

Spiritual Drift

Do people drift in their relationship with the Lord? Absolutely! The Old Testament is filled with the occurrences of the Israelites in a “sin cycle” involving fellowship with God, drifting from God, disobedience through sin, repentance, and returning to fellowship with God. Drifting is not confined to the Old Testament. I believe it has happened in America over the past 100–200 years. As best as I can determine, we are in the “negative” part of the sin cycle in America.

We see indirect evidence of this everywhere. Baptisms are down significantly from 20 years ago. Many churches are inward focused. Only 1% of our churches are growing because of conversion growth. Serious corporate and individual prayer is low. Cooperative program gifts, when you consider economic inflation, have been decreasing over the past 20 years. There is little evidence in our churches where activity is attributed to the sovereign supernatural intervention of God. Many church leaders have lost God’s vision and their passion for God’s work. There is significant conflict and/or ineffectiveness at many levels of SBC life. The list goes on.

How did we get where we are? Spiritual drift. Consider this. Just suppose when you were saved you joined a church that was 50% dysfunctional. The church did some things right and some things that God did not like, but, you had no church background, so, what you observed in church was considered “normal” activity. Twenty years later, the church is about 60% dysfunctional. You have seen some changes, but not enough to get too concerned about. Now at 60% level of church dysfunction, someone else is saved and to that person everything is “normal” because he has no previous experience in church life. Now, extend that kind of spiritual drift from 20 to 100 or 200 years. Might we have drifted so slowly away from God that our drifting away from God has been undetectable to us? Might we have drifted so far that we are out of fellowship with God and don’t know it? I think that is a distinct possibility.

What is the solution? In a word, REPENTANCE. Are there any scriptures we specifically need to follow in this situation? There are several, but two come to mind: Luke 9:23 (get off of our own agenda and get onto God’s agenda) and 2 Chronicles 7:14 (get humble, pray, turn from our wicked ways). You say we aren’t involved in wicked ways? Well I think we are, and this will be the topic of my next article.