

The Seven Deadly Siphons

Reasons we lose enthusiasm.

Loss of spiritual passion seems to be the inevitable result of:

1. **Words without action.** We are tempted to think that saying something actualizes it. We have a momentary feeling of spirituality when we talk about wanting to pray more or "have more time in the Word."
2. **Busyness without purpose.** Ministry produces activities, programs, conversations. If our choices of time-use are not disciplined by call and purpose, our energies become like a lazy, shallow river.
3. **Calendars without a Sabbath.** A datebook filled with appointments but absent of significant hours (days) of quiet and reflection—written in first—is an abomination (an old and harsh word) to the God of the Bible, who said, "Six days you shall labor ... the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God."
4. **Relationships without mutual nourishment.** Pastors tend to be acquainted with too many people but know too few people. The spiritual masters have told us for centuries that without soul-friends, we won't gain spiritual momentum.
5. **Pastoral personality without self-examination.** Too much ministry is built on unresolved anger, unhealthy needs for approval, and the instinct to control. Failing to explore our soul for unwholeness ultimately takes its toll.
6. **Natural giftedness without spiritual power.** A pastor can go a considerable distance in ministry with catchy words, people skills, political savvy, and a facility for organizational dynamics. But kingdom work demands qualities that only a filled-up soul can offer.
7. **An enormous theology without an adequate spirituality.** A pastor cannot represent a view of reality that includes Creation, evil, reconciliation and conversion, sacrificial service, and eternity—a mind-boggling expanse of conviction—and have a spiritual-exercise regimen that is pea-size in contrast. A great theology demands a great spirituality.

—Gordon MacDonald

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