

# SPiritUAL WEARINESS (Galatians 6:9)

by Robert Hatfield

Even the best of Christians may be plagued by spiritual weariness. Far too often the Lord's work goes unnoticed or is unwelcome, and this can be discouraging to faithful brethren. Paul reminded the Galatians, "And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9).

Webster says that to be weary is to be "exhausted in strength, endurance, vigor, or freshness" and that it is much like "having one's patience, tolerance, or pleasure exhausted." The Greek word for "weary" which Paul used in Galatians 6:9 literally means, "to faint or to lose heart." The word "faint" in that verse literally means "to be loosened or relaxed," similar to the way the limbs of a physically weary person will hang (cf. Heb. 12:12). It is sad when Christians become discouraged, begin to slack, and ultimately quit in their work for the Lord.

One of the worst things about spiritual weariness is that it is addictive. The faintheartedness of one often becomes that of another. This is undoubtedly the reason why the inspired writers of the New Testament would repeatedly warn against giving up.

But why were those once-faithful servants tempted to give up? What would cause one who is so blessed (both physically and spiritually [Eph. 1:7; 2 Pet. 1:3]) to suddenly find himself or herself so disheartened to the point of folding altogether? The New Testament indicates that some folks give up because they expect immediate reward (Gal. 6:9; 2 The. 3:13; Luke 18:1-7). Paul would remind these people to press on (Phil. 3:14) and await the reward which is to come "in due season." Others are weary because of a lack of patience and trust in God (cf. Heb. 10:36; James 5:7ff.) or because of persecution (Eph. 3:13). Even others buckle under pressure and wonder why God is chastising them (cf. Heb. 12:3, 5). Sadly, some become disheartened and give up simply because they do not get their way in the church.

Can an honest, truth-seeking soul beat spiritual weariness? Absolutely! Jesus was mindful of His fainting followers (Mat. 9:36) and He is surely mindful of those who suffer weariness today. But the fact that He is compassionate toward the weary does *not* mean that He overlooks it. The Lord (through His word) admonishes the faint-hearted to look to heaven: "he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matt. 10:22). "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). The New Testament writers repeatedly emphasized the reward that awaits God's enduring servants. While the reward remains yet unseen, the promise remains true (cf. Titus 1:2): "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2-3).

Members of the church are involved in the greatest work on earth. The message they carry is the living bread and water which can spiritually feed a dying world. Within that message the Savior pleads, "Come unto me ... no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (Matt. 11:28-30; John 14:6). And those who surrender their lives to the Savior in humble obedience will hear, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant ... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. 25:21, 23).

What is your response? Will you give the Master 100 percent or will you allow yourself to be overcome by spiritual weariness?

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