

# URGENCY OR COMPLACENCY

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**A Place in the Wilderness**

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Scripture quotations are from the  
American Standard Version of the Bible (1901)  
unless otherwise noted.



Urgency is the sense that something is crucial, so much so that it requires attention immediately. Urgency compels us to act upon something due to great need. It includes sincere conviction and a persistent determination to carry out a certain course of action.

Complacency, on the other hand, is a sense of self-satisfaction and trust in our own capabilities and experiences that keeps us from going further and progressing. Complacency is often accompanied by a total lack of awareness of our own deficiencies, however severe they might be.

In a sense, complacency and urgency are opposites of one another. It is not possible to feel urgency and yet at the same time be complacent. The opposite is also true: if one is complacent, there is no sense of urgency.

In our Christian life and walk, what should we sense? How should we feel day by day? Furthermore, what does the Bible say about these matters?

## *Spiritually*

When we discuss spiritual matters, urgency is a strong desire to grow in the divine life to maturity; it is the yearning to reach the goal of our Christian life; it is the great longing to know God in an ever-deepening way.

Conversely, complacency is the belief we are fine just as we are, spiritually speaking; it is the feeling we have all we need and have attained all there is to attain; it is the sense that our spiritual walk and understanding have reached a peak. If we are complacent, we have no need for anything more. Everything is fine just as it is.

## *Laodicea*

Consider the church in Laodicea in Revelation.<sup>1</sup> The Lord comments upon their condition in this way: *Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and blind and naked...* The believers in Laodicea think they are excellent. They consider themselves rich and having need of nothing. They are

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<sup>1</sup> Rev. 3:14-22

totally unaware of their true spiritual condition: their great lack of Christ in their wretchedness, blindness, and nakedness. Furthermore, they see nothing of their great deficiencies.

Laodicea is the epitome of complacency. To the Laodiceans, there is no necessity to go further. They think they have everything they require, but do not know the reality that they have *nothing* of what they truly need. This is complacency. And, in the case of the Laodiceans, it is accompanied by the delusion that they are in a wonderful state.

### ***Sardis***

Consider the church in Sardis, also in Revelation.<sup>1</sup> To them, the Lord says: *I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead.* This is the ultimate complacency—to be dead. These believers think they are living, but they are not; they believe they are fine before the Lord, but they are deceived. They are, in fact, dead.

What does this mean? It means they are living a life of complacency—there is no inward sense to go further with the Lord. What a sad state! What a horrible condition!

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<sup>1</sup> Rev. 3:1–6

## ***Philadelphia***

On the other hand, consider the epistle<sup>1</sup> to the church in Philadelphia. The Lord loves this church. The believers there keep His word and do not deny His name. They keep His word in all circumstances, even through all trials and sufferings. Though they have but a little strength, they use that strength to continue with the Lord, love His speaking, and cherish the word of God.

This is not complacency. With the believers in Philadelphia there must have been and must be a sense of urgency, and that sense impels them forward to the goal of their Christian life.

## ***Our Own Condition***

Although the epistles to the seven churches in Revelation were written to churches that existed at the time of the writing of this book—around 90 AD—they also are addressed to us. Though written then, they are applicable now.

First, in each of these epistles the Lord says,<sup>2</sup> *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith*

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<sup>1</sup> Rev. 3:7–13

<sup>2</sup> Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22

to the churches. This indicates that all the epistles were written for all the churches and for all the believers.

This is also clearly indicated in the epistle to Philadelphia. There the Lord says:<sup>1</sup> *Because thou didst keep the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.* That time of trial has yet to happen. It refers to the last few years of this age. This means these epistles are not just for the churches at the apostle John's time, but also for our time as well. In other words, the condition of the believers in Laodicea may be our own condition as well. The state of the believers in Sardis may also be our own state.

We may be as complacent and dead as those specifically mentioned in Revelation. In fact, those epistles may be written particularly for us. We must seek to know what our true condition is before the Lord.

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<sup>1</sup> Rev. 3:10



## ***Paul***

Now consider the apostle Paul. In his epistle to the Philippians, Paul said:<sup>1</sup> *For to me to live is Christ...* What kind of word is this! This is perhaps the most profound word about the Christian experience in the whole Bible. To convey the depth of the experience of Christ, Paul resorted to a phrase that seems completely incorrect grammatically. How could a verb—to live—be a person? Paul was expressing something that perhaps no one else on Earth had ever experienced. To him, to live was a person. How amazing is this!

Yet, in the same epistle to the Philippians, Paul says:<sup>2</sup> *Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* Paul was experiencing an incredibly profound Christ, yet he did not believe he had reached a peak.

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<sup>1</sup> Phil. 1:21

<sup>2</sup> Phil. 3:12–14

Paul said he was *stretching forward* towards the goal. What intense urgency he felt. He said he counted all things refuse in order that he might gain Christ.<sup>1</sup> Can we sense the urgency in his words? Paul knew his death was close, even imminent.<sup>2</sup> Yet, how urgent he was to gain all the Christ that he could.

Some might think this was because Paul was a great apostle, and that the Lord doesn't expect that from us, since we are but little believers. This, however, is complacency. We must not forget that God set forth Paul as an example for us.<sup>3</sup> He is the prototype of the proper Christian—one with the proper attitude. His urgency must be our urgency.

### ***Song of Songs***

Consider also the seeking one in the Song of Songs. At one point she became complacent, content to stay as she was, telling the Lord to go on without her.<sup>4</sup> But eventually, something of her hunger for the Lord broke through. She then became urgent to find

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<sup>1</sup> Phil. 3:8

<sup>2</sup> Phil. 1:20–23

<sup>3</sup> Phil. 3:17; 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1

<sup>4</sup> Song of Sg. 2:16–17

Him.<sup>1</sup> That urgency stayed with her for the rest of her life, until she was finally one with the Lord completely, resting upon Him, living with Him, having no separation.<sup>2</sup> She longed for His return.<sup>3</sup> This is the goal of our Christian life, but it does not come about through complacency.

### *Examination*

We all must have an honest examination of our true condition before the Lord. What do we see—complacency or urgency? Are we self-satisfied? Are we content with that to which we think we have attained? Do we believe we have all we need?

Or, alternatively, do we desire the Lord? Are we seeking the Lord day by day and even moment by moment? Are we willing to suffer with Him, simply to be with Him wherever He is? Are we following the Lord even into death?

We must examine our hearts truthfully and sincerely before the Lord and in His light. We must see how we really are—because without that, we cannot go on.

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<sup>1</sup> Song of Sg. 3:1–4

<sup>2</sup> Song of Sg. 8:5–7

<sup>3</sup> Song of Sg. 8:14

## *Satan's Ploy*

We now come to the main point of this little booklet. Some believe that before the endtime troubles come, all the believers will be taken from the Earth, regardless of their condition. Others believe that only those who are mature and ready for the Lord will be taken. The rest of the believers will remain on the Earth through the sufferings of the endtime. One thing is clear: these beliefs cannot both be true. They are mutually exclusive. If the first is true, then the second is false; if the second is true, then the first is false.

So, by this we know—and are absolutely assured—that at least one of these beliefs is false. If it is false, it must be from Satan and not from God. So then, let us ask: With which of these two beliefs would Satan attempt to deceive us? To ascertain this, let us look at the result of each belief.

If we believe the Lord is going to take us all from the Earth before the endtime, then we believe everything is fine. We need only wait until the Lord comes back, and we will be taken. We may also believe that in that event, we will suddenly be changed from how we are now to something wonderful and glorious. This will all happen instantly according to the belief of some. If we believe this to be true, where does that lead us? It leads us directly to complacency.

We have no need to go on with the Lord, but rather only to wait for Him to come back.

Now consider the alternative: Suppose we believe we must be ready for the Lord at His return. What is the result of that? It is the sense that we must do everything possible to prepare for His appearing, to gain Him in every way, and to allow Him to work in us to bring us to maturity as full-grown sons of God. The result is the urgency—even as the apostle Paul felt—to stretch towards the goal. To somehow reach the end of our course on Earth.

Which of these would Satan propagate as a lie? The one bringing us into complacency or the one bringing us to urgency?

Furthermore, consider this: Even if it is true that *all* believers—both complacent and urgent—are taken from the Earth before the endtime, how does it hurt to be urgent to gain Christ? We would still be taken from the Earth with all the believers.

On the other hand, suppose it is true that only those who are ready and have matured in the divine life are taken from the Earth at the Lord's return before the endtime troubles. Then what of those who believed they would be taken no matter their condition? Many, perhaps even all, would be left on the Earth. Seeing this, we should be crystal clear which

of these two alternatives is from Satan and which is from God.

Consider this carefully. Would Satan desire that we be prepared for the Lord's coming by seeking Him diligently and urgently, when in fact it was not necessary? Or would he rather that we were unprepared for the Lord, when in fact it was crucial that we were? The answer to this is obvious.

### *Matthew*

In Matthew 24 the Lord tells us,<sup>1</sup> *Then shall two men be in the field; one is taken, and one is left: two women shall be grinding at the mill; one is taken, and one is left.* Many think the one left must be an unbeliever because they think all the believers are taken before the endtime. But look at what the Lord says. He tells us to be ready.<sup>2</sup> If He is commanding us to be ready, he must be talking to us believers, not to the unbelievers.

He also tells us to watch.<sup>3</sup> His command is to the believers: Watch! Watch for Him; guard our hearts from the world and the evil one.

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 24:40–41

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 24:44

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 24:42; 25:13

In Luke the Lord's speaking<sup>1</sup> is even clearer: *But watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.* He spoke that word to His disciples. In other words, if the believers do not watch and are not prayerful, they will not escape all the endtime sufferings. If we are complacent, we will be left behind.

Finally, in Mark the Lord speaks<sup>2</sup> the clearest word of all: *Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. It is as when a man, sojourning in another country, having left his house, and given authority to his servants, to each one his work, commanded also the porter to watch. Watch therefore: for ye know not when the lord of the house cometh, whether at even, or at midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.* He says it to all, to every believer: Watch! What will happen if we are complacent and do not watch? We will be left behind.

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 21:36

<sup>2</sup> Mark 13:33–37

## *Revelation*

In Revelation 14 we can see these two aspects of the rapture. The firstfruits are standing with the Son of Man before the throne of God.<sup>1</sup> They are firstfruits; they have matured early; they have been counted worthy to stand with the Son of Man in the heavens before God the Father as the endtime troubles pommel the Earth.

A few verses later,<sup>2</sup> in this same chapter, we see the full harvest of the believers. This occurs at the seventh and last trumpet,<sup>3</sup> near the very end<sup>4</sup> of what is often called the great tribulation.

Concerning these believers, they are not even said to be ripe. Rather, it says that they are dried out.<sup>5</sup> They are dried out of all the worldly water they enjoyed in their complacency while they were living on the Earth. At that time, they are caught up to be with the Lord in the air, where they will stand before His judgment seat. There the Lord will judge all the

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<sup>1</sup> Rev. 14:1–5

<sup>2</sup> Rev. 14:14–16

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. 15:51–52

<sup>4</sup> Rev. 11:15; 10:7

<sup>5</sup> The actual Greek that is usually translated “ripe” actually means “dried out.”



believers according to how they behaved on the Earth, whether for reward or for punishment.

### *Gaining a Sense of Urgency*

We must let these words work to create a sense of urgency in us, that we might be ready for our Lord when He comes for us. At that moment, only one thing will matter: Is our heart absolutely and fully for Him, in Him, and with Him—or is it still attached to something of the world or of the Earth? At that moment, everything will become manifest. Our true inward condition will be brought to light; what we really are inwardly will be seen. If we have been living complacently, that will be manifest. If we have been living with urgency to gain Christ, that also will be seen. At that time, the ones who are ready will be taken to be with the Lord.

May every Christian be ready for our Lord's return.

