

Doctrine of Watchfulness

1. To Jesus life is filled with great danger. The soul must constantly be on guard and “watch.”
2. The importance of being vigilant is manifested by how often the word “watch” was on the lips of the Savior.
 - Individuals are to guard the way they behave because they do not know the day or the hour of the second coming. *Matthew 24:42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. Matthew 24:43 But know this, that if the Goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Matthew 25:13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.*
 - Individuals are to stay alert in critical situations and pray. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus asked His disciples to watch and pray. *Matthew 26:38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.*
 - The disciples of Christ were gently reprimanded because they were not more watchful at an important time. *Matthew 26:40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?*
 - Individuals are to watch and pray for divine deliverance from temptation, for the flesh is weak. *Matthew 26:41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*
3. The concept of a watchful care over one’s soul is not just a nice idea but a royal command.
 - *Mark 13:34 For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.*
4. All Christians are to take seriously the matter of guarding their souls, not just religious leaders or the apostles. What Jesus has taught one, He has taught all.
 - *Mark 13:37 And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.*
5. There is a special blessing for those who are found watching when Jesus comes.
 - *Luke 12:38 And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.*

6. In special periods of great tribulation it is acceptable to watch and pray. Perhaps the Lord will be pleased to grant divine deliverance in some situations or at least bring the soul through the tribulation period.
 - *Luke 21:36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*
7. Ministers of the gospel, like the apostles, are most like Christ when they watch for their souls and the souls of others and take the Christian way of life seriously.
 - *Acts 20:31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.*
8. Watchfulness is a sign of spiritual maturity.
 - *1 Corinthians 16:13 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.*
9. Watchfulness is to be characterized by prayer with thanksgiving.
 - *Colossians 4:2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;*
10. While multitudes are careless about their souls, the Christian must watch and be sober. There is a serious side to salvation. There is no time for spiritual lethargy.
 - *1 Thessalonians 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.*
11. Part of gospel watching over the souls of others is to endure afflictions. The pastoral ministry involves opposition, evangelization, and in some way demonstrating for the purpose of approval that the ministry was not just a career choice, or a way to make easy money.
 - *2 Timothy 4:5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.*
12. Because the work of the ministry is serious, believers are given a command to be obedient to those who have the rule over them knowing that a good pastor will have the best interest of his people in his heart, and will someday give an account for individuals.
 - *Hebrews 13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*

13. Individuals need strong motives in order to act. The strongest motive will move the will in a particular direction, for the will is a responder not an initiator of behavior. The apostle Peter provides a strong motive for Christians to be watchful and that is the fact that the world is soon coming to an end. And, that is true. The world comes to an end when a person dies. Christian, the day you die is the day the world comes to an end for you. Therefore, be sober and watchful.

- *1 Peter 4:7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.*

14. The Lord Jesus warns against not watching over one's soul and not taking seriously the gospel and the Christian way of life. There will be some form of divine discipline for individuals who are not watchful.

- *Revelation 3:3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.*