

TITLE: The Patterns of Spiritual Renewal (Genesis 35:1-15)

1. The Root of Spiritual Laziness: Forgetfulness (1-3)

- Quote: “Your business is to fix his attention on the stream [of immediate sense experiences]. Teach him to call it ‘real life’ and don’t let him ask what he means by ‘real’”.

I once had a patient, a sound atheist, who used to read in the British Museum. One day, as he sat reading, I saw a train of thought in his mind beginning to go the wrong way. The Enemy, of course, was at his elbow in a moment. Before I knew where I was I saw my twenty years’ work beginning to totter. If I had lost my head and begun to attempt a defense by argument I should have been undone. But I was not such a fool. I struck instantly at the part of the man which I had best under my control and suggested that it was just about time he had some lunch. The Enemy presumably made the counter suggestion...that this was more important than lunch...I said [in response], ‘Quite. In fact much too important to tackle at the end of a morning...’”

- 2 Peter 1:5-11

2. The response to our spiritual apathy: Repentance (3-5):

Colossians 2:6-15,

- Receive Christ as Lord over everything (6)
- Walk with Christ as Lord over everything (6)
- Be rooted in the Lord - consider Him as the source of your identity, take your main nourishment from his word or teaching, seek to know Him (6)
- Give thanks (7)
- Meditate on (think about) the most important spiritual realities (9-15)

3. The Pattern of Spiritual Renewal: Grace. Repeat. (9-15)

Proven benefits of regular church attendance:

- Lower rates of depression
- Less likely to commit suicide
- Generally longer lives
- Generally more optimistic

Proven benefits of reading your bible 4 days a week or more (Lifeway Research):

1. Feeling lonely drops 30%
2. Anger issues drop 32%
3. Bitterness in relationships drops 40%
4. Alcoholism drops 57%

5. Sex outside of marriage drops 68%
6. Feeling spiritually stagnant drops 60%
7. Viewing pornography drops 61%
8. Sharing your faith jumps 200%
9. Discipling others jumps 230%

Practical application:

- Fill your life with healthy repetition: weekly church attendance, daily prayer/bible reading with family, tell yourself the gospel often