

How To Know You Are Spiritually Dying

Introduction. The physical signs of death have been well-known since God created man. The shallow breathing and thready pulse indicate the end of life is near. But what about spiritual death? We are dead in our trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1), and then are made alive in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:22). But even at this point, it is possible to reverse course and spiritually die (Revelation 3:1). What are the warning signs?

I. You Have Left Your First Love

- A. In Revelation 2:4, whatever exactly the love was that they left, "left" implies an intentional, not accidental, act.
 - 1. More than 30 years before, this church had been commended for its love (Ephesians 1:15-16).
 - 2. Most were second generation Christians whose purity of doctrine and endurance in service were unquestioned, but they had abandoned that zealously and devotion that characterizes first love.
- B. God, through Paul, highly commended zeal and diligence (2 Corinthians 7:7, 11; 9:2; Hebrews 6:11; 12:15). Continually striving to give your best effort will bolster you against the temptation to drift from your first love (Hebrews 4:11; 2 Peter 1:10, 15; 3:14).

II. The Story Of The Cross No Longer Moves You

- A. The cross is used all the way through the New Testament as a constant reminder of the sacrifice of Jesus (Hebrews 12:2).
- B. Seeing Jesus on the cross made the centurion exclaim that He was the Son of God (Matthew 27:54). It moved the eunuch to obey and rejoice (Acts 8:38-39).
- C. Paul was willing to glory in the cross (Galatians 6:14), for the cross had the deepest of meanings. How does it move you now when you contemplate that sacrifice?

III. You No Longer Participate In The Work Of The Local Church

- A. Frequent absences at the worship assemblies betray a heart that is no longer devoted to Christ. People who really want to participate in recreational activities or work somehow find the time or shrug off not feeling well to do so. Where your heart is, your attention is (Romans 8:5-9).
- B. On the other hand, you may attend all of the time, but the church's assemblies and classes simply bore you. Old Testament saints loved worshipping God (Psalm 95:1-3, 6; 122:1; 132:3-7). Early Christians received joy from assembling together because they understood where they were and from where they had come (Acts 2:46; 20:7-9).

IV. You Have No Interest In Saving Souls

- A. Getting people to respond to His message was the supreme desire of Jesus (Matthew 9:36; 20:28; Luke 19:10).
- B. The lepers, after having found bountiful provisions in the abandoned camp of the Syrians, realized they could not keep the blessings to themselves (2 Kings 7:9).

- C. Can we hold back from teaching (Acts 8:4)? There are so many different methods to teach people, and they all are effective. The big question is will we ask people to study?

V. Worldliness Attracts You More Than Spirituality

- A. Christians have to watch lest their hearts become weighed down (Luke 21:34). This chokes the word, making it unfruitful (Matthew 13:22).
- B. The grace of God teaches us to turn away from worldliness (Titus 2:12). When the object of friendship is bad, so is that friendship (James 4:4). Therefore, while Christians continue to live in the world, they must maintain purity and refrain from being caught up in the world's temptations. A sure antidote is to set your affection on what is above (Colossians 3:2). Evaluate everything against the background of eternity.

Conclusion. Psychologists tell us that self-preservation is the strongest of all feelings. What if you knew you were dying? Would you try to save yourself? If you are hearing this today, and you know this is happening to you, what will you do? You are fooling yourself by failing to do what you know you should do (James 4:17).

To those of us who are strong, it is our task to edify and strengthen the weak (Romans 14:19; 2 Corinthians 12:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11). We cannot neglect this crucial part of our work, and those who are weak have to understand and not become angry for it. Through this, our congregation grows and becomes more pleasing to God.