



God's people need to be aware: listen, hear, and understand. That's the reason it's so important to read our Bibles, where God presents His perspective so we can understand His character, boundaries, and great promises to those who seek Him. When we know God, we can easily recognize the evil and wickedness that surround us. Jesus firmly warned His disciples, and therefore His Church, to be aware, stand firm, and pursue God wholeheartedly.

JESUS' WARNING REGARDING DECEPTION, LAWLESSNESS, AND ENDURANCE

Matthew 24:11–14 (NASB[®]): "Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. ¹² **Because lawlessness is increased**, most people's love will grow cold. ¹³ But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. ¹⁴ "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

Matthew 24:11–14 (NIV[®]): "Many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. ¹² **Because of the increase of wickedness**, the love of most will grow cold, ¹³ but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

We must continue to seek the Lord amid struggles. That's not always easy in the face of expressions of evil. List some ways you can guard your heart against failing to stand and pursue the Lord, no matter the circumstances around you.

I. COUNSEL FROM SCRIPTURE

A. The Pursuit of God

Zephaniah 1:4, 6 "I will stretch out my hand against Judah and against all who live in Jerusalem. ... ⁶ those who turn back from following the Lord and **neither seek the Lord nor inquire of him**.

Has there been a time when you did not seek or consistently pursue the Lord, and it resulted in undesired consequences? Conversely, when have you consistently sought and pursued God and experienced positive life change?

B. Little Strength

1 Corinthians 1:31 *Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."*

Jeremiah 9:23–24 ²³ *This is what the Lord says: "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, ²⁴ but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the Lord.*

C. Paul Delivered Through His Struggles (Not From)

2 Corinthians 11:23–28 ²³ *Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. ²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, ²⁶ I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. ²⁷ I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. ²⁸ Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.*

How have you seen God's deliverance through your struggles?

What did you learn about God's character through your struggles that you might not have otherwise experienced?

II. UNCERTAIN FUTURE ... "SO FAR"

1 Corinthians 1:9 **God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.**

Name some times have you been tempted to doubt God's continued faithfulness by adopting a "God's been good to me, so far" perspective. Take time to stop and repent. Then, affirm your trust in His faithful character.

III. PAUL'S LESSONS FROM THE JOURNEY

A. Secret of Being Content

Philippians 4:12–13 ¹² *I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.* ¹³ *I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*

B. Attitude Matters

Philippians 2:3–5 ³ *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.* ⁴ *Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.* ⁵ *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.*

What are ways we can cultivate a positive, godly attitude? How can believers shift their attitude when facing challenges?

C. Heart Condition & Mindset

Colossians 3:1–4 ¹ *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.* ² *Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.* ³ *For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.* ⁴ *When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

What does it mean to "set your mind on things above," and how does this mindset impact your daily choices and priorities?

D. Struggle, What Struggle? The Need for Protection

Ephesians 6:10–13 ¹⁰ *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.* ¹¹ *Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.* ¹² *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.* ¹³ *Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.*

E. Good Listener Spirit Led/Directed/Aware/Dependent

Acts 27:22–26 ²² *But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed.* ²³ *Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me* ²⁴ *and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.'* ²⁵ *So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me.* ²⁶ *Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island.'*

READ THIS PROCLAMATION TOGETHER AS A GROUP:

We are not satisfied.

We are not distracted.

We are not weary in doing good.

We are not discouraged.

We have our eyes on the cross and our hearts set on the prize.

We believe the One who has promised is Faithful.

We believe the Holy Spirit is our Helper.

We believe that what we ask in Jesus' name our Father provides.

We believe that the King of Kings is returning to the earth in all of His glory -- and we intend to be about His business until that moment in time.

WE WILL NOT STOP.