

# THE END TIME HABITS/DISCIPLINES OF GODLY CHRISTIANS

## Part 1

**1 Peter 4:7-11**, <sup>7</sup> The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. <sup>8</sup> Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup> Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. <sup>10</sup> As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: <sup>11</sup> whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

### To whom has Peter written these words?

**1 Peter 1:3**, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...

**Note: 1 Peter 4:7-11** is written to born-again Christians to practice godly habits/disciplines.

- ⇒ You cannot practice what Peter said without born-again experience.
- ⇒ If you are not born-again, I invite you to believe in the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins and reconciliation to God.
- ⇒ If you are born-again, I urge you to seriously consider the exhortation of Peter.

**Illustration:** When we travel to a far distant place, Joe would keep on asking the question, “Papa, are we near to the destiny?”

**The end of all things is at hand (near).** What is the end of all things?

- ❖ **1:3-5**, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through

the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you**, who by God's power are being guarded through faith **for a salvation [glorious inheritance] ready to be revealed in the last time.** (cf. v.9)

- ❖ **1:6-7**, In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—**may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**
- ❖ **4:13**, But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad **when his glory is revealed.**
- ❖ **4:17**, For **it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God**; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?
- ❖ **5:4**, And **when the chief Shepherd appears**, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.
- ❖ **5:10-11**, And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, **who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ**, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

**4:7, The end of all things is at hand (near).**

**What is the end of all things?** The end refers to Christ's second coming followed by God's judgment and His glorious inheritance to those who believe in Christ Jesus.

**The end:** The achievement/completion of all of God's purposes is near.

**C.S. Lewis, The Voyage of the Dawn Treader:** "Do not look sad. We shall meet soon again." "Please, Aslan", said Lucy, "what do you call soon?" "I call all times soon" said Aslan; and instantly he was vanished away."

**Revelation 22:20**, "Surely I am coming soon." We may say, "2000 years has passed, Lord?" Lord, "In my eyes of eternity, all times are soon."

**Early church:** The early church lived with a constant expectancy of Christ's sudden return.

**Imminent:** Christ could return at any time, and that we are to be ready for him to come at any time.

### **Then what about the signs that must be fulfilled?**

**Wayne Grudem:** The signs are never given to make us think, "Jesus couldn't come for a few years." There is no indication that Jesus gave these signs in order to provide Christians with a reason not to be ready for his return or in order to encourage them not to expect that he could come at any time!

**Therefore,** we must not live with a sense that Christ would come sometime in the future but that He could come at any time. We must be ready for Him.

### **What must we do at the end times?**

**Illustration:** Steven Cole shared about a strange practice of President Jimmy Carter, the 39<sup>th</sup> president of the United States. He stayed at times in the homes of common Americans. Someone will get a call, informing that the President would like to stay in your home. Their house would be on national television. Imagine the emotional response! Imagine the radical action (keeping the house super clean)!

**The President of presidents is coming soon. Peter exhorted to follow four essential disciplines in 1 Peter 4:7-11. When Christ comes, will He find us busy doing these things?**

**Note:** The list is not exhaustive but they are fundamental disciplines of godly Christians in the last days.

⇒ One Bible scholar calls these instructions—eschatological ethics, i.e. practicing the above disciplines in light of the end times.

### **1. KEEPING IN MIND THE END OF ALL THINGS IS AT HAND, CULTIVATE THE HABIT/DISCIPLINE OF PRAYER.**

**1 Peter 4:7,** The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.

### **What is prayer?**

**Illustration:** A fisherman was at sea with his godless companions when a storm came up and threatened to sink their ship. His friends begged him to pray; but he said, "It's been a long time since I've done that or even entered a church." At their insistence, however, he finally cried out, "O Lord, I haven't asked anything of You in 15 years, and if You help us now and bring us safely to land, I promise I won't bother You again for another 15!" **Unfortunately, many people view prayer as an escape mechanism rather than a constant line of communication with God.**

**Prayer** speaks about communion with God, relationship with God, absolute dependence on God's grace. It is not about just asking and receiving. It is having close fellowship with God by cultivating the habit of talking to Him and walking in the consciousness of His presence.

**Comment:** What Peter is saying is that it is by being in an abiding relationship with God that you would be preserved in the end time. **YOU CANNOT SURVIVE SPIRITUALLY IN THE END TIME WITHOUT HAVING ABIDING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.**

**Observe:** The command is NOT for prayer but to be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of prayers.

Many of us have the **DESIRE TO PRAY** but couldn't devote ourselves to prayer. We know how prayer is the most difficult discipline in the Christian life. We need two disciplines to pray. Without these, we cannot discipline ourselves to pray: **self-control and sober-mindedness**

**Illustration:** A drunkard lacks two things: **i) control over himself and ii) sober-mindedness (alertness).** We may not be drunk with alcohol but we may be drunk with others things in life which are choking our prayer life.

#### **i. BE SELF-CONTROLLED:**

**Self-control:** Control yourself. Don't be uncontrolled, led by your wild passions and emotions and situations. Be in charge/control of yourself. Your 'self' is a great hindrance to prayer. The problem is not on the outside but on the inside.

**Illustration:** Professor James M. Tour is Rice University Chao Professor of Chemistry, computer science, mechanical engineering, and materials science. This 'world-class scientist' has revolutionized one of the most challenging fields of science. Of the more than 720,000 scientists who published chemistry papers in

academic journals during the last decade, Tour was among the ten most-cited authors in the world. He puts in 12 hours a day at the chemistry lab.

“He wakes up each morning at 3:30 a.m. ... to spend his first two hours with his Bible. He says, ‘I read the Bible from Genesis Chapter 1 to Revelation Chapter 22, and when I’m done I start again,’ Tour said. ‘I’ve been doing this for over 30 years. There is this amazing richness. I take a passage and I say, ‘Lord speak to me. And then it just comes alive’.”

His family devotions begin at 5:30 am and last until 6:00 am, when he leaves for the university. His children have remarked on more than one occasion that this devotional time was one of their most important activities in growing up.

#### WHERE ARE THE MEN OF SUCH SELF-CONTROL AND DISCIPLINE?

- ⇒ To pray we must control our sleep [ARE YOU DRUNK WITH SLEEP]
- ⇒ To pray we must control our time [ARE YOU DRUNK DISORGANIZED LIFESTYLE]
- ⇒ To pray we must control our wild thoughts (too many things running in our mind) [ARE YOU DRUNK WITH WILD THOUGHTS]
- ⇒ To pray we must control our wayward emotions (fight against emotions “I don’t feel like to pray”) [ARE YOU DRUNK WITH WAYWARD EMOTIONS]
- ⇒ To pray we must control our appetite (physical hunger) [ARE YOU DRUNK WITH LOVE FOR FOOD]
- ⇒ To pray we must control our time with people [ARE YOU DRUNK WITH SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE]
- ⇒ To pray we must control our good affections (management of the house, time with spouse, attention to children) [ARE YOU DRUNK WITH FAMILY CONCERNS]
- ⇒ To pray we must control our use of social media and mobile phones [ARE YOU DRUNK WITH MOBILE PHONES]
- ⇒ To pray we must control our use of TV and other entertainments [ARE YOU DRUNK WITH ENTERTAINMENT]

⇒ To pray we must control our business. [ARE YOU DRUNK WITH BUSINESS]

THOSE WHO LACK SELF-CONTROL  
CANNOT BE CONTROLLED BY THE NECESSITY TO PRAY.

**Application:** KEEPING IN MIND THE END OF ALL THINGS IS AT HAND, CULTIVATE THE HABIT/DISCIPLINE OF PRAYER BY BEING SELF-CONTROLLED.

**ii. BE SOBER-MINDED:**

**Illustration:** A Christian man gets up late in the morning. He realizes he is late to work. He quickly offers a word of prayer, freshens up, eats breakfast and rushes to work. After working through the day, he returns home. To relax himself, he spends time before the Television or mobile for a while. He gets some things that his family needs. Somehow the time passes away quickly and he goes to bed late in the night. The next day was business as usual. He doesn't spend adequate time personal devotions, no sense of regularly leading his family in devotions, no commitment to church prayer meetings, and no lifestyle lived in the consciousness of God. Here is a man who is not sober-minded and is blown away by the wind of worldly affairs and wild passions.

**Sober-minded:** Be on the alert. To keep watching. BE CONCIOUS THAT YOU ARE LIVING IN THE END TIME WITH A NECESSITY TO PRAY AND SEEK GOD.

**Peter might have said that reflecting upon his own experience:**

**Mark 14:32-42,** And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." **And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled.** And he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. **Remain here and watch.**" And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." **And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."** And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him. And he

came the third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? **It is enough; the hour has come.** The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.”

❖ **1 Peter 4:7**, The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.

**Why sober-minded is necessary? A lot of things absorb our mind from being alert to prayers:**

- ⇒ Work pressure [ARE YOU DRUNK WITH...]
- ⇒ Family responsibilities (spouse/children) [ARE YOU DRUNK WITH...]
- ⇒ House chores [ARE YOU DRUNK WITH...]
- ⇒ Shopping and parties [ARE YOU DRUNK WITH...]
- ⇒ Church activities [ARE YOU DRUNK WITH...]
- ⇒ Interpersonal problems [ARE YOU DRUNK WITH...]
- ⇒ Financial anxiety [ARE YOU DRUNK WITH...]
- ⇒ Health concerns [ARE YOU DRUNK WITH...]
- ⇒ Ministry responsibilities [ARE YOU DRUNK WITH...]

IF OUR PRAYER LIFE IS HAMPERED  
IT IS BECAUSE OUR MIND IS CROWDED.  
THEREFORE, CLEAN UP YOUR MIND AND  
REALIZE THAT GOD IS YOUR GREATEST NEED.

**Isaiah 26:3**, “You keep him in perfect peace **whose mind is stayed on you**, because he trusts in you.” THOSE WHOSE MIND IS STAYED ON GOD WILL BE STEADFAST IN THEIR PRAYERS TO GOD.

DON'T LET ANY EARTHLY FACTORS, HOWEVER NOBLE THEY ARE,  
OVERRIDE YOUR ALERTNESS TO THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER.

**Application:** KEEPING IN MIND THE END OF ALL THINGS IS AT HAND, CULTIVATE THE HABIT/DISCIPLINE OF PRAYER BY BEING SOBER-MINDED.

- ❖ **1 Peter 4:7**, The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.

**Observation:** “for the sake of your prayers” (plural)

**Scottish New Testament scholar I. Howard Marshall:** Peter uses the noun in the plural prayers to indicate that repeated acts of prayer are in his mind. But what kind of prayers? The context may well suggest that prayers in the church meeting are particularly in his mind, since the next few verses are all concerned with the congregation and its activities and relationships.

**Sad fact:** In almost every church, only a handful of people show up for prayer meetings.

- ⇒ To corporate praying we must control our schedule and prioritize our works. [Gautam labors in leading in midnight prayer (after work @ 8pm), Leela comes directly to prayer (works), Daniel goes home (after work) and comes back for prayer] Blessed examples. SOME DESPERATELY WANT TO COME BUT COULD NOT. SOME COULD COME BUT DO NOT TAKE EFFORTS.

**John Piper warns that** "The end is near indeed. If anyone dallies with sin and the world, thinking, "I have lots of time," he plays the fool. The Judge is at the door (James 5:9). And the time remaining should be spent in earnest prayer that we not be made drunk and hard by the cares and pleasures of this world."

NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN PRAYER. NOTHING IS MORE NECESSARY THAN PRAYER. NOTHING IS MORE URGENT THAN PRAYER. LET PRAYER PREOCCUPY OUR MIND. LET PRAYER ENTHRONE OUR HEART. LET PRAYER DOMINATE OUR PASSIONS. LET PRAYER BE OUR FOCUS AND CONCERN. LET PRAYER DRIVE OUR LIFE.

- ⇒ Self-control and sober-mindedness is required for the sake of prayers. Many of us exercise self-control and sober-mindedness in other things but not for prayers.
- ⇒ ALL THOSE WHO NEGLECT BOTH PRIVATE AND CORPORATE PRAYER WILL GREATLY MOURN ONE DAY BECAUSE OF THEIR OBSORPTION IN WORLDLY AFFAIRS BY GIVING NO PRIORITY TO GOD.



**Hudson Taylor:** When Hudson Taylor was sailing to China to begin his missionary work, his ship was in great danger. The wind had died, and the current was carrying them toward sunken reefs which were close to islands inhabited by cannibals—so close they could see them building fires on the shore. Everything they tried was to no avail. In his journal Taylor recorded what happened next: The Captain said to me, **“Well, we have done everything that can be done.” A thought occurred to me, and I replied, “No, there is one thing we have not done yet.”** “What is that?” he queried. “Four of us on board are Christians. Let us each retire to his own cabin, and in agreed prayer ask the Lord to give us immediately a breeze.” Taylor prayed briefly and then, certain that the answer was coming, went up on the deck and asked the first officer to let down the sails. “What would be the good of that?” he answered roughly. I told him we had been asking a wind from God; that it was coming immediately. Within minutes the wind did began to blow, and it carried them safely past the reefs.

**Note:** The wind of the Spirit is not witnessed these days. Our lives are driven by the current of the world toward sunken reefs (sin and complacency). One thing we are not doing. We must pray for the wind of the Spirit to escape hitting the sunken reefs.

**Finally, 1 Peter 4:7,** The end of all things is at hand; **THEREFORE** be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.

**Application:** WE WOULD DEVOTE OURSELVES TO PRAY ONLY WHEN WE LIVE DAILY IN LIGHT OF THE END TIME, KNOWING WE ARE ON THE EDGE OF ETERNITY, WHEN WE LIVE DAILY EARGERLY WAITING FOR THE LORD’S COMING, WHEN WE LIVE DAILY KNOWING WE WOULD FACE GOD’S JUDGMENT.

**Timothy Lane and Paul David Tripp in “How People Change”,** You and I will only be able to understand what is valuable when we examine things from the perspective of eternity. The eyes of eternity alone can tell us what is worth living and dying for.