

# *It's Getting Late; Do You Know Where Your Soul Is?*

By Dan Ecklund

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I can recall dozens of times when I was a kid playing out at dusk with my friends and anticipating that any second I'd hear my name being yelled across the neighborhood from a lighted doorway. I always hoped it would be one of my friends' names that would be called before mine, to save me the embarrassment of having to be the first to leave the fun-filled activities. Ironically, now that I'm married, I've learned that that kind of anticipation never seems to end.

Widespread changes have taken place that are not for the better. As the sun sets on this generation, people should be listening for their names to be called from the lighted doorway. The problem is, our fun activities and desire to play have distracted us so much that we fail to notice how late it is, despite the darkness. We need to see both how dark it is and where we are playing, in order to understand the serious nature of the problem.

*"I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness,"* (John 12:46).

## ***Do You Live in Darkness?***

It's been well stated that the best way to judge a man is by what he does when no one is looking and when no one else knows. Human nature more often than not directs us to do things that we know are wrong out of the sight of people. That in itself is a testament of man: We know right from wrong, and have no excuse before God.

Does your life include a sin that you're holding onto, without any intention of trying to remove it from your life? Many professing Christians have ceased struggling with sin, and have taken the position that they are just "backsliders" who live in sin while God is still in their hearts. However, Scripture speaks to the contrary regarding the lifestyle and practice of sin: *"Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name? And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"* (Matthew 7:22-23).

*"Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness"* (1 John 3:4).

For the record, we acknowledge the obvious: Sin is fun for a time. We enjoy sin, as it has a strong pull on the flesh because we are, by nature, self-centered. We very seldom take sin seriously, and almost never see the consequences for our actions. However, in reality, people often pay twice for sin—once in this world and once again after death.

A trail of pain and broken families follows those who fail to see that sin produces much more than temporal fun for the flesh. Tragedies, to one degree or other, almost always result. While you think you might be immune to the consequences of sin, just check your conscience to see if you're free from sin.

## ***Who's Calling Whose Name?***

Some people have an image of Jesus knocking at the hearts of men, begging them to "open the door." Biblically speaking, it's a poor analogy to depict Jesus as a beggar who wants us to allow Him to come in, as though it's cold and raining outside.

People who that say they have accepted Jesus often fail to understand that Jesus isn't made "acceptable" to us. It's we who need to be made acceptable to Him, because we are the true beggars. Listen to the words of Paul, who knew his personal state, despite all his works: "O wretched man that I am! Who will

deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin” (Romans 7:24-25).

How do you view God? Do you see Him as happy with mankind and wanting to give people gifts and keep them happy, or is He angry with sin and the way people live?

The nature of good is to punish evil and see justice done. The world seems to generally blame God for causing or allowing plagues, earthquakes, floods, and all kinds of destruction. But the world will not admit the reasons God takes actions. The collective attitude is that it is His fault that all such catastrophes happen. People call these things “acts of God.” The lost refuse to see that the way they live has anything to do with God trying to get their attention.

God has gone all out to try to get mankind to understand that fallen man is living in sin, and that each person who lives without repenting of that sin has a day of judgment coming.

### ***Responding to the Call***

Most people reading this believe themselves to be saved, I’m almost certain. I do hope they are, indeed, saved. However, being a false convert for years myself, I now see clearly that a “response” to the call requires inward change. So how do you know if you’re saved? Here’s a simple list.

#### **1. Do you struggle with sin or just live in it?**

If the Bible says something is wrong, you should fight against the desire to do it. People who confess to be “followers of Christ” but don’t follow His words need to examine their salvation. No Christian will be perfect this side of heaven, but every Christian will—because of God the Holy Spirit within him or her—fight against the sinful nature as a result of the life-changing properties of salvation: “Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are His,’ and, ‘Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity’” (2 Timothy 2:19).

#### **2. Are you getting better or worse?**

Each year, you should be a better Christian than you were the last. That doesn’t mean your life itself will be better in every aspect, in terms of the trials of daily life, but it does mean that your obedience to God will be improved. We often think that those who’ve taken a few years off from their faith are just backsliding a little and will return once they “sin themselves out.” Scripture warns that this should not happen. Our goal is to move forward: “But Jesus said to him, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62).

#### **3. Do you value your God enough to talk about Him?**

Do people around you know “WHY” you’re a Christian? Most of the people in the U.S. today think they are “Christian” by default, despite common rejection of Bible teachings and denial of the very words of Christ. Do you tell people around you the reason you’re a believer and that you hold the words of Christ in higher regard than does public opinion? According to researcher George Barna, fewer than 2 percent of Christians truly witness. If the Living God has altered your life, pulling you out of sure judgment, the supernaturally influenced reaction is to tell someone the reason they need to submit to Him as well. ““Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven? But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 10:32-33).

If you’re not sure of your standing with God at this point, there are two things that can help you. First, pray that God will show you where you stand, and at the same time beware of anything in your mind that tries to make your sin seem mild. Second, listen to “True and False Conversation” by Ray Comfort—an eye-opener for the dangers of living your life as the “average confessing Christians.” It’s available free online at [www.Livingwaters.com](http://www.Livingwaters.com).