

Spiritual Ailments

I. Introduction

- A. A number of Bible passages speak figuratively about illnesses, maladies, diseases, or sicknesses in order to warn against *spiritual* ailments we must guard against. **Matthew 13:15**
- B. Consider four examples of such “ailments,” and what Scripture teaches about overcoming them.

II. Malnourishment

- A. Christians are commanded to long for the Word of God like a babe longs for physical milk. Just as a baby needs nourishment from physical milk to be sustained and grow, we need the spiritual nutrition provided through God’s Word to avoid spiritual malnourishment. **1 Peter 2:2**
- B. Just as one naturally hungers or thirsts when food or water is desperately needed, we must deliberately hunger and thirst for the Word that we desperately need. **Matthew 5:6**

III. Nearsightedness

- A. A second ailment to guard against is spiritual nearsightedness. **2 Peter 1:9**
- B. Like physical nearsightedness, one who is spiritually nearsighted only sees clearly that which is near. The focus of one who is spiritually nearsighted is on what provides *instant* gratification, rather than what is *eternally* profitable. **Hebrews 12:16-17; Luke 16:24-26**
- C. Instead of falling into this trap, we must develop the foresight encouraged by God’s Word, looking beyond the here and now. **2 Corinthians 4:18**

IV. Weariness

- A. Looking beyond the here and now is key to overcoming a third spiritual ailment – weariness. No matter the tribulations faced, we must not become spiritually faint or lose heart, remembering that pleasing God is more than worth the cost of discipleship. **Galatians 6:9**
- B. Avoiding weariness in well-doing is helped when we look to examples of others who walked by faith in the midst of great trials. **Hebrews 12:1-3**

V. Heart Problems

- A. A fourth spiritual ailment to avoid is a heart that is not right with God. Numerous problems of the heart are warned against in Scripture. Among them are the three types of hearts in the parable of the sower that refuse to let God’s Word produce good, lasting fruit. **Luke 8:4-8**
- B. A hardened heart causes one to respond to God’s instruction with stubbornness and rebellion. **Luke 8:12**
- C. Another type of heart fails to let God’s Word become deeply rooted, and thus causes one to respond to God’s instruction with instability and shakiness. **Luke 8:13**
- D. A “crowded heart” causes one who has a desire to please God to be distracted by temporal concerns, thus becoming unfruitful. **Luke 8:14**
- E. To overcome these, we must have “an honest and good heart.” **Luke 8:15**

VI. Conclusion

- A. May we each take the necessary steps to avoid and/or treat spiritual ailments warned against in God’s Word.