

Living with the End in View

1 Peter 4:7-11

PART TWO

Introduction

How we handle trials, tragedy, affliction, and persecution when it comes is determined by how much we have invested in spiritual *preparation*.

“Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap” (Galatians 6:7).

“for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil” (Hebrews 5:13-14).

To be prepared for calamity, tragedy, affliction, or persecution we must be *trained in righteousness*:

“For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it” (Hebrews 12:11).

“Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come” (1 Timothy 4:7-8).

The objective in being a disciple is to become like your teacher; not just learn things about Him. “A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher” (Luke 6:40).

A Pattern for Daily Christian Living

“The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers” (v7).

The vulnerability of an undisciplined life.

“Vulnerability” The state of being exposed to the possibility of being attacked or harmed spiritually, physically, or emotionally. The inability to withstand the effects of a hostile environment.

First line of defense, *“be self-controlled and sober-minded”*

“Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city” (Proverbs 16:32).

“A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back” (Proverbs 29:11).

“A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls” (Proverbs 25:28).

If *“self-control”* is available as a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:23), what can be done to obtain it?

“Fortify *the walls* by prayer. Trust not to the strength of the citadel” (Chas. Bridges).

“prayer” is the channel of my personal communion with holy God. How important then is it to keep prayer unclouded, uncluttered, unobstructed?

Consider: “those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Galatians 5:24).

“sober-minded” Guard your mind. Post a sentinel there to keep vigilant watch day and night.

In order to exercise self-control we must see things in their proper perspective with a sound mind. This will only happen when we consume a steady diet of God’s Word.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” (Colossians 3:16).

“You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul.... You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise” (Deuteronomy 11:18-20).

“I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you” (Psalm 119:11).

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This treasure, like faith itself, must be held with “a good conscience” (1 Timothy 1:19).

“So long as Eve kept by faith the word of the Lord, she resisted Satan; but from the time she doubted of that which God made most certain by his word, at once she was snared” (Wm. Cowper).

Job said: “I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food” (Job 23:12).

“[Job] has ingrained God’s teachings deep inside him in order to guide his daily life. God’s word hidden in his mind keeps him from sinning” (John E. Hartley).

“Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart, for I am called by your name, O Lord, God of hosts” (Jeremiah 15:16).

We consume things for two reasons: 1) we hunger for them; 2) we are strengthened by them.

“Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God” (1 Peter 1:22-24).

Why? ...

“for the sake of your prayers” (v7).

Staying immersed in the Word of God taps the mind of God, which opens wide the channel of prayer.

“Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins” (v8).

“Love is capable of being commanded because it is not primarily an emotion but a decision of the will leading to action” (Edwin A. Blum).

The love of God that flows freely without ceasing into the heart of the believer provides the ongoing power source that compels us and makes it possible to love other people.