



In Seasons of Prosperity

- Proverbs 30:8-9, “Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, lest I be full and deny you and say, “Who is the LORD?” or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God.”
- 1 Tim 6:6-10: “But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.”

“Money, most certainly is one of the most ensnaring and heart changing of possessions. It seems desirable at a distance. It often proves a poison when in our hand. No man can possibly tell the effect of money on his soul, if it suddenly falls to his lot to possess it. Many [a] one did run well as a poor man, who forgets God when he is rich.” – J.C. Ryle

- Deuteronomy 8:17-18, “Beware lest you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.’ You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day.”

Money is ***not*** an evil in itself.

“Earthly blessings, held loosely in the grateful hands of faith and used in appropriate measure, are a means of doing to family, friends, and neighbors.” – Brian Hedges

“I do not ask rich men to leave their situations in life, give away all their property, and go into the workhouse. This would be refusing to fill the position of a steward for God. I ask no man to neglect his worldly calling, and to omit to provide for his family. Diligence in business is a positive Christian duty. Provision for those dependent on us is proper Christian prudence. But I ask all to look around continually as they journey on, and to remember the poor—the poor in body and the poor in soul. Here we are for a few short years. How can we do the most good with our money while we are here?... You cannot keep your money forever. You must give an account one day of the manner in which it has been expended. Oh, lay it out with an eye to eternity while you can!” – J.C. Ryle

In Times of Solitude

- Who you are when no one is looking is who you are.
- David was tempted when he was alone on his rooftop, and Jesus was tempted when he was alone in the wilderness.



- We need to *positively act* and make better use of our solitude.

When Grace is in Slumber

“These are those times when our lamps burn dim and our zeal grows cold, when we’ve grown negligent in spiritual disciplines.” – Brian Hedges

“When a man is a Christian in name only, and not in reality—in outward things only, and not in his inward feelings—in profession only, and not in practice—when his Christianity in short is a mere matter of form, or fashion, or custom, without any influence on his heart or life—in such a case this the man has what I call a ‘formal religion.’ He possess indeed the *form*, or husk, or skin of religion, but he does not possess its substance or its *power*.” – J.C. Ryle

- If we are not watchful in these times, we are in danger of practicing mere formal religion—a religion that lacks the heart.
- To first cherish communion with God, we must cherish our union with Christ. That is the foundation to our communion with God. But don’t stop there!

“Union is the common privilege of all who feel their sins, and truly repent, and come to Christ by faith, and are accepted, forgiven, and justified in him. Too many believers, it may be feared, never get beyond this stage! Partly from ignorance, partly from laziness, partly from fear of man, partly from secret love of the world, partly from some unmortified besetting sin, they are content with little faith, and a little hope, and a little peace, and a little measure of holiness. – J.C. Ryle

- Let us be watchful and seek after growth in faith, hope, peace, and holiness *through* our communion with God in the word and in prayer. Let us not settle for small measures of joy in Christ, for when we do, we find ourselves in seasons where grace is in slumber.

In Seasons of Self-Confidence

“Have you been faithful in your daily devotions? Has it been weeks, or even months, since you last blew it with anger or lust? Are you starting to feel like a pretty good Christian? Watch out! The enemy of your souls lies in wait.” – Brian Hedges

- Proverbs 16:18, “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”
- Peter understood how important it was for us to be humble ourselves.
 - 1 Peter 5:5-7: “Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.”



“Do you realize that given the right circumstances, sufficient temptation, and enough pressure, you are capable of committing the worst sins imaginable?” – Brian Hedges

- 1 Cor 10:12, “Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.”

In Seasons of Doubt and Discouragement

- We must all admit that we all have been in seasons like this.
- The danger is not having doubts and discouragements themselves, but what we do with them.
- Psalm 89:46, “How long, O LORD? Will you hide yourself forever? How long will your wrath burn like fire?”
- Mark 9:21-25, “And Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. *But if you can do anything*, have compassion on us and help us.” And Jesus said to him, “If you can! All things are possible for one who believes.” Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!”
- The root of all kinds of sin is unbelief. We must strengthen our faith. How do we do that? By exercising faith in God—and all his promises.
 - Genesis 15:4-6, “And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: “This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir.” And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.”
 - 2 Peter 1:3, “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises.”
- Let us be watchful in seasons of doubt and discouragement to this end—that we fix our eyes again in faith upon God’s precious and very great promises.

During the Interruptions to Routine

“Have you experienced this? Maybe you’ve been on a regular bible-reading plan and have enjoyed times of prayer and meditation for weeks or months on end. And then a holiday comes and with it a house full of guests. First you just skimp on bible reading. But before you know it, you’ve altogether quit praying in private. Only after several days of drift and an angry blowup with your spouse do you realize what has happened.” – Brian Hedges

- If you’re not watchful during an interruption to a routine, you might slip into a season of doubt and discouragement without knowing it. Or you could find yourselves in a season when you’re spiritually asleep.



- 2 Samuel 11:1-3, In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel. And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem. It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"
- Church family, whatever the interruption might be, in times of rest or times of difficulty, let us be watchful.

Watching in the Moment of Temptation

"...that moment when you've savored the juicy morsel and like the taste. You clamp down your jaws and suddenly feel the sharp, piercing desire for. More and a forceful tug toward deliberate, willful sin. You realize you've swallowed a hook and the angler is reeling you in. Your better judgment, God's word, and the Holy Spirit are whispering "no." But your appetites and emotions are screaming, "yes!" – Brian Hedges

1. Pray and run to Jesus.
 - a. Hebrews 4:15-16 says, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, *that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*"
2. Exercise faith in the promises of God, that God can and will deliver you.
 - a. Psalm 32:6-7, "Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found; surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him. You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance."
 - b. David expects deliverance from God.
 - i. Strength to say "no" to the temptation.
 - ii. Running far, far away from the situation.
 - iii. Providence. God has a merciful way of providentially keeping us from being worse sinners.
3. Seek help and prayer from a brother or sister in Christ.