Early Warning Signs of Spiritual Cancer

2 Tim. 2:14-18 (NKJ)

Introduction:

A. American Cancer society stresses early detection.
   1. Provides list of early warning signals.
   2. Encourages frequent self-examinations and check-ups.
B. Bible stresses early detection of spiritual illness.
   2. Get it before it gets beyond curing. (1 Tim. 4:2; 2 Pet. 2:14).
C. Some early **warning signs** of spiritual cancer.

Discussion:

I. **Danger Signs Relating To Authority.**
   A. Find yourself resenting Biblical restrictions and requirements.
   B. Find yourself justifying views and actions by something other than Bible authority.
      1. What good and beloved people think about it. (cf. 1 Cor. 2:4-5).
      3. What is popularly accepted or prominently endorsed. (1 Cor. 1:26-31).

II. **Danger Signs Relating To People.**
   A. Find it harder and harder to resist peer pressure. (cf. Matt. 14:9).
   B. Find yourself feeling more and more neglected by brethren. (cf. Matt. 20:28).
   C. Find yourself constantly critical of church - may be looking for excuse to quit.
   D. Find yourself more concerned with personal rights than feeling of brethren. (1 Cor. 8-9).

III. **Danger Signs Relating To Preferences.**
   A. Prefer constant company of worldly minded over spiritually minded.
   B. Prefer secular activities over spiritual exercise.
      1. Only real joy comes from non-spiritual activities.
      2. Any spiritual exercise becomes a burden

IV. **Danger Signs Relating To Time.**
   A. Find it harder and harder to find time for spiritual exercise - publicly and privately.
   B. Find more and more of you time consumed by the affairs of this life. (cf. 2 Tim. 2:4)
      1. Innocent _pleasures_ of this life. (Cf. 2 Tim. 3:4)
      2. Even _necessities_ of this life -- sign of lack of faith. (Matt. 6:30,33)
   C. Find yourself wanting to rush through services to get on to something else.

V. **Danger Signs Relating To Conscience.**
   A. Find yourself constantly arguing with conscience.
      1. Talking yourself in doubtful practices (cf. Rom. 14:23)
      2. Talking yourself out of known duties.
   B. Find yourself constantly on the defensive.

VI. **Danger Signs Relating To Sin.**
   A. Comfortable with sin in other. (2 Pet. 2:8).
   B. Minimizing the seriousness of sin.
      1. After all, "all have sinned".
      2. Comparing own sins favorable with other sins.
   C. More critical of efforts to correct sin than the sinner.

Conclusion:

A. These may not mean apostasy is a certainty in every case.
B. These will do to watch lest they develop to that point.