

Supplement to Chapter I

Chapter 1 - Life in Fast Forward

Everything we see, everything we hear, everything we read, or say - basically everything we feed into our mind - goes into a memory bank to form our own, personal data-base. And just as a mechanical computer performs on the basis of what is fed into it, the data-base we have accumulated in our heart and mind predictably determines our attitude and actions.

Could it be that in order for us to survive the persistent surge of activity, the increasing wickedness and sensuous materialism, it is becoming ever more urgent for us to make room in our lives for such a place? Is our Lord running after you, longing for the moment when you will slow down long enough to meet with Him - in a "quiet place"? pg 19, par 2

In the first chapter of *The Sword* and in other places throughout the book reference is made to the subtle but aggressive advance of evil in our society and in our world. This lesson will focus on this evil agenda that is being thrust upon us and challenge you to take a stand against it.

In the United States, June, 1962 for the first time in the history of (that) country, Christian principles were separated from public education. With neither legal nor historical precedence, a high court decision made prayer illegal in Public Schools. This was followed in later years by the legal prohibition of Bible reading, religious instruction and even the display of the ten commandments on Public School properties.

Teachers, over the years, have been asked to identify the top problems in America's public schools. In 1940 they identified these as the top problems:

- talking out of turn
- making noise
- cutting in line
- litter
- chewing gum
- running in halls
- dress code infractions

When asked the same question in 1990, they identified:

- drug abuse
- pregnancy
- rape
- assault
- alcohol abuse
- suicide
- robbery

(From the *Index of leading Cultural Indicators* published by Heritage Foundation, March 1993.)

According to this same publication, the population increased 41 percent from 1960 to 1990. They state that during this same 30-year period:

- violent crime increased over 500 percent
- illegitimate births increased 400 percent
- divorces increased 400 percent
- children living in single-parent homes increased 300 percent
- teenage suicide increased 200 percent
- S.A.T. scores dropped almost 80 points - despite huge increases in support for education

- (since 1976 child abuse increased 340 percent)

1. On the back of this page, list the negatives you have seen evolve in your culture during your lifetime. Go back as far as your memory will permit and document the decline you have observed. (In my personal very incomplete evaluation, I listed over 30.)

2. Contemplating what you have written above, what conclusion must you draw?

3. Is it possible for us to escape these influences in our life?

4. How do you see the deterioration of the secular culture around us affecting the Christian church?

5. As you have listed the decline you have seen in your lifetime in #1, try to evaluate how this has influenced your thinking, your values and your acceptance of practices you would at one time avoided. Sometimes the erosion is so subtle it is not easily defined, unless you go back 10 or 20 years and measure from there. Be as objective as you can using your first memories until now.

6. As well as the intrusion of evil on your daily existence, do you see a stressed agenda as an added negative to keep you marking time or losing ground spiritually? Are you aware of the planned strategy that is being executed against you in this area? Explain.

7. Addressing the time aspect, how effective has the enemy been in monopolizing your time? What percentage of your time are you occupied with contemplating the words and truths of Scripture versus the time you spend focused on this world's agenda? Looking at your data base, what do you think the ratio might be between the two as you evaluate this past year?

8. Contemplate for a moment: Solomon said: *Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.* (Proverbs 4:23). Do you see a need for a strong antidote to counter the constant bombardment of negative and evil that is being launched against you? Would not the introduction of pure, clean, unadulterated truth into your life be a "refreshing breeze" in contrast to the stench that surrounds us. Where does such help lie???