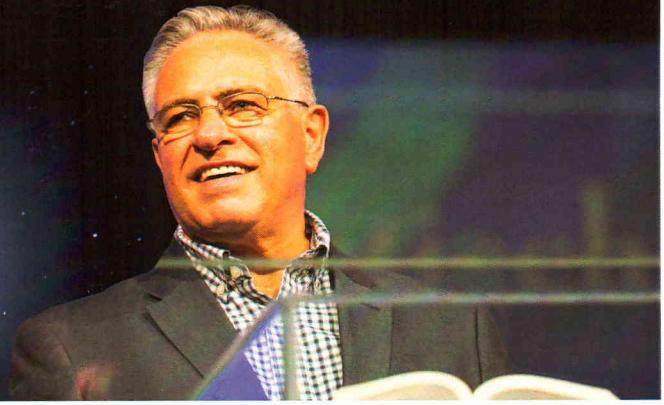




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## INSTRUCTIONS IN RIGHTEOUSNESS

ENTRY 22-1

# STRONG, FIRM AND STEADFAST

Never before have Christians faced such distractions, compromise and temptation. Even Jesus was tempted, but our fixation with the fast-based, digital world has unleashed a devastating war against us. The attack is designed to dilute, distract and ultimately destroy the passion of the Church. If we lose our passion for Jesus and His people, everything else in our lives becomes shaky. It is not that people have stopped believing in God, but many have lost their zeal. Scripture says, "Zeal for your house will consume me" (John 2:17, Ps. 69:9). Today, it seems that passion for God's house is no longer a priority. To a large degree, the sold-out, all-in cry of the disciple has been lost. The lack of consistent Church attendance and financial commitment are serious signs of a lukewarm lifestyle. Scripture says, "Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him.... And the God of all grace.... Will.... make you **strong, firm and steadfast**" (1 Peter 5: 8b,9a,10).

## THE WORLD HAS CHANGED

Social Media, entertainment and AI are not going away; they will only become more addictive. We live in a content-consuming world. The average American is now scrolling on a digital screen five hours a day. Young children should be guarded against this intrusion, and they should be given strong restrictions regarding screen time and subject matter. Youth and adults should limit their time and subject matter on their devices as well. Even with strong restrictions, however, we will not win this battle. The victory lies in our ability to focus on the Lord and His Church. The zeal for His house must consume us and our families once again.

## A NEW GENERATION

For decades, teenagers, children, and young adults have been the largest demographic to come to Christ. Eighty percent of new converts are in that age group. Lately, we have seen a surge in young people coming to Christ, and they are passionate. We thank God for revival, but this has not yet reached the Church at large. The Church needs a wake-up call; we need revival within our congregations. The newly saved young people will flock to exciting Churches where they find others their own age who are sold out for Christ. Most congregations, however, are still trying to find consis-

tency and fervency with their own members. If this casual posture does not change, even these new believers can lose their passion in just a few years.

It is time to take strong action. The Lord instructs us to resist the devil, rekindle the flames of the Holy Spirit and allow Christ to make us **strong, firm and steadfast**. It is a terrible thing to lose our first love. We pray that the fire that we see on some university campuses will affect the Church until all believers become red-hot for Jesus.



## RESIST THE DEVIL

James 4:7 says, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you". The devil hates it when you resist him. This is a word for you! The devil can't stand it and when you resist him. That causes him to flee; he runs away as fast as he can. But before you resist the devil, you must first resist your own flesh.

Recently, I asked someone why they had not been at church for a while. "Did I offend you," I asked? They replied, "No, I have just been lazy." That was very troubling to me. If only I had offended them, I could have repented. But how can I help someone to stop them from being lazy? I know that this is an oversimplified answer to why they have not been at church, I believe they have been tempted with distractions and compromise as well as laziness.

I will tell you how to resist the devil in this regard. First, turn over a new leaf and recommit to gathering with God's people every week. Secondly, give generously to the Lord and His work. You should never miss paying your tithes and giving extra offerings as the Lord leads you. Where your heart is, there your treasure will be. If you are noncommittal in your giving, it is an indicator regarding your obedience and your zeal toward the Lord.

Besides initiating a renewed commitment for yourself, your consistency will help influence others in a right direction. This is, first and foremost, a good example for the members of your own family, but it is also for other church members; whether you know it or not, you have a profound effect on them. A full crowd and strong giving add strength to the church, allowing it to be more impactful. It also encourages church leaders. By God's grace, these leaders carry the torch for bold faith in our communities. They need to remain faithful even if the congregation has lost passion and consistency – but why not be a strong church family? Show your support by your faithful attendance, your giving and your participation as a servant and a worshipper.

## GOOD SOIL

In Matthew 13, Jesus gives us the Parable of the Sower. He tells us that a farmer scattered seed. Some of the seed fell along the path, some fell on rocky ground, some fell among the weeds and then some fell on good soil. Some of the seed was eaten by birds, some was in shallow ground where the sun scorched it, and some were choked by weeds, which are the cares of this life. The seed that fell on good soil produced fruit because it had nourishment, water, and it was planted deep. Three out of four seeds, however,



failed due to the temptations of compromise and distractions. Both the Sower and the seed had good intentions and a good purpose, but if it did not remain in good soil it did not produce fruit.

## STRONG, FIRM, AND STEADFAST

When we consistently resist the devil's temptation of distraction, compromise and laziness, we place ourselves and our families in good soil.

Then we can be **strong** as we carry the weight of serving the Lord, our families and those around us with love.

We can also be **firm** as we stand unmoving against temptation, sin and the attacks of the devil.

Lastly, we can be **steadfast**. That means we will have endurance to win the long-term victory for ourselves, for our families, and for our community, as we advance the Kingdom of God.

Church attendance and paying our tithes are godly principles. They are the first things we should insist upon. Then we should press in to be passionate with our worship and our obedience to Christ. I ask you to reignite that on-fire, sold-out, all-in-for-Jesus attitude, and fan the flame of revival fires in our world.

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*Instructions in Righteousness* is produced by Christians for Messiah Ministries (CFM). Dr. Peter Wyns is the President of CFM and the Head Pastor of Antioch International Church. He has served as a pastor for 54 years and traveled to more than 45 nations.

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