

Signs of Spiritual Decline

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A deadly disease attacked our beautiful native live oak trees a number of years ago called "live oak decline." It was identifiable by branches that gradually lost their leaves and died. Many trees were lost because of it.

A deadly disease that destroys Christians could well be called "spiritual decline." Its symptoms are very evident, and if the disease is not stopped, the loss of eternal souls results. What are some of the tell-tale symptoms?

1. **Carelessness in Attendance.** Admittedly, there is more to being a strong, faithful servant of Christ than faithful Bible class and worship attendance. However, even the infidel knows it is impossible to be a faithful Christian without faithfully assembling with the saints (Heb.10: 24-25). Think about the finest, most spiritual people you know and among their many qualities will be their consistent class and worship attendance. When someone begins missing for no real reason, whether on Wednesday night, Sunday morning classes, or Sunday night, "spiritual decline" has set in. Such ones may soon become careless about Sunday morning, too.
2. **Too Busy.** One who says, "I'm just too busy to come on Wednesday night or to..." do this or that work in the church, has just advertised his or her case of "spiritual decline." The Lord never gave anybody so much to do that he couldn't seek the kingdom first (Mat. 6:33). The strange thing about the person "too busy" to serve Christ through His church is that about ten times out of nine he or she is a ringleader in a civic club, sports association or some other secular organization. What one is really saying is that said club or whatever is **more important** than participation in the visitation program or teaching a class. Otherwise, they would say, "I'm too busy" to do the club work. Such a person is in the throes of "spiritual decline."
3. **Worldly Friends.** We all have friends who are not Christians, but when we choose our closest and most constant associates among non-Christians, we show signs of "spiritual decline." Such intimate associations subject us to more temptations than we would encounter among our brothers and sisters. All of us could probably name some who have become involved in drinking, dancing and other worldly practices and have completely deserted the Lord because of their evil companions (1 Cor. 15:33). Let us all be vigilant regarding any signs of "spiritual decline" in our lives.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Edifier*, weekly bulletin of Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, TX, August 5, 1982, of which I was editor.]

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