time; look, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2b). {eoa}