

Signs And Symptoms Of Softness

Introduction. In Matthew 16:1-4, Jesus told the people there that they had learned to discern the signs. He said that they could discern the physical signs but could not discern spiritual signs.

We are going to examine some signs today that reflect softness on the part of too many people. When we study softness, we have reference to people who are easily molded or who yield to pressure. It is a lack of strength of character or weakness and it has serious ramifications for the one who wants to go to heaven.

I. ***Acceptance Of Social Sins***

- A. Many Christians have become very “soft” on sins such as social drinking, immodest apparel, dancing and going to clubs and bars, playing the lottery, and filthy or indecent speech.
- B. But we should not receive the grace of God in vain and corrupt ourselves (2 Corinthians 6:1; 11:2-3). We must cleanse ourselves and crucify the deeds of the flesh (2 Corinthians 7:1; 12:20-21; Galatians 5:24; 6:7-8, 14).

II. ***Unity In Diversity***

- A. Some use the instruction in Romans 14:1-3 where “God hath received him” as support for the acceptance of many viewpoints under an umbrella of tolerance.
- B. Years ago, Christians would have not tolerated doctrines such as instrumental music, 1,000 year reign of Christ, and church kitchens and gymnasiums. But now, many brethren have become tolerant of differences in “moral and doctrinal issues”, different teachings concerning divorce and remarriage, and the literal interpretation of Genesis.
- C. An example of the faulty reasoning for unity in diversity:
 - 1. Procedure:
 - a. Cite the rule.
 - b. Make an exception to the rule.
 - c. Make the exception the rule.
 - 2. Application:
 - a. God expects us to understand His will (Ephesians 3:4; 5:17; John 8:32; 1 John 2:3; Matthew 7:21).
 - b. But no Christian has perfect knowledge.
 - c. Therefore, we can have fellowship in doctrinal disagreements.

D. We must not fellowship evil (Ephesians 5:11) and we must separate ourselves from evil (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

III. ***Acceptance Of False Religion***

- A. This is an umbrella of grace which people have used to teach that there are no works in salvation or that we are saved by faith only, baptism is unnecessary for salvation, any church is acceptable to God, and there is no pattern of authority in religion.
- B. Paul warned that there would be those who turned away from the truth (Acts 20:28-32). False teachers have entered in (1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 4:2-4; 2 Peter 2:1-2). We must test the spirits to see if they are from God (1 John 4:1).

IV. ***Departure From All Religion***

- A. This is the ultimate end of softness. People who once had a promising future in the work of the Lord, no longer attend the worship assemblies, no longer engage in prayer to God, and no longer study their Bibles. This is a sad situation and it breaks the heart.
- B. We have to take heed because the carnal considerations of the world causes the word to be unfruitful (Hebrews 3:12-13; Mark 4:18-19). Demas is a sad example of one who traded the way of righteousness for a love of the world (2 Timothy 4:10).

Conclusion. We should all desire to be strong and not turn away into softness. Paul exhorts us in Ephesians 6:10 to be strong in the Lord. John wrote in 1 John 2:14 to young men, because they were strong, and the God's word abided in them, and they had overcome the devil.

May God help us to be the same. Softness causes people to be lost in hell for all eternity and weakens churches for future generations. Who among us cannot see the need to be strong?