

WEARY IN WELL DOING - Galatians 6:7-9 - "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. [8] For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. [9] And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."

This is a dear Christian brother who has faithfully been working for the Lord for years. And he is still working hard for the Lord. But, while he is doing the very same work, he no longer enjoys it - he feels it has become a burden - there's no lightness in it - no thrill - no sense of excitement. **The ministry begins to drain him.**

It's what **Martin Lloyd-Jones** called the **danger of the middle period**. In physical terms we call it the mid-life crisis. But it happens in all spheres of life - including the spiritual. It's the time along the road when you're passed the time of initial surprise, and the thrill of newness, but there's still a lot of work yet to be done.

- 1) Before we begin to look at the solutions to this problem, I think there are **three things a Christian must not do**. I will just mention them quickly:
 - a) **He must not quit or give up in the battle** - Every Christian, no matter how spiritual, will go through seasons when he must **resist the inclination to resignation**. Don't quit every time the devil tells you to.

Avoid **rashness** - "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." Note the order. It's not that God gives strength so you will then be able to be quiet and confident. Rather, as you settle your spirit, learn to wait patiently for the Lord, **then** He will pour strength into your soul - "I waited patiently for the Lord and He heard my cry."

- b) **Don't rely on artificial means to perk up your soul** - The Christian faces, in the spiritual realm, exactly what drugs and sex and alcohol are for people in the physical realm. There is something that needs to be at least questioned in modern day Christianity. You can't even keep up with the new books proclaiming and analyzing the new trends and developments in the church today.

I was thinking about some of those words from **Psalms 19:7-10** - "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; [8] the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; [9] the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. [10] More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb."

Notice the emphasis on the words **heart** and **soul**. This is not a man who is merely taking up another project or discovered a subject of interest. His life is centered, transformed and nourished by abiding in Jesus like a branch in the vine.

- c) **Don't settle for doing anything for Jesus in a programmed formal fashion** - "True, I don't feel that close to the Lord anymore. Life seems to be going from bad to worse. But I won't quit, I'll just keep my nose to the grindstone and tough it out. After all, I don't want to be a stumbling block to my kids."

There are two things wrong with that attitude:

- i) **Relying on your own self-discipline, you won't be able to keep it up for long** - You may be strong enough to do a lot of things by sheer will- power, but you can never live the Christian life by sheer will-power.
 - ii) The second problem is **you won't attract anybody to the cause of Christ by the strength of your will-power**. Without the genuine life of Jesus in the center of your being, you may win arguments when you witness, but you will never see conversions.

- 2) **CONSTANTLY PREACH TO YOURSELF ABOUT YOUR OWN HEART - Psalm 42:5, 11** - "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation....42:11.... Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God."

That is always the first step. "Why have I been so restless? Why have I been so weary in well doing? What is happening at the root of my heart?" These are not **rhetorical** questions. Let me suggest some common sources of trouble for people who are **weary in well-doing**:

- a) **I could simply be drained physically** - Not enough sleep. Not eating properly. Not taking any time for rest and nourishment. Or lack of exercise.

There's a great example of this in the story of Elijah, the prophet of God. It's in **1 Kings 19:2-8** - "Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow." [3] Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. [4] But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers." [5]

And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, "Arise and eat." [6] And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank and lay down again. [7] And the angel of the Lord came again a second time and touched him and said, "Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you." [8] And he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God."

This comes immediately after Elijah's great victory over the false prophets on Mount Carmel. That was a mighty, but incredibly draining time. Then he was threatened by Queen Jezebel. Elijah ran for his life. When God comes to him he's sitting under the juniper tree feeling sorry for himself. And God is going to speak to him. He has things He wants Elijah to hear. Only Elijah is in no condition to listen to God right now.

b) **Re-evaluate the motives right at the bottom of everything you are doing for the Lord** - Let me urge thought and honesty at this point. Many Christians *never* look deeply at this though they "**serve the Lord**" all their lives.

* I can serve the Lord because of the appreciation and recognition that comes from doing the job well. People tell you how much they appreciate what you are doing. That's heady stuff for any Christian. How important to kneel before the Lord of the Church and say, "**Lord, it's Your work. I am your servant. I want to do this as though only You knew I was doing it.**"

* Another common danger is to get involved in the work for the Lord because of the excitement in the work itself. The challenge is big. The job seems exciting. There's a natural thrill in doing any job well.

If you live off the excitement of the work itself, you will find yourself empty sooner or later. Remember, lasting excitement doesn't come from the work itself. It comes from your abiding relationship with the One whom you are serving *in* the work.

c) **Stay close to Jesus while you work for Him** - Weariness in well-doing comes from seeing the **work** rather than the **goal** of the work.

It's worded a number of ways in the Scriptures: In our text - Galatians 6:9 - "**And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.**"

Hebrews 12:1-2 - "**Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, [2] looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.**"

Colossians 3:1-2 - "**If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. [2] Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.**"

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 - "**So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. [17] For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, [18] as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.**"

These are all different ways of expressing the same truth. We are to be **Christ** oriented in our work, not **work** oriented in our work, even if it's for Christ.

And there's a simple rule to check your own heart. When something isn't getting done - or isn't being done right - if you truly are grieved because you love Jesus, you'll pitch in and work humbly to help get the job done.