

with chores? "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." [John 13:35] ... "Bear ye one another's burdens" [Gal 6:2].

How heavenly is my conversation?

How much time do I spend talking to others (including strangers, coworkers, friends, neighbors, family) about the Lord and the kingdom to come, as compared to talking about the weather, sports, food, cars, work, clothes, family, health, hobbies, personal problems, etc.? "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." [Col 3:2]

How spiritual are my priorities?

◆ How much do I pray, read the Bible and witness as compared to how much time I spend watching TV, eating, sleeping, reading secular materials, shopping, complaining and gossiping? "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." [Eph 5:15-17]

◆ Am I more informed about the most popular movies or sports figures than what's in the Bible? Can I justify turning a TV on when I know without a doubt that I will positively end up being exposed to ungodliness from commercials and programs? Do I care that the Bible says: "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes" [Psa 101:3]?

◆ Do I drink booze or smoke or play the lottery? If so, do I realize that I am telling the world that my God is not able to deliver me from these lusts and that I love these things more than I love God and His commandments? "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness." [Prov 30:12]

◆ How many times have I been married? Do I realize that 30 years ago even the **unsaved** RARELY got divorced and considered marriage a lifetime commitment - no matter what. And yet today, divorce and remarriage happens on a regular basis among professing born-again Christians. "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery." [Luke 16:18]

◆ Do I know exactly what is going on in my children's lives - what they are being taught by the world (teachers, friends, etc.) and by the church and do I make the sacrifices required to ensure that they are not being unnecessarily contaminated by sin? Does my example help them to be more Christ-like?

"There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother." [Prov 30:11]

◆ Am I as concerned about how I look to God as compared to how I look to the world (clothes, makeup, physical appearance)? "for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." [1 Sam 16:7]

◆ When I do share the Gospel, do I do it out of genuine concern for souls and out of love for the Lord or just to meet some kind of obligation? "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." [2 Cor 9:7]

What is my attitude about prayer?

◆ If and when I pray, what do I pray about and what is its significance in relation to eternity? How often do I pray about the things most people prefer to complain about? "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." [James 4:3]

◆ Do I pray for any of these things and how often:

1. MYSELF: to be conformed to Christ, to hide God's Word in my heart that I would not sin against Him, to grow in my love for Him and for all His commandments, to surrender my will to His completely, to have a forgiving spirit, to have self-sacrificial love, to have the joy of the Lord as my strength, to rejoice and be exceedingly glad when being persecuted for Christ's sake, to hate every false way, especially in myself, to have a genuine love for the brethren and for the lost as exemplified by my thoughts words and deeds, to be anxious to let the world know how wonderful is my blessed Savior and Lord, to live a life of thankfulness for God's grace in my life.

2. COMFORT AND HELP FOR THOSE WHO ARE: sick, dying, elderly, physically and mentally handicapped, hungry, homeless, jobless, divorced, separated, widowed, orphaned, crime victims, ravaged by war, abused (by parents, children, spouses, etc.), persecuted for preaching the Gospel.

3. GODLY WISDOM FOR: myself, missionaries, church leaders & congregation, rulers and anyone in a position of authority, parents, people taking care of others, people facing major decisions in their lives (jobs, marriage, divorce, relocation, surgery, etc.).

4. SALVATION FOR: relatives, friends, neighbors, landlords, tenants, coworkers, store clerks, gas station attendants, people who come to my door, people who call me on the phone, people I contact by mail, political leaders, judges, teachers, youth, people who are dying, police, prisoners, Catholics, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, cult members, atheists, drug addicts, alcoholics, homosexuals, fornicators, liars, adulterers, gamblers, smokers, pleasure seekers, abusers of themselves, abusers of others, mockers, people who use, manipulate, abuse or harm me in some way, and any people God will put in my path as I go about my daily activities.

When we pray for the things of God and with the

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." [Psalm 119:11]

mind of Christ, God straightens out our priorities but this will not happen if we are not faithfully reading and STUDYING the Word of God:

Can the world tell that I am a Christian:

- by the words coming out of my mouth?
- by the things I own or the things I desire?
- by the things I spend my time doing?
- by my humility?
- by my servant's attitude?
- by my concern for lost souls?

Have I really counted the cost of discipleship?

◆ *Would I be satisfied* with a 10 year old car? with worn-out clothes or clothes bought at a thrift store? with furniture bought at a garage sale? without all the gadgets and toys my neighbors have? or with plain home-cooked food versus expensive restaurant prepared meals ... so that I would have more money to spend on the Lord's work?

◆ *Would I be satisfied* not owning a TV set or refraining from buying that book I wanted to read so that I could spend more time with devotions for myself and my family and spend more time sharing the Gospel and praying and reading God's Word?

◆ *Would I be satisfied* not having many friends and being the object of ridicule so I could see lost souls in heaven someday and so I could hear the Lord say: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant ... enter thou into the joy of thy lord." [Matt 25:21]?

Web site: <http://comingintheclouds.org>

**Will God Judge America?
Will He Judge The Church?**

Many Christians and even the unsaved are wondering: Will God judge America? If so, when?

Well in case you haven't noticed, God has already started to judge America. When you have a nation where children murder children, you are witnessing God's judgment on a Church and a nation that have abandoned the God's laws and are in full scale rebellion against them.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS THAT GOD'S JUDGMENT HAS BEGUN?

The signs include: idolatry, blindness, and slothfulness, in the Church. In other words, RAMPANT SIN in the Church of God in America today and COMPLACENCY and IGNORANCE about its pathetic spiritual condition.

There is rampant idolatry in the Church today: Many Christians today measure the quality of a church by its signs and wonders and by the size of the crowds its draws with its Madison Avenue crowd pleasing 'techniques': "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign" [Matt 16:4]. It is as if the Church was trying to compete with Hollywood for the attention of the masses and in competing, trying to use the wisdom of the world. Christians in America crave the same toys and earthly interests as their heathen neighbors. "For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will deliver thee into the hand of them whom thou hatest, into the hand of them from whom thy mind is alienated: And they shall deal with thee hatefully, and shall take away all thy labour, and shall leave thee naked and bare: and the nakedness of thy whoredoms shall be discovered, both thy lewdness and thy whoredoms. I will do these things unto thee, because **thou hast gone a whoring after the heathen, and because thou art polluted with their idols.**" [Ezek 23:28-30].

There is increasing spiritual blindness encroaching upon the Church: More and more, Christians are becoming numb to sin. Behavior that true believers would at one time have had nothing to do with, they now justify just like their unsaved

friends and neighbors. For example: cheating on taxes, not paying sales tax on taxable purchases, gossiping on the phone, violating the speed limit, going to movies, talking bad about people, watching TV including programs that mock people and God's laws as a form of entertainment - like those 'wonderful nature programs' that mock God's story of creation by insisting that we evolved from who-knows-what. Other examples include: reading worldly literature, going to amusement parks, partying, pigging-out, listening to secular music, using minced oaths (slang versions of swear words like oh my gosh, gosh darn, my Lord, my heavens, my Word, golly gee, gee-wiz). It is not a question of 'Does the Bible approve of such worldliness?' because the answer is a resounding NO! It is a question of - Why do true blood-bought saints have such a thirst for the corrupt and defiled things of the world and such an apparent lack of hunger for things above? "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and **blind**, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and **anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see**. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." [Rev 3:17-19]

There is an increasing state of slumber encroaching upon the Church: "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they **all slumbered and slept**." [Matt 25:1-5]

The above parable is a sad but true commentary on the Church in America today. Notice that they ALL slumbered and slept. NOT JUST THE UNSAVED (those who had no oil for their lamps)! What Jesus warned us about has already happened. Telling the difference between Christians and the unsaved is becoming more and more difficult, and not because the unsaved are becoming more godly in their behavior! Most Christians are unaware of the wolves in sheep's clothing all around them. They are ignorant of the ecumenical movement and its affect on a Christian's ability to preach the truth to others

whom they are unequally yoked with in various ministries and movements like Promise Keepers, The Pro-Life movement, the Charismatic movement, etc. Also, most Christians don't see the danger of modern Bible translations and how they promote confusion in the Church and how they create a distrust of the accuracy of the Bible among unbelievers. Many Christians don't see the danger of women teaching and preaching men in the Church. They don't see how it ties in with the feminist movement in America and how it creates havoc in the God-ordained roles of men and women in the home, in church and throughout society.

WHY IS THE CHURCH ASLEEP:

1. For one thing, the shepherds are to blame:

"My people hath been lost sheep: **their shepherds have caused them to go astray**, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace. All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, even the LORD, the hope of their fathers." [Jer 50:6-7]

Many pastors today are afraid of offending their congregations so they never preach against specific sins, but rather in generalizations, if they even preach about sin at all. So their flocks are not convicted or challenged. Jesus was not afraid to rebuke Peter or the other apostles. He told them like it was even if it meant that they all would abandon him. Pastors need to remember that Jesus marched to Calvary alone. Not a single disciple was crucified with him. Church leaders should get out of the pulpit and stop hindering the work of God if they are just going to scratch itching ears. If they wish to be true shepherds they need to lay down their lives for the sheep, not just be willing to lay them down, but to actually lay them down. In other words, when they prepare their messages for their congregations, they need to tell them whatever they need to hear - things that may not be very popular in this self-indulging society that we live in. In the process, God will help them clean the skeletons out of their own closets, because the Holy Spirit will soon convict them of hypocrisy if they preach hard against specific sins. The net result will be a cleansing effect on the whole local body of believers.

2. The sheep are also to blame:

"For the time will come when they will not endure

sound doctrine; but **after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth**, and shall be turned unto fables." [2 Tim 4:3-4]

God implicates both sheep and shepherd in a single verse - Jeremiah 5:31: "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and **my people love to have it so**". The danger of living in a highly integrated society as America is the pollution from world. A Christian's interaction with people of other belief-systems is constant and unavoidable. The number of religions and idols in this country is enormous. The most popular idol is self - which explains why the American public spends so much time and money on self-gratification. And just like Lot in Sodom and like ancient Israel in Egypt, the Christians in America have become heavily influenced by the culture of sin all around them, to the point where godly Christian parents can't even trust their children with other Christian children. Christians have become so caught up in the world that they don't realize that things they do are NOT Christian (i.e. not approved by the Bible). They call evil good and good evil. They often do this by putting the word "Christian" in front of some worldly activity like Christian Rock or Christian movies or Christian singles groups. What's next? Christian beer? Christian porn? Do people think they can fool God? God knows that the motives of people's hearts is not to glorify Him but to please the flesh when they engage in many of today's so-called Christian activities. There is hope, but not for the majority. Only for a remnant: "Even so then at this present time also **there is a remnant** according to the election of grace." [Romans 11:5]. Many professing Christians are self-deceived or have been deceived by others. They think they are saved but they are not. They may go to Bible believing churches, they may have recited a salvation prayer, they may even be pastors, but they have never been supernaturally CONVERTED: "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be **converted**, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" [Matt 18:3].

SELF EXAMINATION IS ESSENTIAL

Regardless of the spiritual condition of the Church in America today each Christian needs to be primarily concerned with their own personal walk with the Lord. If a Christian cares about their walk they WILL engage in continual self-examination:

How great is my love for God?

- ◆ Do I purposefully make time each day to pray, study the Bible, and share the Gospel? "But seek ye ◆first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." [Matt 6:33]
- ◆ How often do I thank the Lord for saving my soul, for answering my prayers and for all His blessings in my life - even when I am around unsaved people? "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit." [1 Thess 5:18-19]

How great is my love for holiness?

- ◆ Do people have anything bad to say about me that is true? "Abstain from all appearance of evil." [1 Thes 5:22]. Do I desire to be honest no matter what the cost to me personally or what the world may think? "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" [1 Pet 1:15]

How great is my love for the lost?

- ◆ When was the last time I told to someone about the Lord, in person or by letter or by phone? When was the last time I handed someone a Gospel tract and told them that they need to be ready to meet God someday? When was the last time I gave someone a Bible or encouraged someone to read theirs? Do all my neighbors and coworkers know that I am a Christian and do they know about God's wonderful plan of Salvation? "When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand." [Ezek 33:8]
- ◆ When I hear someone mock God or curse or use ungodly language do I warn them not to? Jesus did: "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." [Matt 12:36]
- ◆ Do I spend more money on ministries than on myself? When was the last time I bought gospel tracts or gave money to support a scripturally sound evangelistic ministry? "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" [Matt 6:20]
- ◆ **How great is my love for the brethren?**
Do I make it a habit of fellowshiping with other Christians, eating with them, inviting them to my home, calling them on the phone, praying with them,

talking to them about the Bible, going with them
places to share the Gospel together, helping them