

9 Essentials to Become Part of God's Answer to the Present Darkness

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I am both excited and sober about this generation's future. I am excited because of the many who are responding to the Lord, but I am sober because I am aware of the difficulties of the context and culture that you will engage with for the sake of the kingdom.

This is, objectively, one of the most difficult hours in history to engage a generation with the gospel. Never before has a generation been more desperate for truth yet suspicious of anyone who possesses it. The layers of defensiveness and armor around the unsaved heart, filled with pain, hurt, disappointment and fear, is unlike any time in history. I believe that we are on the verge of facing one of the greatest evangelistic crises ever. Methods and strategies will not be sufficient to face the threat and the challenge that is before us.

The only way forward is the plan of God to raise up burning and shining lamps in the context of historic breakthrough and revival.

Raising Up Burning Ones

Therefore, we want to build on the flame that the Lord has ignited within our hearts. We must continue to take the flame within and press on to fight for a bonfire that will blaze within us under even the greatest of pressures. We want to press on from ones transformed by the love of Jesus unto becoming "burning and shining lamps"; becoming true friends of

the Bridegroom in an hour where the greatest threat to the future is not political or moral confusion, nor liberalism or capitalism, nor social or racial conflicts, but a man-centered, sentiment-driven, thankless and self-absorbed form of Christianity that denies its power and exalts our comfort and our feelings above His sacrifice and His passion.

How do we engage this generation in crisis? How do we run the race to win? How do we become the burning and shining ones that the Lord wants to use as light for a generation that loves darkness? Here are some key truths that we must cling to that the enemy will seek to steal, this culture will seek to quench and diminish, and our own flesh will war against in the face of the pressures and trials that are before us.

Roadmap to Success:

- **Jesus is the source and starting point of all things** and is leading this movement. “One thing” must never become cliché or trite to us.
- **The Beatitudes of Jesus are the core expression of first-commandment love.** This is who we want to become by grace because we love Him.
- **The rest of the Sermon on the Mount is our road map to second-commandment love.** This is how we’ll become who God made us to be because we love Him.
- **The “good eye” is the key to everything.** We must live before His eye in a singular, focused way. The fear of the Lord is the continual resolve to remember that He sees, He remembers and He rewards because He is moved and filled with indescribable jealousy and commitment to His desired end for our hearts and our lives.
- **Wisdom is prioritizing a flowing heart alive in the love of Jesus.** We want to fight to be aware of His presence, responsive to His leadership and oriented toward delight and gratitude regarding His mercy and kindness towards us. We want to despise entitlement and the disease of “I deserve.”

- **Build your life on the rock of the commands of Jesus.** ““Whoever hears these sayings of Mine and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on a rock. And the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house. And it did not fall, for it was founded a rock” (Matt. 7:24-25).
- **Fight to see the bigger picture regarding yourself and the people that trouble you.** You are more than your issues and your victories. So are they. Love the person in front of you; honor them with the dignity that was bestowed on them according to Jesus’ costly sacrifice. Let His blood, shed for them, speak louder than their behavior, their weakness or their brokenness. Let it do the same for you. Avoid cynicism and bitterness at all costs. Despise arrogance and haughtiness in all its forms.
- **Keep your heart and your life simple.** Prioritize a Spirit-filled, Spirit-led life. Crave genuine fellowship with the Holy Spirit. Long for the increased activity of the Holy Spirit on your heart and on your life. Revival matters—what you believe about man, his need for God, the depth of the problems and the issues of injustice and how they are resolved is all wrapped into what you believe about revival.
- **Make the knowledge of God, deeply understood and authentically expressed, your genuine goal of that fellowship.** Eschatology matters—what you believe about where things are going, what life is about, who Jesus is, and what He will do, all are wrapped into what you believe about the end times. We cannot afford to be an eschatological agnostic, disconnected from the necessary truths that surround the return of Jesus.

This is Jesus’ answer to the complexity of wickedness, rebellion, arrogance and unprecedented pressure. His answer to this present darkness and all of its foolishness is a spotless, beautiful bride, mature in love and glorious in

holiness. She will pray for Israel. She will long for His return, and she will lay down her life for the nations that despise her. The Father's delight is to answer the mounting ugliness of the human condition with unprecedented beauty. We long for Him to come, but until then, we long for Him to receive the reward of His suffering—in our lives and the lives of all who were made to bring Him the highest and deepest pleasure and joy.

This is the kind of church the Lord wants to thrust in the midst of a generation like brands plucked from the fire. The heart of God for the days to come is to see His burning and shining lamps, His friends of the Bridegroom, fight for the glory and the beauty of Jesus to be known through a clear demonstration of passionate love in Spirit and in truth. Amen.

What is your role in answering the present darkness?