APATHY: WHEN FACED WITH IT

Intro: A teacher once asked what the two greatest problems in the church are: A student answered, “I don’t know and I don’t care.” This answer aptly represents the two problems of ignorance and apathy. We are wanting to discuss the aspect of apathy.

We all must deal with struggles and we will all face discouragement and doubt and continually need encouragement; Acts 14:22 “Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” The way we deal with these struggles show our faith; Jam. 1:2-4 “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” We sing the song: “When My Love for Christ Grows Weak.” Let us consider the struggle we all face with apathy.

I. DEALING WITH APATHY.
   A. Rev. 2:4-5 “Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”
   B. Remember from where you have fallen.
      1. Notice the prodigal son; Luke 15:17 “And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!”
      2. There is the need to acknowledge the sin of apathy and neglect.
         a. To omit God’s will in our life is to sin against God.
            (1) Jam. 4:17 “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”
            (2) The one talent man (Mat. 25:14-30) sinned in failing to use what God had given to him and was punished.
         b. Psa. 51:3-4 “For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. 4Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.”
      3. We need to remember God’s grace and mercy in our life.
         a. Rom. 12:1 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”
         b. Tit. 2:11-14 “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”
      4. Allow God’s Word to convict you.
         a. 2 Kin. 22:11 “And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.”
b. Acts 2:37 “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

C. Repent of the sin.
1. Rev. 2:5; 3:9 “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.... "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.”
2. It begins with Godly sorrow.
   a. A broken and contrite heart; Isa. 57:15; 66:2 “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.... "For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.”
   b. 2 Cor. 7:9-10 “Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”
3. Change your mind toward the sin of apathy; Rom. 2:5 “But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;”

D. Return to do the first works
1. Rev. 2:5 “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”
2. Luke 3:8 “Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.”
3. Return to loving God foremost.
   a. Mat. 6:33 "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”
   b. Mat. 22:37 “Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.”
4. Return to faithful service to God.
   a. 1 Sam. 7:3 “And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.”
   b. Rom. 12:1 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”
5. Increase your works of faith.
   a. Rev. 2:19 “I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.”
   b. Gal. 5:6 “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.”
II. DEFEATING THE SIN OF APATHY

A. Renew Godly priorities in your life.
   1. Eph. 5:14 “Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”
   2. Realize the seriousness of living a faithful life; Mat. 22:5, 7 “But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:... ’But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.”
   3. Requires devotion to God and Christ:
      a. Giving of ones time, energy, values, one’s all.
      b. Gal. 2:20 “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”
      c. Phi. 1:20-21 “According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. 21For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

B. Return to faith in the Lord, not in yourself.
   2. You would be amazed if you knew that many of the people who became apathetic did so because they had a high view of self and low view of others; 2 Cor. 10:12 “For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.”
   3. Remember Jesus; Heb. 12:3 “For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.”
   4. We must rely on the Lord.
      a. 1 Pet. 5:6-7 “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: ‘Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”
      b. How; 2 Cor. 12:8-10 “For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”

C. Renounce sin in your life
   1. 2 Cor. 4:1-2 “Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; ‘But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.”
   2. Continued presence of sin in your life causes apathy; Mat. 24:12 “And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.”
   3. Cast off sin and put on Christ.
      a. Rom. 13:11 “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.”
      b. Eph. 4:20-24 “But ye have not so learned Christ; 21If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus. 22That ye put off concerning
the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;
23And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24And that ye put on the new man, which
after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

4. Remove all stumbling blocks which hinder faithfulness to God; Mat. 5:29-30 “And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable
for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast
into hell. 30And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is
profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body
should be cast into hell.”

D. Regularly attend all worship services
1. God desires worshipers.
a. Acts 2:42 “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship,
and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”
b. John 4:23-24 “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall
worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.
24God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

2. It is a time for edification; 1 Cor. 14:26 “How is it then, brethren? when ye come
together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation,
hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.”

3. Do not just be here, really worship.

E. Read and study your Bible
1. Psa. 119:14-16 “I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.
15I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. 16I will delight myself
in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.”

2. Study
a. 2 Tim. 2:15 “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not
to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”
b. Acts 17:11 “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they
received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily,
whether those things were so.”

3. It is the way to build faith; Rom. 10:17 “So then faith cometh by hearing, and
hearing by the word of God.”

4. It will protect against sin; Psa. 119:11 “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that
I might not sin against thee.”

5. It will instruct you in righteous living; 2 Tim. 3:16-17 “All scripture is given by
inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction
in righteousness: 17That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good
works.”

F. Accept encouragement from others
1. Isa. 35:3-4 “Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. 4Say to them
that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance,
even God with a recompence; he will come and save you.”

2. Heb. 12:12 “Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;”

3. We must be careful about prideful self-sufficiency.

4. Allow others to help bear your burden and accept their encouragement to
faithfulness.
a. Gal. 6:2 “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”
b. Rom. 12:10-11 “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; 11Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;”

G. Resolve to help others
1. Even as we must accept, we must help also.
2. Gal. 6:9-10 “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. 10As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

H. Get to work
1. Accept life’s challenges as opportunities to grow; Pro 22:13 “The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets.”
2. God let Elijah know that he still had work to do.
   a. 1 Kin. 19:4 “But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O L ORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.”
   b. 1 Kin. 19:15-16 “And the L ORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: 16And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.”
3. 1 Cor. 15:58 “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

Conclusion: David pleaded with God to restore the joy of salvation; Psa. 51:12 “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.” However, to have that joy one must: remember, repent, and return; Rev. 2:5 “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”