



ARE YOU

READY?

A PRACTICAL GUIDE
FOR SPIRITUAL PREPARATION



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INTRO

ARE YOU READY?

THIS IS WRITTEN WITH THE INTENT TO HELP CHRISTIANS RECOGNIZE THE NEED TO BE READY AND TO GIVE PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS, FROM SCRIPTURE, THAT WE CAN DO TO PREPARE OURSELVES, SPIRITUALLY.

1. ARE YOU READY to believe God to provide for you if the dollar becomes worthless and you can no longer afford to feed your family? Do you have the faith to sacrifice the unnecessary things and believe God for a miracle to provide for your family's needs or will you turn to the government to be your savior? (Matthew 6:24)

2. ARE YOU READY if you wake up in the morning and find that you no longer have a job, and there are none to be found, so that you lose your home? Would you be able to find peace and contentment in the Lord, knowing that HE knows your needs and is in control, working all things together for the good? Or would you dwell in fear and anxiety over your future. (Rom. 8:28)

3. ARE YOU READY to experience a great natural disaster like what has happened in Indonesia or Japan where you lose all you have? Would you become bitter towards God for the loss of family and friends or would you have the attitude of Job and draw closer to God? (Job 1:20-22)

4. ARE YOU READY if the infrastructure of our country goes down where there's no electricity ie. no street lights to guide our traffic, no news or internet to know what's going on; no one to run our water or sewer plants; Possibly no police to protect the public because they're protecting their own families? Do you have the faith to be a witness for Jesus in that hour, being more than a conqueror, or would you be like the world, every man for himself? (Ps. 46:1 & 2)

5. ARE YOU READY, if there's another terrorist attack, like 9/11/2001 or a series of attacks all over the country, would you hide in your home, in fear, or retaliate with violence, returning evil with evil? Would you pray for their souls and share Words of eternal life with them and the people they seek to take to hell with them?

6. ARE YOU READY if our government collapses and there's no more government aid, like welfare, social security, or unemployment to be relied on, and gangs of people are going house to house, looting? What will you do?

7. ARE YOU READY to respond if a foreign army attacks on our own soil and our family and friends are killed or tortured and raped, right before our eyes? Or your land is taken? Would you join the army or would you be like the Romanian citizen, Richard Wurmbrand, who, after World War 2, met the invading Russian tanks and soldiers, as they invaded, with New Testaments in their language?

8. ARE YOU READY if persecution of Christians comes here, in America, like it has to many other countries, such as North Korea or China, etc, and the church is forced "underground" or lose their lives, in order to remain faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ? Would you deny the Lord that bought you so that

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you don't have to suffer? Or would you stand for Him and be willing to go to prison and even die for His testimony?

9. ARE YOU READY if the leadership of your local church isn't able to hear from God in the difficult times to come, and can't face it or doesn't know what to do, just like others? Would you panic and give up your faith? Or would you be able to trust and hear from God, yourself?

10. ARE YOU READY if these things happen here, and there is no one is able to help you, but Jesus, alone. Are you currently close enough to God to be led by the Spirit of God, if your life and that of your family's depends on it? Or would your automatic response be that of the flesh because that is your habit when things get out of control? What if this cost you your life, as well as your family's. What if that cost you your soul?

All of the above things have happened to Christians in other countries, and our God is no respecter of persons, and does not show partiality. Do these things strike fear in your heart?

IF YOU ARE NOT READY FOR THESE THINGS, THEN YOU ARE NOT READY FOR JESUS COMING BACK. HE HAS WARNED US THAT THESE ARE THE TYPE OF THINGS THAT WOULD HAPPEN BEFORE HIS RETURN. (MT. 24; LK. 17:20-37; LK. 21; MK. 13)

Jesus said,

“THERE WILL BE GREAT TRIBULATION, SUCH AS HAS NOT BEEN SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD UNTIL THIS TIME, NOR EVER SHALL BE...”
-Matthew 24:21

Jesus said,

“WHEN THE SON OF MAN COMES, WILL HE REALLY FIND FAITH ON THE EARTH?”
-Luke 18:8

If we are having a hard time having faith now, in the little things, and when it is easy and the tree is green, how are we going to have faith when things are difficult, hard times have come, and the tree is dry? We are kidding ourselves if we think we are counting on becoming spiritually strong overnight. If we are having a hard time receiving grace, now, it may be even harder then. Now is the time to get right with God, and tomorrow may be too late. In many countries where God has allowed persecution and suffering to come to the church (through communism and Islam, for instance) the church, as a whole, was not ready, resulting in many losing their faith. How can we not think that could happen here?

Jesus taught us, in the parable of the 10 virgins, that the 5 wise virgins were ready and the other 5 foolish virgins were not. (Mt. 25:1-13; Lk. 13:35-37) That

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could mean that possibly half of the church will not be ready. The difference between them was not that they weren't waiting for the Lord's return or that the foolish weren't virgins, for if they had been immoral unbelievers they wouldn't have been called virgins, but harlots. So, what was the foolish virgins' problem? They simply didn't have enough oil in their lamps to remain ready, and to withstand the delay of the Bridegroom.

What is the oil a symbol of? Jesus doesn't explain this parable to us, but the scriptures reveal elsewhere that the oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit's Presence and work in our lives. (Ex. 30:25-30; 40:9-15; Ps. 45:7; 1 Sam. 16:1, 13; Isa. 10:27; Acts 10:38; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27; Jms. 5:14, 15; Jn. 3:3-8; Acts 1:8; Rom. 8:9-17; 2 Thess. 2:13)

When a person truly believes in Jesus, the Spirit of God comes in to them and they are born again, receiving His anointing and power to live holy lives. God gives us the ability, by His grace, to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and shine as a lamp with His love and truth. (Mt. 5:14-16; 6:22, 23; Lk. 11:33-36; 12:35-37; Ex. 25:6; Rev. 1:20; 2:1-5; 11:3, 4; 2 Sam. 21:17; Ex. 25:37; 27:20, 21; Jn. 1:9; 8:12; Eph. 5:8-18; Phil. 2:15; 1 Jn. 1:5-7; 2:9-11)

OR we can choose not to be filled with the Spirit, but walk after the flesh, and quench the Spirit, and grieve Him to the point where He is no longer in our lives. (Heb. 10:29, 30; Jdgs. 16:20, 21; 1 Sam. 16:14; Gal. 5:13-23; Psa. 51:11; Rom. 8:1-17; Eph. 4:30; 1 Thess. 5:19; Dt. 31:17)

We can be deceived like the Christians in the Church of Sardis, who were about to die (empty of oil, like the foolish virgins). Listen to what Jesus said to them:

“And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, ‘These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: ‘I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.’”

-Revelation 3:1-3

The Christians of Laodicea were like the foolish virgins, also. They thought they were doing great, when, in reality, they had grieved the Holy Spirit to the point that Jesus was no longer in their lives but He was on the outside of their lives, knocking to be let back in. They needed oil- His Spirit- in their lamps.

“And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things say the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. 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---I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed;

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and anoint your eyes with salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock, If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.”

–Revelation 3:14-20

WE NEED TO TAKE THE WARNINGS OF SCRIPTURE SERIOUSLY, LEST WE FIND OURSELVES FOOLISH VIRGINS, WAITING IN VAIN FOR JESUS COMING. (MT. 25:11, 12; 1 JN. 2:28; AMOS 5:18-24)

For we can have “Christianity” or “churchianity”, without Christ, and religion without a relationship with Jesus, Who is the source of eternal life!

“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?--- unless indeed you are disqualified.”

–2 Corinthians 13:5

“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. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.!'”

–Matthew 7:21-23

“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

–John 17:3

“And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

–1 John 5:11, 12

(See also: Jn. 5:39, 40)

May the Lord help us to not deceive ourselves, as did Sampson, who relying on the great things God had done for him in his past, did not recognize that the Holy Spirit had left him. He, like us, if we are not careful to continue in a right relationship with God, can end up being judged, rather than delivered. (Jdgs. 16:20, 21; 2 Chron. 15:2; 1 Chron. 28:9)

THE KEY TO BEING READY, IS LIVING IN A CLOSE, PERSONAL, OBEDIENT, RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS, WHERE WE DWELL IN THE SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH, BY ABIDING IN CHRIST.

“He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.' Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence. He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be

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your shield and buckler. You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste at noontide. A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you.

Only with your eyes shall you look, and see the reward of the wicked. Because you have made the LORD, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling;"

-Psalm 91:1-10

"Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us."

-1 John 3:24

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full." Jn. 15:5-11 (See also: Jn. 14:21-24; 17:20-23; Ps. 27:1-5; 31:19 & 20)

IF GOD IS FOR US, BECAUSE WE ARE ABIDING IN JESUS, OUR ROCK, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?

"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written:

'For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.'

Yet, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

-Romans 8:31-39

"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our

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Savior, Who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.”
-Jude 24, 25

(See also: Ps. 62:5-8; 42:1, 2; 34:1-22; Phil. 1:6; Jn. 10:27, 28)

THE FOLLOWING ARE 10 THINGS WE CAN DO TO HELP OURSELVES BE READY:

The following are some things I have learned from Christians that have suffered persecution and imprisonment for their faith as well as from those that minister to Christians who live in other countries under oppressive governments.

1. SEEK TO DRAW CLOSE TO GOD IN PRAYER AND MAKE IT A HABIT OF OUR LIVES TO GET TO KNOW HIM AND HIS WORD. If we don't spend time with someone, we can't get to know them. The same is true with our heavenly Father. Moses knew God's ways by spending time alone with Him. The children of Israel only knew God's acts, and as a result, doubted God and fell into sin when trials came. Moses remained faithful. It's not enough to know much about God, we must know Him, personally. Please, read these verses: Ps. 103:7; Heb. 3:5-11; 1 Cor. 10:1-12; Jn. 17:3

“As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts, If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever.”
-1 Chronicles 28:9

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”
-Jeremiah 29:11-13

“But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly, For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”
-Luke 21:34-36
(see also: Mk. 14:38; Isa. 40:28-31)

God promises that if we draw close to Him, He will draw close to us!

(Please, see: Jms. 4:8; 2 Chron. 15:2-4; Dt. 4:29; Mt. 11:28-30; Jn. 6:35-37)

2. We must fear God above all else, otherwise, whatever we fear the most,

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will ultimately control our lives. If we fear man more than God it will become a snare to us that has the potential to cause us to forfeit eternal life.

“The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.”

-Proverbs 29:25

“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.... Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.”

-Matthew 10:28, 32, 33

“Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”

-John 12:42, 43

“The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to turn one away from the snares of death.”

-Proverbs 14:27

(also see: Ps. 34:7-11; 46:1,2)

3. WE MUST NOT THINK MORE HIGHLY OF OURSELVES THAN WE OUGHT TO THINK LEST WE FIND OURSELVES LIKE PETER, DENYING CHRIST. We must learn to practice humility, relying on the Lord's grace and not our own strength.

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

-1 Corinthians. 10:12

“And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

-Matthew 23:12

“But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: 'God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.'”

-James. 4:6

“And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

-2 Corinthians 12:9, 10

(also see: Rom. 12:3; Mt. 26:33-35, 75; Prov. 3:5,6)

4. WE NEED TO ABIDE IN HIM FOR THE GRACE TO OBEY HIS COMMANDS AND TO MAINTAIN A CLEAR CONSCIENCE WITH GOD AND MEN, SO OUR PRAYERS WILL NOT BE HINDERED BY SIN, IN ORDER THAT WE MIGHT GLORIFY HIM. If we don't have a clear conscience and our prayers are

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hindered because of unconfessed sin, we will be facing the future in our own strength and without God's help, which is a sure recipe for disaster! We would be like a soldier that is cut off from the supply line and without our orders!

“My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.”

-1 John 3:18-22

“Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from a sincere faith.”

-1 Timothy 1:5

Please, see: Jn. 14:23, 24; 15:1-14; 1 Jn.1:6-9; 2:3-6; 3:21-24; 1 Jn. 4:12, 16)

5. I HAVE HEARD IT SAID, THAT YOU DON'T NEED MARTYRS GRACE UNTIL THE TIME COMES TO BE MARTYRED. In other words, God's grace will be there when you need it, so you don't have to give it a thought. I don't believe that is the right attitude to have, because God's grace may not be there for you, if you are being careless with His grace, now... if you're not in a good spiritual place to be able to receive it. We must learn to die to ourselves now, and follow Christ in the hard things, even when we don't have to, or we might find that we aren't able to when we are forced to go the extra mile, later. If we're seeking to save our lives, in the little and/or big things, now, we could end up losing them, eternally, just as Jesus warned us.

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.'”

-Matthew 16:24, 25

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.”

-Revelation 12:11

6. WE MUST BE FAITHFUL TO WALK IN THE LIGHT HE HAS GIVEN US IN ORDER TO RECEIVE MORE. If we are not faithful to obey the revealed will of God, as it is written in the Bible, how can we expect to receive supernatural direction, in the future, when the lives of our loved ones may depend on it. Whatever the outcome, if we are not focused on God's glory now, without repentance, we won't be later, either. May we cry out to God for this mind and heart:

“...according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

-Philippians 1:20 & 21

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“His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'”... “for to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

-Matthew 25:21, 29 & 30

(Please, see: Lk. 19:17; Lk. 16:10-12; 1 Cor. 4:12; Heb. 3:2; Mt. 13:11-12; 24:45-47; Lk. 12:42-48; Pr. 28:5)

7. WE MUST LEARN TO TAKE ONE DAY AT A TIME, AS JESUS SAID, OTHERWISE THE TROUBLES WE FACE WILL BE OVERWHELMING TO US, CAUSING US TO LOSE HEART IN HOPELESSNESS, AND TO BECOME INEFFECTIVE AS WITNESSES AND EASY PREY FOR THE EVIL ONE. We must learn to focus on Christ, and cast all our cares upon Him so that we can walk in peace. (Lk. 21:26)

“You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever, for in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting strength.”

-Isaiah 26:3, 4

“Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'what shall we drink' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

-Matthew 6:31-34

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

-Philippians 4:6, 7

(see also: 1 Pet. 5:7; Jms. 4:13-15; Col. 3:15)

8. WE MUST BE WILLING TO DO HIS WILL, NO MATTER WHAT IT IS, NO MATTER THE COST, IN ORDER TO KNOW HIS WILL.

Our unwillingness to be open to do certain things that God asks of us can keep us from being able to accept God's will for our lives, which, in turn, can lead us to being totally deceived by the evil one and led down a path to destruction. We need to stop making excuses, such as “It's not my calling.”, etc. for not doing His will. Please, read an example of this in Jer. 42:1-22:

“Now all the captains of the forces, Johanan the son of Kareah, Jezeiah the son of Hoshaiah, and all the people, from the least to the greatest, came near and said to Jeremiah the prophet, 'Please, let our petition be acceptable to you, and pray for us to the LORD your God, for all this remnant (since we are left but a few of many, as you can see), that the LORD your God may

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show us the way in which we should walk and the thing we should do.' Then Jeremiah the prophet said to them, 'I have heard. Indeed, I will pray to the LORD your God according to your words, and it shall be, that whatever the LORD answers you, I will declare it to you. I will keep nothing back from you.' So they said to Jeremiah, 'Let the LORD be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not do according to everything which the LORD your God sends us by you. Whether it is pleasing or displeasing, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God to whom we send you, that it may be well with us when we will obey the voice of the LORD our God. And it happened after ten days that the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah. Then he called Johanan the son of Kareah, all the captains of the forces which were with him, and all the people from the least even to the greatest, and said to them, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, to whom you sent me to present your petition before Him: If you will still remain in this land, then I will build you and not pull you down, and I will plant you and not pluck you up. For I relent concerning the disaster that I have brought upon you. 'Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom you are afraid; do not be afraid of him,' says the LORD, 'for I am with you, to save you and deliver you from his hand. And I will show you mercy, that he may have mercy on you and cause you to return to your own land. But if you say, 'We will not dwell in this land,' disobeying the voice of the LORD your God, saying, 'No, but we will go to the land of Egypt where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor be hungry for bread, and there we will dwell'---'Then hear now the word of the LORD, O remnant of Judah! Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; 'If you wholly set your faces to enter Egypt, and go to dwell there, then it shall be that the sword which you feared shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt; the famine of which you were afraid shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there you shall die. So shall it be with all the men who set their faces to go to Egypt to dwell there. They shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence. And none of them shall remain or escape from the disaster that I will bring upon them.' For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; 'As My anger and My fury have been poured out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so will My fury be poured out on you when you enter Egypt. And you shall be an oath, an astonishment, a curse, and a reproach; and you shall see this place no more.' 'The LORD has said concerning you, O remnant of Judah, 'Do not go to Egypt!' Know certainly that I have admonished you this day. For you were hypocrites in your hearts when you sent me to the LORD your God, saying, 'Pray for us to the LORD our God, and according to all that the LORD your God says, so declare to us and we will do it.' And I have this day declared it to you, but you have not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God, or anything which He has sent you by me. Now therefore, know certainly that you shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence in the place where you desire to go to dwell."

-Jeremiah 42

"If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority."

-John 7:17

9. WE MUST FACE OUR FEARS AND LEARN TO HAVE FAITH TO OVERCOME

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THEM, THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS FINISHED WORK AND HIS PROMISES TO US. We must wean ourselves of putting our trust in the world's systems (insurance, money, doctors, police protection, guns, grocery stores, etc.) so that if or when they fail us, we won't fall with them. If we don't believe God's promises, our doubts can lead to fear, fear to denial, denial to apostasy, apostasy to hearing Jesus say to us, "I do not know you." (Mt. 25:12), just as He said to the foolish virgins. It would also be very beneficial to memorize God's promises, and hide His Word in our hearts so that we might not sin against Him. (Ps. 119:11)

"Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

-2 Peter 1:2-4

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

-Hebrew 11:6

"And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

-Hebrew 6:11, 12

(see also: 2 Pet. 1:2-4; Ps. 119:11)

HERE ARE SOME PROMISES FOR US TO BELIEVE IN

a. We must trust that He loves us, and that everything we need has been provided for us in Christ Jesus, because of His finished work on the cross, and that nothing can separate us from His love. (Rom. 8:31-39; Jn. 3:16; Is. 49:14-16; Jn. 10:27-29)

b. We must believe that He will never leave us or forsake us, no matter what the circumstances. (Mt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5, 6; Jn. 14:18; Josh. 1:9; Ps. 125:1, 2)

c. We must believe and know that He won't allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able, but will give us the grace and strength to walk in victory, because we have been raised up with Him. (1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Cor. 2:14; Rom. 8:37; Phil. 1:13; Isa. 54:17; Ps. 108:12, 13; Gal. 2:20)

d. We must believe and know that He is sovereign and in control and He works all things together for our good, no matter how bad things get. (Rom. 8:28; Jms. 1:2-4; 1 Pet. 1:3-7; Rom. 5:1-5)

e. We must believe that He promises to meet all our needs even when there is no possible way we can see God being able to do this apart from a miracle. (Mt. 6:19-34; Ps. 84:7-12; Phil. 4:19; Ps. 37:17-19; 33:18-21; 2 Pet. 1:3, 4)

ARE YOU READY?

f. We must believe His promise of a better life in eternity and that no matter what we suffer here on earth, our reward in eternity will make the suffering totally insignificant and completely worthwhile.
(Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17; 1 Cor. 2:9; Mt. 5:10-12; Rev. 21)

10. MOST IMPORTANTLY, WE MUST WALK IN LOVE, AND NOT ALLOW OUR HEARTS TO BECOME HARD, EVEN LOVING OUR ENEMIES. (Mt. 24:12; 3:43-48; Rom. 12:9-21) The way we treat others in their suffering and need now, will determine how God treats us when our time of trial comes. If we live selfish lives, not caring about others, we can't expect God to move the hearts of others to help us in our time of need.

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.”
-1 John 4:7 & 8

“Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard.”
-Proverbs 21:13

“He who gives to the poor will not lack, But he who hides his eyes will have many curses.”
-Proverbs 28:27

“Remember the prisoners as if chained with them-- those who are mistreated-- since you yourselves are in the body also.”
-Hebrews 13:3

“He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, and He will pay back what he has given.”
-Proverbs 19:17

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.”
-Galatians 6:7

(See also: Pr. 22:9; Isa. 58:6-11; Mt. 25:31-46; 1 Jn. 3:16 & 17; Jms. 2:13-17)

BUT, the good news is, for those who are ready, they can “look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.” Lk. 21:28. It will be a time of great opportunity to glorify our Lord, in the days to come. It will become much more clear to many that our only hope for salvation is in Jesus. The Light of Jesus love and truth shines brightest, the darker it becomes.

“Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people, But the LORD will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you.”
-Isaiah 60:1, 2

A GUIDE FOR SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

“that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.”

-Philemon 2:15, 16
(see also: Mt. 5:14-16)

In the book of Daniel, he talks about the last days, and says:

“... And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.”

-Daniel 12: 1b-3

LET US ENTREAT THE LORD FOR HIS GRACE, NOW, FOR THE GRACE THAT WE WILL NEED IN THE LAST DAYS, FOR GOD'S POWER IS PERFECTED IN OUR WEAKNESSES (2 COR. 12:9), SO THAT WE CAN BE "THE PEOPLE WHO KNOW THEIR GOD SHALL BE STRONG, AND CARRY OUT GREAT EXPLOITS." (DANIEL 11:32B)

“LORD, HELP ME to not be filled with fear and anxiety about the future, but to have faith and hope, and encourage others.

LORD, HELP ME, as lawlessness increases, to not allow my love to grow cold. Increase my love for the unlovely (Mt. 24:12) and enable me to love my enemies, as you did.

LORD, HELP ME to not be consumed with my own needs and survival, but with the needs and salvation of others.

LORD, HELP ME to know how to seek you and receive answers from You, as to what to do or where to go, so that I may help others to know Your will and receive Your grace.

LORD, HELP ME to be a son of Issachar, “who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel (the church) ought to do...” 1 Chron. 12:32

LORD, HELP ME to have no regrets for not being ready to obey You and be a witness for Your glory, but to be able to stand before you without shame at Your coming, and hear You say, “Well done, good and faithful servant... enter into the joy of Your Lord.” Amen.

“And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.”

-1 John 2:28

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