

# “THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

## Signs of Indifference

Donnie V. Rader

How can I tell if I am indifferent? Furthermore, how can I see that there is indifference within the local church? Let's consider four signs that point to apathy.

**1. A loss of zeal.** Dedicated people have a burning zeal. They are fervent in spirit (Rom. 12:11). Their hearts burn within them as the two who were on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:32). However, it is possible to lose that fire of enthusiasm. The church at Ephesus had left its first love (Rev. 2:4-5).

Judah, both before and after the exile, let their service deteriorate into a weary routine that demanded no real effort. Isaiah said their fear toward God had become *“tradition learned by rote”* (Isa. 29:13, NASV). Malachi rebukes the remnant for offering inferior sacrifices (blind, lame, and sick) to God (1:6-2:17).

When a church has some members who have either lost or never had zeal, it has a problem with indifference. Some Christians are not excited about the salvation they have in Christ. Some are not enthused about worshipping the Almighty. Some are not fired up about the hope of eternal life. When your service to God is a “ho-hum, no big deal” thing, your fire has gone out!

In C.S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters* (a fictional account of one devil's instructions to another on how to destroy a Christian) *Screwtape* instructs *Wormwood*: *“If you can once get him to the point of thinking that ‘religion is all very good up to a point’, you can feel quite happy about his soul. A moderated religion is as good for us as no religion at all.”*

**2. A loss of spiritual interest.** Waning interest in spiritual matters easily follows a loss of zeal. There are several indicators that our desire for the spiritual has decreased.

A lack of desire for the word. All Christians ought to have the same thirst for the word that babies have for their milk (1 Pet. 2:1-2). David wrote at length about his love and desire for God's word (Ps. 119). When Christians have no real interest in studying and learning, make little or no effort to come to Bible study, don't care to know what the text means or how it applies, indifference is a problem. Every person that I have talked to who has quit serving the Lord, has said that they quit studying their Bibles long before.

Not bothered by sin. Those who fear God hate sin (Prov. 8:13) and depart from it (Prov. 16:6). When Christians are not disturbed by sin in their own life or that of others, indifference is indeed a problem.

Not bothered by false doctrine. David said that rivers of waters ran down his eyes because some had not kept the law of God (Ps. 119:136). God's people, who love the law of God, are bothered when false doctrine is taught. However, there are Christians who are not bothered by uncertain sounds being given. Furthermore, they don't want to hear any warning about it. Indifference indeed!

Not concerned about the lost. When we care little about approaching the lost about the gospel of Christ, apathy is well under way in our lives (cf. Mark 16:15).

**3. Missing services.** It may begin with an occasional absence. Maybe we start with allowing our work schedule to keep us away. It may bother us at first, then we adjust to the idea. Later we may miss once in a while to do something else we want to do. It is now becoming easier to miss even more. It may start with missing Bible

study or Wednesday evening, then Sunday night and so on.

Every service we miss, we miss out on that much spiritual growth. Thomas missed what the other disciples gained when he was not there (John 20:20-28). If by being present we are built up and edified (Heb. 10:25; Eph. 5:19), then if we miss, we are made that much weaker.

Do you forsake the assembling (Heb. 10:25) for reasons that are within your control? If so, you are indifferent.

**4. Consumed with secular interest.** This life is merely a land we are passing through (Heb. 13:14). That means that secular things are temporary and rank far below spiritual matters.

When our secular concerns overshadow and crowd out the spiritual, it indicates that we have a problem with indifference. When we don't have time to worship or study our Bibles, we are plagued with indifference. When making money is more important than spiritual concerns, we have a problem. When having fun is pushed ahead of serving the Lord, indifference is taking its toll.

These principles will help us as we examine ourselves (2 Cor. 13:5). ■

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## Are You A Lukewarm Disciple?

By Jesse A. Flowers

We certainly are not left to wonder how Christ feels about the lukewarm disciple. Such a one is completely repulsive to Him. Christ did not redeem us from every lawless deed to be lukewarm for Him, but to be zealous for good works (Titus 2:14). The Christian is not instructed to be indifferent, rather ***“not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord”*** (Rom. 12:11).

What is your current spiritual temperature? Are you zealous for the Lord and the work of the Lord (Rev. 3:19), or have you become lukewarm? How can you know? Well, take a brief spiritual assessment test.

- (1) Do you spend very little time each day and week reading the Word of God?
- (2) Do you seldom pray?
- (3) When you attend worship services, are you present in body but absent in spirit?
- (4) Do you rarely bring up Jesus and the gospel to the lost?
- (5) Do you attend services, but fail to participate in the work?
- (6) Is your heart not really into spiritual matters?
- (7) Are you allowing other people and other things to come before God?
- (8) Are you beginning to compromise with worldly things?

If your answer was “yes” to some or all of these questions, then you have become lukewarm for your Savior. And Jesus, because He loves you, would rebuke and chasten you, calling on you to repent and be zealous. ***“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me”*** (Rev. 3:20).

Open the door of your heart. Let the Savior in. Hear His voice and humbly obey Him. ■

***“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So because thou art LUKEWARM, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee [vomit you, NKJV] out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and blind and naked”*** (Revelation 3:15-17).

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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