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A Certain Hope

"For the Lord himself shall descend." 1Th 4:16

"So shall we ever be with the Lord." 1Th 4:17

"Looking for that blessed hope." Tit 2:13

This blessed hope is;

A powerful hope; "the dead shall be raised" 1Co 15:52

A glorious hope; "this corruptible must put on
incorruption, this mortality must put on immortality"
1Co 15:53

A victorious hope; "O death where is thy sting, O grave
where is thy victory?" 1Co 15:55

A joyful hope; "so shall we ever be with the Lord" 1Th
4:17 (Let us live in the light of this blessed hope)

O joy! O delight! Should we go without dying;

No sickness, no sadness, no dread, and no crying;

Caught up through the clouds with our Lord into glory;

When Jesus receives His own.

Hollywood Weights

“Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset [us], and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.”

Heb. 12:1

Is the Church handicapped in the race by carrying weights of carnality?

Paul says “every man that strives for the mastery in temperate in all things.”

(1 Cor. 9:25)

Case in point—Does the Church today really consider Hollywood worldly? Do the elders and leaders of the Church have the spiritual courage to stand up and tell it like it is? Fifty years ago godly spiritual Christians considered Hollywood off limits. Today it has moved into our living rooms and for the most part is considered standard Christian entertainment and a very inexpensive babysitter. Has Hollywood’s moral standards improved to where we can accept it as part of the Christians’s fare?

If we dare to say anything against it some will scream, “legalism,” or

“child abuse!” Many will say, “Its not all bad, don’t take all the fun away from the kids! We can enjoy the good and close our eyes and ears to the bad.”

An illustration—There will always be some good food in the garbage can, but I do not want my children to get their sustenance from there. Our Father “owns the cattle on a thousand hills,” it must be embarrassing for Him to

see His children going to the far country and into the pigpen, eating husks, when he could be feasting at the Father's banqueting table.

It's a sad day when children of Christian parents are better acquainted with the Hollywood stars and cartoon characters than they are with the Bible

"Heroes of the faith," and sadder still when Christian leaders and Sunday School teachers tell their class about the latest movie in the theater. Is it any wonder why the

Lord can't bless us spiritually or numerically?

Does the Bible address this scenario? The Lord Jesus said, "No man can serve two masters" (Matt. 6:24) and "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:21) Paul wrote. "Come out from among theme" (2 Cor.

6:17), and also, "Seek those things which are above set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." (Col. 3:1,2) And "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

(Phil. 4:8)

These worldly conditions come upon us so gradually that we are in danger of "getting used to the dark," and not be aware of the situation. The

Church at Ephesus in Paul's day would have been considered a spiritual assembly.

Thirty years later when John wrote to it in Revelation 2 things were very much different.

A final statement—If we seriously consider what is going to take place at the judgement seat of Christ, we can't ignore these conditions. The Church is in the world to be a witness, but when we allow the world into the Church it becomes an unbearable weight.

The Big C's

We observe three "Big C's" that seem to sum up a spiritual decline in the professing Church today and none of us are exempt from its ill affects. The Lord addressed these issues in His letters to the seven Churches of Asia.

1. "COMPLACENCY" - The Lord reminded the Laodicean church, they were neither cold nor hot, but luke-warm. Many want enough religion to pacify the conscience but not enough of Christ to make the flesh uncomfortable or the world unattractive.

2. "COMPROMISE" - This can take the form of a "watered down Gospel" so as to not upset the sinner or compromising truth so we don't lose some of the Christians to the big church across the street.

3. "CARNALITY" - This is to allow worldly methods or practices to creep in to increase the numbers of the congregation. The worlds music is used in some places to attract crowds. A. W. Tozer said, "you win them to what you win them with". A worldly church will have worldly members and the obvious result will be COMPLACENCY, COMPROMISE and CARNALITY.

The Lord saw the rich and boastful Laodiceans as "wretched, and miserable, and poor and blind, and naked". Then He told them, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore and repent". Rev. 3:17,19

Are we in danger of being dragged down by the three "Big

C's"?