

# THE COUNSELOR

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## Troubled Times

THESE ARE VERY TROUBLED TIMES.



Housing foreclosures escalate to record-breaking numbers. The jobless rate soars. Food prices and the cost of living explode. Gasoline prices soar and then dive. Wall Street melts down and the Feds bail them and other financial institutions out with part of the 770 billion dollars approved by Congress. They also plan to rescue the big three auto companies with a 25 billion dollar loan. The U.S. is in a recession. The American people want change, and they have just elected a new president, hoping he will reverse the mess our country is in. We are fighting wars within and outside our country. We are a nation divided and struggling to survive against enemies on all sides. Morality gives way to individual rights, personal freedom, selfishness, and entitlement. Many Christians have become lukewarm, complacent, and compromising. Our once great Christian nation has been overcome by the world. Whatever happened to America, the God-Fearing nation, which God had once blessed? We have all seen a dramatic decline in the values and an alarming escalation of disasters, crises, violent crimes, divorce, and brokenness. Is this nation being judged? Are we being warned? Events are taking place that reveal we are living in the last days. Families, marriages, young adults, teenagers, and children face incredible challenges. The world stage is being set for the Antichrist. It won't be long before we enter into the Great Tribulation. The birth pangs are getting stronger each day. Greater persecution, trials, temptations, and

attacks from Satan are just around the corner. Do not despair! God is still on the throne! He will use these perilous times to carry out His plans no matter what world leaders do. No one or thing can thwart His Divine Will and Power. He rules amidst this chaos! How do we as Believers react in these troubled times?

## Christian Families

We must remain self-controlled and alert. We must walk in the strength of Our Almighty God. Christians are driven more than ever to Christ in these perilous times as they examine their



faith and walk with God. Hard times force us to depend on God as never before. Our own gifts, abilities, and fortitude cannot pull us out of the current crisis or looming disasters. Our country is being brought to its knees. People are looking for answers, and they want solutions. We understand as Christians, the consequences of repetitive sin and unrepentance. We know that sin progresses to death and destruction. Christians suffer in a backslidden and unbelieving nation. We don't always escape the consequences of living in a fallen world that refuses to submit to God. However, Jesus said that we have the promise that God is with us and that He will never leave

us or forsake us. He does protect, rescue us, and restrain evil at times. He will take us to be with Him in the end. But there will be considerable suffering before that great day of His return! He watches over His children, and gives us courage and strength to fight the good fight and run the race of our Christian lives. It is critical that Christian families take comfort and refuge in our Savior Christ Jesus during these times. Educate yourselves Biblically. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. (James 4:8). Seek first the Kingdom of God and hold fast to Christ and the Kingdom of God within you.

Husbands, fathers, and single men; step up and strive to be Godly men like never before. Live Holy lives. Love, lead, encourage, educate, and even rebuke fellow Believers who have become lukewarm and are falling away. Wives, mothers, and single women do the same, seek the Lord, and stand for Him more than ever. We must warn those who have forgotten their First Love (Christ) and pierced many with all kinds of grief. Stop compromising. Shake the “dust from your feet” and cease associating with those who refuse to repent and return to God, plunging deeper into sin.

Husbands, love and protect your wives from the wickedness that surrounds us. Love them with your lives. Show them that you are strong and unwavering in the Lord by all you do for them. Build them up; pray with them and for them. Help them not to live in fear as the world comes tumbling down around them. Reassure them in Christ. Discuss your plans and strategies with them for living in these last days. Go to the Lord as you prepare for the worst and continue living a full victorious Christian life, loving and encouraging others to seek Christ.

Fathers, gather your children and process their concerns regarding the times we live in. Raise them up in the way they should go. (Proverbs 22:6). Help them understand the reasons this is all happening. Encourage them not to be afraid. Offer them God’s hope and teach them to find refuge and strength in Him. Lead by



example. Teach your children how to deal effectively with trials, temptations, and the world’s influence. Do this by reviewing present day likely scenarios and rehearse ways to resist and overcome these situations. Give them God’s battle plan. Talk to your teenagers. Have frank discussions about

the temptations of sex, drugs, alcohol, and others snares of their generation today. Do this in love. Reach your children before the world get’s to them. Create a loving family environment; one where family members can freely check in with one another and share their thoughts, feelings, experiences, frustrations, and concerns. An atmosphere of love, respect, encouragement, support, and acceptance keeps Christian families strong and together no matter what happens to them. The world will continue to deteriorate. Prepare yourselves physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Dig into the Word. Pray for protection over your family and home. Get into the good habit of praying Psalm 91 often. This is a great prayer for protection. Hold communion frequently with your family. Use this time to remember the Lord and intercede for others. This can also be a great time of healing. Read and discuss with your families what the Bible says about the end times. Ask God to help you understand these prophecies and act upon them.

Teenagers, stay close to your Godly peers. You need friends who will not encourage you to give into sinful and destructive behaviors. You can remain pure. You don’t have to experiment with alcohol, drugs, and sex. Look at those who



have fallen already and see the pain this causes. The teen years can be very difficult in refraining from all the temptations. You need God, your family, and a strong network of Believers to help you resist and overcome these trials. Children, do the same, stay close to other kids who believe what you believe. Stay away from the trouble makers. Listen to your parents when they openly discuss the problems you will face today. Obey your parents. Go to your parents when you are being bullied, offered drugs or exposed to pornography. These problems don't just go away without being addressed. Stay close to God. Pray always. Don't be afraid, God is in control and much bigger than anything you will face.

## Pressures

You will inevitably face all kinds of pressures.



They come in many forms today. The devil will try to use these difficulties to weaken and manipulate you into falling deeper into sin and further away from the Lord. He will do whatever he can to keep you from

Christ. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Use the Word to get him off your back and remind him that he is defeated by the Blood of Christ, and that he has no authority over you. For example, if you find yourself worrying about the bills to the point of repeatedly imagining the worst, wringing your hands and losing sleep; stop and remember how faithful God has been with you all these years. Reread Psalm 23 aloud. Don't allow yourself to slip further into futility, run to Christ! If you hear or feel some type of demonic attack or oppression, call on the name of Jesus, ask Him to save you. He will! Tell the devil, "Lord rebuke you satan, you have no power over my finances. You are defeated by the Blood of Jesus! Leave in His Name! Nothing can separate you from Christ! Beware of another formidable enemy ---- the self. We will not be rid of the sin nature in us until we are with the

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Lord. We must guard against becoming so self-absorbed, self-indulgent, and selfish that it pulls us away from Christ. An unchecked self can lead to serious problems. Pride comes before the fall. A self not surrendered to Christ is a self open to all kinds of sin. The closer you are to God the less likely you are to becoming a victim of the self. You may be struggling with financial or health related issues. Do all you possibly know to do to address these troubles. Turn the rest over to God, pray for guidance and deliverance from these problems and wait on God. Confide in your close Christian friends so they can come alongside you. Don't add to your stress by falling deeper into anger and depression. God will come through! He will provide - one way or another - in His time. He will deliver you. Seek refuge in God as you face pressures to conform to this world. Stay focused on your main purpose and mission as a Christian. We live for Him. Everything we do should bring glory to God. We are called to draw people to Him by the way we live out our lives here. Take one day at a time. Don't be lured into fretting about what could happen tomorrow. Focus on Him as He cares for you today. You cannot control the stock market, Congress, food and gas prices, or the weather. God works all things together for those who love Him.

## The Great Commission

We are to bring the Gospel to the lost in this world. Every Christian is commissioned to



witness by his words and actions for the love of Christ. We are meant to draw

people to Him. Jesus said, "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." (Matt. 28:19). We are supposed to go into this dying world everyday carrying out His commission. He elaborates further in Mark's Gospel; "but whoever does not believe is condemned. And these signs will

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accompany those who believe: In my name they will speak in new tongues, they will pick up snakes with their hands; and they will drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.” (Mark 16:15-18). The Lord equips us with His power and provision to bring the Gospel to the lost. The world desperately needs what we have -- Christ! These are exciting times to witness for Christ. Always keep the Great Commission in mind. Look for the opportunities God presents for you to share the Way the Truth and the Life. Christ will give you the words to say to those people hungry for answers in a troubled world. Be ready to share the hope you have!

## Remnant Believers

There is a very small core group of Believers in the world and our nation who are very serious about their Christianity. They are God's Strike Force. They are on fire for the Lord.



They are a select group of Believers who will not give in to the world, devil or flesh (sinful self). Quietness and trust is their strength as they walk in love. Remnant Believers are set apart to be Holy as He is Holy (1 Peter 1:16) and Perfect as He is Perfect. (Matt. 5:48). They worship the Lord in Spirit and Truth. (John 4:23-24). Remnant Believers understand God's calling on their lives. They will not compromise. They are ready to die for Christ! Many will suffer persecution and martyrdom now and in the days ahead. They are Christ's heroes of faith today. Are you a Remnant Believer? Remnant Believers are separate from the backslidden and lukewarm Christians. They remain in the world but not of the world. They are completely absorbed in the work of intercession and the Great Commission. You will find them engaged in serious discussions about the days we are living in as they follow the Lord's commands on Godly living, witnessing, and spiritual warfare. They know time is running out and there is a lot to do for the Kingdom of God. They move with a sense

of urgency and purpose, redeeming the time for the days are evil. God always watches out for His Remnant Believers. He protects and provides for them. Pray for the Remnant Believers to carry out God's work in these last days. Pray for Him to direct and protect them. Pray for His laborers to reap a mighty harvest of souls for Christ. Pray that God counts you as His Remnant as He judges our nation for abandoning Him. Also pray that you are counted worthy to escape God's wrath to come. (Luke 21:36) Pray for God's Remnant to remain strong during these perilous times. Search yourself. Are you a Remnant, the few God can count on who will make a difference for Him, and will endure persecution and press on?

## Bible Readings

Prayerfully read and discuss the following on what the Bible says about the End Times.



Share this information and prepare for the Lord's return. Take comfort. Take action. Many of these readings addressed the Nation of Israel at the time but the world as well. We could also read these and think about our country these days.

**Ezekiel 33** - Watchman, warn others.

**Daniel 7** - End times prophecy.

**Joel 1-3** - Prophecy and call to repentance.

**Amos 5-7** - Israel - Day of the Lord.

**Matt. 24** - The Great Tribulation.

**Luke 21** - Signs of the Times.

**1 Thess. 4-5** - The Lord's Return.

**2 Timothy – 3-4** – Godlessness in the Last Days.

**2 Peter 3** - Look for the Day of the Lord.

**Jude** – Warnings on False Teachers/Apostasy

**Revelation 1-22** - Letter to the Churches, Apocalypse, Lord's Return, Heaven

## Run With Perseverance

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin which so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out before us.” (Heb. 12:1). We have the full backing and power from God to run this race with perseverance and move through our Christian lives during these times with determination. We can carry out God’s calling with a sense of urgency and His peace. Christ will supply all our needs and help us run with perseverance. He will finish the good work He started in us. What does it mean to run with perseverance? It means that we are to pray without ceasing for the lost, our country, and the Lord’s return quickly, and persist in the face of all kinds of opposition and adversity. Count on the devil opposing you. Everything we are supposed to do in living our lives for Christ in these last days should be run with perseverance. Don’t give up! Fight the good fight. When you fall down God will raise you back up. Reread 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 1:3-11, 4:7-18. Store up treasures in Heaven. God will reward you for running the race with perseverance. Inspire other Christians to run the race with perseverance in these troubled times. Encourage them not to give up. Live your life courageously no matter what. Finish strong. Finish well. You will overcome and be victorious. The power, love, discipline and means comes from God. We can have peace in the storm and that sense of urgency in living for God in these last days. We can run with perseverance. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning it’s shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.” (Heb. 12:2-3)



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