

for bitter! Woe to those wise in their own eyes, and bright in their own sight" (Isaiah 5:20-21).

As people of God, it is important to "discern the weather" and be prepared for the coming storm. On the horizon, clouds of immorality, worldliness, persecution and the godless armies of the devil are gathered. They sweep across the land even now but a greater conflagration is looming in the years to come. Opposing homosexuality, adultery, divorce, religious division and the hosts of schemes of the wicked one will bring the church of Christ into full battle. Tolerance will be intolerable for those who stand for truth. The words of Jesus will echo throughout the land: "Do you suppose that I have come to give peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division. For from now on,

there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law" (Luke 12:51-53).

The message of the Revelation will become a dear book for the saints of God. John the apostle portrays the struggle of the people of God with the hosts of enemies like government, immorality, worldliness and the battle of good and evil. For the saints of God who cry out, "How long" (Revelation 6:9) the answer will come from the "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (Revelation 19:11-16). The

battle will be long and the hardships difficult, but the victory is assured to those who are not defiled with the changing morality in America. The country may fall victim to snares of the devil, but the people of God must rise above the tide of destruction to live for the King. Citizens of the Kingdom must stand for truth and righteousness on every hand. There may come a day when we must follow the example of those in Ephesus: "Many of those practicing the curious arts, bringing together the books, burned them before all. And they counted the prices of them and found it to be fifty thousand pieces of silver" (Acts 19:19). Standing for the Lord may require standing alone - but stand we must (Ephesians 6:13-18). ~

by Kent Heaton

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by Bubba Carrier

The first time I tried to march and play drums at the same time, I was terrible. When I concentrated on playing a steady beat, I marched out of step; when I focused on marching in line, I played off beat. After the first week, I went to the band director and told him that marching

band was not for me and that he shouldn't expect me at any more of the rehearsals. I'll never forget what he said to me "Bubba, I didn't think you were a quitter." That cut through me like a knife.

We don't like to be called quitters, but we sure act like them. We try various hobbies and crafts for a while, and if we don't enjoy them as much as we originally thought we would, we toss them aside

and move on to something else. How many have picked up the game of golf only to throw it back down a couple of weeks later? What about attempting to learn a musical instrument? Even those who make a substantial investment in their potential interest - equipment, lessons, accessories - give up after their initial failure.

If we're not careful, we allow this mentality to carry over into our

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Assembly Schedule Sunday

Bible Class for all ages ___ 9:00 AM
Morning Worship Service ___ 10:00 AM
Evening Worship Service ___ 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Class for all ages ___ 7:00 PM

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spiritual thinking. With high ambitions and fiery spirits, we march into the battlefield of life full of vigor and ready to conquer anything that crosses our path. Yet the first time our courage is demanded because of some obstacle or hurdle that lies in front of us, we abandon the Lord and run the other way. The excitement that fueled us at first is lost because we recognize that some exertion is required of us or an unanticipated conflict must be resolved. Even those who make a considerable investment in the Lord's work - time, energy, resources drop out long before the race is won.

Quitting is easy because it involves no effort, no commitment. The world convinces us that life is self-centered and that we must do anything and everything to make ourselves comfortable and content. This philosophy implies eliminating that which causes discomfort and discord; things like our marriage, our religion, even our own life.

Please reflect on these simple suggestions the next time you encounter the temptation to quit the Lord.

1. Trust in God. Faith is not simply believing in the existence of God, it involves putting your complete confidence and trust in Him. He has promised, "I will never leave you, nor will I ever forsake you" (Heb. 13:5). Even in your darkest hour, when it seems that all hope is gone, He is standing by your side, ready to help you overcome your adversaries. Those who abandon Him have not totally surrendered their fears and worries and are attempting to live life on their own. Place your

confidence in God that He will lead you through the difficult times and build you up so that you can endure them. If you never forsake Him, He has promised that He will never leave you. Trust Him.

2. Finish what you start. Jesus did. He came to this earth with a mission, to fulfill an incredible plan to save men from their sins, and He did not allow one thing to step in His way not the devil, not the apostles, not the scribes and Pharisees.

Paul told Timothy to 'be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry' (2 Tim. 4:5). The young preacher was to expect trials and setbacks, frustrations and anxieties, but he was to endure them with patience and persistence and not give up. Paul knew about hardships; "five times I received hard from the Jews thirty-nine lashes, three times was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times was I shipwrecked..." (2 Cor. 11:24-27). Do you think he considered calling it quits a time or two? Yet through it all, he continued to trust in God and that allowed him to finish what he started.

3. Remember the big picture. Heaven is for those who have endured and those who have conquered, not for those who have given up. Since Paul had fought the fight and kept the faith, he was confident in his eternal destiny - "in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but to all those who have loved his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8).

Remember where you're going. It's easy to get distracted by the temporal things that this life has to offer; they cause us worry and tempt us to throw in the towel and quit. They make service to God seem less important and perseverance impossible. At the judgment, those who have endured and those who have given up will be separated, and the ones who have kept the faith will receive their crown of life. Won't the temporal things seem so insignificant then?

Consider the poem of Jill Wolf. 'Don't quit when the tide is the lowest, for it's just about to turn, don't quit over doubts and questions, for there's something you may learn. Don't quit when the night is darkest, for it's just a while till dawn; don't quit when you've run the farthest, for the race is almost won. Don't quit when the hill is steepest; for your goal is almost nigh; don't quit, for you're not a failure until you fail to try.'

Fight the good fight, finish the course, keep the faith, and whatever you do, don't quit. ~



Thoughts to Ponder

Perseverance is the hard work you do after you get tired of doing the hard work you already did.

A Changed Morality in America



The face of America has changed so dramatically that without hindsight it is difficult to notice how subtle the changes have been. Images splash across the television with common abandon that describe the levels of depravity being accepted by society. Men kissing men and women kissing women is now a common theme on television. How many commercials hawk the cry of the

old medicine man and his traveling side show with new drugs for male impotence, sexual fulfillment, depression, heart disease and some drugs I am not sure what they are for. Violence is presented in CSI investigations, made for television crime series, criminal stores with multitudes of heinous violent deaths, and all the end-of-the-world scenarios filled with chaos. Reality shows exploit the bachelor and bachelorette in sexually provocative series and

endless dribbles of other reality shows where people show their supposed real life. Talk shows bring mindless victims to their stage to humiliate themselves to find out who the father of the seven children really is and why your daughter is a prostitute and marriage counseling before millions of people. And then there are those ungodly cartoons that use foul language and sexual immorality to make stupid people laugh. Welcome to American television.

The wise man Solomon said, "Is there a thing of which it may be said, See, this is new? It has already been in days of old, which were before us" (Ecclesiastes 1:10). Immorality is not a new dish that man has dined on the past few years. The challenge to morality has been going on since the Garden of Eden when Satan said to Eve, "Has God indeed said" (Genesis 3:1). As a society, America has moved away from being "One nation under God" to "One nation under Man." God is slowly being eroded away from the moral conscience of the people of the land. The minority has begun to rule the majority. The days of Isaiah have returned: "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil; who put darkness for light and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet and sweet