

IMPACT

I **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own under-
standing; *in all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: Colossians 2:6-8 “As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.”

Quote: If we are not seeking to make an IMPACT with the gospel, then perhaps the gospel has made no IMPACT upon us!

Gut check time is a “pause to assess the state, progress or condition of something; it is a test or assessment of courage, character, or determination.” As we have gone through this series on being a soldier of Christ, perhaps you have come to one of two negative conclusions. Either you are not among the number that are by faith entrusting their souls to Christ, or you have allowed yourself to become numb to the truth of spiritual warfare and have become indifferent. I have talked to soldiers who said that when they first entered into a combat zone their senses were on high alert. They were in survival mode. As time went by, the sheer intensity of their focus lessened somewhat. As unthinkable as it may sound, there were times when the ebb and flow of their daily routine made them somewhat complacent or even a bit careless! That cost some soldiers their lives, and others their health. For those who survived to anticipate the end of their tour of duty, the intensity and focus returned. They knew that they were almost home!

Like these soldiers, there are times when we can forget that we live in a spiritual combat zone! The Christian life is not like a video game that allows you to “play again” when you get “killed.” Let down your guard, get careless with your thoughts, fail to maintain self-control, allow yourself to be drawn away by your own lust, and, before you know it, you’ve become like David—the killer of a giant named Goliath and who later killed a loyal, courageous, principled soldier named Uriah with whose wife he committed adultery! “Not

me,” you say. “I’d never go that far,” you say! Paul warns all of us, “Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. Therefore, my beloved, *flee* from [any “God substitute”].¹ Joseph fled from temptation and triumphed! David lingered, lusted, let down and lost!²

For true soldiers of Christ, it is not enough to get Home alive by “the skin of your teeth.” We must seek to arrive with honor and with the desire to hear a “Well done!” from our Commander-in-Chief. If that desire is not at the forefront of our ambitions, if it does not guide our thoughts, words and deeds, then we may be guilty of the complacency about which A. W. Tozer warned in his classic, “The Pursuit of God.” “Complacency is a foe of all spiritual growth.” “Complacency makes us satisfied with nervous activities which occupy time and attention, but can never satisfy the longing of the heart.” Complacency leads to boredom, with the end result being “the evil habit of seeking God *and something more*.”

Has the ebb and flow of daily routine made you complacent, careless or even callused? Have you lost sight of the goal of doing all for the glory of God and the eternal good of others? Paul wrote, “Examine yourselves as to *whether you are in the faith*. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—*unless indeed you are disqualified*.”³ A sobering, but necessary challenge! The warfare is real! The stakes are high! Our last IMPACT ended with this challenge—*May gratitude for grace, love for our Lord and compassion for the lost compel us to lift high the banner of the cross!* In the classroom and in the workplace, we must never forget the challenge of our Captain—“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”⁴

1 I Corinthians 10:12-14 2 II Samuel 12:6, 18; 13:28-29; 16:14-15; I Kings 2:25 3 II Corinthians 13:5 4 Luke 9:23