

December 7, 2023

Dear Brethren and Friends,

With winter having arrived, we are facing shorter days, colder temperatures and less time to spend outdoors. Oftentimes, we can start to feel worn out.

Pulling some quotes from an article entitled: "Why Do You Feel More Tired In the Winter?": "The days get shorter during the winter months, especially in northern states, Dr. Bazan says. Unfortunately, reduced sun exposure can dramatically affect your circadian rhythm, causing your body to produce more melatonin (a.k.a., the sleep hormone). The end result: You feel tired more often."

The article gives a few more examples as to why we may feel more tired and then gives some advice on how to feel better.

On our spiritual front, the Feast of Tabernacles has ended a few months ago, and we have gone back into the fight and the fray of living our lives in this world—and it can be utterly exhausting!!

As children of God, we are singled out and targeted with increasing ferocity by our spiritual enemies. Just as there are things that we can do physically to rejuvenate, so we must also do so spiritually. We are warned in Scripture that as we draw closer to the return of Christ, the more we will have to face difficulties which we will have to overcome. With God's help, we can be successful and victorious to make it into His Kingdom.

I have quoted the following Scripture before, but in regard to what I am writing about in this Member Letter, I want to once again draw our attention to these words found in the book of Daniel.

In Daniel 7:25, we read: "He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time."

This time period written about here is just ahead of us. We are the ones being talked about by Daniel—we, the saints will be persecuted or become weary and worn out! The word for "persecute" here literally means to "wear out the mind." The attacks are meant to wear us down until we want to curl up and quit—until we have nothing left with which to fight. We are fighting the war on all fronts: in our hearts, our minds, emotions, our attempts at righteousness and holiness and even our use of God's Spirit (that is, showing the fruit of the Spirit), and lastly, the enemy who is attacking us physically and also spiritually, in our minds.

Our battle is often won or lost in our thoughts (compare James 1:14–15). Do we ever feel overwhelmed, spiritually and mentally exhausted? That is one way the enemy attacks us.

We are going to need to be on the defensive. We must fight the enemy and win, with God fighting for us and with us.

We battle on by renewing our mind through the Holy Spirit, as Paul wrote in Romans 12:2: "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." God's Will for us is to win—to become His born again and immortal Family members. In order to reach our potential, we have to constantly focus on this fact.

The way in which we do this is by continually looking past the growing darkness of this world. This is challenging—but what life is without challenge? NONE! In Philippians 4:8 we read, “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”

Paul is telling us to “think on good things, and the peace of God will be with you.” What we feed in our thoughts will grow, and what we starve will die. And it IS very hard to constantly be doing what Paul mentioned. Yet, it is utterly important.

As we continue on our quest to keep pushing forward in our battles, there are a few things that will help us to keep going even when it seems dark and maybe hopeless at times.

First, don’t become sidetracked: Stephen Covey, the author of “Seven Habits of Highly Effective People,” coined the phrase: “The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.” Keeping our focus and efforts on the most important goals will help us accomplish them. Christ essentially told us the same, in Matthew 7:13–14: “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.” There is only so much time in this life. If we are sidetracked, we fall into many traps and leave no room for God—nor for such important matters like the “renewing of the mind.”

Second, engage in your warfare: Be active in this Christian Way of Life. Realize that we each are soldiers and that we are ACTIVELY engaged in battles. Pray about it, for we do wrestle. Keep in mind that the battle is spiritual because, behind the scenes, evil spirits are trying to disrupt God’s plans. Paul wrote: “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:4–5). We are to be using the spiritual might of the Holy Spirit to help us to stay active and to win our battles. It is God’s strength and might flowing through us that allow us to succeed.

Paul aptly wrote in Ephesians 6:10–20 about taking on the whole armor of God. To be engaged in warfare, we need to fully understand HOW we are to do the things Paul mentions. Verse 11 tells us: “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” We are to stand and fight. This takes an immense amount of courage, strength and wisdom—all of which are drawn from putting on the armor of God when it is used in the correct way. We should note that when we do take up the armor of God and start to use it effectively, we will be able to face the wiles or the schemes of the enemy which are vicious and should not be taken lightly.

As we experience winter, we know there are things we need to do to physically feel better. But more importantly, we know that in this world, we are spiritually facing some of the hardest times that will be known to man, and it is not getting better—but rather, prophecy and world events are unfolding before us. We cannot be asleep and unwilling to be aware. We must rather be those who are awake and willing to serve; not with love that has grown cold (Matthew 24:12–15), but rather with zeal for the Truth.

We are not to be those whose lights are going out. We are not to be those who are growing cold! We must believe with ever increasing confidence and faith that we will be those helping to usher in the Kingdom of God at Christ’s soon return! We must continue to draw the strength, courage and will to keep fighting throughout this life.

Let’s anchor onto Scripture, as Hebrews 12:12–13 states: “Therefore strengthen the hands which

hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed."

Let us find the strength and courage to continue on and finish our individual fights. Let us continue to pray for the Work and for the ability that is needed for God's ministers to carry on in accomplishing this Work. We all need the strength that God gives us and the continued help from everyone who continues to walk with us in this journey. Together we can accomplish this great goal for which God has called each and every one of us.

With Christian love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kalon Mitchell", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kalon Mitchell