

Spiritual Draught

Have you ever been in a rut? Of course you have been, or perhaps you are still in one. He is a rare Christian who has not experienced times of spiritual draught, when the joy of the Lord has become a vague memory or departed altogether.

To get into a rut does not take much effort, but to get out is another matter. Since there is no single cause of the condition, you can't find a simple remedy.

Sometimes we are to blame, as for instance when we merely pretend to be spiritually minded; or when we get so taken up with ourselves that we pass others by like ships in the night; or when we permit worldly interests to choke the tender roots planted by God. When the cause is known, particularly when it is as simple as this, the remedy is not too difficult to find. The old-fashioned remedy for worldliness and selfishness is to repentant and then to seek to live a life separated unto God.

Being too busy can be another cause for spiritual dryness. When we are too busy for the things of God we must stop and reconsider the real values of life. When we get too busy for God, it may well be that we'll find ourselves without time to spiritually refresh ourselves.

Though the art of contemplation is nearly forgotten in the West, we should stop and meditate and rediscover who we are in the sight of God. Sometimes our trouble is not moral but physical.

As long as we are in these mortal bodies, our spiritual lives will be to some degree affected by them. One often unsuspected cause of spiritual staleness is fatigue. When you have that tired dragged out feeling, your spiritual life will not be very exuberant. Shakespeare said something to the effect that no man could be a philosopher when he had a toothache. When you are tired you also become an easy prey for the tempter. How difficult it is to resist the evil one when you have that tired feeling.

It is possible to be a weary saint. It is scarcely possible to be weary and feel saintly. The Christian who gets tired without relief will go stale. He will feel trapped in routine living and does no longer have the strength or will power to overcome his problem.

Our Lord was aware of such situations and occasionally look His disciples aside for a much needed rest.

Another reason some of us are spiritual drab is monotony. To do one thing continuously will result in boredom even if what we do is basically pleasant and uplifting.

Scripture reading can become a routine so easily. A Scripture passage is selected at random and is read dutifully. Yet this good and necessary habit can turn into such a routine life-style that we no longer ask ourselves: 'What are we reading?' What does God have to say to us today?

How easy it is to take God for granted, forgetting that He never takes us for granted. Some of the greatest saints have written of dangers of spiritual exercises uninterrupted by lowlier considerations.

Someone suggested that we should at times break off thoughts of heavenly things and go for a walk or dig in the garden. To keep from going stale we should be careful not to be trapped by perfunctory spirituality. The best habit may turn sour if no variety occurs. Our Lord warned against vain repetition. There is a repetition that is not vain, but prayers oft repeated without a real sense of urgency are routine utterances.

We should examine our prayers now and then, and again discover how spontaneous we really are. Are we talking to God, and of course listening to Him as well, or do we have a monotonous monologue with ourselves?

Have you ever tried to stir your soul by reading? I am not thinking of light novels. When you feel spiritually stale, the history of the great revivals, or some of the Christian classics, will stir the soul to renewed vigor and dedication.

We can keep from going spiritually stale by getting proper rest, by avoiding monotony in prayer, by studying Scripture as God's Word for us, by reading of some good books, by heeding the Lord's call to move onward with Him.

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October 1972