

7 Signs You Need Revival

I was in major need of revival by the age of 19. I was the backslidden grandson of a fiery tent-preaching revivalist. I had spent a great deal of my life in the church but was now running fast into the world. I was a gifted hypocrite who played the part on Sunday but did as I wished come Monday.

Apparently I had enough people fooled to be used as a leader in the church. I don't know if that said more about my skillful deception or their desperation. The warning signs were there if someone would have exercised enough discernment to see the symptoms.

I was dying and needed help. Thankfully that help arrived in our little church in 1996 when revival broke out during an ice storm (another story for another day). Jesus, the great physician, showed up with a diagnosis and prescription for my spiritual condition. Yes, it hurt, but it also healed!

There are seven questions for self discovery that the great theologian A.W. Tozer encourages us to consider. These questions, if answered honestly, speaks volumes about our spiritual health. They are:

- What we want most
- What we think about most
- How we use our money
- What we do with our leisure time
- The company we enjoy
- Who and what we admire
- What we laugh at

I make it a point to frequently ask these questions of myself. With these in mind, I want to offer seven signs you need revival in your own life:

1. You are entertained by things that once grieved you.

When I got saved, I cleaned up my life and cleaned out my house. I filled up several garbage cans with worldly items that I had collected over the years. No one told me to do this. I simply had such a pure love for the Lord and I didn't want anything to come between me and Him. I was breaking up with the devil and no longer had a need for any of these articles of worldly affection.

However, any home that has been swept clean will once again become dirty if it's not maintained daily. Over time, it's easy to drop our guard and let things back into our lives that we once shook off.

Are you turning on things that once you would have turned off? When is the last time you walked out of a movie because you were grieved over how they profaned the name of your God? Are peers comfortable sharing obscene jokes in your presence, or do they change their tone when you're around? Are you entertaining yourself with things that once grieved you?

2. You are silent where you once spoke.

Asking a man filled with the Spirit to be silent is as futile as asking a lit candle not to shine. The boldness to share the gospel is inherent in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "You will receive power when My Spirit comes on you, and you will be My witnesses."

The truest evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a tongue that has been set free and set on fire with the gospel!

Remember when you were first saved? You wanted to share the experience with your friends and family. Remember that boldness to declare His righteousness and what He had done for you? Do you still have it, or has your voice grown still? Your silence may be the sign of a backslidden heart.

When is the last time you shared your faith? Do you speak up when a wrong must be made right? Are you silent where you should speak?

It is time to once again find your voice!

3. Your prayer closet has cobwebs and your Bible is dusty.

No man is greater than his own prayer life. The believer that doesn't spend time on his face before the Lord and in the Word is quietly telling the Lord, "I've got this on my own."

Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). He didn't say *proceeded*, but *proceeds*. It's not just what has God spoken to you in the past, but what He says to you today! If you want to live, you have to daily get on your face and get into His Word.

When life throws a problem your way, is prayer the first place you turn or the last? What did God show you in His Word today? When is the last time you spent quality time with the Lord? If you were as lacking in your vocation as you are in your devotion, how long would it be until you were out of work?

Do you believe prayer truly works? Then you should be praying more!

4. You're more likely to criticize your pastor than to contemplate his message.

When you walk out of church, are you thinking about what you agreed and disagreed with in the message, or do you take it to heart? Criticism is a sure symptom of a heart that is hardening.

I've learned in my own life that when I am criticizing another person, it says more about me than it does about them. Why not

attend church this weekend and ask the Lord to speak to your heart and change your life through the words spoken from your pastor?

5. You excuse sin.

Sin is anything Jesus wouldn't do. I like this simple and straightforward definition. If Jesus wouldn't go there, do that, drink that, smoke that, say that, listen to that or watch that, then it is sin and has no place in the life a son or daughter of God.

Jesus set the standard pretty high. He said, "You shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). The writer of Hebrews tells us to "pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). Holiness and perfection is impossible if you attempt to do it on your own.

Thankfully, I'm not doing this in my own strength but in His.

Are you tolerating habits and addictions? What are the hidden things in your life you wouldn't want anyone else to find out about? What do you keep telling yourself—"It's no big deal"?

If you have sin in your life, don't excuse it. Confess it!

6. You're looking for the "dislike" button on this article.

Solomon wrote, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (Prov. 27:6).

If I'm sick, I want a doctor to diagnose the problem, not tell me how great I am. If I'm unhealthy, I want a good friend to care enough to confront me about my eating habits. If I'm swimming in a mountain of debt, I don't need a friend offering me another loan; I need a true friend to cut up my credit cards.

Yes, it hurts the ego or pride to be told that something is off. But those wounds are faithful if they come from a friend who loves us.

If someone is always telling me how great I am and how blessed God wants me to be but never steps on my toes in areas where I'm falling short, do they really care about me? Sometimes caring means confronting!

If this message seems offensive to you, don't criticize the writer. Cross-examine the reader!

7. You have a deep sense there is something more!

Tozer said, "To have found God and still to pursue Him is the soul's paradox of love." How true that is.

It's almost been 20 years since I found God at the altar of a church, but yet I still pursue Him every single day. After all these years, I still hunger for more. Thankfully, there is more!

Enoch walked with God (Gen. 5:24).

Moses spoke with God as a friend speaks with a friend (Ex. 33:11).

Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up (Is. 6:1).

Peter watched as Jesus pulled back His humanity and exposed His divinity (Matt. 17:4).

Paul was taught by Christ (Gal. 1:12).

John was called up to heaven, where he saw Jesus upon His throne (Rev. 20:11).

This fires me up!

Edwards and Wesley awakened our nation.

Charles Finney was baptized in waves and waves of liquid love.

William Seymore lived in the glory cloud for four years at Azusa.

Smith Wigglesworth raised the dead back to life.

I am jealous of their God encounters and will not be denied my own!

My friend, if you've slowed or even stopped your pursuit of God, let these words stir you. There is more! If you see that you are in need of revival, be encouraged. It is not far from you. If you will come close to Him, He promises to come close to you (James 4:8).

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