

On the Move

February 15, 2015 Pastor Bill Bump

We cannot delegate our spiritual movement to anyone else. It is a very personal responsibility.

Today: The problem of spiritual infancy

Just because a person has been a church attender for a few years, it does not mean that the person is spiritually mature.

Hebrews 5:11-14 (NLT) ¹¹ There is so much more we would like to say about this. But you don't seem to listen, so it's hard to make you understand. ¹² You have been Christians a long time now, and you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things a beginner must learn about the Scriptures. You are like babies who drink only milk and cannot eat solid food. ¹³ And a person who is living on milk isn't very far along in the Christian life and doesn't know much about doing what is right. ¹⁴ Solid food is for those who are mature, who have trained themselves to recognize the difference between right and wrong and then do what is right.

Marks of spiritual infancy:

1. Dullness of hearing (v. 11)

Spiritual infancy is hearing only what we want to hear and spitting out anything we don't like.

The Bible warns against dullness of hearing.

Hebrews 3:7-11 (NLT) ⁷ That is why the Holy Spirit says, "Today you must listen to his voice. ⁸ Don't harden your hearts against him as Israel did when they rebelled, when they tested God's patience in the wilderness. ⁹ There your ancestors tried my patience, even though they saw my miracles for forty years. ¹⁰ So I was angry with them, and I said, 'Their hearts always turn away from me. They refuse to do what I tell them.' ¹¹ So in my anger I made a vow: 'They will never enter my place of rest.'"

One of the first symptoms of spiritual regression is dullness toward the Bible.

2. A diet of milk (vs. 12b-13)

If we never go beyond the elementary principles in the Bible, we will remain spiritual infants without experiencing all God has for us.

3. The inability to discern (v. 14)

As we grow in the Word, we learn to use it in our daily life and we develop spiritual discernment, so we know the difference between right and wrong.

A characteristic of an immature person is that they lack discernment.

Move Strategy at LFMC

First segment: Exploring Christ

The people in this segment have a basic belief in God, but they are unsure about Jesus and His role in their life.

They attend church regularly, but they have no personal relationship with Jesus.

The single most defining characteristic for this segment is spiritual indifference.

To move from the Exploring Christ segment to the Growing in Christ segment, a person must invite Jesus into their life as Savior.

Second segment: Growing in Christ

Love of God becomes a personal value.

They believe that the God of the Bible is the one true God.

They sometimes struggle in living out their faith in the world outside the church.

Third segment: Close to Christ

They are willing to be publicly identified as followers of Jesus.

The most significant characteristic is the high degree of ownership they take of their spiritual journey.

Moving from Growing in Christ to Close to Christ is the most dramatic shift on the spiritual continuum.

Fourth segment: Christ-centered

The most significant characteristic is that these people have yielded control of their lives to Jesus.

They choose each day to follow Jesus rather than give in to the pull of the secular world.

The key to moving to this segment is the courage to say: I am willing to risk everything that's important in my life for Jesus.

Conclusion

In our spiritual life, we never stand still; we either go forward or gradually slip backward.