

4 Ways to Avoid Spiritual Pitfalls in the Last Days

It appears that we are living in the Last Days, and the Scriptures caution us to be on the alert concerning spiritual pitfalls. We are warned about the rise of false leaders bringing in false teachings and doctrines of demons. We are told to be in the world, but not of the world, to guard ourselves from sexual immorality and all forms of ungodliness, to study the Word, to be filled with the Holy Spirit, to be passionate and not lethargic towards Jesus, to keep our hearts pure before the Lord and to remain faithful until the end. Yet, we continue to see Christians fall into foolish practices and fulfill the end-times prophecy that many will fall away from the faith.

Once while teaching at a Holy Spirit conference, a young woman came up during ministry time and said to me, "Lay your hand on me, I want your passion for Jesus. I want what you have." I looked at her with all sincerity and said, "You can have what I have, and even more. But I can't lay my hand on you and cause you to be passionate for Christ. You have to make a quality decision to pursue Him for yourself."

There are certain things that we can release into other people by the laying on of hands, such as healing, deliverance, baptism of the Holy Spirit, releasing the simple prophetic gift to see dreams and visions, but a passion for Christ, no. And I will add that touching a person with a special anointing by God that is walking in a specific calling does not guarantee someone an easy ticket into the same type of ministry. An example of this is the practice of grave soaking, which is a doctrine of demons and Christians should not take part in this type of activity. We are not to fix our eyes on people, dead or alive, but on Jesus Christ alone.

It's natural to desire a special anointing, but we need to realize that it is God who appoints and anoints an individual for a special calling. And that person has undergone a time of preparation. Before they are released into the ministry, they are led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to test the motives of their heart. And if and when they pass this test, they are then released into the ministry (see Luke 4). We need to understand that anointing is given freely by God, but it is not cheap.

How do we protect ourselves from Satan's schemes to lead us astray? How do we ready ourselves during these last days? The answers to these questions are found within a parable that Jesus taught concerning 10 virgins; five were wise and the other five were foolish (see Matt. 25:1-13).

The prudent were ready to meet the bridegroom, even when the announcement of his arrival came unexpectedly during the midnight hour. They each carried their own lamp filled with oil. And because they did not know the exact timing of his arrival, they each brought an extra flask of oil to make sure they could find their way through the darkness.

Now, the foolish virgins were not ready when they heard the shout to come and meet the bridegroom. They did not even have oil for their lamps, and asked those that were prepared to give them some of their oil. But to their dismay the wise virgins declined their request and told them to go and buy their own oil. And while they went to purchase the much-needed oil, the bridegroom came and those that were ready went with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut.

Later, the five foolish virgins came and asked the bridegroom to open the door. But it was too late, the door was already closed, and they were left behind. And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, I do not know you."

And there is a warning in verse 13 for all of us: "Be on the

alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.”

How then do we protect ourselves from being led astray and left behind? We need to be like the wise virgins and prepare ourselves spiritually now to meet the Lord whenever He calls.

These things prevented the foolish virgins from entering into the wedding feast.

1. They were not prepared to meet the bridegroom.
2. They did not purchase oil for their lamps.
3. The Lord did not know them.

What do we need to protect and prepare ourselves?

1. Salvation is the first step to prepare to meet Jesus. “Jesus answered him, ‘Truly, truly I say to you, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God’” (John 3:3).

2. The study of the Word to teach us how to live faithfully. “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Ps. 119:105).

3. The Holy Spirit to empower our lamps. “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

4. An intimate relationship with the Lord to protect us from a religious spirit. “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonderful works in Your name?’ But then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who practice evil’” (Matt. 7:21-23).

May we be wise and not foolish during these last days.

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