

RICHARD SUMMERLIN MINISTRIES

NOW faith is

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2023



2023

WE ARE GOING HIGHER

ISAIAH 60:1-7

NOW FAITH IS

IN THIS ISSUE

1

THE CHURCH OF THE END TIMES

By: Pastor Richard Summerlin

2

CHURCH OF PERGAMUM SEVEN LETTERS TO THE CHURCH

By: Pastor Kimberly Summerlin

3

PEACE BE STILL

By: Kayla Corey

4

PRAISE BRINGS VICTORY AND PLUNDER

By: Angie Thomas

5

THE SLOW PROGRESSION OF DRIFTING

By: Dillon Mavrich

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The Church Of The End Times

By: Pastor Richard Summerlin

The greatest line of defense placed on this Earth for the current and future times we are living in **IS THE CHURCH**. Jesus spoke these words prior to being beaten and crucified on the cross: “

“...on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it”(Matthew 16:18).

God never made a promise to anyone that they would not face challenges - but this promise He made through His Son Jesus Christ: no challenge or battle that comes against the Body of Christ (the church) would prove more powerful or have victory over us.

This is a significant statement because the ability of the church to succeed greatly depends on the ability of the church to be attached to the head. The church is a body, referred to multiple times as the Body of Christ. With the church being the body, Jesus is the head:

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence.” (Colossians 1:15-18)

Jesus, being the head of the body (you and me), brings all power, dominion, and authority over any principality - seen or unseen - under the authority of the church. The body cannot go anywhere unless the head goes along with it.

This is one of the reasons, especially in the times we are in, that it is imperative that the Body of Christ (the church) be on the same page entirely.

For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or

Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many” (1 Corinthians 12:12-14).

You can see there are many members of the Body of Christ: all together, we make up one body.

EVERY PERSON HAS THEIR PLACE WITHIN THE BODY, AND IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT EACH BODY PART DOES THEIR OWN PART.

Did you know that just one person (or member) not upholding their part - or job - within the body can cause major problems for the rest of the body, no matter how insignificant their part might seem?

TO BE CLEAR, NO PART OF THE BODY IS INSIGNIFICANT.

Think about your small toe on your foot. In the grand scheme of things, it is probably one of the least thought-about parts of the body. Though small, it does serve a purpose, aiding in the balance of the entire body.

However, when that small toe runs headfirst into the corner of a table, how big of an impact it has on the rest of the body.

When each body part is not in their place, it affects the entire body. “And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it...” (1 Corinthians 12:26)

The reason this is so important during the end times is because of what Paul teaches us in the first book of Timothy:

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons...” (1 Timothy 4:1).

There is a demonic force, a powerful demonic force, working against the church during these end times. But when someone goes outside of the protection of the church - which is where these principalities of darkness do not have power or authority - people begin to get into trouble.

BEING AROUND THE THINGS OF GOD HELPS ANCHOR US TO THE PROMISES, PROTECTION, AND PLAN OF GOD.

“This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast...”(Hebrews 6:19).

An anchor for our soul. That is what the Bible describes: the hope, or confidence, we have for the promise God made to Abraham and passed down through his lineage to us. It is an anchor for our soul.

The word anchor in the Greek is agkyra, which means a stay or safeguard. When we think of the word anchor, most of the time, what comes to mind is a boat anchor. A large hunk of metal sitting at the bottom of a body of water, holding a boat in place. While that is what an anchor does, I personally do not think that is the best example of the anchor the author of Hebrews 6 meant.

When I think of the word anchor, I think of the Greek meaning safeguard; what comes to mind is a protective force that takes swift action when necessary. Take Israel's Iron Dome system, for example. It is designed to respond to projectiles that pose a threat to the nation of Israel. It is an all-weather air defense system that intercepts and destroys short-range rockets and enemy artillery shells. When an enemy takes aim at Israel and launches an attack, the Iron Dome system moves into action to destroy anything that comes into range of the nation of Israel. It is an anchor - a safeguard - for the nation of Israel.

This is exactly how you will be protected from being deceived and pulled away from the things of God in the current times that we live in. **STAYING WITHIN THE SAFEGUARDS, GOD HAS SET UP FOR YOU WILL KEEP YOU OUT OF THE SNARE OF THE ENEMY.**

Some ways to stay safeguarded (anchored) to the things of God are to celebrate and

make big the same things that God celebrates and makes big. Some things that the Bible tells us are celebrated by God are:

- Church attendance
- Studying & meditating on the Bible
- Prayer & fellowship with God

The word assemble or gather in some form is used dozens of times in the New Testament referencing church attendance. One example of the benefits of church attendance is mentioned here in Acts 9:31 “Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.”

THE CHURCH IS A SAFEGUARD IN TODAY'S SOCIETY FOR THE BELIEVER.

In the book of Joshua, he writes: “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success” (Joshua 1:8).

Studying your Bible and regularly keeping the Word of God in front of you guarantees your path will lead to success.

KEEPING YOUR BIBLE IN FRONT OF YOUR EYES WILL PREVENT YOU FROM SUCCUMBING TO FOOLISH DOCTRINES AND OUTLANDISH TEACHINGS.

Couple this with a Bible-preaching and a God-fearing Pastor, and you will be unstoppable!

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6).

PRAYER AND FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD SHOULD BE AN ONGOING, REGULAR OCCURRENCE FOR THE BELIEVER.

Your personal fellowship with God should not only spike when you have a catastrophe or when you need something. That is not the only time you talk to your kids, spouse, or friends, is it? God desires to spend time and fellowship with His children. ...But in everything... Paul encourages you to always, in all matters, keep your relationship with God burning.

These simple and impactful ways to keep your life close to God will anchor you to the safety of the Word. You will no longer be tossed around by every doctrine, global affair, evil political agenda, or sin that easily ensnares us.

YOU WILL LIVE VICTORIOUSLY, IMPACT THOSE AROUND YOU, AND GUARANTEE YOUR INCLUSION IN THE CATCHING AWAY AT THE TIME OF JESUS' RETURN.

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Church of

SEVEN LETTERS OF THE APOCALYPSE

PERGAMUM



BY: PASTOR KIMBERLY SUMMERLIN

The Deceived Church, The Compromised, or The Indulged Church

And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges. I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. (Revelation 2:12-17)

In my last two articles, we looked at the first two churches on the postal route of the seven churches, written about in the book of Revelation, that received a letter from the Lord.

The church of Ephesus was considered the loveless church or the relaxed church. They left their first love. Imagine being labeled that for all of history. That is NOT what I want to be written about me for the rest of eternity!!!

Then we have the Church of Smyrna, considered the Suffering Church or the Persecuted Church. Tested, Tried and Triumphant. If I had my choice, I want this to be said about the kind of church we are at New Way. I could do without the persecution, but how do you know where you really stand unless it's been tried and tested?

The next church on the postal route of the seven churches is the Church of Pergamum. This church is considered the deceived church, the compromised, or the indulged church.

"Ancient correspondence began with the author's name. And this author is identified as the one who has a sharp two-edged sword. We know who that is from chapter 1, verse 16 because back in chapter 1, you have the vision of Jesus Christ. And Jesus Christ is described in verse 16 as having in His right hand seven stars, which, you know, are the seven leaders of the churches, as is noted for you in this same text. And out of His mouth, it says, came a sharp two-edged sword. So, the Lord is described as holding the leadership of the church in His hand and out of His mouth coming a sharp two-edged sword. Now, when you go over to chapter 2, verse 12, the one who has the sharp two-edged sword says this. Jesus Christ, then, is the author.

And in this case, you will notice that the description of Christ that is selected is that which articulates His judicial authority. It sees Him as judge. It sees Him as executioner. What is it that is the sword coming out of His mouth? Perhaps Hebrews 4:12 says it as well as any, "For the Word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any" – what? – "two-edged sword." It is the Word of God coming out of His mouth that is like a two-edged sword. It's a double-edged sword to speak of its facility and alacrity and judging and moving fast from side to side and wreaking havoc as it moves. It is an instrument of judgment falling on those who are deserving of that judgment.

In Revelation chapter 19, we see the same imagery. In verses 11-15, Jesus Christ in His return is described; heaven opens in verse 11, a white horse, the one on it is faithful and true; He comes in judgment and making war; His eyes are like a flame of fire, and so forth. And in verse 15, "And from His mouth comes a sharp sword." And here it tells you what it's for. "So that with it He may smite the nations." It is a sword of judgment. "The two-edged character simply means it moves fast, and rapidly, and devastatingly in both directions. It cuts everywhere it turns."-(John MacArthur).

Notice how the first two letters that John penned by the leading of the Holy Spirit began with:

Ephesus- "The one who holds the seven leaders in His hands." Not a threatening letter, speaking about His control and His care and concern as He moves through His church and protects His leaders.

Smyrna- "The first and the last, the one who was dead and came to life." This is an encouraging letter because some of them were dying for their faith in Christ. He was writing them as the one who was resurrected. The one who had conquered death.

But the introduction of Christ in this letter to the church of Pergamum is not a happy one; it is a threatening one. This church was facing judgment. They were in danger, and that danger was coming from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

HE IS THE ONE WHO WIELDS THE SWORD. THE SWORD OF JUDGMENT USED TO CUT DOWN THOSE WHO DISOBEY THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Satan discovered that the persecution only purified the church and spread the gospel, so he took the opposite tactic to indulge the church.

Under the direction of Constantine, the church married the world. Somewhere along the line, the separation between the church and the world got blurred. Christian practices were adopted by the world and worldly practices were adopted by the Christians. If ever there were such a time before, we are in that time again today. The church has become worldly. Those who were once with us are with us no more. The difference between the church and the world is indiscernible.

THE CHURCH HAS SOLD OUT TO SATAN AND HAS LONG SINCE BEEN STRIPPED OF ANY SPIRITUAL POWER AND INFLUENCE.

This was the same state of the church of Pergamum, and that's why the Lord identifies Himself as the one with the sword.

Pergamum was an important center where pagan cults worshipped Zeus and other gods. The worship of the Roman emperor was also very big. A temple was built for Caesar worship in 29 A.D., which was right about the time of the flourishing ministry of Jesus Christ.

The city of Pergamum was obviously an evil place because it is referred to in Revelation 2:13 as "where Satan's throne is." This church is beginning to be linked inseparably to the world. And this church has decided that it can maintain some kind of Christian credibility and also associate itself with the sins of the past. Pergamos is a picture of any church that courts the world, any church that marries paganism in any form. The church at Pergamos is a picture of any believer, any Christian who weds the world, as we shall see.

"...Where you dwell," Satan's throne, his headquarters" refers to a permanent residence. The synagogue of Satan was in Smyrna- it was perverted Judaism. People who said they were Jews but were not. The throne of Satan was this Gentile base of false religions. Satan

had set up his enterprise there, and this little church was right in the middle of it and was, in some ways, succumbing to it.

"In the city of Pergamos, there was a medical school. And this was a famous place of medicine.

Mingled into their medicine, of course, was a lot of superstition. And the emblem or the idol of Asclepius was a snake. If you have ever seen the medical symbol, you will notice that in the middle of a medical symbol winding its way around the pole is a snake. That is the ancient god Asclepius, the god of healing. When you went to the temple of Asclepius, you went there to be healed. In the temple, harmless snakes slithered all over the temple floor. And to be healed, you had to go in there and lie down and stay there. You slept on the temple floor, and while you slept, the defused multiplicity of the deity of Asclepius crawled over your body and infused you with his healing power. Satanic? Yes. Right from the old serpent himself.

So when you hear that Asclepius was there, the serpent god, that sounds Satanic, when you know that Zeus was there and big upon the hill looming over the whole place was an altar to this false god, you know that Satan was there. And when you know they were worshiping the Caesars, you know Satan was there. And when you put it all together, certainly this is Satan's throne."-(John MacArthur)

In the middle of all that was the church of Pergamum: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied My faith." That's what they got right. In other words, you have been faithful to me, and you did not deny My truth, My gospel, the message of salvation by faith. But... I have a few things against you. "Because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam." Verse 15, "You also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans." They had people in the church who believed false things, and they allowed it, and there were some who held the teachings of Balaam, and they didn't deal with it or put them out of the church. It wasn't a question of them denying the Lord's name. They wouldn't do that. It wasn't a question of them denying the faith. They wouldn't do that either. It was a question of being soft and tolerant to the error. There were some that wed the world, and they were allowing them to feel comfortable in it.



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Balaam's strategy was to get the Moabite women to seduce the Israelite men into intermarriage. The doctrine of Balaam is the teaching that the people of God can intermarry with the heathen and thus will become what the heathen are.

Verse 17 says, "He who has an ear to hear let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To the one who conquers, I will give some hidden manna, I will also give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name inscribed that no one knows except the one who receives it."

THE BIBLE SAYS IN 2 CORINTHIANS 6, "WHAT FELLOWSHIP HAS LIGHT WITH DARKNESS? WHAT CONCORD HAS CHRIST WITH BELIAL? BE NOT UNEQUALLY YOKED TOGETHER WITH UNBELIEVERS."

Verse 15 says, "In the same way," this is important because the teaching of the Nicolaitans led to the same behavior. The way of the Nicolaitans led to a mingled lifestyle. It advocated an extreme indulgence in sin, uncleanness, immorality, and orgies based upon a perverted understanding of God's grace. It was an abuse of freedom.

Who is the one who overcomes? The believer. 1 John 5:4 says, "Who is the overcomer? The one who believes." The true Christians, true believers, those who did believe, those who do believe, and those who continue to believe, will get the true bread of life, Jesus Christ and all the benefits of knowing Him. I will sustain you.

GRACE DOESN'T ALLOW YOU TO LIVE ABOVE GOD'S STANDARD. IF SO, THEN WHY DOES THE NEXT VERSE CALL FOR REPENTANCE?

There are people today who think they are free in Christ to behave any way they want because they have the grace of God to fall back on. There are pastors in pulpits all over the world who live in this kind of perverted grace.

Verse 16 commands us to repent- turn around and go the other way. He wasn't telling them they were doing good by accepting everyone and their sins. He was telling them do something about it, or I will come quickly and fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

How can we keep the world from drowning if we are floating in the same sinking boat? If the boat sinks, don't we all go down?

Then, the white stone. I'm not sure what that is, but I found this by John MacArthur also: "But there's an interesting little historical note. When a victor won in the games, whatever great games were being held, it was not uncommon for the victor to be given as part of his prize a white stone. And the white stone was his admission pass into the festival that was held following the games for all the victors. Could it be that the overcomer will receive the ticket to the eternal victory in heaven? And then He says, 'And a new name written on the stone' - and I read where they would do that. They would give the victor, like a trophy, a stone with his name, and he alone could use it as his pass. 'A new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.'"

THE CHURCH SHOULD NEVER TEACH A MESSAGE OF COMPROMISE. IT SHOULD NEVER BE A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE FEEL COMFORTABLE IN THEIR SIN.

The Bible says that "a little leaven leavens the whole lump." What you allow grows and festers. We need to be careful what we listen to. Especially in these last days where so many false teachers and prophets are popping up everywhere. How interesting it is, that as we come to the climax of the ages the devil is on double time. He has doubled his efforts to deceive as many Christians as possible into a compromising stance on the things of God: Abortion, same-sex marriage, what is and what isn't sin, sexual immorality, hatred, violence, etc.?

I don't know what the name was, but what I do know is that we don't want to be a compromising church or Christian. If we are compromising, we need to repent lest the Lord come against us and smite us with a sword out of His mouth. We want to walk in the truth of God's word no matter what. I want the hidden manna God has for me; I want my white stone as admission to eternal victory.

THE ENEMY'S CHANGE OF TACTICS & THE CHURCH

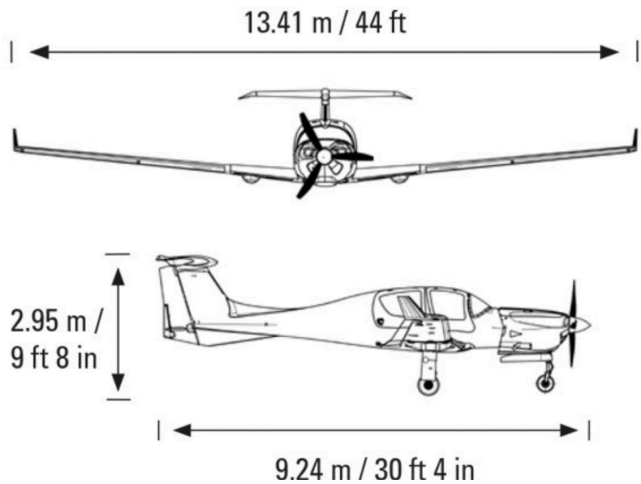
So, look at the change of tactics. Initially, Balak, king of Moab, tried to get Balaam to curse Israel. But God prevented the curse from occurring. So Balak followed Balaam's advice and used Moabite women and immorality to lure Israel away from their God. And that worked! When you look at church history, you see something very similar. Against the previous church, Smyrna, the enemy, used persecution to try and stop the church. But that failed. In their trials and tribulation, the believers drew closer to the Lord. So, there was a change of tactics. If persecution doesn't work, maybe compromise through immorality will. So, in Pergamum, the teaching of Balaam took hold. And as we shall see below, this had profound implications for this period of church history!

But for you also, remember that your enemy is both a dragon and a serpent and is not above changing tactics! That is, he can try persecution as well as cunning and deception! (Rev 12:9). He can promise you the world or try and take it from you. He can always change tactics, so be on guard!

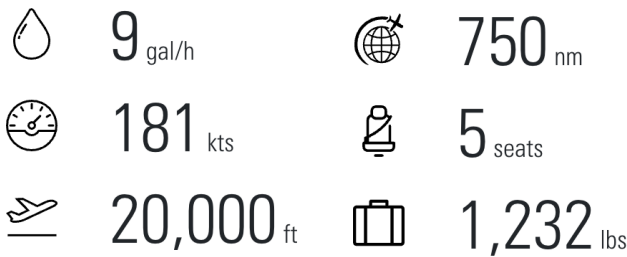
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Max. speed (ISA, 16,000 ft, 1,700 kg, MCP)	335 km/h TAS
Cruise speed at 82% (14,000 ft)	319 km/h TAS
Stall speed, landing configuration	107 km/h CAS
Best rate of climb	3.96 m/s
Max. range (FL180, 45% PWR) no climb, no reserves	1,520 km
Max. range incl. 30 min. reserve no climb, no reserves	1,396 km
Consumption at max. range (FL180, 45% PWR)	30.2 lt/hr
Consumption (12,000 ft, 60% PWR)	38.9 lt/hr
Take-off performance (MSL, ground roll / take-off obstacle)	407 m / 734 m
Landing performance (MSL, ground roll / landing distance)	344 m / 678 m

PEACE BESTILL

By: Kayla Corey

Last week, my niece called me over the phone, exclaiming, "It's the end of the world!" Initially, assuming she needed homework help, I found myself in a counseling session instead, assuring her that it wasn't the apocalypse. Her classmates had convinced her that the conflict in the Middle East was the final battle of Armageddon, as described in the Bible. While the signs of the times suggest Christ's imminent return, the world's end will not arrive until after the church's rapture and the seven years of tribulation. Between now and then, the world's condition will likely grow darker and more chaotic. Nevertheless, as I explained to my preteen niece, believers can maintain complete and total peace. Why? Because God said so. In John 14:27, it's stated, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

On average, people spend 70 minutes daily consuming news, whereas most individuals don't dedicate that much time to consuming the Word of God in a week. With countless online videos and commentaries depicting overseas wars, natural disasters, and our unstable political climate, it's no surprise that a significant percentage of people rely on antidepressants. After that phone call, I pondered how we can access the peace promised by Jesus. There are certain things I bear in mind during moments when all hope seems lost.

Firstly, Almighty God made a covenant with me, technically with Abraham, but fortunately for us, in Acts Chapter 3, Peter said, "You are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with Abraham." Throughout Scripture, we repeatedly witness God forging covenants with his people, never once breaking or retracting a promised covenant.

A covenant entails an agreement involving obligations and benefits for the parties involved. It's a sacred agreement or mutual promise. God covenanted to care for Noah and his family, providing them with the peace and confidence they needed

as they prepared the ark and lived in it for over a year. Furthermore, He pledged to never again destroy the world in the same manner, solidifying this commitment by displaying a rainbow in the sky as a sign of His promise. God later covenanted to Abraham that He would make him a father not only to a son but to a nation of people. If there's ever a promise you can trust in, it's one made by God. By fulfilling the terms and conditions of our covenant, such as abstaining from sin and continually seeking Him, we can be confident that He will uphold all His covenant promises. The second source of my peace is a personal relationship with God. The disciples spent years with Jesus, yet they still struggled to truly understand Him. Jesus even remarked to the apostle Philip, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me?" Many of us may have spent years in church but find ourselves in Philip's shoes—struggling to commune with God on a deeply personal level.

You might know the Bible, be active in your church, and be well acquainted with your pastors and church leaders, but that's not the same as personally knowing God. If I were to ask if you know the president, you might say yes. You could recite his full name, the name of his wife, kids, and maybe even his dog's breed. However, you still wouldn't know him personally. That kind of personal knowledge only arises through intimate one-on-one time with someone. Many Christians grasp what the Word says about God but fail to know God.

God delights in those who know Him. Knowing God involves recognizing His voice, being familiar with His ways, discerning His sovereign will, and being fully assured of His perfect character. When we truly know God, we can live with spiritual authority, hope, and peace. This marks the distinction between possessing extensive knowledge about God and genuinely knowing Him." Finally, and perhaps most crucially, I declare the Word. Once we grasp the depth of our covenant with God and are completely convinced of His unwavering character, we can intercede using the

Word for any situation. When the Word is prayed in faith, power is released to go forth and protect. Spend time meditating on the scriptures that promise us peace. Memorize and pray the scriptures that offer protection. Unsure where to start? I'll share some scripture below. We can rest assured that our God cares for His children. If we can abide in him and trust in him, we can be at total peace at all times.

"The Lord watches over you – the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all harm – he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore." Psalm 121:5-8

"You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast because they trust in you." - Isaiah 26:3

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." - John 16:33.

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praise

BRINGS VICTORY & PLUNDER

By: Angie Thomas

What is praise, and why is it important as a believer? Simply put, praise is a weapon that destroys enemies, brings healing, gives us supernatural strength, and **always brings victory and plunder!**

In Biblical times, plundering (verb: to take goods from a place or person), typically using force and in a time of war or civil disorder) was the legitimate and expected confiscation of personal property and the enslaving of defeated people following a military victory. As you praise your way to victory, **God is going to give you back everything the enemy tried to steal from you!** Proverbs 13:22 “Good people leave an inheritance to their grandchildren, but the sinner’s wealth passes to the godly”

PRAISE...ISN'T JUST SOMETHING YOU DO; IT'S A SPIRITUAL ENVIRONMENT YOU CHOOSE TO CULTIVATE!

Isaiah 61:10-11, “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its bud, As the

garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth, So the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.”

We have the power to cultivate an environment that invokes praise, and when we praise, it contains the power to realign our spirit with God’s spirit when “life” throws us an unexpected twist. In Isaiah 61:3 it says, “God gives us a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.” This scripture refers to **praise as a garment**; a garment is something that we must choose to wear. When we put on our garment of praise, we will keep the atmosphere free from depression, anxiety, stress, heaviness, sickness, and anything ungodly that tries to come in and attack!

PRAISE IS OUR EASIEST ACCESS INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD!

Psalms 22:3: “But you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.” When we praise, it magnifies the goodness of God in our lives, and the psalmist wrote that God inhabits the praises of His people; He draws nearer to us when we praise Him.

In 2 Chronicles 16:9a, “For the eyes of the Lord roam throughout the earth to show himself strong for those who are whole-

heartedly devoted to him.” **Praise shows God that your heart is turned toward Him.**

PRAISE POINTS YOU IN THE DIRECTION YOU WANT YOUR LIFE TO GO, AND YOUR LIFE POINTS OTHERS TO JESUS!

Psalms 150:1-6
“Praise the Lord! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heaven! Praise him for his mighty works; praise his unequalled greatness! Praise him with a blast of the ram’s horn; praise him with the lyre and harp! Praise him with the tambourine and dancing; praise him with strings and flutes! Praise him with a clash of cymbals; praise him with loud clanging cymbals. Let everything that breathes sing praises to the Lord! Praise the Lord!”

We see in verse 6 that praise isn’t just a suggestion, but it is commanded by God! Why is praise so important to you as a believer? Because praise provokes God to action and gives us supernatural access to His secrets and promises for our future (Deuteronomy 29:29)!

Find the direction you want to go and begin to praise God that He can take you there! Believing for healing? Start praising

God for His healing power! Believing for promotion? Start praising God that He is the only one who can truly promote; the list goes on and on according to your life’s current circumstances. We are instructed in Psalm 150 to **praise God for His mighty acts!**

When it came to monumental life-altering events in the Bible, **praise was a foundational action** that brought victory in the most uncertain of circumstances, always pointing others to God’s mighty works!

In Joshua 6:15-21, we read that the Walls of Jericho came down because there was a shout of praise as an offering unto God! Rahab, the prostitute, and her family were spared, their lives forever altered for God’s glory because of Joshua’s obedience, which ultimately led to victory!

In Acts 16:20-27, we read a familiar story about, Paul and Silas in the prison. At a time when most would’ve given up and crawled into a corner in defeat, they chose to praise! Their praise caused a violent earthquake, freeing every prisoner!

Praise isn’t always just for our benefit; as a result of the earthquake, the jailer came to repentance. Praise isn’t a feeling; it’s something we must choose to do. In many circumstances, the freedom and salvation of souls depend on it!

Psalms 44:5-8
“Through you we drive back our foes; through your name we trample our enemies. For I do not trust in my bow, and my sword does not bring me victory. But you give us victory over our foes and let those who hate us be disgraced. We boast in God all day long; we will praise your name forever.”

PRAISE... CONFUSES THE ENEMY AND LEADS US TO VICTORY!

In 2 Chronicles 20, we read about Jehoshaphat was the fourth king of the Kingdom of Judah, who is generally remembered as a king who sought to follow the ways of the Lord and bring about religious reforms in the kingdom. He is also remembered for his response to a military threat. When an alliance of enemy nations threatened Judah, Jehoshaphat turned to God in prayer and fasting, seeking His guidance and intervention. In response to his prayer, a prophet assured him that God would fight on behalf of Judah, **leading to a miraculous victory without even needing to fight!**

2 Chronicles 20:5-9,
“Jehoshaphat stood before the community of Judah and Jerusalem in front of the new courtyard at the Temple of the Lord. He prayed, “O Lord, God of our ancestors, you alone are the God who is in heaven. You are ruler of all the kingdoms of the earth. You are powerful and mighty; no one can stand against you! O our God, did you not drive out those who lived in this land when your people Israel arrived? And did you not give this land forever to the descendants of your friend Abraham? Your people settled here and built this Temple to honor your name. They said, ‘Whenever we are faced with any calamity such as war, plague, or famine, we can come to stand in your presence before this Temple where your name is honored. We can cry out to you to save us, and you will hear us and rescue us.’”

In Jehoshaphat’s prayer, we can see that God not only does Jehoshaphat remember **God’s faithfulness** in the past, but he recognizes in praise and worship, God’s faithfulness to do it again! He fully understood and acknowledged the nature of who God is! He was full of faith - **KNOWING that God was good!**

The timeline of events to follow led to **Victory and Plunder for the Glory of God!**

In 2 Chronicles 20:15-19, The worship turns to praise with God’s response to Jehoshaphat’s prayers.

In 2 Chronicles 20:20-21, The praise team of Judah goes before the army! Remembering God’s goodness again!

2 Chronicles 20:22-25, The praise was so loud that it brought confusion to the enemy and plunder, verse 25, “King Jehoshaphat and his men went out to gather the plunder. They found vast amounts of equipment, clothing, and other valuables—more than they could carry. There was so much plunder that it took them three days just to collect it all!”

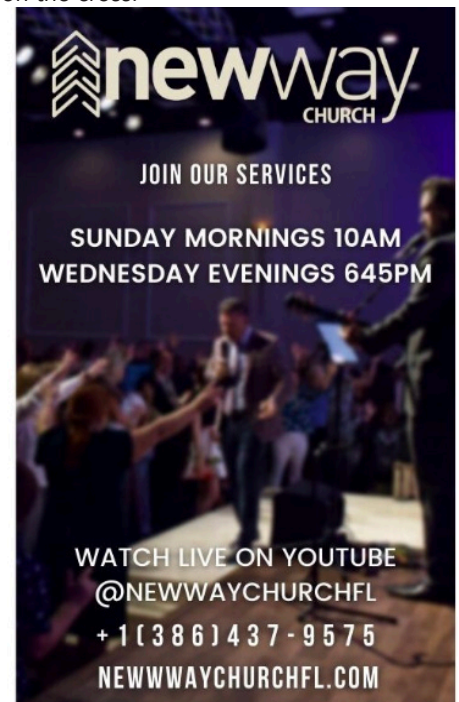
PRAISE BRINGS FREEDOM AND REST!

Receive a bad report or bad news? **Praise God until you receive your victory!** Believing for freedom from depression or addiction? Praise God until you receive your victory! Feel like you are surrounded on every side by the enemy? Praise God until you receive your victory! Nothing is going the way you think it should be going? **Praise God until you receive your victory!**

In 2 Chronicles 20:27-30, we read that praise brings freedom from our enemies and rest! “Then all the men returned to Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat leading them, overjoyed that the Lord had given them victory over their enemies. They marched into Jerusalem to the music of harps, lyres, and trumpets, and they proceeded to the Temple of the Lord. When all the surrounding kingdoms heard that the Lord himself had fought against the enemies of Israel, the fear of God came over them. So Jehoshaphat’s kingdom was at peace, for his God had given him rest on every side.”

God hasn’t changed! His character remains and will remain until He comes again! The same God who brought Victory to Joshua, Paul, Silas, and Jehoshaphat is the same God we serve today! Because of His steadfast faithfulness, **you have a reason to praise!**

Colossians 1:15-20,
“Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can’t see— such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together. Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything. For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ’s blood on the cross.”



The Slow Progression of Drifting

By: Dillon Mavrich

Hebrews 2:1 - Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

The writer of the book of Hebrews issues a stern warning to the reader to **“give heed.”** In the Greek, the phrase give heed is translated as Prosechō: **to give attention to, apply oneself to, cleave to, and devote to; be addicted to.**

The author here realizes the importance of paying attention to words that have, past tense, been spoken to you. And the emphasis on the importance of being attentive is the fact that **it will be incredibly easy to forget or neglect the words being spoken to you.** Otherwise, if it was not going to be an issue to give attention to, then the warning would not have been given.

Jesus, Paul, and Peter all give strict warnings on the importance of your attention being in the right place:

Luke 21:8 - And He said: “Take heed that you not be deceived...”

1 Timothy 4:16 - Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

2 Peter 1:10 - Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent (take heed) to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble...

Take a moment to think about the Greek word Prosechō and the expression it means: **to cleave to.**

This same expression is used when Jesus reiterates the meaning of marriage, that a man will leave his mother and father and cleave to his wife (Matt. 19:5). A marriage is a commitment - it is not just a contractual agreement, but it certainly is contractual as well as an expression of commitment before friends and family. You are obligating yourself to your spouse. Come hell or high water - you are sticking together.

Another expression of the word Prosechō is **to be addicted to.** More often than not, addiction has a negative connotation - and rightfully so - addictions typically involve some sort of substance abuse (drugs, alcohol, etc.) or lustful type activity. Neither of these are acceptable nor should be tolerated in the life of a Christian. However, in the context of the Word of God, it is **expressly and adamantly encouraged to take heed - or be addicted to - the Word preached and taught to you!**

How one becomes addicted to something is by repeated action without compromise. Habits: Doing something repeatedly over and over until you no longer make a choice to partake in that activity - you unknowingly and mostly unwillingly return back to it. In fact, most people who are addicted to something, specifically a substance, mostly do not want to continue in the thing, but they cannot shake it - they are addicted.

It is time the Church gets to a place of addiction. Addicted to the preaching of the Word. Addicted to the reading of the Word of God. Addicted to prayer in the Holy Ghost and in communication with God. Addicted to praise and worship. Addicted to being in the presence of God.

Things could come up in your life that distract, deter, and frustrate you. But your addiction to the things of God keeps you

- forces you - to continue in it. You could wake up on a Sunday morning and have no desire at all to go to Church, but your addiction to the things of **God compels** you and **moves you** to get up and go. Powerful!

Without this addiction, without taking heed, it becomes increasingly easier to neglect what has been spoken to you. And the verse we read in Hebrews says, Lest we drift away. **It becomes easier and easier to begin to drift away.** This word drift in the Greek is Pararrero: to slip or glide away, as if to slip the mind - drift.

Here is the key word: slip. The real root of this is the idea that this drifting away - or slipping - is unnoticeable. It is a gradual, progressive fade. So minute and discrete that it progressively grows and grows and gets worse and worse without notice.

When someone says, “That slipped my mind,” **What they mean is that idea crept away without being aware of it.**

Take heed (be addicted to it) lest we drift away (slip away unnoticed).

The Greek word here for drift is Pararao meaning to glide away, as in to slip your mind.

The concept of stock trading comes to mind. When trading stocks, the prices are constantly (and sometimes erratically) changing. So when you see a business that you would like to purchase shares of, the market price might be, let's say, \$10.05. But by the time you move your mouse and click through the software to actually make the purchase, the stock's price may have moved to \$10.10. That is how fast it

can move. But even if you lock your price in at \$10.05, by the time the purchase actually goes through, due to the delay of the internet and other things that may lag the execution, you may have actually purchased the stock at \$10.06 or \$10.04. This phenomenon in the financial markets is known as slippage.

This same phenomenon is happening in the lives of Christians all over the world. The worst part about it is most Christians are completely **oblivious** to it.

Slippage is causing Christians to obliviously stray off into a world of sin and eventually away from their salvation.

The concerning part is not the fact that they are slipping away - slippage is a byproduct of the real problem: sin. Sin breeds death. However, it is extremely rare for sin to start off with a glaring alert, flashing hazard lights, and caution signs saying, “THIS WILL LEAD TO DEATH!” It usually begins subtly, unnoticed, and nonchalantly - perhaps not sin at all - and begins to turn Christian's navigational beacons ever so slightly off. **This is why a consistent prayer life, studying the Bible, fellowship with God, and church attendance are so important in the days we are living in.** They may not always be the most riveting and exciting, though most of the time they can be, they are still essential for your stability and for avoiding going off course.

Sin will try to find you. It is not just going to leave you alone. Remember, you have an enemy, and that enemy will use any means necessary to pull you away from the life here and

your eternal life in Heaven God has for you. James 1:14 & 15 - But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, **when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.**

You can see, even in the act of the beginning phases of sin itself, death is not present. **It takes sin to be full-grown, to produce death in your life.** The thing to notice, however, is where sin starts. “...drawn away by his own desires and enticed.” It begins within you - it begins in the heart. There comes a desirous attitude or craving within you that craves something.

Anything you crave or desire greatly that is of this world will eventually conceive and birth sin. Like it or not, that is the reality. Look at this verse in 1 John.

1 John 2:15 & 16 - Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

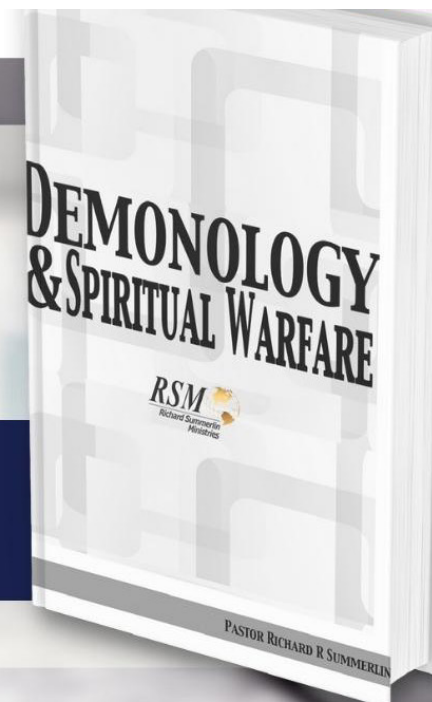
The love of this present world disqualifies you from your heart, having the love of the Father in it.

Going back to the author's words in the book of Hebrews: “Take heed.” **Being completely given to what has been said to you, preached to you and taught to you will prevent you from slipping.**

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