

THE DEADLY PITFALL OF SPIRITUAL COMPLACENCY

One of the deadliest — if not the deadliest — pitfall that can happen to a true Christian is spiritual complacency.

What is spiritual complacency?

A dictionary definition of complacency is a sense of “satisfaction or self-satisfaction accompanied by unawareness of actual dangers or deficiencies.”

Complacency quietly and very subtly undermines the true believer. It gives the individual the illusion that his or her spiritual condition is fine, solid and strong.

But it isn't. Because that person has slipped into that spiritually dangerous condition of comfort.

Everything's fine, when it isn't.

I'm okay, when he or she isn't.

Spiritual complacency can best be illustrated by the example of this man Obadiah in 1 Kings 18.

Israel, at this time, was ruled by King Ahab, a wicked yet weak ruler who did much evil and provoked God to anger more than all the kings of Israel before him.

And so, God sends Elijah to warn Ahab that Israel would suffer a severe and crippling drought. Desperate to save his kingdom, Ahab orders Obadiah to find Elijah.

On his way to tell Ahab that God would send desperately-needed rain, Elijah encounters Obadiah, a high-ranking member in Ahab's palace.

Elijah tells Obadiah, “Your king is looking for me. Go and tell him that I am here.”

Obadiah is hesitant. He reminds Elijah that he was a devoted follower of God. “At the risk of my own life, I hid one hundred of God’s prophets from being executed by order of Ahab’s wife.”

He begs Elijah, “Please, my lord Elijah, don’t tell me to do this. If I tell Ahab I have found you and you somehow disappear, he will kill me.”

“Don’t worry, Obadiah,” Elijah reassures him, “I will stay right here. Just tell Ahab you have found me.”

Was Obadiah still a devoted follower of God?

Or was it somebody or something else that he was now loyal to?

Over the years he served in Ahab’s palace, as he began to move up and become part of the king’s inner circle, Obadiah enjoyed the prestige and the material wealth that came with the position he had.

So now, he was afraid of losing everything: his status, his influence and the perks and benefits he enjoyed.

Slowly, over time, he started to drift away from God and his truth!

Obadiah was lulled into a complacency that weakened his spiritual condition.

Instead of taking a stand for God, he put up with idolatry, doctrinal compromise and the watering down of the truth. His conscience was seared, and he became spiritually weak!

The same thing will happen to us if we become spiritually complacent as Obadiah had become.

We have to realize that we have an enemy: Satan the devil, who, like a roaring lion, is stealthily stalking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:9). And we are his primary target.

How do we prevent the deadly pitfall of spiritual complacency from setting in?

The answer is in Ephesians 6, beginning in verse 10.

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

That's God's Holy Spirit in us. He has given us His Spirit of love, of power and of a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7).

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

We see law enforcement officers and soldiers wearing body armor for added protection against their adversaries.

We, too, must put on the whole armor of God to withstand the crafty and clever yet deadly and fatal trickery and guile of Satan the devil who seeks to lull us into spiritual complacency.

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

We are under attack by an enemy determined and committed to destroying us!

We are in an intense, raging battle against powerful spiritual forces that are committed to weakening, undermining and ultimately crushing us.

On our own, by our abilities and our resources, we are outmatched!

So we have got to stay close to God and draw closer to Him each and every day.

And here's how we get that done.

Verse 18.

18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints

Being in this prayerful attitude throughout the day. At work or at home or in school. Whatever we're doing. While we're working on something or dealing with some problem.

We must go to God with heartfelt prayer, ask for His help and look to Him for His guidance and counsel so we avoid the deadly pitfall of spiritual complacency.