



Daily Verse and Comment

[Luke 21:36](#)

(36) Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

New King James Version

The Bible includes prophecy to spur us on as we see events unfolding that point to the return of Christ. Yet, Jesus Himself stresses that, more important than just watching the news, each of us has important work to accomplish. The prevailing view of this verse is that we are to watch world news so that we would not be caught flat-footed as the end approaches. We must be aware of world conditions as a motivator, but in His admonition, Jesus has much more on His mind.

The apostle Paul's statement in I Corinthians 13:2 captures the gist of Christ's intent: "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, . . . but have not [love](#), I am nothing." In other words, knowing everything about world events is worthless if we fail to develop the loving character of [God](#) in the time given to us.

In [Luke 21:34](#), the term *take heed* means "to hold the mind or ear toward someone," and in a nautical setting, it connotes "to hold one's course toward a destination." Jesus says we are to set our minds on the correct course and carefully watch that we do not wander off it. Why? To ensure that we are not distracted by the pulls of our flesh or anxiety over filling basic needs. These things tend to dull our spiritual senses, blinding us to how far we may have regressed.

So Jesus tells us in verse 36 to *watch*, which literally means "to go without sleep." The underlying Greek word is used only three other times in the New Testament ([Mark 13:37](#); [Ephesians 6:18](#); [Hebrews 13:17](#)), each with the

connotation of being alert and praying for spiritual growth. The sense in Luke 21 is that we are not just to sit back and "watch," but we are to put our backs into our calling, working to overcome in taking on the very nature of God.

We can all relate to the struggle that Paul describes in [Galatians 5:17](#): "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish." Paul faced this conflict in his own life, as he admits in [Romans 7:14-23](#).

Overcoming is a terribly difficult process. The key is to struggle, to strive, to put whatever effort is necessary to do what God wants us to do, and not to give in to any compromise. It requires work not to be lackadaisical, thinking that just because we know about God, His laws, and the future He has for mankind that we are a shoo-in for His Kingdom.

[Jesus Christ](#) Himself was in all points tempted as we are. Yet, He fought Himself that He might live without [sin](#) and thus be the perfect Sacrifice so that we could have eternal life ([Hebrews 4:15](#)). Even a shallow reading of [the gospel](#) accounts shows that He put everything He had into being our Savior and Example.

The apostle Paul is another good example. In [I Corinthians 9:26-27](#), he describes his approach to living the Christian life:

Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Paul prayed, studied, fasted, and lived his life as close to the standard of Christ as he could so that he might please God and, in doing so, set a proper example for each of us.

[Mark 13:32](#) reminds us that no man knows when Christ will return: "But of that day and hour no man knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." Verse 33 tells us to "take heed, watch and pray," connecting these two ideas. Not knowing the timing of His return should be an incentive to us to be vigilant and attentive to spiritual things—to be

always prepared. Then Jesus instructs us in verse 34 that we each have work to do. In plain words, we have each been given the task of achieving what is expected of those whom God calls.

Over the years, many have started on this course, excited at the prospect of the [return of Jesus Christ](#) and the establishment of the [Kingdom of God](#). But time has gone on, and consciously or unconsciously, a "the Lord has delayed His coming" attitude has set in. As a result, many have neglected to watch their spiritual growth and drifted away from their awesome calling and potential.

Neither God the Father nor Jesus Christ wants us to miss out on the wonderful future They have prepared for us, thus the many admonitions to watch and pray. So we need to consider deeply the warning Jesus gives in [Mark 13:35-37](#):

Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning—lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!

— John O. Reid

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