

# Some Signs of Spiritual Decline

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A deadly disease attacked our beautiful native live oak trees several decades ago called "live oak decline." It was identifiable by branches that gradually lost their leaves and died. Tragically, despite years of earnest efforts to reverse the decline, it caused many trees to become "dead oak trees."

Similarly, a deadly disease that destroys Christians could well be called "spiritual decline." As with the very evident tree symptoms, if this spiritual disease is not reversed it will result in the utter spiritual loss of the one thus infected. What are some of the tell-tale symptoms?

1. **Carelessness in Assembly Attendance.** Admittedly, there is more to being a strong, dedicated servant of Christ than consistent Bible class and worship attendance. However, even infidels know it is impossible to be a dedicated Christian without faithfully assembling with the saints as the Lord's Word declares ("Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves..." (Heb.10: 24-25). Think about the finest, most spiritual brother or sister you know, and among their many qualities will be consistent Bible class and worship attendance. When one begins missing (with no extenuating circumstances), whether on Sunday morning, Sunday afternoon, Wednesday night, or other gatherings (e.g., Gospel meetings) "spiritual decline" has set in. If not remedied at first signs it often never is.
2. **Too Busy.** One who is just "too busy" to come on Wednesday night or to participate in other church activities 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 active in a civic club, sports association, "band boosters," or some other secular organization. What one is really saying is that said club, or organization is **more important** than participation in the spiritual work of the kingdom. Otherwise, he or she would say, "I'm too busy" to do the secular 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 associates among non-Christians, we show signs of "spiritual decline." Such intimate associations subject us to more temptations than we would encounter among our dedicated brothers and sisters ("Evil companionships corrupt..." (1 Cor. 15:33, ASV). All of us could probably name some saints who, though once faithful, have adopted such things as drinking, nightclubbing, the public display of near nudity, and other worldly practices because they made the wrong choice of close worldly friends.

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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