

Perilous Times

2 Timothy 3:1-3 (Amplified)

BUT UNDERSTAND this, that in the last days will come (set in) perilous times of great stress and trouble [hard to deal with and hard to bear].

²For people will be lovers of self and [utterly] self-centered, lovers of money and aroused by an inordinate [greedy] desire for wealth, proud and arrogant and contemptuous boasters. They will be abusive (blasphemous, scoffing), disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy and profane.

³[They will be] without natural [human] affection (callous and inhuman), relentless (admitting of no truce or appeasement); [they will be] slanderers (false accusers, troublemakers), intemperate and loose in morals and conduct, uncontrolled and fierce, haters of good.

1 Peter 5:8-11 (The Message)

Keep a cool head. Stay alert. The Devil is poised to pounce, and would like nothing better than to catch you napping. Keep your guard up. You're not the only ones plunged into these hard times. It's the same with Christians all over the world. So keep a firm grip on the faith. The suffering won't last forever. It won't be long before this generous God who has great plans for us in Christ—eternal and glorious plans they are!—will have you put together and on your feet for good. He gets the last word; yes, he does.

God always gives his children the answer to every problem in every age and at every stage of the Christian walk. He did not neglect to warn and advise us of things concerning these last days; and despite what scoffers may say, we are in the last days. Jesus is ready to return, but the Church is not ready for Him! However, Christians all over the world are waking up to the reality of the times in which we live. The Holy Spirit is quickening the hearts of the children of God worldwide to the times and the urgency of the hour.

How we respond to that quickening will determine whether we overcome or succumb to the onslaught of the enemy.

The King James Version says to “be sober, be vigilant”. This means that we must always be on the alert and live Godly in Christ, live righteously. The word “sober” is interesting because, just as an individual who gets intoxicated has their senses and judgment impaired by the effects of the alcoholic content of the liquor, so too the Christian, when they partake of the world system, their spiritual walk will be impaired by allowing rulership by their senses and desires. In this day, we cannot afford to be caught off guard. We must be prepared at every moment to resist the devil.

James 4:6-8 (Amplified) says: *“But He gives us more and more grace (power of the Holy Spirit, to meet this evil tendency and all others fully). That is why He says, God sets Himself against the proud and haughty, but gives grace [continually] to the lowly (those who are humble enough to receive it).*

¹So be subject to God. Resist the devil [stand firm against him], and he will flee from you.

²Come close to God and He will come close to you. [Recognize that you are] sinners, get your soiled hands clean; [realize that you have been disloyal] wavering individuals with divided interests, and purify your hearts [of your spiritual adultery].”

One of the main issues affecting Christians today is that they are “wavering individuals with divided interests”. The ways of the world are so attractive, and the pull of our old nature, old friends and past-times before the new birth experience is so strong that we cannot let go totally. We keep flirting with the devil, thinking that because we are born-again and God's hand of protection is on us we will get away with it. Not so! When we willfully go into the enemy's camp, knowing that it is against God's will, we will be defeated! The door opens for the devil to devour us. He devours our health, finances, destiny, and attacks our children!

An example of this is found in Numbers 14:40-45. After the children of Israel refused to enter the Promised Land and God passed judgment on them, they presumptuously determined to go to fight the Amalekites and Canaanites despite Moses' warning not to go. The result was that they suffered a terrible defeat, because God was not with them. When we presumptuously go into the enemy's camp to satisfy our friends, and our soulish nature, all our prayer and petition will not invoke God's protection or blessing! This is one of the reasons many Christians today are defeated, broke and some die! If you have been guilty of this, please be like David in Psalm 19:13(Amplified) *Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me! Then shall I be blameless, and I shall be innocent and clear of great transgression.*

A key issue in the world today is submission (which is a topic in itself). In the Christian, submission to God is the key to resisting the devil. How do we submit to God? How do we submit to anyone or anything? The first step is to know what is required. What does God require of us? Micah 6:8(Amplified) *"He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, and to love kindness and mercy, and to humble yourself and walk humbly with your God."* Here we have four things: - 1) do justly, 2) love kindness and mercy, 3) humble yourself, 4) walk humbly with your God.

According to this passage, God has shown us what is good. It is laid out for us in His Word, the Bible. The pre-requisite is to get in the Word, know what it says, know what He commands, and then do it. This is known as **OBEDIENCE!**

As we live in obedience to the Word of God, all the rest will follow! Do not think we can walk the thin line between the world and obedience to God and get away with it! We walk with Him in humility and success will come our way. The enemy cannot defeat us! He will try, but he will not succeed! (Isaiah 54:17)

Moses was known as the meekest man who lived, but a look at his life would indicate that he was definitely not weak! He was strong enough to lead millions of people out of the land ruled by the most powerful person of that era! He was strong enough spiritually to stand in the face of God while the rest of the nation was afraid! He spoke to God face to face.

We must be strong enough to come out of the land of Egypt! Forget all it offers! Forget those we left behind! Let us not tag along with the "mixed multitude" that will eventually get us to lust after the leeks and garlic and onions and the gods of Egypt". Let us get in the realm of the Spirit where we meet God face to face and discover all He has planned for us (Jeremiah 33:3). Let Him direct our paths. Allow Him to lead while we follow.

"You're cheating on God. If all you want is your own way, flirting with the world every chance you get, you end up enemies of God and his way. And do you suppose God doesn't care? The proverb has it that "he's a fiercely jealous lover." And what he gives in love is far better than anything else you'll find. It's common knowledge that "God goes against the willful proud; God gives grace to the willing humble."

⁷⁻¹⁰So let God work his will in you. Yell a loud no to the Devil and watch him scamper. Say a quiet yes to God and he'll be there in no time. Quit dabbling in sin. Purify your inner life. Quit playing the field. Hit bottom, and cry your eyes out. The fun and games are over. Get serious, really serious. Get down on your knees before the Master; it's the only way you'll get on your feet." James 4:4-10 (The Message)