



MONDAY, July 20, 2009: *“The certainty that the judgment seat lies ahead for all believers should deeply influence our conduct.”* \_ J. Oswald Sanders, Dynamic Spiritual Leadership

- ❑ Lamentations 3:31-33 **For the Lord will not cast off forever. Though He causes grief, yet He will show compassion according to the multitude of His mercies.**
- ❑ **For He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.**

Judgment is coming! How's that for a Monday morning wake-up call! It is true, however.

Both in this life and in the life to come, judgment is a part of God's action in our lives and in the world. The Bible is very clear on this. To paint a one-sided rose-colored picture of a “push-over” God is to do a great disservice to ourselves and to others who may make very foolish decisions thinking that God will go easy on them.

The book of Lamentations is a reminder that though the wheels of God's judgment grind slowly, grind they do.

However, the book of Lamentations also reminds us that even in the worst of times God leaves an open door of hope and mercy. Today's verses remind us that God's judgments are never given in irrational anger or vindictive scorn. Neither are God's judgment given without a better purpose in mind.

This gives me - a very imperfect man - great hope and comfort. Today's devotional is a reminder that you and I can never fall beyond the reach of God's mercy. For that, I am eternally thankful.

**SCRIPTURE:** Jude 1:21

TUESDAY, July 21, 2009: *“There is nothing that can be done with anger that cannot be done better without it.”* \_Dallas Willard, The Divine Conspiracy

- ❑ Proverbs 19:11 The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and his glory is to overlook a transgression.

One of the tell-tale signs that a person is wasting their potential is if they are fighting a lot.

A true warrior spends a lot more time preparing to fight than fighting. They understand that the real battles (things worth dying for) do not come around that often and when they do, only the prepared survive.

What about you? Are you spending a lot of time with minor skirmishes? Are you fussing about this, complaining about that, and arguing over things that will not matter this time next year?

Why are you doing this? Why are you making your life miserable and the lives of those around you? Why are you wasting your precious days and resources over things that do not matter?

Bottom line: take the high road, pick your battles and then be ready for them. There will only be a few battles that you must fight in a lifetime; the rest is only preparation. The great tragedy will be if when your times comes, you falter, all because you wasted your strength on lesser things.

**SCRIPTURE:** I Samuel 4:9

WEDNESDAY, July 22, 2009: *“Your talent and giftedness as a leader has the potential to take you farther than your character can sustain you. That ought to scare you. The fact that people choose to follow you is not necessarily an indicator that you deserve to be followed. There is a significant difference between having a following and being worth following. The truth is that talented, charismatic, visionary people will almost always have a following. Whether they are worth following is a different question, predicated upon a different set of values.”* \_Andy Stanley, The Next Generation Leader p.127

- ❑ Matthew 5:33-37

Today's Scripture lesson is a reminder that if anything is required beyond our word, then a dangerous weakness is revealed in our life.

In other words, if before people will believe us, it must be our word “and” anything, then we need to go back to the altar and begin rebuilding our life – for our word represents the strength of our character.

This is true especially where we are known.

In some cases to get things done our word “and” something else – like someone else's name, a contract, a position, etc. - may be required, not because of weak character, but because we are not known. However, this should be a reminder to us to not lean on other people's reputation or on our position of authority but rather to pay the price of building a relationship with people so that they know they can believe our word because they know our character.

**SCRIPTURE:** Zechariah 8:16

THURSDAY: July 23, 2009: *“To believe in the church is to live out of the conviction that grace abides in her, teaches and governs her common life, and flows from God to all the faithful.”* \_Longer Catech, Eastern Orthodox Church

- ❑ **Acts 2:42** *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

All the essential elements of the church are present in this early fourfold description of the church: apostolic doctrine, community, sacrament, and common worship.

My point in mentioning this is to remind you that your church membership represents something that is very important. The church is the love of Christ. It is where new life is coming into being, authoritative teaching of revealed truth is being passed on, and where a visible community of believers are manifesting the love of God in the world.

Today you may be heading off to a job where you are just another cog in the corporate wheel, but I want to remind you that as a member of the church you are a part of something that matters...really matters!

**SCRIPTURE:**

Hebrews 10:23-25