

Mental Preparedness

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Introduction: Often in life the key between success and failure is the wisdom to be mentally prepared beforehand.

- A. There is no terror like the ones who face calamity and do not know what to do!
 - 1. The lack of knowledge added greatly to the terror of Belshazzar. **(Dan 5:7-9)**
 - 2. I have known those to face the IRS without proper preparation and pay a price.
When you do not know, fear can cause you to do things that add to the trouble!
- B. On the other hand, the one who is ready for the day of trouble will respond with the wisdom he has gathered beforehand.
 - 1. What did the Christians do when the armies of Rome approached Jerusalem? **(Mt 24:15-18)**
 - 2. One of the keys in good coaches is preparing their players for various situations ahead of time. (Ex. Running a race)
- C. We as Christians have the wisdom of God through His written word.
 - 1. "How should I respond in this situation?" By God's word we have a perfect answer! **(Psa 119:11, 98-100)**
 - 2. The world will give advice that may or may not work.
 - 3. The mark of the mature Christian lies in his ability to apply the scriptures to everyday life and in his faith to do what God says. **(Heb 5:12-14)**
 - 4. Consider some of God's wisdom we need to know beforehand.

I. How should I respond to persecution?

- A. Consider how Jesus prepared His disciples. **(Jn 16:1-3)**
 - 1. By preparing them beforehand they would not stumble!
 - 2. How would you respond if you were threatened with being "cast out of the synagogue" or lining up with human authority?
- B. Jesus also tried to prepare His disciples for his betrayal and arrest. **(Mt 16:21; Jn 14:28-30)**
 - 1. The disciples did not prepare because they did not believe there was any danger! **(Mt 16:22-23; 26:34-35)**
 - 2. How do you prepare for something beforehand? Our Lord prayed and resolved what He would do before the event! **(Mt 26:42-44)**
 - 3. What did His disciples do? What did they need to do? **(Mt 26:40-41)**
- C. What happens if I do not prepare?
 - 1. You fight the wrong battle! **(Mt 26:50-56)**
 - 2. Peter fought the battle he had prepared for! What was the result?
 - 3. Often when we do not prepare, more sin follows. **(Mt 26:69-75)**

II. How should I respond to church problems?

- A. You should understand that they will come! Look at the example of the early church.
 - 1. They had internal problems. **(Acts 6:1-4; 15:1-2)**
 - 2. They worked the problems out as God had directed them.
 - 3. Too many are unprepared for trouble! Do not be surprised when trouble comes.
- B. We prepare ourselves by learning to love God and our brethren. **(1 Pt 1:22-23)**

1. When we love God we will love the truth. (**3 Jn 1:3-4**)
2. We will respond to hurts as God has instructed us. (**Rom 12:17-21; Mt 18:15**)
3. We will watch our tongues and our hearts! (**Eph 4:29-32**)
4. If you prepare beforehand God will use you to save others who might be lost.

III. How should I respond to temptation and sin?

- A. We need to know how Satan works. (**Jas 1:12-16**)
 1. We are in trouble when we scoff at the threats of temptation. (**Prov 16:18**)
 2. Why do we warn of avoiding certain situations and associations? How did Joseph respond to temptation? (**Gen 39:12-13; 1 Cor 15:33**)
 3. Do you hate sin? Are you willing to fight temptation?
- B. I need to know how to respond when I sin! (**1 Jn 1:7-9**)
 1. Do you know the basis of forgiveness?
 2. When we are uncertain about forgiveness, Satan will use that to His advantage. (**2 Cor 2:5-8, 11**)
 3. I need to gain wisdom so that I may avoid future sin. (**Jas 5:16**)

IV. How should I respond to apostasy?

- A. You need to know that it will happen. (**Acts 20:29-31; 1 Tim 4:1; Mt 7:15**)
 1. Apostasy moves slowly and often many are unaware of its presence.
 2. Those who sound the warning are often ostracized as troublemakers and extremist. Sometimes a man who gives a proper warning has a wrong spirit.
 3. There will come a time where you will see it face to face. What will you do?
- B. The only answer is to open God's word and seek others to do the same.
 1. How many brethren will go along and refuse to open their Bibles will surprise you. (**2 Tim 4:2-4**)
 2. Many will stay in the church where they were raised, follow the friends they have always known regardless of what is done.
 3. If you have prepared your heart to follow God's word beforehand, you can resist these social forces and stand for the Lord.

V. How should I respond in my marriage?

- A. You need to prepare beforehand. What has the Lord said?
 1. God says we need to learn. Are you teachable? (**1 Pt 3:7**)
 2. Older women should be used to teach the younger women. (**Tit 2:3-5**)
 3. Sadly when a class is offered on marriage, the ones who need to learn do not come! It is best to learn these things before marriage!
- B. How do you solve problems in your marriage?

Conclusion: How are you preparing today?

- A. What did the disciples do when Jesus wanted them to pray?
 1. Often we have heard the very thing we need to stand but through indifference we do not receive it. It takes work to make it a part of us. (**Heb 8:10**)
 2. A good mark of those who will fall away in time is those who come to services and do not worship! Those who talk during the invitation song have no concern for the lost or their own souls.
- B. Let your home be a place of preparation. How is your study and prayer going?