

Connection to Romans 13

As citizens of God's kingdom, we can live in anticipation of the return of Christ. We can represent Christ well now, knowing that one day we will live in eternity with Him.

Introduction/Opening

Recent statistics show that an increasing number of evangelicals who are firm in their faith are flabby in their practice of gathering with their brothers and sisters in worship. It's the part-time syndrome, and it can sneak up on any of us. Vacations, sports, sickness, guests over a weekend, holidays, work travel, and a ton of other things can keep us from gathering with other believers.

The Message presents Romans 13:11 in this way: "But make sure that you don't get so absorbed and exhausted in taking care of all your day-by-day obligations that you lose track of the time and doze off, oblivious to God."

Dozing off and becoming oblivious to God? We can be so absorbed and exhausted in taking care of all our day-to-day obligations that we become oblivious to God!

What can we do to snap out of this? Paul called on the Romans to to wake up and come back to reality. We must learn not to plan for the indulgence of our sinful desires. Instead, we must plan to do God's will (put on Jesus Christ). What does this look like?

Outline

1. Focus on the Imminent Return of Jesus (v. 11).
This will give us an urgency for obedience, to share the gospel, and to express our faith in Jesus.
2. Decide to Live Right (v.12).
Through the Holy Spirit by prayer, self-discipline, reading and studying God's Word, we put on holy character so that people can recognize us as belonging to Christ. The "armor of God" is listed in Ephesians 6:11-17. It is the protection that practical righteousness provides.
3. Don't Waste Time Toying with Sin (v. 13).
Let's not go back and forth but be consistent in our lives and live as we live in the day. We must do away with the deeds of the flesh.

4. Embrace Christ in All We Say and Do (v. 14).

The use of the full phrase “the Lord Jesus Christ” shows how we are to totally embrace Christ and allow Him to influence all of life. We are to embrace Christ in such a way that His character is shown in all we say or do. We not only put on His character, but we also let Christ Himself be our armor.

Conclusion

We all can become spiritually lazy very quickly—one small decision at a time until we are in a spiritual lethargic stupor and numb to spiritual life.

While writing this conclusion, I received a text from a friend who has been helping someone “wake up.” I’m paraphrasing: “The old me is gone, my marriage is in a better place, daily Bible reading and prayer is the norm, and I’m treating my body as God’s temple. With God’s blessing I will prevail. I have no other choice.” It’s amazing to see God wake someone up! May we remain awake to God’s purposes in our lives.

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