**Combatting Complacency**

**Introduction**

1. Wisdom is personified, and speaks of those who had rejected her, and what her response is when they desperately need her – **Proverbs 1:28-33** – ***“the complacency of fools will destroy them” –*** Complacency is a dangerous thing.
2. A Chrisian should always be moving forward, improving, growing, abounding more and more – **1 Thessalonians 4:1-2**
3. How do we combat complacency?
4. Welcome Criticism
5. ***“Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, But he who hates correction is stupid.” (Proverbs 12:1)***
	1. ***“stupid”*** *– ḇa‘ar* – “brutish person… The root seems to contrast man's ability to reason and understand with the beast's inability to do so (**Proverbs 30:2**)” (TWOT)
	2. Part of man’s ability to progress is their ability to reason, and be reasoned with – this involves receiving criticism in a constructive way.
6. In seeking God’s approval there is study – **2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16-17** – not merely an intellectual process, but involving constructive criticism – leading to action/change.
	1. **1 Corinthians 3:18-20** – I must become a fool to become wise.
	2. This involves a predisposition toward being wrong, and welcoming correction – I may think I know, but I have to be willing to change if proven otherwise.
	3. This is so with God’s word, and other men.
7. The command to restore one straying includes the receptive side of the equation for one to be teachable, and correctable – **Galatians 6:1-2, 6-8**
	1. **(v. 6)** – the teacher brings the good things to the one who strays, and he who is taught participates in those good things – repentance, conversion, change.
	2. **(v. 7)** – describes incorrigibility, disdain for criticism – deceiving self is foolish.
	3. **(v. 8)** – the criticism has merit if it is from God’s word – change how you sow.
8. A man who is open to criticism is one who will be constantly improving, and safe from harm that would otherwise befall him because he won’t listen to others – **Proverbs 15:31-33**
9. Associate with the Mature
10. ***“As iron sharpens iron, So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.” (Proverbs 27:17)***
	1. The opposite is true as well – **1 Corinthians 15:33**
	2. Our company influences us for good or bad.
11. This must reach beyond the most obvious and fundamental understanding of the danger of associating with those who are totally opposite – **2 Corinthians 6:14-16**
12. Paul warned of the folly of comparing self to others – **2 Corinthians 10:12**
	1. They seek honor from each other, and give it freely – **John 5:41-44**
	2. **However, while we should avoid comparison to others to receive false honor, and make ourselves feel better where we are, if we are able to see another acting in a way that is righteous, though we struggle in the area, it would benefit us to think about the contrast and pursue counsel with them.**
13. We must avoid associations that hinder, and purse associations that will challenge us, and elevate us to new heights – **1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:15-16**
	1. Our elders – **Proverbs 16:31; Job 12:12**
	2. Our brethren – **Hebrews 10:24-25**
14. It takes humility to acknowledge that our usual companions may not be helping us get better, and though another’s ways or advice may be challenging, their fruit/experience/age hold value for me – **1 Kings 12:4-11** – Rehoboam did not like the advice of the elders and sought counsel from his peers leading to the division of the kingdom.
	1. Rather than make a decision offered him with great merit that would certainly lead him outside of his comfort zone he maintained the status quo and suffered the consequences.
	2. **While Rehoboam pursued counsel, often we receive counsel through our associations – if I am constantly around those who themselves are not trying to get better, I will grow complacent; if I am constantly around those who are seeking to improve I will as well.**
15. Be Comfortable with Being Uncomfortable
16. **Many are satisfied with their current state because to aim any higher would require trying new things – things that are challenging, different, and sometimes scary.**
17. Johsua is revealed as the assistant of Moses from Exodus 17 on to the time of the end of Moses’ life. When Moses died, Joshua is called to step up – **Joshua 1:1-2, 6-9**
	1. This change in leadership would have been an adjustment – Israel mourned the loss of Moses – **Deuteronomy 34:8, 10-12**
	2. Joshua would probably have to make the greatest adjustment – think of all the grief Moses dealt with (why Moses in weakness acted in a way that led to his punishment).
	3. **(vv. 6-9)** – rather than shrink from the challenge of a new day, Joshua was told to be strong and courageous.
18. Peter is often criticized (much of it being warranted), but he showed the willingness to do what was challenging and uncomfortable – **Matthew 14:27-33**
	1. **(v. 28)** – what made him say this? Impetuousness in part, but what about godly ambition, love for Christ, eagerness to meet a challenge, etc.?
	2. (**v. 31**) – Jesus’ statement is one of criticism, but also credit – He does not say NO faith, but LITTLE faith – little in comparison to who? The others stayed in the boat.
19. If we have an ability and opportunity, even though our ability may seem small in comparison to another, we need to use it! – **Romans 12:6-8**
20. **The Bible is filled with true accounts of people doing extraordinary things from God that make us feel uncomfortable. Perhaps, it makes us feel this way because we keep ourselves safe within our comfort zone when we should be seeking to further our talents for the Lord. (cf. Matthew 25:24-28 – wicked and lazy)**
21. Constant Comparison to Christ
22. The ultimate weapon in combatting complacency is the standard of Christ. It is a unique standard which the scripture shows we can reach, and as soon as we reach it we have further to go – there is no place for complacency in Christ.
23. We are to be aiming for Christ’s stature – **Luke 2:52; Ephesians 4:11-15** – fullness of Christ – everything that He is.
24. Jesus says learn from Me, and do I as I say and do – **Matthew 11:29; John 13:12-17; Philippians 2:5; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 4:1-2**
25. Our renewal and transformation is to be constant, a daily transition from a lesser state into a greater one, from self to Christ living in us – **2 Corinthians 3:18; 4:6, 16; 5:5; Galatians 2:20**
26. **When our aim is Christ there is no room for complacency!**

**Conclusion**

1. The devil seeks to make us feel comfortable where we are so that we regress, fail to glorify God, and eventually fall away completely.
2. Complacency is an enemy that must be mercilessly slain. We must always be striving for more in Christ.