

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..
 - 1. Get it before it gets a hold on you (cf. Jas. 1:14-15).
 - 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).
 - 2. What feel about it rather than rational conclusions based on Bible information. (cf. Prov. 14:12).
 - 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.