

When Ease Becomes an Idol: A Watchman's Exhortation on the Modern Quest for the Easy Life

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Foreword: A Lamp for the Velvet Age

Twilight is not night, yet it blinds the careless traveler who mistakes dimness for dawn. Our age has mastered this half-light, selling a “low-cost life” whose creed is least pain, least sacrifice, least inconvenience, maximum control, maximum pleasure, maximum speed. The offer sounds merciful; its cost is invisible. A Christianity disciplined by such calculus will trade the rugged cross for padded wood, the pilgrim's staff for a lounge chair, and the Spirit's fire for blue-light comfort. I write, therefore, as a trembling watchman, not to shame but to wake. True rest is a gracious stream, yet when comfort enthrones itself, that stream becomes a narcotic fog.

Consider the velvet highway: smooth, wide, brightly lit. Each billboard promises “*No strain—No delay—No grief.*” Travelers set out light-hearted, unaware that softness erodes sinew. Muscles of prayer atrophy; lungs of endurance shrink; the soul's compass rusts. When an unexpected hill appears—diagnosis, betrayal, persecution—the velvet pilgrims cannot climb. Ease has stolen their strength.

This script is a lamp pressed into such hands. Its glow is not entertainment but orientation: back to Calvary's narrow path where obedience costs yet frees, where tears water hope, and where love outlives comfort. Read slowly, Bible open, conscience tender. Test every paragraph against the Lamb who was slain; measure every promise against eternity's horizon. Should these pages rekindle holy grit, then the flare has done its work.

Keywords: Christian discipleship, idol of comfort, easy life mentality, consumer Christianity, spiritual formation, biblical self-denial, Christian endurance.

There is a sentence that, in many places, has become the unspoken constitution of modern life: *“The good life is the low-cost life: least pain, least sacrifice, least inconvenience, maximum control, maximum pleasure, maximum speed.”* In itself, seeking relief from needless suffering is not sinful. Scripture never glorifies misery as an end in itself. Yet when “ease” becomes an ultimate goal, it competes with God for the throne of the heart, and it reshapes what Christians expect from discipleship, what they are willing to obey, and what they are willing to endure.

With humility, I write as a watchman who trembles at the weight of words, because warning people is not entertainment and spiritual diagnosis must not become spectacle. Yet silence can also be cruelty. When an entire culture catechizes the church into comfort, the shepherd’s voice must become clearer, not louder, and the conscience must become sharper, not harsher. The issue is not that Christians desire rest. The issue is that many are being trained to treat rest as a god, convenience as a right, and sacrifice as an insult. But, before we move, there is a deeper sickness the lamp must expose: the marketplace has invaded the sanctuary.

Marketplace Miracles and the Basket-Weaver’s Rebuke: The early church never framed spiritual gifts as merchandise. Yet many pulpits now operate like trading floors, where prophecy is pay-per-view, miracles require a seed-fee, and “impartations” are invoiced. The Apostle Paul, who stitched baskets to avoid burdening the flock (Acts 18:3), would blush to see ministry re-imagined as an influencer economy. When charisms become commodities, Christ is recast as a brand and the Spirit’s gifts as status symbols.

A second tragedy unfolds among the crowds who chase such spectacles. Hoping for material forecasts—contracts, visas, spouses—they often receive divinations that bind rather than liberate. Gifts bought with silver frequently drag silver chains behind them. The ancient warning to Simon the sorcerer echoes: *“May your silver perish with you”* (Acts 8:20). The church must restore Paul’s ethic of labor-supported service: work with your hands, preach without price, and let generosity spring from love, not leverage.

The Parable of the Soft Road

Imagine two roads leaving the same city. The first road is paved with velvet. It has no stones, no steep inclines, no sharp turns. Along the way are signs that read: “Avoid discomfort,” “Do what feels natural,” “If it costs you, it cannot be right.” Many travelers choose it because it promises relief.

The second road is narrower. It is not cruel, but it is honest. It requires attention, endurance, repentance, forgiveness, restraint, and sometimes tears. Along the way the signs read: *“Take up your cross,” “Persevere,” “Love at cost,” “Obey when it hurts,” “Trust when you cannot see.”* This road is not attractive to the flesh, but it is familiar to the saints.

Now the parable’s sting is this: both roads offer an “end,” but only one offers a true arrival. The soft road often leads to a place where travelers are comfortable yet hollow, entertained yet unformed, safe yet enslaved. The narrow road leads to life, because it is traveled with Christ and ends in Christ. Our age insists the soft road is “normal.” Scripture insists the narrow road is. See the sober words of Christ in Matthew 7:13–14.

The Parable of the Velvet Highway

Picture a kingdom with a newly paved highway, so smooth it feels like walking on clouds. It is called “The Velvet Way.” Its signboard lists its promises: “No strain. No delay. No waiting. No awkwardness. No risk. No grief. No shame. No cost.” Thousands enter with relief. They assume smoothness equals blessing.

But as they travel, something strange happens. Their legs weaken. Their lungs shrink. Their courage fades. They begin to fear even small hills. They avoid any path that requires effort. Soon they cannot carry burdens, cannot endure storms, cannot walk with the wounded, and cannot follow a King whose road includes a cross. The highway did not merely give them comfort. It quietly took their strength.

This is what the idol of ease does. It does not always tempt with overt sin. Often it tempts with “reasonable” preferences that, when enthroned, become spiritual sabotage. Christ does not call His people to needless suffering, but He does call them to costly obedience. The cross is not a decorative symbol; it is a training ground for love. See Luke 9:23.

A Philosophical Diagnosis: The Metaphysics of Ease.

Every age smuggles a philosophy into daily life. Ours quietly teaches a metaphysics of control: that the highest good is the ability to remove friction from existence. Pain becomes an enemy without meaning. Delay becomes an injustice. Limits become oppressive. The self becomes a fragile monarch who must never be contradicted.

In this worldview, the human person is not primarily a creature called to holiness, but a customer entitled to comfort. The moment this philosophy enters the church, Christianity risks becoming a managed experience rather than a surrendered life. God is subtly repositioned from Lord to service provider. Prayer becomes a tool for outcomes. Worship becomes a mood regulator. Church becomes a platform for personal enhancement.

Yet the Christian faith is not a lifestyle brand. It is the kingdom of God breaking into a world that runs on self-rule. If Christ is Lord, then the self cannot remain king without conflict. See Matthew 6:24.

The Hyperbole That Reveals the Hidden Truth

Permit a controlled hyperbole to expose a real pattern. Many modern hearts behave as though minor inconvenience were major persecution, as though delay were a moral evil, and as though any demand that costs something must be “toxic.” This is not because people are foolish, but because they are being trained. When comfort becomes a moral absolute, then the smallest cross feels like cruelty.

In that environment, discipleship is reinterpreted. Instead of asking, “Is it true?” people ask, “Does it feel easy?” Instead of asking, “Is it obedient?” they ask, “Is it convenient?” Instead of asking, “Does it glorify God?” they ask, “Does it preserve my peace?” The tragedy is that “peace” here often means emotional anesthesia, not the deep biblical peace that can coexist with tears. See John 16:33.

The Many Traps of the “Low-Cost Life”

If the enemy cannot destroy a soul through scandal, he often tries to dissolve it through softness. The traps below do not always look sinful at first glance. Many are “reasonable.” That is why they are dangerous. They function like a mild sedative: not enough to alarm you, but enough to keep you from

watchfulness. What follows is not written to shame but to rescue: a careful map of how the desire for a low-cost life can quietly become a spiritual strategy of drift.

The Trap of Comfort Theology: Blessing Redefined as Uninterrupted Ease:

Some believers slowly absorb a theology in which God’s favor is measured by smooth circumstances. In this mindset, the absence of trouble becomes proof of divine approval, and trouble becomes evidence of spiritual failure. The result is either despair when suffering arrives or performance to keep appearances. Yet Scripture refuses to make comfort the definition of blessing. Often God’s deepest work is not to remove the storm but to form Christlikeness within it (see Romans 5:3-5).

The Therapeutic Religion: Christ as a Soothing Product Rather Than a Reigning Lord:

There is a version of Christianity that functions like a spiritual spa: it exists to reduce stress, improve mood, and provide coping mechanisms. God truly comforts the weary, yet when comfort becomes the goal, truth becomes negotiable. Prayer is used mainly to stop discomfort, worship mainly to improve mood, and Scripture mainly to quiet anxiety. Repentance is labeled “negative,” judgment “toxic,” and holiness “harmful to self-esteem.” In that posture, Scripture is treated as content to skim for reassurance rather than a living word that can cut before it heals (see Hebrews 4:12). This is how the soul drifts, not by loud rebellion, but by quiet edits to the gospel until it no longer calls for surrender.

But Christ does not merely soothe; He saves. He does not merely regulate emotions; He commands allegiance. The gospel is not designed to keep the self comfortably seated on the throne; it is designed to bring the self to surrender before the King.

Speed: A Life Too Fast for Wisdom, Too Noisy for God.

The low-cost life wants maximum speed. Yet speed is not neutral; it forms the soul. A hurried life becomes shallow not because people are lazy, but because depth requires time, and time is what speed steals. Wisdom matures slowly. Character ripens slowly. Reconciliation often unfolds slowly. Prayer is frequently slow. Scripture meditation is slow. The Spirit’s sanctifying work is likened to farming, not manufacturing (see James 5:7-8).

Here another snare appears: outsourcing maturity. Some hope that a new job, a new city, a new church, or a new routine will automatically produce inward peace. Sometimes change is wise, yet the self travels with us. If the heart's idol remains untouched, a person can relocate and still carry Egypt within. A believer can even be "busy for God" and yet spiritually malnourished, like someone living on snacks and calling it nutrition.

Control: The Illusion That Safety Is the Highest Good. The low-cost life craves maximum control. Control promises safety, but it often produces slavery. When control becomes a ruling desire, trust becomes difficult, and obedience becomes conditional: "Yes, Lord, as long as..." as long as outcomes feel manageable, as long as reputation is protected, as long as discomfort stays within budget. This is self-protection baptized as wisdom. It can look prudent, but it quietly trains cowardice.

Control also changes prayer. Prayer becomes a mechanism to secure preferred outcomes rather than communion with God. In that posture God is not worshiped; He is leveraged. And when control hardens into identity, people begin to speak as though fragility were destiny: "I cannot handle conflict," "I must protect my peace." Knowing limits can be wise; enthroning limits becomes a shrine.

The Curated Community: Relationships Without Burdens. Modern life can train people to relate like consumers: select the best, avoid the messy, unsubscribe when inconvenient. But covenant love is not a subscription. The low-cost version of community wants fellowship without responsibility, intimacy without sacrifice, and belonging without accountability. It is like wanting a family with no diapers, no tears, no patience, no forgiveness. In reality, that is not family; it is an audience.

This is why church commitment can feel heavy to a comfort-trained heart. A local church is not a restaurant and believers are not customers. Scripture commands burden-bearing (see Galatians 6:2). Yet the idol of ease can mimic maturity by hiding behind the language of "boundaries" in order to avoid reconciliation, accountability, difficult people, and hard conversations. Boundaries can be necessary; avoidance is something else.

Painless Holiness: Sanctification Without Mortification. Many want sanctification the way one wants a software update: automatically, quietly, without interruption. But Scripture portrays the Christian life as warfare against the flesh. The old self does not retire peacefully; it resists. When Christians expect holiness to be painless, they interpret inner conflict as failure rather than as evidence that the Spirit is at work (see Galatians 5:16-17).

Pleasure as a Compass: When Appetite Becomes "Authenticity". The modern world often baptizes desire with the word "authentic." If you feel it strongly, you must express it; if you restrain it, you are "dishonest." Yet Scripture distinguishes between desires that should be denied and desires that should be disciplined and purified. The low-cost life turns appetite into authority, but appetite is a poor god. It always asks for more and never promises peace. It is like drinking saltwater to quench thirst.

This is also how sin markets itself as relief. Lust offers escape from loneliness, substances promise distance from grief, gossip offers relief from insecurity, dishonesty offers a shortcut around consequences, bitterness offers a cheaper alternative to forgiveness. The door looks easy, but it opens into a hard prison.

Avoiding Suffering at All Costs: When the Cross Is Interpreted as Abuse. Some people, often for understandable reasons, carry deep wounds. In such cases, the language of suffering can be misused by others to justify harm. This must be said plainly: Scripture never glorifies oppression. It never commands a believer to remain in situations of ongoing injustice or abuse. God is a righteous judge, and He defends the vulnerable.

Yet the reaction can swing to the opposite extreme, where any discomfort is labeled "harm," any difficulty "trauma," and any challenge "toxicity." A watchman must warn: when suffering is removed from the category of possible faithfulness, Christians become incapable of enduring even the ordinary costs of love, truth, duty, and perseverance. Pastoral precision is essential. There is a difference between needless suffering and necessary suffering, between persecution and inconvenience, between bearing a cross and being crushed by sin or violence. Christ calls us to the first, not the last.

Digital Catechesis: God Treated Like an App. Technology is useful, but it trains habits. One-click solutions train impatience. Custom feeds train entitlement. Endless options train restlessness. Gradually, people begin to treat reality as removable: if something challenges me, I swipe away. But you cannot swipe away the living God.

When digital habits govern the soul, Scripture becomes content to skim, sermons become entertainment to rate, worship becomes mood-management, and prayer becomes a transaction. The heart then expects God to be as immediate as a search engine. Yet God is not a machine; He is holy. He is personal. He forms people through seasons, not clicks.

Technology, like a silent tutor, has convinced multitudes that life can be friction-free. But every swipe pledges allegiance to the systems behind the screen. When those who govern the algorithms switch from convenience to coercion—what Revelation sketches as the “beastly” economy—dependence will become worship. The cashless, card-less, password-less future already scans our faces; soon it may scan our consciences. A soul trained to bow for bandwidth will not stand when refusal costs survival.

The Quiet Apostasy Through Reasonableness. Perhaps the most dangerous trap is slow drift, because it rarely feels rebellious. A person does not wake up and say, “*Today I will reject Christ.*” They say, “*Just this once, I’ll compromise.*” “*Just for this season, I’ll neglect prayer.*” “*Just until life calms down, I’ll postpone obedience.*” “*Just this one relationship, I’ll keep this sin.*” Then months become years, and the heart becomes trained in delay.

This is also how callings are avoided. Many believers sense God’s pull toward difficult obedience, but the idol of ease whispers, “Later, when it is safer.” Often, “later” becomes never. It is the parable of a house that does not collapse from a storm but from termites: the structure stands for a while, and then one day it gives way. Scripture calls this the deceitfulness of sin (see Hebrews 3:13).

The Analogy of Two Yokes: The Weight That Frees and the Weight That Kills

Here we must be exact. Christianity does not call people to pursue suffering as a virtue. Scripture does not glorify misery as an end in itself. There is nothing holy about needless pain. Yet there is also nothing holy about avoiding every cost. If we refuse the yoke of Christ, we do not become unyoked. We simply accept another yoke, often heavier.

The world’s yoke is paradoxical. It promises ease but produces slavery: anxiety because control is fragile, loneliness because love is costly, boredom because pleasure without purpose becomes dull, and fear because suffering inevitably arrives and the soul is untrained to endure it.

Christ’s yoke is also paradoxical. It may include hardship, yet it brings rest because it aligns a person with reality. It is the yoke of truth, repentance, love, and obedience, carried with Christ Himself. See Matthew 11:28–30.

A Watchman’s Exhortation: Returning to Robust Discipleship:

With deep respect for the reader’s conscience and circumstances, I offer this exhortation.

Begin with honest self-examination. Ask where comfort has become a hidden master. Not every desire for relief is idolatry, but every heart must ask what it cannot bear to lose. The idol is often revealed not by what we enjoy but by what we cannot surrender without resentment. See Psalm 139:23–24.

Then recover biblical expectations. Scripture prepares believers for trials, not to depress them but to stabilize them. When suffering comes, it need not be interpreted as God’s absence. It can become a place where faith is purified and hope becomes durable.

Next, practice purposeful self-denial, not as performance but as training. The Christian learns to say “no” to the tyranny of appetite in order to say “yes” to love. In a culture of maximum speed, learn patience. In a culture of maximum pleasure, learn restraint. In a culture of maximum control, learn trust. In a culture of least sacrifice, learn generosity. These are not accessories. They are marks of spiritual adulthood.

Preparation is not paranoia; it is prudence. Ask yourself: Could I walk if the buses stopped? Cook if the grid failed? Pray if the phone was silent? Meet in

homes of mud brick when cement is rationed? The disciplines of simplicity today are rehearsal for faithfulness tomorrow. We fast from excess now so that, if shortage comes, obedience will feel familiar rather than fatal.

Finally, fix your eyes beyond the present moment. When eternity fades, comfort becomes frantic. When the resurrection is vivid, suffering is not romanticized, yet it is not ultimate. See 2 Corinthians 4:16–18.

Ready for the Trumpet? The ultimate test of our attachments will arrive “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye” (1 Cor 15:52). Rapture readiness is not date-setting but heart-setting: living loose to possessions, awake to His voice, eager for His appearing. Those strangled by comfort will clutch the present world; those schooled in sacrificial hope will rise unencumbered. Let us, therefore, hold things lightly and Christ tightly, lest the day come and find us heavy-footed on the velvet highway.

Closing: The Candle and the Sun

Allow one last analogy. Comfort is a good candle. It can warm a room. It can help the weary. But when a candle is placed on the throne, it becomes a false sun. It cannot carry the weight of meaning. It cannot guide a life through storms. It cannot conquer death. It will smoke, flicker, and finally go out, leaving the soul in deeper darkness than before.

Christ, however, is not a candle. He is Light. He does not promise that the road will be painless, but He promises that it will be meaningful, that it will not be walked alone, and that it will end in life. See Hebrews 12:1–3.

If anything here has felt sharp, please receive it as the careful incision of a watchman who would rather awaken than entertain. May the Lord grant us the discernment to distinguish mercy from idolatry, rest from escapism, and Christ’s yoke from the world’s velvet chains.

Recommended Further Readings

SANGWA, S. (2025). When Babel Becomes Beautiful: The Parable of Cultural Blend and the Death of Distinction. *Open Journal of Science, Philosophy & Theology*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.65655/vjp0cd30>

SANGWA, S. (2025). The March of Rights: Why a Generation Protests and Heaven Still Rules. *Open Journal of Science, Philosophy & Theology*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.65655/2hmv7s31>

SANGWA, S. (2025). The Silence of the Saints: Why the Church No Longer Speaks Against the Powers of the Age. *Open Journal of Science, Philosophy & Theology*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.65655/yrvb1m45>