

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XVIII

December 13, 2009

No. 50

No Slack Time

Jerry Fite

This is the time of the year when we look forward to slowing down for the holidays. Students are busy in studying for finals and completing projects knowing they can soon rest for awhile. Shoppers are presently intense knowing the hustle and bustle will soon end. We might correctly define the word “holiday” as a “holy day” but notice the emphasis upon relaxation and the cessation from work accompanying the word: “*a day of freedom from labor; Day set aside for leisure and recreation; period of leisure or recreation; Suspension of business.*” With the times of the season upon us, we must remember that we can never take a break from or become slack in living the life of a Christian.

Paul awakes our senses with these words: “*in diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord*” (Romans 12:11). Our service to the Lord never takes a holiday. Being diligent characterizes an earnestness moving one to run with haste to do the will of God. The heart is burning with fervency to meet God’s demands. Paul contrasts this proper attitude of service with the slug-

gish or slothful service that is irksome to God (*Matthew 25:26*). There is no taking a break at the end of the year to allow our fervent heart and diligent service to wind down.

We cannot give in to down time in being watchful either. Paul writes, “*Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men be strong*” (*I Corinthians 16:13*). Peter focuses our watch upon the devil: “*Be sober, be watchful: your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*” (*I Peter 5:8*). When would your adversary think you were particularly vulnerable? Would it not be this time of the year when the world around us is unwinding and enjoying their down time?

David allowed his “down time” to foster the sin of adultery. It was a busy time for most kings as they were engaged in fighting battles. But David sent Joab to battle, and he stayed at home. He rose from his bed in the evening, and walked on his roof. In an unguarded relaxing moment, his eyes and heart led to lust as he viewed Bathsheba bathing (*2 Samuel 11:1-2*). The devil can tempt us at any time, but one is left with a “what if” in thinking that this moment

that led to so much pain for David could have been averted if he had been intense upon the field of battle instead of unwinding upon his roof. We must be watchful and circumspect always, especially during “down times.”

The continual fervent spirit will not become dull or sluggish in understanding God’s word (*Hebrews 5:11*). Such knowledge will move one to always be ready to teach others the truth of God (*Acts 18:25, 2 Peter 3:15*). As the world around us is winding down, we may find an opportunity to talk to the lost about their soul. They may, in their down time, be thinking soberly about more important spiritual things. We need to be looking for open doors to teach others the Gospel. For the faithful Christian, there is no down time in learning and then teaching others.

Being spiritually active should be a constant in our lives. Even on the Lord’s day when we worship and keep the only memorial authorized for the Christian, we are active spiritually. No down time here!