

The Discipline of Being Vigilant

by Todd Atkinson

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being vigilant and watchful in our walk with God, and encourages us to know Jesus personally, to be gentle and loving in our interactions with others, and to stand before the Son of Man with confidence and faith.

Duration: 1:12:45

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 21:25-37, Luke 22:39-46, Ephesians 5:14-21

Topics: "Spiritual Disciplines"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being vigilant in our relationship with God the Holy Spirit. The speaker encourages believers to edify and strengthen one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. They also highlight the significance of offering heartfelt worship and devotion to the Lord. The sermon emphasizes the need to be vigilant against conforming to worldly influences and to be aware of the signs of Jesus' return.

Transcript

Lord, I just thank you for this man of God. This man who's been a light and and a leader and a father and a grandfather in the city of the faith. And so lord today I ask that you would again anoint his words.

Anoint his mouth that when he speaks that your your holy spirit would speak. Lord and anoint our ears and our hearts today to hear your voice. In this teaching more that we would hear and know your voice.

In your name father, amen. Thank you. Thank you pastor Ryan.

Just before we look at the the scripture today I just want to to make an announcement regarding the community of learning classes. This is the last Sunday before they start. We begin tomorrow, tomorrow night And I just wanted you to to notice that little brochure that's in your file folder.

Would you pick that up or would you look at that? I want to correct it. There's a misprint. That's my fault.

I I gave the wrong brochure to Mary Ann. And so I want you to correct that first class is my class on the new testament should be 6 30 to 8. That should be 6 30 to 8 in the church church library. But notice notice the classes just again if you're in the area of encouraging people.

We've got great teachers who put lots of time into preparing their classes but still haven't got quite enough to make it a viable class. So would you consider just ask the lord if there is something that that would really enrich your your understanding of the faith and the table is out at the back and Rick Benner again done a great job of setting that that up. But I want you also to look at that just on the other side of the picture You know notice notice down there.

It's got the eta courses, you know, we have first year Courses second year third fourth and after each each year there is a certificate offered if you fulfill the requirements the requirements of taking at least four classes in in the Classes that we have mentioned there. Well, we have two students who've already fulfilled those those requirements we gave a Certificate To a student this morning and the nine o'clock service bill bill axtell and we want to do that Uh this morning sandra jeffrey just ask sandra if she would come forward We'll present her this this Diploma certificate from the evangelical training association her sandra And let's say Express our congratulation. Maybe just stay sandra Let's just pray pray for sandra father.

Thank you Thank you for for sandra's desire to know your word to know your ways and we just join our hearts and and and Congratulating her and praying for her that you will bless her in every way Use her mightily in your service We ask these things in jesus name amen Bless you following along on the the series if you would also take that little sheet that's in your your Bulletin, I think that's got the backbone of serious christianity And the spiritual disciplines And just notice and this will help you focus. At least you'll have an idea where i'm going If you just notice the the key truth It says key truth. Well I hope by the time i'm through you'll you'll know that in the spiritual conflict in which every believer is engaged and especially in our time It is crucial to maintain the discipline of vigilance of the discipline of being alert Knowing what's going on? And then the the leading question In which areas of my life? Do I need? To be especially vigilant and we hope to answer then that that question, but let's just ask the lord to help us Our father we acknowledge our need of you Holy spirit come and and quicken your word We pray father that you'll touch your minds Lord we want to think we want to think and we want to use The minds that you've given to us so touch our minds that we might grasp the word of god And then lord touch our hearts That what we grasp with our minds will find its way into our Experience our everyday living That we might bring glory to you lord jesus In your name we pray Amen It's it seems to me that If ever there was a time The church of christ and and those who would follow Jesus needed to be vigilant Needed to be alert And aware what's happening? It's the time in which we live Not only is north america in the midst of of a general federal elections both canada in the us but the united states right now is confronted with financial upheaval and quite Possibly is on the verge of a financial collapse an economical catastrophe Of of proportions we read from the experts similar to the great depression of the the 1930s Now I I don't want to dwell on that.

I'm sure you're you're like me and you've probably read and heard enough about politics and the election and then the financial troubles, but I want to just Remind you of that because I want to suggest to you that in such times We need to be prepared for the worst and yet confident in the lord jesus Believing that he is well able to bring good out of evil And that his kingdom indeed Will come and that his will Will be done on earth as it is in heaven and we pray that every time we repeat the lord's prayer but in the meantime we need to exercise the discipline of vigilance We need to be alert and watchful And to be on our guard in order To be effective servants of the lord jesus And that's what the lord. Jesus said in luke chapter 21 And I want you to read verses 25 to 37, but know that the first verses of luke 21 the disciples and jesus are at the temple and The disciples are remarking about how beautiful the temple is and jesus just said to them These are beautiful stones and beautiful edifice All right, but there's coming a time when one stone won't

remain on another It will be raised to the ground is what he's saying. And so he prophesied that 8070 that's exactly what happened titus the roman general raised it to the ground and so jesus then is enters into a discussion of what the Disciples asked following that Master, what will be the signs of your coming? What will be the signs what these things are going to come to come to pass? And so they get into a discussion of the last of the last times He says in verse 8 watch out Watch out that you're not deceived.

That's the first thing. He says don't be deceived many will come in my name And then he goes on Talks about other physical happenings on earth and in the skies and then he comes we come to verse 25 There will be signs in the sun moon stars on the earth Nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea men will think from terror Apprehensive of what is coming on the world for the heavenly bodies will be shaken at that time They will see the son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory when these things begin to take place Stand up and lift up your heads because your redemption is drawing near He told them this parable look at the fig tree and all the trees when they sprout leaves You can see for yourself and know that summer is near even so when you see these things happening You know That the kingdom of god is near. I tell you the truth This generation will certainly not pass away until all these things Have happened and so we stop there, but I want you to notice that in verse 27 The lord jesus is referring To the last of the last days now the bible teaches us that the last days began When jesus was born the last days began when jesus came into the world But jesus here is talking about the last of the last days happenings that immediately Precede his return to the earth verse 28 says that when these things begin to take place that we should Stand up and lift up our heads.

We should be vigilant we should stand up lift up our heads because Your redemption is drawing Near now, what does that mean when we give our lives to jesus? Ask him to come into our hearts repent of our sins. We are redeemed. That's the word used it's redemption And so we're redeemed from a past life We're redeemed from a life that had no use for jesus and we become into a life where jesus is the center That's redemption.

We're redeemed from a past life brought into a new life But this redemption is the completion of that when jesus comes back. We will be fully redeemed Taken out of the very presence of sin and sinfulness And so that's the redemption that he's talking about and he said you should be vigilant when you see these things happening Because your redemption it's coming to a completion And especially take note that if we are seeing the beginning of these things then verse 32 states That our generation Will certainly not pass away until all these things Have happened No, no we are not able to say with certainty that we are that generation because Things like this have happened over and over in the history, but we can say something with certainty We can say with certainty That there will be a generation In whose time the lord jesus will come right that sort of makes sense It's logical isn't it jesus that he's coming back and that the generation that receives him will be one that will have seen Events and things he's prophesied that will come to pass. So therefore if it's not our generation It's got to be one generation But indeed it could well be ours Because we are seeing more of these signs of luke 21 than any preceding Generation But the watchword for me And so I again for another time another place to talk about the signs of jesus coming again but I just want you to to notice this that the watchword In all of this talk about the end times is vigilance And so we read the rest of that passage in luke 21 verse 34 be careful Or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation drunkenness and the anxieties of life And that day will close on you Unexpectedly like a trap for it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth Be always on the watch And pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen And that you may be able to stand before the son of man Each day jesus was teaching at the temple And each evening he went

out to spend the night on the hill called the mount of olives Verse 34 says be careful Be vigilant, that's what it's saying.

It says be always Be always on the watch be always Vigilant and pray that you may be able to stand But notice what it says after that that last verse Each evening he went out to spend the night on the mount of olives Jesus Was vigilant vigilant Vigilance, but not just for the signs of his coming again indeed We're repeatedly urged in the bible to be vigilant or alert to be aware and to beware of What is happening in us to us? Around us it uses those words over and over again We're told to beware of watch out for false prophets in matthew chapter 7 and and verse and verse 5 15 But notice says by their fruits, you'll know them. And so again guidelines is given be watchful apply tests Look at the fruit of their lives and then he says that we are we should be on guard and to be careful Around people who would would betray us and he's talking in the context of of persecution And so he's saying be be careful watch out of the people around you who would betray you to the persecuting authorities And then he goes on to say to avoid avoid anti-christ teaching By teachers in the tradition of the pharisees and the sadducees in matthew 16 Again, be careful. Jesus said to them be on your guard against the yeast or the teaching of the pharisees and the Sadducees, I would like to suggest to you that the lord.

Jesus Is our example In living with vigilance and alertness and i'd like you to read Luke 22 Luke 22 39 to 46 Jesus went out as usual to the mount of olives and his disciples followed him on reaching the place He said to them pray that you will not fall into temptation He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them knelt down and prayed Father if you're willing take this cup from me yet Not my will but yours be done An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him and being in anguish he prayed More earnestly and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples. He found them asleep exhausted from sorrow Why are you sleeping he asked them get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation I think the lord jesus in this passage Is showing the disciples How to remain vigilant and true in the face of the enemy's temptations He told them How not to fail into not to fall into temptation? He said pray pray That you will not fall Into temptation and then he showed them what and how to pray And in short Pray passionately for god's will to be done and for their And not their own will pray passionately for god's will to be done and not their own Will that's how They'll have victory over satan's temptations. Notice notice that Prayer to the father if you're willing take this cup from me, you know, what are we talking? We're talking about crucifixion take the cup of crucifixion from me, but Not my will Yours be done.

That's the secret. He's telling us if we can pray that prayer Passionately when the temptations come to us, we'll find victory. Notice how he prayed Anguish He prayed earnestly His sweat wasn't great drops of blood, but it was like great drops of blood Falling to the ground in other words jesus was an earnest jesus was serious about the request to the father Want you to notice especially? How jesus taught his disciples? How to handle the weaknesses? And failures in others in this passage When he came back to them, he found them Sleeping But notice there's no angry outburst.

No, no outburst saying you you silly Sleepy doe heads. Why didn't you stay awake while we were praying? None of that at all none of that at all and and and the the Record of this and matthew and mark. It's even more gentle.

It shows you how jesus Approached his disciples and he gently chides them For sleeping and then he repeats to them the need For vigilance, but what a lesson for all of us and how to accept each other warts and all How do we accept each other and with all of our weaknesses? And so a church isn't a place where

people are welcome as long as they keep as long as they maintain holiness and don't sin That's the opposite Church is a place for when you do sin you've got some some place to come to where people will still love you and accept you and Understand and together we help each other overcome Our sins and this was a lesson to to to the disciples of love and patience and gentleness the lord jesus was eminently approachable Anybody could approach him The people that he he welcomed and talked to all aspects of life But you know sometimes Our angry attitudes and words drive people away from us and frighten them They become fearful and they then give us a wide berth And the whole point of our following jesus is to attract people to him So therefore we need to to be in a situation where people can can approach us and listen to What we have to say about the eternal things of life and so this this passage and this experience of Gethsemane is one that is highly instructive for us So jesus then Becoming The example and one could ask a question. How was it that jesus didn't fall asleep? Because he would have been under more pressure than the than than the apostles were And yet he stayed awake Prayed because He knew the importance of vigilance And was all prayed up and in constant communion with his father So therefore he's our great example our perfect example that we must focus our eyes steadfastly on him We need to follow his example in his matter of vigilance Now knowing the whole matter of of the apostles being with him You see jesus knew and and because of this he could be gentle and because of this he had no need to get angry and mad Is he knew the battle was his? He knew that the struggle with the enemy was his it wasn't the disciples He asked them to come along pray and watch Of course we knew he was dead on he won the battle He had victory over the enemy. He debated satan and his hordes on calvary's hill our example then our example Of vigilance I want to suggest to you That these scriptures are giving us at least four exhortations or four warnings first of all Don't fall asleep.

Maybe I should say that to you In this in this message don't fall asleep. Don't don't fall asleep be vigilant about your love For the lord jesus that that's the first the first area be vigilant be aware of what your relationship to jesus is Vigilant about your love for the lord jesus and doing that we have to answer the question Do we know the lord jesus? in a personal way Do we know him? Personally Is the lord jesus real to me or to you? Do I know him as I know other persons now? We say that is he real to you because many people will say I believe jesus lived Many people will say I know god exists But he's not real he's not Immediate to them and so we need to ask That question do I know the lord jesus in a personal? Way now we know what it is to know members of our family spouses Friends neighbors to know know things about them. We could say we we know them but I if I asked you If you know prime minister harper Most of you would reply.

I know who he is. I know about him, but I don't know him personally And all the liberals said thank god for that. Yeah But we know what we're talking don't we to know about somebody like the prime minister And to know your neighbor or to know your two different knows And yet the question we need to ask is do I know jesus Do I know just about him or do I know him and it's the most crucial question You and I will ever ask and answer is do you know jesus? Personally Do you know him? as god Do you know him as god you may know him you may say well he was a prophet and he was a great Man and a great teacher, but do you know him? as god That he was god Now anybody can claim anything and say they're anybody they're like they're like they like but approving it is as an another thing you I'm sure you've heard this story about the Psychiatrist and I found this in ravi.

Zacharias's most recent book beyond opinion It's a living the faith. We defend great great book but in it he says Heard the story of the psychiatrist who's transferred to a to a new wing in a psychiatric hospital And he's as he's going his rounds. He comes to a patient who really perturbs him Eventually he asked Excuse

me.

Just who do you think you are? and the patient replies napoleon and the Psychiatrist probes deeper. Yeah, that's a very very interesting Who told you that you are napoleon and he replies? God told me And just at that point the man in the nick's bed just sits bolt upright and he says I most certainly did not But Jesus not only claimed to be god He he he proved it proved it in his life the miracles the healings the the Surrender to suffering for us. He proved In many other ways that he was the son of god So we we have to then ask do I know? Jesus like that notice this this scripture in second corinthians 13 and 5 Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith Test yourselves.

Do you not realize that christ jesus is in you? Unless of course you fail the test Now now this was written to christians This was written to to christians in corinth And so paul just outrightly says you need to be vigilant. You need to examine your life You need to examine your behavior and your thoughts and your desires To see if indeed you were given a new heart and see if indeed you've you've entered into the new life 2 peter 3 17 to 18 Therefore dear friends be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men But grow in the grace and knowledge of our lord and savior Jesus christ again, we're we're exhorted and warned be vigilant. Make sure you know That you're growing In grace, and you're growing in the lord.

Jesus christ Now that's an easy thing to know to know you say say you you gave your life to jesus five years ago Well when you gave your life It's not very likely that you read a lot of the bible and and you went out of your way to be good and kind of people So five years later What's your life like Is it the same you're still not reading the bible still not? Entering into worship still not spending time with people who love jesus. Well, the chance is you failed the test That you need to recommit your heart to jesus until These things start happening in your life And so so peter then again is is is saying that Be sure you grow in grace and it's one of the Indications whether your faith took hold and your life was changed. And so that's the value of a vigilance And and no one's looking down on anybody We're not only saying that saying that all of everybody here is welcome here.

We're just saying here's a smart thing to do Be alert watch. Look at your life. Has the has there been changes that fit? The life of christ well, then we could ask well, how do we express? our love for jesus Well notice this this passage And and john he said if you love me keep my commandments Now now someone may too quickly say But that doesn't mean the ten commandments because the bible tells us that we are under grace not the law Of course, it means the ten commandments Because the ten commandments are his commandments He was the one that gave them to moses on on mount sinai And yes, we are not under the legalistic legalistic system of the old testament That that meant keeping laws in order for our commandment breaking sins to be covered and atoned for But we are under the grace System of the new testament that enables us to live a commandment keeping life because we are united to And with the lord jesus and his spirit enables us to live as he lived And and indeed that's how we know we love him By wanting to be in his presence Sitting at his feet learning his word Spending as much time with other others who love love jesus his body the church By wanting to live a life that pleases him by expressing our love praise worship And adoration of him as often as we can Those are the marks Notice these words in first john 2 4 to 6 Here's how we can be sure That we know god in the right way Keep his commandments If someone claims I know him well, but doesn't keep his commandments He's obviously a liar His life doesn't match his words But the one who keeps god's word is the person in whom we see god's mature love This is the only way to be sure We are in god Anyone who claims to be intimate with god ought to live the same kind of life.

Jesus lived my dear friends I'm, not writing anything new here This is the oldest commandment in the book and you've known it from day one. It's always been Implicit in the message you've heard and of course, that's the from the message Translation but but notice again notice it gives us four tests and it says this is how you can be sure This is how you can be sure christ come in to your heart and life Notice that that there are four tests to apply to our lives in order to be assured of our salvation one Am I keeping god's commandments? no, no, it doesn't mean that we measure our success as christians by by Checking to see if we kept the ten commandments now That's not what we're saying here. Paul said we we follow one law and that's the law of christ who fulfilled all the ten commandments and who gives us his Commandment fulfilling life when we give our hearts to him And so that's what we measure.

We ask ourselves at the end of the day Was I like jesus today? How did my life reflect jesus today that that's how we as christians measure success but it's a uh And doing that we will have no problem then With the commandments two Am I keeping god's word? That's what it says The one who keeps god's word is the person in whom we see god's love Three are others able to see god's love in my life And four am I following the example of the lord jesus and sincerely Seriously want to live As he lived so so that first area of life. Don't don't fall asleep be vigilant about Your love for jesus Then secondly, let me say don't fall asleep Be vigilant about your life in the holy spirit Be vigilant about that About the relationship then with god the holy spirit the verse that the passage that speaks to me is ephesians 5 14 to 21 Wake up. Oh sleeper Rise from the dead and christ will shine on you Remember, these are christians these books were written to christians and christ will shine on you be very careful Then how you live not as unwise but as wise making the most of every opportunity Because the days are evil Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the lord's will Is there's that lord's will again Do not get drunk on wine which leads to debauchery instead be filled with the spirit Speak to one another with psalms hymns and spiritual songs Sing and make music in your heart to the lord Always giving thanks to god the father for everything in the name of our lord.

Jesus christ Submit to one another out of reference for christ. So paul in that passage exhorts these ephesian Believers to wake up and to be very careful how they live and to live Wisely and not foolishly and then he goes on to to reveal What living a vigilant life would look like? I think that's what he's saying or he's saying here's here's what it is to be vigilant and alert And be alive as a christian one Seize every opportunity to serve the lord. Jesus.

That's verse 16 making the most of every opportunity and to Seek to understand the lord's will in every decision we make that's verse 17 Don't be foolish Understand what god's will is it's saying don't be foolish. Don't make a decision without asking god to lead you Don't be foolish spend time on on Finding out if it's god's Decision or your decision and then make it clear. You don't want your decision You don't want your will to be the deciding matter here You want god's will if you get a chance of a marvelous job in calgary rather than in lethbridge.

That's great But be sure you say god. Do you want me to move to calgary? Do you want me in this job? And he may say yes, but if he says no that's by far the best decision you'll ever make Don't be foolish Ask god's will And in every situation three Don't get hung up on the old wine of the vine But be filled with the new wine of the spirit of god That's verse 18 Don't be drunk Wine leads to debauchery instead be filled with the holy spirit filled with the spirit now I I want to emphasize that because we I think the enemy knows it's so effective to be thinking Often about god's spirit that it's so effective that he does his best to get us not to think about it And so it's sort of played down But i'm suggesting to you that these verses are saying be vigilant About your relationship with god the holy spirit It goes on to say For what is a vigilant life? well

for speak to each other or edify one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs Now that means spending time with each other To encourage each other and to strengthen each other and to Experience god's spirit in a corporate way It said five sing to the lord offering him our hearts worship and devotion And adoration that's in verse 19 sing and make music to your heart to the lord Now that's encouraging for everybody because even if you can't carry a tune on a basket god hears your heart And if there's a song in your heart god hears that And that will edify you and that will build you up if in your heart In your just in your mind you sing over some of the wonderful choruses that we sing here Or some of the marvelous verses of scripture that talk about christ We can do that in our minds and hearts and we'll keep vigilant and and then six express gratitude to god the father continually For everything in the name of the lord. Jesus now It's easy easy for most of us to be grateful to give thanks when everything is going well Don't need faith to give thanks when everything is going well, but you need faith To give thanks when things are not going well You need faith to give thanks in the midst of our sicknesses You need to give thanks to god in the midst of uh of the difficulties and hardships of life Thankful that he's with us That's we can always be thankful for that.

Thank you. Lord. Jesus.

I know you're with me on this It hurts like everything but I know you're with me. Thank you Thank you for being with me and so we we learn and we grow to be able to Give thanks in the midst of every that keeps you vigilant That that helps and keeping alert and and being aware and then lastly it says number seven learn to graciously submit And serve one another out of reverence for christ that that's a tough one There's some people it's easy to submit to People that we get along with and you know, I know them well and they're good friends. We can submit easily to those those folks but to submit to someone whom you don't like someone whose personality doesn't fit you or someone in some capacity who's who's Making decisions that affect you and yet here's a here's an exhortation If you want to be vigilant learn to submit to each other in the lord Submitting to each other because you know it It helps because when we are doing that then we're avoiding the temptations of the enemy And not allowing the enemy to take a relationship and rob us Of spiritual blessings and rob us of peace of mind and heart and so we learn to Submit and to serve one another In honor preferring one another is another scripture So why is it important then to be vigilant about our relationship with god the holy spirit? because It is only he Who will keep us vigilant and alert It is only he Who will keep us committed to the lord jesus? It is only he Who will make us effective in reaching others with his love? It is only he who will make us joyful in our serving and in our Relationship with others it is only he who will give us serenity and peace when the roof falls in God the holy spirit.

Do you know? Is the executive director? Of the whole project of building the kingdom of god and of birthing and growing the church God the holy spirit is the one And so we read a passage like first corinthians 12 First corinthians 12 and verses 4 to 11 god's various gifts are handed out everywhere But they all originate in god's spirit god's Various ministries so various gifts god's various ministries are carried out everywhere But they all originate in god's spirit God's various expressions of power so various gifts various ministries Various expressions of power are in action everywhere But god himself is behind it all each person is given something to do that shows who god is Everyone gets in on it Everyone benefits all kinds of things are handed out by the spirit to all kinds of people The variety is wonderful wise counsel clear understanding simple trust healing the sick miraculous acts proclamation distinguishing between spirits tongues and Interpretation of tongues all these gifts have a common origin But are handed out one by one by the one spirit of god he decides Who gets what? and when That's the message Translation of that marvelous passage and first corinthians 12.

What did you get what it was saying? eugene peterson who Compiled the the message translation I think gets this on the nose just the the the different Translations of the gifts may be a little different than what I would approach but I think it's marvelous insight here He's saying god the holy spirit wants to give everybody a gift god the holy spirit knows you he knows your name He knows your potential and he wants to give you a gift because everybody gets in on it Everybody builds the church and everybody in the church are the ones who get the gospel out and advance the kingdom everybody Everybody What a marvelous statement That that god the holy spirit and his wisdom says you need a gift Here's what you need for what I have in mind for you And it goes to somebody else says i'm going to give you that gift because I need you here I need you on the mission field or I need you And and the plumbing business here.

Here's the gift i'm giving you so you can do your your work the spirit Gives the gift so that's why we need then to be vigilant It shouldn't be something we rarely talk about god the holy spirit It should be something right in front of us there every day because he's the means If we're going to do anything for god, he's the means and we've said it before If we use our gifts and talents in the church here and it's in our own gift If it's just out of our own capacities We will advance the kingdom of god not an inch If it's in our own Abilities the kingdom of god doesn't move Because the kingdom of god is only built by the spirit of god And he only builds when we devote our talents to him and when we dedicate our talents to him And and then he takes that and he uses that To build the church and to build the kingdom, but what a marvelous insight God the spirit and so don't fall asleep on that one Don't fall asleep and never think of god's gifts and and his spirit Think about it often now thirdly, let me say don't fall asleep Because i've got another two points to go Don't don't fall asleep be vigilant about wholesome Personal relationships now, I suppose you could have your own list of these things that you need to be vigilant about But what i've wanted to do is what I think is important what I think is crucial to really enjoying jesus Areas of life that I think are crucial and really being glad you belong to jesus and and really Having joy in your heart and peace.

I think these areas are the crucial ones and the love for jesus That's the first one. Don't don't don't fall asleep on that one And then the holy spirit don't fall asleep on that one. And then in this third one be vigilant about wholesome personal Relationships when we think about what the lord jesus spent most of his time on while he was with us on earth It's obvious Most of his time was spent on personal relationships He walked and worked and ate and slept with his disciples Teaching preaching healing didn't take up the greater part of the day Most of his time was spent living with his followers Conversing with them discussing important issues of the day listening to their problems telling them stories Laughing and weeping with them The gospels make it make it absolutely clear People were most precious to the lord jesus he always had time for people And so you can know that in the disciples, you know the special friendship with peter james and john and then the other the other nine to nine disciples and and then the Other people that are named mary martha lazarus joseph of iamathea nicodemus all people who had connections with him that were that were of more depth than just Trivial friendships and then mary magdalene Others we can name them Jesus stated it simply and clearly Mark 10 45.

I am come to be served But to serve and to give my life a ransom For many others i'm i'm come to give my life to other people I've come to give my life as a ransom for others and I know it means his death on the cross But he gave his life away before he got to the cross and giving it to others notice. First corinthians 2 9 9 to 11 Anyone who claims to live in god's light and hates a brother or sister is still in the dark It's the person who loves brother and sister who dwells in god's light and doesn't block the light from others But whoever hates is still in the dark stumbles around in the dark doesn't know which end is up blinded by The

darkness and so again the statement here is clear only loving relationships Between his children are acceptable No other kinds of relationships are Are tolerated in god's kingdom Just loving relationships. So that means we must love the people around us and our families our neighbors our friends Our colleagues whether they know the lord or not whether they're christians or not.

It has to be a loving Relationship our families those in our families they they may not Be the nicest to be around when it comes to talking about our faith But we have no alternative We are to love them and we are to make sure they know we love them That's if we want to be effective in sharing the gospel with them loving relationships And although we say that of course all the time We're being vigilant that whatever the relationship It must never hinder my relationship with the lord jesus So that's the rider with that Every relationship has to be a loving caring relationship But not all relationships are good for us and so we use a test Does this relationship enhance? my life with jesus My relationship with jesus or does this relationship hinder my relationship with jesus And so if the answer it hinders your relationship with jesus, then don't touch it with a 40-foot pole Because it'll be downhill from there We need to be vigilant why why do I say that because Because If the relationship hinders me from following and loving jesus Then I lose my ability to bless and to love the people around me and meaningful and lasting relationships Let me go on look at 1 corinthians 16 Keep your eyes open hold tight to your convictions Give it all you've got be resolute and love without stopping Would you do me a favor friends paul says and give special recognition to the family of stefanus You know, they were among the first converts in greece and they put themselves out serving christians ever since then I want you to honor look up to people like that Companions and workers who show us how to do it giving us something to aspire to And he goes on to add another five people with with obvious affection and love And he commends them for their faithfulness And and love for jesus and then paul's letters often end that way just all kinds of of commendations Expressions of of his love.

Well, let me go on to my final last last point here Don't don't don't fall asleep Be vigilant about wholesome relationships And then let me lastly say be vigilant about living a christian lifestyle And having a christian worldview a christian lifestyle and a christian worldview Living a christian lifestyle means that it is more than a sunday go to church kind of religion It means that our commitment to the lord. Jesus guides and directs all of our life our work our creation Our recreation our family budget our friendships our our conversations our involvement in the community and community organizations and neighborhood activities The lord jesus said in john 17 He said that we we his followers are in the world But not of the world We're in the world, but we're not of the world and that's crucial a distinction to make We're in the world Representing jesus, but we don't Live like the world He meant that we should avoid Worldliness He should avoid Worldliness now what worldliness is living life? As if god didn't exist It's living life as if jesus had never lived It's a christless Way of life that's worldliness worldliness no thought of jesus No thought of god.

In fact, it may be The occasion when people say I believe in god. I believe in jesus, but the way they live Would show that the No trust in jesus. They don't bring him into anything that's in their life So we're not talking about believing in him we're talking about how we live and so he said avoid worldliness, but accept humbly and lovingly in jesus name every person you meet avoid worldliness Love the people around us.

In fact in in romans 12, uh, the jb phillips translation says Uh don't conform to the world do not be conformed to the world Or do not let the world press you Into its mold and that's what we're talking about and and the media and it does a great job of that just Sewing words that are worldly sewing thoughts that are worldly just presenting to us Worldliness that that's clear and plain and we're told be vigilant Don't pick up the words. Don't pick up the thoughts. In fact Jesus said and luke 12 watch out be in your guard against

all kinds of greed A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions And then he told them that parable about the rich farmer who who had so much money He wanted to build bigger barns and he wanted to extend his territory And and then god says to him Thou fool this night your soul will be required of you and then who gets what you've accumulated That's what the parable says and so the word is Watch out Be vigilant guard against in this passage all kinds of greed I I picked up the time magazine the title of the main article is the price of greed But the financial collapse and so so this this is not some bible thumper like me Shouting out that that price that greed is the reason the trouble is in the states.

That's time magazine Time magazine going to the core. It's a spiritual problem. It's a spiritual problem that that's Wrapped up in materialism and I need to go on here.

So Uh, how do you how do you handle that then? Okay avoid void worldliness. Let me say the second one is crucify Carnality, that's another exhortation colossians 3 and 5 says put to death Put to death whatever whatever belongs to your earthly nature Sexual immorality impurity lust those things that belong to your old life put to death treat them as if they're dead so crucify Carnality and paul then is using the analogy of baptism You know you come in with your everyday clothes on to be baptized you take them off and put on a baptismal road Paul said that's the way it is in the christian life You take off your old life and it's in the past and you put on the new life That is jesus and the life that jesus has for you Let me lastly say that that We need then not only Crucify carnality. We need to stand up to satan While bowing down to the lord jesus and and I I need to be especially vigilant because I have an enemy whose main purpose is to keep me from repenting and Confessing jesus as my lord and savior and when he fails to do that Then he purposes to make me an immature weak and ineffective follower of jesus His intention is to get me to live a life that is little or no different Than my atheistic or agnostic friend neighbor That is a life with no real experience of jesus personally first peter five and eight Be self-controlled and alert your enemy the devil Prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour resist him standing firm in the faith and the people who are devoured by the Nema are the non-vigilant Those who are not alert those who are not aware Those who do not beware of some of the warnings that are there Those are the people that he he devours and we then need to be vigilant and alert In order to resist him in the name of christ.

Well, I wanted also to talk about A christian worldview, but we'll have to do that Another time, but let me just say we need to hold on to a christian worldview. That is we see reality through the eyes of the christian faith We see reality through christ's eyes and through the christian faith and we need to hold on to that because we're Bombarded in every direction from a whole different worldview a worldview that says only materialism Is there a secular materialism? The only thing that's real is what you can see and touch and feel that's the predominant philosophy And so we need to hold on to this we believe that there is a god who stands outside his creation And he transcends it even though he can be in it And indeed he did come into it in the person of jesus. We need to hold on to that There's a god who created the universe.

There's a god who sent his son and became Part of his universe to understand the people that he created and so we answer that we know We know where we're from god created us. We know where we're going We're going to the home of our heavenly father. We know what the problem is with the world It's rebellion against god and rejection of his son jesus That's the problem.

We know how to fix the problem of the world that is to open our hearts to believing in a loving god and embracing his son jesus and Accepting his offer For his life to be united with my life and then living it out. That's the answer And so we need to hold on to that as a world view through which we see everything else paul Paul put it together and just this last scripture philippians 2 Philippians 2 he put just the whole picture

that what i've just been talking about that this This world view of god coming into our dimension He stated these wonderful truths in philippians 2 the lord. Jesus being in very nature God did not consider equality with god something to be grasped but made himself nothing Taking the very nature of a servant being made in human likeness and being found in appearance as a man He humbled himself became obedient to death even death on a cross therefore God exalted him to the highest place And given him the name that's above every name That at the name of jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and every tongue confess That jesus christ is lord to the glory of god the father what a marvelous truth and you know You may be here today.

Maybe you have never Bowed your knee to jesus christ. Maybe you have never given your life to jesus But what this passage is trying to urge us. It's it's saying that at some time in the future everybody Whether they will it or don't will it will bow the knee to jesus every nation Whether it knows it or not belongs to christ And one day every nation will acknowledge That he is lord of all but what we're about here today is that we are We have we have this opportunity of our own free will Right here this morning of our own free will to say jesus.

I I want to bow my knee to you I I want to bow my knee to you now I want to confess Repent say i'm sorry For the years to this point that were christless That had that you had little I had little interest in you Little interest in your your word the bible. I little interest in I want to I want to repent of that jesus I want you to come and I want to bow in my heart to you I want to be your follower I want you to be my lord now so that that's what we're about here that we have this free opportunity To do it now rather than miss miss it and one day Have to do it With it the whole world Let's pray I'd like you just to respond to all of that in your own in your own words Your own heart's prayer Father I pray for person persons Who just heard your word today? Said say in their hearts I want to make that commitment. I want my life to change.

I pray lord. You give them faith Give them courage Give them words in their hearts To make that commitment to you I pray father person persons who who know who know the things in their lives That are hindering them from giving their life to you and from following you Whether it's a habit Whether it's a relationship I pray that you'll give them Courage and strength Do they say that this thing will no longer have a hold on me? Jesus name break it For this relationship is not helping me I'm gonna end it lord with your help and I want to come to you Could be the lord has just spoken to you about reading his word You're saying I need to do more of that could be the lord speaking to you about just spending more time praying You're saying That's something that I could learn to do I'm going to come out early in the morning and i'm going to come out to a cell group I'm going to learn to pray What I pray for the faith I pray for the the thoughts to express that I pray lord that person or persons who's saying I could do with something more substantial in my life I'm going to consider those those classes I'm going to consider studying with with others because I want to be an effective servant And so lord we offer you all of these prayers Offer them like a bulk ale flowers and then Ask your lord confirm them To each person who's prayed Lord in your mighty name we ask this I'm, just going to ask you to look at corporate prayer a prayer to pray together Just a prayer response that we as a congregation can say together invite you to read that and then we'll just stand And then i'll ask the prayer teams If they'll just come forward Um come forward at this time this if you're on a prayer teams today, I just invite you to come If you can read that and then we'll stand and say it together I have found that it's often very helpful after doing a Corporate prayer like that to come to a prayer station Ask just ask for prayer. I made a decision.

Would you pray for me? We've got wonderful prayer teams here people who've got all kinds of of of interest and time and Your your need And so a great opportunity and I found that it helps you know just

helps to confirm it and Embedded if making a general prayer and then having somebody to join with you and say yeah, we're with you in this so please stand as we Repeat the prayer together. We got an awful lot of prayer teams here today. So that's Okay, let's let's just repeat it together father I want to be a vigilant and vibrant servant of the lord.

Jesus Forgive me for all those times. I was sleeping when I should have been praying For all those times I furthered my own interests when I should have been serving yours For all those occasions I spent precious time on things of little consequence When I could have been worshiping and serving you Help me lord. Jesus to give more and more of my time to you and your kingdom Thank you.

Holy spirit for finding me giving me faith to believe in the lord. Jesus Fill me with your love and grace and power And ever increasing measure in your powerful name lord. Jesus.

I pray Amen and so lord we Thank you for your presence. Thank you that we can meet just unmolested to Open the bible together and read the bible just your thank you for the freedom we have And so go into all the world in the power of the holy spirit to fulfill your high calling as servants And as soldiers of jesus christ and the lord bless you and keep you The lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you the lord lift up his countenance upon you And give you his peace Amen invite you to come for prayer God bless you

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