

3 Keys to Fighting Spiritual Apathy

“John, to the seven churches which are in Asia ... from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen” (Rev. 1:4-6).

The first name that is given to Jesus in the Book of Revelation is “The Faithful Witness.” Because He was faithful to His calling, the reward that He has for us relates to our being faithful to our calling.

“His master said to him, ‘Well done, you good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a few things. I will make you ruler over many things. Enter the joy of your master’” (Matt. 25:23).

It is not what we do that determines the reward we receive, but rather it is our faithfulness in what we do (well done, not much done) that determines our future state and reward.

Many of us have experienced the let-down of an unfulfilled promise, and have felt the hurt and disappointment. We were created in the image of God and feel, in a limited measure, as He feels. Just as we can feel disappointment, so also our Lord can be disappointed when we are not faithful to the outworking of all that He has made available to us.

In the parable of the five wise and five foolish virgins, all 10 received lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom. But the foolish did not take a supply of oil (the result of time spent in His presence) with them.

“Then the kingdom of heaven shall be like ten virgins, who

took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were wise and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps, but took no oil with them. But the wise took jars of oil with their lamps. While the bridegroom delayed, they all rested and slept. But at midnight there was a cry, 'Look, the bridegroom is coming! Come out to meet him!' Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. But the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps have gone out.' The wise answered, 'No, lest there not be enough for us and you. Go rather to those who sell it, and buy some for yourselves.' But while they went to buy some, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. Afterward, the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open the door for us.' But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.' Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming" (Matt. 25:1-13).

When the Lord delayed His coming, their lamps went out. The Lord had been faithful, as He supplied them all with lamps, and with oil. But the foolish did not develop a means to resupply their oil.

We Were Created to Be Dependent

The "lamp" represents our salvation. All ten were saved. The oil speaks of the Lord's enabling grace and anointing, which quickens and maintains our spiritual life and strength. When we are not faithful to maintain a personal relationship with the Lord, we use up the supply of oil that we were initially given, and soon we feel spiritually dry and wonder why.

Adam was created to be dependent. He had to come to the tree of life on a daily basis to receive life. When he transgressed, the Lord placed a flaming sword to hinder his partaking, and the process of death began.

To be faithful on our part means that we take seriously our

need to spend time in the presence of the Lord, to receive from Him. The oil is available; He who is ever faithful is waiting to pour spiritual life and substance into us.

The foolish took their spirituality for granted, and did nothing to make room to receive oil. The result was that their lamps went out, and they could not enter into a deeper level of communion with Jesus.

After eating a good meal, food no longer seems appealing. When we fill ourselves with the things of this world, we will lack in our desire for spiritual things. When we are hungry, we become much less choosy as to what we will eat. The law of self-preservation is stronger than any thought patterns we may have concerning what we will eat, or not eat.

Fasting will increase our hunger, not only physically, but also spiritually. Fasting is much more than simply going without food in an attempt to cause the Lord to do as we want. Rather, when we fast we become very hungry. When we refuse to satisfy this hunger on the natural level, and sanctify it to become a prayer, it continually cries out to the Lord for satisfaction.

The fact of our going without food merits nothing, but when we sanctify our hunger as a prayer to reach out to the Lord, He will respond to our need.

Once we are spiritually fed, we must in turn feed others. Otherwise, that which we received will stay dormant within, and we will feel so full that we will fall asleep in His presence. As the foolish virgins, we will fail to maintain our supply of His grace and anointing.

How Can I Become so Spiritually Hungry That I Am Found Among the Five Wise?

“As the deer pants after the water brooks, so my soul pants after You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living

God. When will I come and appear before God?" (Ps. 42:1-2).

David is crying out for an enlargement of his spiritual capacity. He had his faults, but he maintained a hunger for God that was so intense that the Lord moved him from tending sheep to the throne room.

We may ask, "How can I become so spiritually hungry that I will be found among the five wise, rather than with the foolish, in that day?"

There is no simple answer, but the first step is in our will. We must make the decision to make room for spending time in His presence. The Lord often comes in the night to knock on the door of our heart. Although our bed may feel warm and comfortable, we must make a firm decision that we will get up and spend time in His presence.

The second step is to guard what we allow to enter into our being. Carnal relationships and television will rob us of our spiritual perception and hunger. We often delay our going to bed, and then are too tired to get up when the Lord comes, seeking our fellowship.

These patterns must be broken and a schedule set, so as to make room. We must determine to remove those things that could become a substitute for our spending time in the Word and in prayer.

We will never become the overcomer who finds himself among the five wise unless we develop a disciplined pattern of life. The foolish said, "Give us of your oil." But the wise responded, "Go and buy for yourselves."

No one can give to another their commitment to spiritual obedience. But they can share the testimony of what they have received, which will make others so hungry that they also will begin to seek for themselves.

The third step is to spend quality time in the presence of the Lord. There is no substitute for the time we spend with the Lord.

When we do our part, the Lord will do that which we cannot do. He will create within us the hunger to propel us into the presence of the five wise.

Only then will we be prepared to enter with Jesus "in that day," through the open door into His Millennial Kingdom.

*Reprinted from Elijah List. **Nancy Taylor Warner**, daughter of Wade Taylor, spent most of her childhood in a Bible school environment due to the calling on her father's life. In 1981, the Lord called her to support his message, and she since has functioned in a variety of positions. Today, in response to her dad's wishes and the encouragement of its board of directors, she now oversees Wade Taylor Ministries (). Nancy travels at times to speak and pray for others. Nancy's special gift of relating to and loving people stems from her own love for Jesus and His Kingdom. Her spiritual life messages flow into the hearts and spirits of those to whom she ministers.*