

THE DANGER OF COMPLACENCY

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Not too long now till we come to the Autumn Festivals.

It might be a good time to review ... take stock — how have we done since the Feast last year?

How are we doing? Have we made good progress? Have we been fruitful? Or — are we just “treading water” ... standing still? Or — even gone backwards? How am I doing? How would you describe your life and journey with God?

Compare:

1 Thessalonians 1:1-4

1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers,

3 **remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ** in the sight of our God and Father,

4 knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.

Faith ... hope ... charity ... 3 key characteristics. If Paul saw our life would he see that we fit that description?

Or ... possibly like ... ?? Is this more like what we are — Laodiceans?

Revelation 3:14-17

14 **“And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write,**

These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

15 **“I know your works, (bad works) that you are neither cold nor hot.** I could wish you were cold or hot.

16 So then, **because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.**

17 Because you say, **I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing**—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—

Lukewarm ... self-satisfied. They say to themselves that they are pretty good. They deceive themselves.

What does the evidence of the last 12 months show about you? Or the last 5-10 years? Which of these 2 groups do we come into?

God's power hasn't waned — so if we haven't grown as we might like — it's down to us. The problem is at our end.

One major area I believe we all need to watch out for is the **DANGER OF COMPLACENCY.**

Complacency: “A feeling of contentment or self-satisfaction ... especially when coupled with a lack of awareness of impending danger”.

Someone said: “The contented soul is the stagnant soul”. Pooled there ... not moving waters.

It pictures someone at ease ... relaxed ... casual ... coasting along. Unaware of the danger approaching.

We need to be alert. Not complacent!

Hebrews 2:1-3

1 **Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.**

2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward,

3 **how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation**, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,

Pay attention! Don't drift!

“The road to hell slopes gently downwards”. You end up in a place that you never intended.

It’s our way of life that matters. Not necessarily our technical knowledge.

When we first “started out” — we were excited ... hungry to get more information. Did lots of Bible Study. On fire? Wanted to tell or share this with our family and friends? Shun the world?

But ... over time ... the tendency is to cool down. Coast? And we are neither hot nor cold ?? Lukewarm?

Deuteronomy 4:1, 9, 23-24

1 “Now, O Israel, **listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live**, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers is giving you.

9 **Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life.** And teach them to your children and your grandchildren,

23 **Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the Lord your God which He made with you**, and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of anything which the Lord your God has forbidden you.

24 For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

Take heed! Lest you forget!

It is human nature to forget the past ... become overly familiar — unless we actively remember.

Don’t forget our past walk with God.

Don’t forget the price that was paid! Don’t forget “our future” either!

An aeroplane only stays in the air if it is moving forward! Us too!

Amos 6:1

1 **Woe to you who are at ease in Zion, (in the Church)**

And trust in Mount Samaria,
Notable persons in the chief nation,
To whom the house of Israel comes!

Amos 6:3-7

3 Woe to you who put far off the day of doom, (*mañana* — “plenty of time”)

Who cause the seat of violence to come near;

4 Who lie on beds of ivory,

Stretch out on your couches,

Eat lambs from the flock

And calves from the midst of the stall;

5 Who sing idly to the sound of stringed instruments,

And invent for yourselves musical instruments like David;

6 Who drink wine from bowls,

And anoint yourselves with the best ointments,

But are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.

7 Therefore they shall now go captive as the first of the captives,

And those who recline at banquets shall be removed.

The devil has 3 pet demons named: “No God”. “No hell”. “No hurry”.

There may be “sufficient” time ahead? But you shouldn’t count on it — especially individually. Let’s look at this parable:

Luke 12:16-21

16 Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: “**The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully.**

17 **And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’**

18 So he said, **‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods.**

19 **And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.” ’**

20 **But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’**

21 **“So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”**

The primary problem here is covetousness ... comfort ... contentment — but it's also a warning about timing! So — don't be complacent!

Another end-time prophecy.

Isaiah 32:1-4

1 Behold, a king will reign in righteousness,
And princes will rule with justice. (*"Princes" — you and me?*)
2 A man will be as a hiding place from the wind,
And a cover from the tempest,
As rivers of water in a dry place,
As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.
3 The eyes of those who see will not be dim,
And the ears of those who hear will listen.
4 Also the heart of the rash will understand knowledge,
And the tongue of the stammerers will be ready to speak plainly.

A word-picture of the World-to-come.

Isaiah 32:9-11

9 **Rise up, you women who are at ease,**
Hear my voice;
You complacent daughters,
Give ear to my speech.
10 In a year and some days
You will be troubled, you complacent women;
For the vintage will fail,
The gathering will not come.
11 **Tremble, you women who are at ease;**
Be troubled, you complacent ones;
Strip yourselves, make yourselves bare,
And gird sackcloth on your waists.

Isaiah 32:14-15

14 **Because the palaces will be forsaken,**
The bustling city will be deserted.
The forts and towers will become lairs forever,
A joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of flocks— (*doom and gloom until God restores the Millennial world to fruitfulness*)
15 Until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high,

And the wilderness becomes a fruitful field,
And the fruitful field is counted as a forest.

“Women” or Israel’s leaders (?) ... unaware of the danger ahead. Too comfortable! On their beds of ivory ... enjoying life ... blinded to what is coming. Unaware of impending danger.

A warning gives us the opportunity to take action!

Proverbs 1:20-33

20 **Wisdom calls aloud outside;**

She raises her voice in the open squares.

21 **She cries out in the chief concourses,**

At the openings of the gates in the city

She speaks her words: (a warning)

22 “How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? (“Simple ones” — naïve ... seducible)

For scorners delight in their scorning,

And fools hate knowledge.

23 Turn at my rebuke;

Surely I will pour out my spirit on you; (*addressed to believers*)

I will make my words known to you. (*addressed to believers*)

24 **Because I have called and you refused,**

I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded,

25 Because you disdained all my counsel,

And would have none of my rebuke,

26 **I also will laugh at your calamity;**

I will mock when your terror comes,

27 When your terror comes like a storm,

And your destruction comes like a whirlwind,

When distress and anguish come upon you.

28 “**Then they will call on me, but I will not answer;**

They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me.

29 **Because they hated knowledge**

And did not choose the fear of the Lord,

30 They would have none of my counsel

And despised my every rebuke.

31 **Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way,**

And be filled to the full with their own fancies.

32 For the turning away of the simple will slay them,

And **the complacency of fools will destroy them**; (*self-satisfied — complacent*)

33 But whoever listens to me will dwell safely,

And will be secure, without fear of evil.”

Many warnings ... many opportunities. We can listen. It's up to us!

Verse 32 “the complacency of fools will destroy them”.

Jack Nicklaus: “Complacency is a continuous struggle that we all have to fight”.

1 Corinthians 10:11-13

11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

Let him who thinks he stands ... take heed lest you fall!

Complacency implies we're comfortable ... coasting ... at ease. Instead ... we should be alert — vigilant — on guard. Taking action.

1 Peter 5:8-9

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

Be vigilant ... resist. Don't let satan tempt you to be “at ease”. If he does — he has found someone to devour.

Matthew 7:21-27

21 **“Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.** *(The one who does the will of the Father)*

22 **Many** will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’

23 **And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’** *(It’s not talking the talk that matters. If you’re not doing what the Father wants done — forget it!)*

24 “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:

25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

26 “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:

27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

We must be doers ... not just hearers (remember to “fear God” is to “hear and obey”). And not just now and then. It’s a way of life — involving some effort. We should be walking that narrow path.

Look at the Apostle Paul.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

24 **Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.**

25 And **everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things.** *(Exercises self-control)* Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.

26 **Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.**

27 **But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection,** lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Paul disciplined himself. He didn’t coast: “well ... I’m an Apostle”. 😊

How many successful athletes are complacent? Ignore their training for long periods? Just assume they can “turn up” and compete?

It takes consistent effort ... whether we feel like it or not ... enduring unto the end.

Paul pursued his objective energetically!

Philippians 3:7-14

7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.

8 **Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ**

9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith of Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

10 **that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,**

11 **if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from (among) the dead.**

12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but **I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.**

13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but **one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,**

14 **I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.**

Philippians 3:12 (THE VOICE)

12 **I am charging on to gain anything and everything the Anointed One, Jesus, has in store for me—and nothing will stand in my way because He has grabbed me and won't let me go.**

There was no complacency in Paul's life? He was active and alert. And a good example for us.

It is better to be enthusiastic than lukewarm!!

To be complacent: “A feeling of contentment ... self-satisfaction ... especially coupled with a lack of awareness and of impending danger”.

Paul clearly wasn't complacent!

We could do with checking ourselves. Do you still hunger and thirst for righteousness? Passionate? Striving?

Or — lukewarm ... and unaware? Have a look! Take action ... if necessary (check your prayer time and thoughtful Bible reading).

But ... in passing ... doesn't the Bible teach we should be content? A contradiction somewhere? Not really.

1 Timothy 6:6-10

6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain.

7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.

9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.

10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Be content!

Paul is referring to material possessions. Don't be too ambitious ... striving against others ... unhappy because you don't have a bigger house ... a newer car.

It is good to be at peace and be content with your material blessings.

But we should want our spiritual lives to be growing and fruitful ... actively going forward ... growing in grace and knowledge.

Being lukewarm ... half-asleep ... believing you're already “wealthy and have need of nothing” — is complacent.

It is easy to fall into complacency ... the passage of time — same old familiar routine.

SO ... BE AWARE.

“Complacency happens almost without notice. Check and renew your heart daily”.

ABG = ALWAYS BE GROWING. Don't be stagnant.