

DRIFTING

Introduction:

"For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it." (Heb. 2:1, NASV)

1. From this text we are warned about drifting from the word of God.
2. We have all seen "driftwood" being driven by the water.
3. Many Christians get caught up in currents of the world and drift from their mooring, the word of God.
4. Drifting is hard to perceive at first; little by little and step by step we move away from foundation truths and principles.
 - (1) It is easy to rationalize sin until we awaken one day to realize how far we have drifted from what we used to be!
5. Many who have received the Word with joy have drifted away from it, and are still drifting!

I. WHAT CAUSES DRIFTING FROM THE WORD?

1. The Word is not mixed with faith in the hearts of many (Heb. 4:2).
 - (1) Many hear what the Word says, but they don't believe it!
 - (2) We are warned about an evil heart of unbelief (Heb. 3:12).
 - (3) We are warned of being "dull of hearing" (Heb. 5:11).
 - (4) We are warned about hearing the words of Jesus and doing them not (Matt. 7: 26; James 1: 22 - 25).
2. Some drift because they never develop enough familiarity with Truth (Luke 8:13; Matt. 13:21).
 - (1) They never studied the Word as they should (II Tim. 2:15).
3. Some drift because they do not love the truth (II Thess. 2:10; Psa. 119: 97; Prov. 23:23).
4. Some drift because they feel no obligation to know the Truth (John 8: 32; Eph. 5:17).
5. Some drift because of evil influences (I Cor. 15:33).
 - (1) False doctrine and false teachers (Matt. 7:15; II Pet. 3: 1, 2).
 - (2) Marriage partners
 - (3) Workplace
 - (4) Peer Pressure
 - (5) The entertainment world
 - (6) Strong social pressures

II. CONGREGATIONS DRIFT

1. The churches of Galatia (Gal. 1: 6 - 9; 5:7).
2. The Ephesian congregation (Rev. 2: 1 - 7)
3. The church at Laodicea (Rev. 3: 14 - 22).

4. When a congregation settles down into a simple "house-keeping" routine, it is drifting.
5. When a congregation ignores uncorrected sins, it is drifting (I Cor. 5:2; II Thess. 3:6).
6. When a congregation pays little attention to its over-all teaching effort within and without, then the drift has already begun!
7. When a congregation does not want preaching that "reproves" and "rebukes", it is drifting! (II Tim. 2: 2 - 4).
8. When a congregation will tolerate false teachers, it has drifted! (II John 9 - 11; II Tim. 2: 16 - 18).
9. When a congregation will allow false teaching, it has drifted! (Eph. 5: 11; Matt. 15:9; I Tim. 1:3).

III. SIGNS OF DRIFTING

1. There is drifting in the pulpit in many places.

- (1) The preaching is always in broad generalities, never in specifics.
- (2) Sin is rarely, if ever, described by name -- no one feels guilty of doing wrong ! (Acts 2:37; 7:54).
 1. The Holy Spirit came to "convict the world of sin" (John 16: 8).
 2. The preacher is to rebuke sin (II Tim. 4:2; Heb. 4:12).
- (3) Novel and "catchy" approaches and "cute" phrases are being substituted for old-fashioned gospel preaching.
- (4) Fundamental truths are by-passed in favor of sensationalism!
- (5) The "felt-need gospel" is substituted for the real needs of the people.
- (6) God is only pleased when the gospel is preached in its fullness (I Cor. 1:21; Mark 16:15,16; II Tim. 4: 2).

2. Some elders are drifting!

- (1) Instead of shepherding the flock, they are confusing the flock with indecisive leadership! (Acts 20:28).
 1. By showing weakness in the face of error (Tit. 1:9; Jude 3).
 2. By timidity in handling the ungodly.
 3. By not dealing with preachers who have become weak in the faith and are leading the flock astray (Acts 20: 29).
 4. By allowing the flock to feed on a "watered-down" diet that is faith-destroying.

3. Many members are drifting when it comes to personal involvement in the work of the church. (Phil. 2:12; I Cor. 15:58).

- (1) Many members feel no loyalty to the local church (Acts 9: 26).
- (2) Many members feel no financial responsibility (I Cor. 16: 1, 2).
- (3) Many members feel no responsibility in personal evangelism (Acts 8:4).
- (4) Many don't attend gospel meetings (Heb. 10:25).
- (5) Some don't attend Bible classes (Eph. 5:17; II Tim. 2: 15)

CONCLUSION:

1. Yes brethren, we are DRIFTING -- in many places!
2. "*We must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.*" (Heb. 2:1)