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# Our Present Age

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## Little-by-Little

**LITTLE-BY-LITTLE** we grow, develop, and then wake up one day to find ourselves where we are. I mean, how did I get to be sixty-five years old so quickly? We travel through life, we experience it, reach certain milestones, and then are totally amazed at how we got here so fast. It's almost as if everything up to now has been a dream from which we have awakened.

The bottom-line to it all is no matter how much we live, experience, and look forward to the next milestone, life creeps up on us little-by-little and too often catches us by surprise.

In a similar way this is how the last days overtake us. Little-by-little prophecy is fulfilled. At some point we get a glimpse of what is happening and wonder how we got here. It overtakes us because we experience a little more immorality, a little more inflation, a little more wrong ideas, a little more... (you add your own) and we begin to assimilate a little here and a little there. Much like the proverbial *frog in a boiling pot*, we adjust to the temperature of the culture around us until the Christianity we once knew is no longer Christianity at all. In this way we understand how it's possible for even the strongest of Christians to be overcome, necessitating the importance of those who think they are strong to take heed lest they also are removed from Christ (Mat. 24:24; 1 Cor. 10:12). No one is exempt from being taken captive by sin's gradual increase.

Many adapt to the world's culture because they don't understand the little-by-little concept. They think of last day events as apocalyptic in nature, seizing upon them

without warning. Thinking in this way keeps the blinders on to what is really happening around us. The apocalyptic events do not come as one diving into a pool of water, but as one tip toeing into the waters until they are fully immersed by the culture around them.

In this month's newsletter I want to look at some little-by-little events that too often go unnoticed as major signs because they are just part of life, but therein is the danger. It is the everyday events that will drive us to sin's tight clutches. Let's look at some of these.

### Inflation

We now live at a time when inflation is just part of life. Yet the little-by-little increases in inflation will overtake us until hyperinflation has embraced us (Rev. 6:5,6). My wife and I occasionally quip that if we had the income twenty years ago that we have today we would think we were rich. It still amazes me that twenty years ago we were able to live with just one paycheck. As it is, we both have to work if we're going to pay the bills.

Let's go back to the year 1969. I was sixteen and I remember paying .25¢ for a gallon of gas. Postage stamps were .06¢, a new car was approximately \$2,000, a new house \$40,000, and get ready for this shocker... the Dow Jones Average was around 838.92 compared to today's Average of 24,283.11. It is obvious that little-by-little we are swiftly moving toward hyperinflation.

## Drugs

We all know the issues we have with illegal drugs and the much talked about “opiod crises.” But let’s look at the real crises—legal drugs, commonly called prescriptions and medications. These negatively affect more people than crack, heroin, and cocaine combined.

Are you aware that Scripture is clear that drugs will become big business in the last days prior to the appearing of the Antichrist and are spoken of in a negative light? It’s true. Let’s look at three particular verses found in the book of Revelation. You look up the verses and I’ll give the commentary.

In each of the three verses, the word *sorcery* is defined in the Greek as the dispensing and use of drugs, as well as poisoning by drugs. Not very comforting is it?

In Revelation 18:23 a direct correlation between the businessmen (merchants) and the dispensing of drugs (sorcery) is shown. This reveals that drugs are big business, big money, and are distributed to the masses. to deceive and move them away from good health.

So what are we to do then? How about if we go back to the old paths, to the way we use to take care of what ails us before the current health care tactics took over little-by-little beginning in the 1800’s; the old paths consists of food, herbs, plants, oils, and prayer. “Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:14-16). Did you notice the lack of a doctor in the equation?

Revelation 9:21 tells us that those dealing in legal drugs are sinners and Revelation 21:8 tells us they will find themselves in the lake of fire, not God’s kingdom (Rev.

22:15). Keep in mind we are talking about the money making, big business legal drug dealers, not the back ally street dealers.

Little-by-little we have accepted drug use as normal. There was a time when drugs were not permitted to be advertised to the consumer. There was a time we did not have “drug” stores or “pharmacies.” Those days are swallowed up by the age of the Antichrist which is now upon us. No matter how far we might turn back the clock, legal drugs are here to stay. You can come out of this system by being proactive and taking the proverbial bull by the horns and return to the old paths.

## Lovers of Pleasures

The twenty first century church may truly be called the *pleasure seeking church*. Little-by-little the love of God within the doors of our denominations has been replaced with the love of those things that stimulate our senses to "enhance" our worship and ability to interact with God. Hold on for a moment...what did I say? "stimulate our senses to "enhance" our worship and ability to interact with God." Isn't God real? Isn't God living? Isn't it our interaction with an actual God that stimulates us toward Him? Let this sink in: no other stimulus is necessary.

Let the Apostle Paul come and assemble with the denominations of today. He would be in a rage to find the assemblies inside the denominations acting like the pagans. In Paul's day, it was the pagan's that assembled with all the enticements, entertainment, and stimulus.

The Apostle Paul told Timothy that the last days—our days—would be characterized by God's people loving pleasure more than God (2Tim. 3:4). This goes hand-in-hand with the great apostasy of the church, with the church moving away from the Holy Spirit and having only an appearance of being a Christian without actually being a Christian (2Tim. 3:5). When the Holy Spirit is missing, we look for other ways to stimulate our congregations—and in comes the worship bands, big

screen TV's, high profile speakers, praise fests, activities of all sorts, coffee shops, and you name it, it will be brought in to continue the organizations that are falsely called churches.

Lover's of pleasure more than lover's of God?  
Something to think about.

## Violence

Violence is another major everyday sign that the end is here. Even as it was in the days of Noah, so will violence continue to grow little-by-little until it fills the earth (Gen. 6:11-13).

As I read the news, protests are taking place, a business owner hired a hit man to kill a cop, poop is thrown on a restaurant, man murders woman, woman murders man, teens shooting up schools, mall shootings, warring neighbors, road rage, shopper's rage, home invasions, continual wars, and the list goes on and on.

As much as we would like to think we can stop the violence, no amount of activism or legislation or social change will make a difference—Jesus is our only hope and He is being removed from the equation even by those claiming the name of Christ. Violence will only grow worse, more deadly, and make it difficult for people to even want to go outside their own homes. During these times we need to be pressing forward in our Christianity with all the gusto we can muster and hold on just a little while longer.

## Hearers, Not Doers

Does anyone experience anything real anymore? Thankfully there are still some, but they are quickly being replaced by the majority who prefer fantasy experiences instead of actual experiences.

Little-by-little we have become a culture of images and non experience, which picked up momentum with the beginning of the modern age in the 1800's. We prefer

to read, watch, play the viral, and virtual reality games. Let's not forget our passive going to the polls and sitting in church thinking we have achieved some great accomplishment. And what about our social media where we vent with many words, argue with others, and go away self satisfied thinking we have accomplished great things with our words? Nothing has been accomplished. Reality is being replaced with everyone doing what is right in their own eyes, living within their own minds, unable to experience reality because the source of truth and reality is not known. Little-by-little absolute truth is replaced with self truth. Along with absolute truth so has our passion to act become nullified. We need to be revolutionaries, not journalists.

To combat this living within our own minds, Scripture demands that we be doers and not hearers (Jam. 1:22-27). James downplays the giving of words and encourages the taking of action: visit those in need, help the sick, and spend time keeping yourself from becoming like those not of Christ (Jam. 1:27). Words alone keep us from Christ...action keeps us close to Christ. Action is equivalent to love. Love is the greatest commandment (Mat. 22:36-40).

## Powerless Christianity

Let's face it...the church is on its death bed. The church no longer lives with the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the biggest little-by-little that pulls God's people from Him. Romans 8:9 is clear that without the Holy Spirit we do not belong to Christ.

Look over the list in Galatians 5:19-21. This is a list of those things that belong to those who don't have the Holy Spirit. Those who do these things *will not inherit the kingdom of God*. Here's the catch...the majority who claim the name of Christ allow these things to be part of their Christian life. In contrast, take a look at Galatians 5:22-23. This is a list of those characteristics that belong to those who have the Holy Spirit. The sadness of our present age is that license is given to live like those

without the Holy Spirit, while claiming to be Christian. If we cannot inherit the kingdom of God by living according to the flesh, then there is no license to merge the flesh with the Spirit of God.

Little-by-little we have been deceived into thinking that we are able to grow out of sin and into grace. The teaching of Scripture is that we put off sin, and put on grace (Rom. 13:12). The implication is that we take off the dirty coat of sin and put on the over sized coat of grace and grow into it. Sin is removed...grace now abounds.

## The Return

Teachings on the last days are not popular today. Few Pastors teach on it. Congregations believe everyone has the right to their own opinions. Most believe the main issue of the last days—the return of Christ—is still far into the future. Little-by-little the last days have reached the point of being irrelevant to the Christian faith; and guess what? This mocking attitude is what the Apostle Paul warned would appear in the last days (2 Peter 3:4).

We are not to remove ourselves from last day's teachings and knowing when Christ will return. Being on the lookout for His return is our "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13; Phillip. 3:20). It is this conscious, active awareness of His soon coming that will keep us from being caught unaware when He does appear (Mat. 24:37-39). Also take a look at the following Scripture: Luke 12:37-40.

The time is short. Christ will soon be here. Only those consciously looking for His return will enter His kingdom.

## Who Do You Trust?

Proverbs 3:5,6 tells us: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not unto your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."

Often I think this thing called "trust in the Lord" has become more of an unrealistic panacea than a true trust in the Lord. When asked what it means to "trust in the Lord" there is often an obstinate "just trust in Jesus" kind of answer. He is too often left out there somewhere in the unseen world, disconnected from what we do on earth.

I admit, God is out there, unseen, and we are to stand firm with Him through His Spirit in us, but we do not "trust" Him by leaving Him out there. Throughout Scripture, whether it was through the commands given to Adam, or the law given to Moses, or the revelations given through the prophets, or the direct teachings given by Jesus, to trust God was very practical having to do with history, with what we think, feel, and do. To trust God is to live in a way that conforms to God's revealed word. To point people to trust in God I do not point them to somewhere beyond the blue, but to the word of God and the direction He's given to us.

Do we trust God? To trust God is to love God. Love is an action. If we love God we will be very practical and do as John 14:15 encourages: "If you love me, keep my commandments." To love God implies we are in relationship with Him. We enter into this relationship by receiving Him, through the Holy Spirit, into our lives. Having Him within, we then can know Him; knowing Him we can love Him.

## New Book



**COMING SOON** - Understanding the last days does not have to be complicated. Jesus made this clear when in Matthew 24 He outlined the events and ordering of last day events in only 28 verses.

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