

PERILS FACING CHRISTIANS

By Keith Greer

“In journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness-- besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.” {2 Corinthians 11:26-28} As he sought to follow Christ, Paul many great perils. We, too, must face our own perils. There is always the peril of:

Apostasy. *“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.” {1 Timothy 4:1-3}* The word apostasy means “a falling away.” Paul knew that many Christians would fall away during the first century. The same thing is true today; many will begin what they will not finish. It doesn’t happen overnight; it is usually a gradual process. We must constantly guard against the danger of falling away from the faith.

Compromise. *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” {1 Corinthians 15:58}* God’s children are always under worldly pressure to compromise their faith and values. Those in the world see no problem with bending the rules a little bit. Jesus clearly told us we cannot “serve two masters,” {Matthew 6:24}. Compromise may be a choice for the world, but it’s an ever-present danger for those who seek to remain faithful to the Lord and His cause. We must not compromise.

Worldliness. *“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. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” {1 John 2:15-17}* God’s children are constantly under pressure to succumb to worldliness. The world is always busy trying to get us to conform to its standards {Romans 12:1,2}. Love of the world strikes a death blow to a Christian. On every hand, we encounter gambling, drinking, immorality, cursing, immodest dress, and warped standards. We must reject all of this!

Materialism. *“The young man said to Him, ‘All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?’ Jesus said to him, ‘If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.’ But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.” {Matthew 19:20-22}* There’s nothing wrong with having wealth and possessions. It depends on their priority in our lives and what we sacrifice to get them. In this life, everything is fleeting and temporal. Christians must put eternal things ahead of the temporal. Please read *Luke 12:15*.

Spiritual Malnutrition. *“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.” {2 Peter 3:18}* Christians are

always in danger of spiritual death due to lack of attention to God's word. We need the word to feed our souls and give them what they need to survive {*Hebrews 5:12-14; 1 Peter 2:1,2*}. Just as the physical body needs nourishment to be healthy so does the inner man. Failure to add in our knowledge and understanding of God's word has serious ramifications. One needs a healthy diet of the word of God to fight off the onset of this type of malnutrition—it's easily preventable!

We must give daily time and attention to this area of our lives. We cannot ignore these **PERILS** and their consequences. The world cares little about themselves, others and for the most part little about God who created them and gave them life. Understand this point clearly— the world will not seek to encourage you, commend you, or not attack you for your determination to live for God by His standards. The cost of discipleship is high today but each must be willing to pay it if heaven is one's goal!
