

Dealing With Spiritual Fatigue

Revelation 2:1-7 [NIV] *“To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands: I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. But you have this in your favour: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”*

Jesus Christ commended the church at Ephesus for working hard, persevering, resisting sin, critically examining the claims of false apostles and enduring persecution and hardship.

Ephesians 1:15 [NIV] *“For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,”*

Paul had once commended the church at Ephesus for its love for God and other Christians, but many of the church founders had died and many of the second-generation believers had lost their zeal for God. Ephesus was a busy church, members doing much to benefit church members and the community, but they were acting out of the wrong motives.

Work for God must be motivated by love for God or it will **not** last.

In the first steps of your Christian life you may have had enthusiasm but limited knowledge, do you now have knowledge without enthusiasm?

Both knowledge and enthusiasm are essential if we are to keep our love for the Creator God intense and untarnished.

Hebrews 10:32-39 [NIV] *“Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You sympathised with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, ‘He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.’ But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.”*

The writer of Hebrews encourages us **not** to abandon their faith in times of hardship and persecution, but by our endurance to show that our faith is real.

Faith that rests on what Jesus Christ has done for us in the past, but also trusting Him for what He will do for us in the present and future, [**Romans 8:12-25; Galatians 3:10-14**].

2 Timothy 1:2-8 [NIV] *“To Timothy, my dear son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.*

So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God,”

Timothy had been with Paul a long time and had shared the same persecution and trouble that preaching the Gospel Message had brought on them.

Paul in this letter had sensed that Timothy was feeling the fatigue of a very busy life of Christian leadership and was giving him encouragement and challenges.

Paul would **not** have used the words *“fan into flame the gift of God”* unless Timothy was needing the invigorating power of the Holy Spirit.

2 Timothy 2:3 [NIV] *“Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”*

Paul must have detected in Timothy a little temptation to recoil a bit from the hard life he had been called by the Creator God to live.

What was needed in the above situations was a personal revival.

There is such a thing in the Christian life as a *“spiritual winter.”*

Little by little we get snowed under and frozen over.

There is life down there but it is covered by the snow and frost.

There is also possible for us to have the spiritual equivalent of a springtime, which is on the physical level dependent on the position of the sun.

While on the spiritual level, it is dependent on the position of the Son [of God] in our lives.

Neither physical or spiritual can have a *“springtime”* in our lives without help from the Creator God.

How do we get this revival to happen?

First it must come to each individual.

Nothing can happen in a church fellowship that does not happen first in each individual.

Psalms 51:1-4 [NIV] *“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.”*

David set the pattern for us, he confessed his sins and repented.

Psalms 51:11-12 [NIV] *“Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.”*

Only a right human spirit and an active Holy Spirit can restore us to a joy-filled life.

Use the pad and pen method.

On our knees with our Christian Bible open, write down what we find is wrong in our lives.

Read, for example, the *“sermon on the mount,”* [**Matthew chapters five to seven**] and when the Holy Spirit convicts us, write it down.

Now and then set The Bible aside and go over our list before the Creator God in confession, with the promise that you will **not** fail Him in that way again.

Always thank God for revealing this sin in our lives, or our wrong attitude or motive.

Begin to question ourselves before God with an open Bible, asking Him to reveal the causes that produced the sins we have confessed.

Don't be evasive by rationalising your weaknesses, for that will get you **no** help.

Ask some questions.

Am I always truthful and honest?

Dishonesty and “*shading the truth*” are sins that grieve the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 4:20-32 [NIV] “*You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbour, for we are all members of one body. ‘In your anger do not sin’: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*”

We have here a long list of attitudes that are part of the old life which we as a Christian should have “*put off*,” **not** allowing them to be part of our new life.

Do I have habits I am ashamed to let anyone know I have?

Psalms 139:1-12 [NIV] “*O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD. You hem me in, behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, ‘Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,’ even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.*”

All of these habits are well known by the One who really matters, our Creator God.

Have I judged other Christians?

Matthew 7:1 [NIV] “*Do not judge, or you too will be judged.*”

The only person we should judge is our own selves, [**1 Corinthians 11:31**].

Am I heavenly-minded or earthly-minded?

Where do my thoughts tend to stray when they are freed from our day-to-day tasks?

Matthew 6:19-22, 24, 31-33 [NIV] *“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light.” ... “No-one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.” ... “So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”*

We always “brood over” in our mind those things we love, or if we are holding a grudge, those people we hate.

Am I faithful in prayer?

1 Thessalonians 5:17 [NIV] *“pray continually;”*

Pray does **not** have to be formal only at set times, it can become a way of life, sharing all our hopes, joy, trials and pains with our loving Heavenly Father.

These are a few questions we need to ask to bring “springtime” to our spiritual life.