

us to want to live our entire lives to the glory of God (our love for Christ is sufficient motivation for that), yet imminency adds the motivational factor of *urgency*, to do what we ought to do *today*, instead of putting it off until some future time. Imminency suggests the possible shortness of time for the fulfillment of obligations to God, and thus combats apathy, laxness, and the tendency to procrastinate.

Both imminency of death and imminency of our Lord's return combat apathy and satisfactions with the humdrum, and introduce alertness and urgency into our living of the Christian life. Our Lord teaches us to *number our days* (since they are brief and fleeting), so that we may apply our hearts to wisdom. He also teaches us to remain ever *alert* and *watchful*, not because every day of a Christian's life is to be lived to the glory of God (although that is true), but because *we do not know the time of the Lord's return*, and because when He returns we will have to give an account of how we have lived and what we have accomplished during His absence. We must maintain the concept of *imminency*!

But we must also retain the concept of *delay*. Now it is true that our Lord's return is called "the blessed hope" (Titus 2:13), and that we are to be looking for the appearing of our Lord. We also recognize that "hope deferred makes the heart sick" (Proverbs 13:12). And yet we are to hope for and confidently expect our Lord's return, even if it is delayed. In Romans 8:23 Paul says that we groan, waiting eagerly for our new transformed bodies, which we will receive at our Lord's return. And in verse 25 he says that if we hope for this transformation, which we have not yet experienced, then "with perseverance we wait eagerly for it."

Peter mentions the concept of delay in 2 Peter 3, and asserts that the Lord is not *slow* about fulfilling the promise of His coming, but is rather *patient*, not desirous that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Yet even during this delay, Peter finds a basis and motivation for holiness and godly conduct in the impending destruction of the present skies and earth -- which are to take place following our Lord's return -- and the establishment of new skies and a new earth, in which righteousness will dwell.

6. It is possible so to emphasize imminency as to neglect the delay factor, or to emphasize the delay factor and neglect imminency. It is possible to do this in preaching and teaching. It is possible to do this in formulating