

HOLDING STEADFAST IN TRUSTING GOD ALONE

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We certainly can thank God for how He is working with, and developing, His people. God is doing everything possible to conform us into the image of His Son Jesus Christ, and to prepare us for eternal life. It certainly makes life worth living when everything that touches us is for our best spiritual interest.

Sometimes a very small thing, humanly speaking, works out for some spiritual blessing and benefit, and becomes the means of great growth and development.

The Bible tells us there isn't a thing that can happen to us, not a circumstance can arise in our lives, that God doesn't intend it for our teaching and development. Paul tells us in Romans 8:28-29, that everything that happens to us---every detail and circumstance of life--works together for our good. Then he adds --- "whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son."

What great work that is! We are born under the full control of self and the devil--- doubly deaf, dumb and blind concerning God and His Truth, with a through ticket to the Lake of Fire and unable to know or to help ourselves! To think that God will take charge of our lives, and use His great power and wisdom in changing all that! We are to exchange self and the devil for Jesus Christ the Son of God. Jesus is to be our life. We are to be confirmed into His image.

Everything that touches us is to work out to that end---to teach and develop us to the point where Jesus Christ will be in full control. To be fully conformed to His image, is the most valuable thing that could happen to a human being.

On the other hand, the things that happen to people who are not in the will of God work together for bad." Paul sums this up in 2 Corinthians, where he says--"the sorrow of this world worketh death"---and so does the happiness of this world.

However, to a truly surrendered Christian, everything that touches them will be like a stepping-stone, to take then step-by-step (and day-by-day) just as fast as they can bear it, into the image of Christ--and finally into eternal life.

This carries everything else with it--- it carries health, peace, the control and salvation of our family, and financial blessings of every kind.

For example, if a person in the world is left a great human inheritance of money, they do not continue to work night and day to make both ends meet. No, they only need to go to the bank, and draw money out.

Through that great work on Calvary's Cross, we have been left a full inheritance of God's financial wealth, which is on deposit in God's bank, and it is just as real an inheritance as any money in an earthly bank.

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If we give our lives to God right and hold steady, then we will grow and develop rapidly--and God will bring all of us to that place where we will enter into our financial wealth in Heaven's bank--where we can get as much money as we want, when we want it, and how we want it.

That is why all of Satan's efforts have been to get people away from Calvary's Cross, and what that Atonement of Christ has given us. That is why the devil has all the churches believing that Jesus Christ has changed, and that He will not do anything for us in this present life. They say, Jesus did it when he was here on earth, but He will not do anything for anybody today.

That just permits the devil to have complete control of the human race. The most delightful place for the devil is to control a professing Christian. That is why Satan gets professing Christians to shut God out of their lives, and everything that pertains to it.

The truth is that Jesus came, first of all to deliver us out of the troubles of this present life. Jesus came to "destroy the works of the devil," and to render him powerless. That is why the devil fights, and tries to nullify, the great work of Jesus Christ on Calvary's Cross, and to keep us from going to God directly and personally.

When Jesus was here on earth, the devil succeeded in convincing the Jewish people--and the devil has done the same with all the churches today---that God has changed, that Christ has changed, and He does not destroy the works of the devil any longer--that God does not heal and protect our bodies, that He does not supply our needs, that He does not break Satan's power over our unsaved loved ones---God does not do one thing for us in this present life. Those are all lies of the devil!

A Christ Who is not divine, and Who has changed is no Christ at all. Do we fully realize how fortunate we are to have found out that we do have a divine Christ---that we do have a resurrected Christ---and that we do have a Christ Who is "the same yesterday today and forever,"---Who has all power and authority in Heaven and in earth---and that He will be with us always---always at our side---even to the end of the world.

We have a written Word, God's Word, the Bible, that neither men nor devils can change--a Word that is still "full of life and power," as the writer to the Hebrews tells us

One thing about the Scriptures is, they are new every time we read them---that is, if we depend on God each time we read our Bibles. It is one of the proofs that the Bible is a divine Book, a message straight from God which has a divine origin. No one can understand the truths of the Bible with their own mind."

With every book written by man, we can understand it with our own mind and intelligence, but when it comes to the Word of God, only God Himself can reveal the truths of the Bible to us.

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No wonder John the Baptist said, “a man cannot receive anything except it be given him from above.” That is why we ought to pray earnestly, even only in a few words, every time we open the Bible to read.

We should ask God to give us much from above; to open up our minds and hearts to understand it. The most valuable knowledge we can get from any book is the knowledge that the Bible gives. It is very useful in every detail of our Christian life.

1 Peter 5 says---“be sober, be vigilant, for your adversary the devil walketh about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you.’

That is some place to come to! That is a wonderful responsibility --telling us how we may become perfect, and how we can become settled, or established.

Anything and everything that would perfect our character is valuable, and anything that would establish us so that we would not fall by the wayside is of the utmost or greatest importance.

He warns us that the devil is continually on our track. It doesn't mean that the devil is always roaring on our track, but it does mean that he comes secretly, just as sneaky, and just as subtly, and just as quietly, as he can.

The devil's greatest asset is to hide his identity, and he is an expert in doing that. Satan has been in the deceiving business for six thousand years. He was a fallen archangel, to begin with.

But Jesus Christ conquered him, and rendered him powerless on Calvary's Cross. God has provided the spiritual light and strength that will enable us to detect Satan. And, we also will be enabled to profit by any of his efforts to attack us.

Let us consider what we are to be sober and vigilant about. What are we to watch? What are we to be on our guard against? The Bible makes it plain from the very beginning---that the devil has just had one plan of working---and that is, to induce or persuade people to depend on something, or on somebody besides God, for what they want in this present life.

That is where we are to be sober and that is where we are to be vigilant. We are to be on our guard against those thoughts of Satan that would get us to look to a human source or to trust in anything, or in anybody, besides God.

For example, after we have prayed for something, the devil will appear. Thoughts will come into our minds to look to some human source of help for our deliverance.

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It is easy to do that, because we were born in that condition--with a nature to depend on something besides God. Satan follows us through our entire Christian life, trying to get us to look to some human source for our help---to depend on human help, instead of God alone.

We might be surprised how many battles are won, and the vast number that are lost, right at this point. It is only the Holy Spirit who can expose these suggestions of Satan, because the devil tries to fool even those who are genuine---if they are not always "sober and vigilant."

We will never pray for anything that the devil will not tell us that we are not going to get it. The devil will either give us a reason why, or else get us to depend on somebody, or something, besides God for it. That is just where we are to be "sober and vigilant."

Jesus told us that in the closing days of the Gospel, there would be very few people, considering the world as a whole, who would be trusting in God alone for the things they needed and desired in this present life, and who would deal personally with God about them.

In the parable of the unjust judge and the poor widow, which God gave us in the 18th chapter of Luke, we have the most valuable truths showing this. God told that story for the express purpose of teaching us to always pray, and to never lose heart.

In other words, when we go to God for anything, we are to hold steady in seeking it from Him, and to not accept the thoughts Satan may try to put into our minds. We are never to let our answers to prayer go by default, meaning to allow the devil to convince us to accept defeat without us holding steadfast for what belongs to us.

God means that the moment we make our decision final to go through with Him, there will be a full manifestation of His power---not only in giving us the grace to receive, but the perfect victory as well.

We know well that the devil hasn't changed. And it was in two things, which are closely united, that Satan launched this world on all the trouble it has had, individually and as a whole. The devil got Adam to believe his word instead of God's Word---and he got Adam to trust in himself instead of God. This is the vital point.

All these suggestions and discouraging doubts and fears, and dark pictures (that seem exactly like our own sensible thoughts, and seem founded on fact) are directly from Satan.

It is the sale when we pray for our family. It is God's will, and according to God's Word for us to have the devil cast out---and kept out---of every member of our household. However, the devil tempts us to use self-effort. And, wherever self is trying to do anything, it opens the door wide for the devil.

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Therefore, if Satan can get us to depend on the least human effort to control any member of our household, it will permit the devil to remain in charge of that person's life.

That is where we need to be “sober and to be vigilant” ---as Peter tells us.

When we pray for Satan to be cast out of anyone, and for them to be controlled by God's power, there comes a picture in our minds---a suggestion soft and gentle---"well, they are still the same person; there is no change in them yet."

When we accept these thoughts, it is enough to shut out the entire power of God and allow the devil to continue. God's written Word says they are delivered!

In all the examples in the Bible, the devil was cast out at once---wherever God could get anybody to believe His Word instead of the devil's lies.

So, if ever we need to be “sober and vigilant,” it is when we pray for our families. We should be on our guard against the suggestions of the devil that come into our mind and say that it will not be done.

If we accept these suggestions and pictures of the devil, that the things we have prayed for are just the same---we have wasted our time, and done ourselves an injury instead of a help.

God is just as willing to deliver today as Christ was, when He walked sixty miles to cast the devil out of the daughter of that woman of Canaan. That woman not only refused to believe the devil, but she would not believe the opposition of Jesus Christ Himself!

Isn't that some example for us?

No wonder Jesus said--- “Oh woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt.”

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