

THE CHURCH AWAKENING: AN URGENT CALL FOR RENEWAL

THE CHURCH ON A LONG DRIFT

ACTS 18:18–21; 19:1–41; 20:28–31; 1 TIMOTHY 4:12; 5:23; 2 TIMOTHY 1:6–7; REVELATION 2:1–4



The Heart of the Matter

Erosion is slow, silent, and subtle. Often, it happens in our presence without our being aware of it or the toll it is taking. Soil can erode so slowly that the farmer fails to realize how much of his fertile land he's losing. The same thing can happen in a church. A once-strong, well-nourished, and healthy body of believers can ignore the warnings and overlook the signals that reveal that the church is on a long drift. It happened to the church at Ephesus. Even though they were warned by the apostle Paul, they failed to be on guard and to remain alert. Tragically, within a matter of years, the erosion took such a toll on their spiritual lives, the Lord finally announced for all to hear, "You have left your first love" (Revelation 2:4).



Discovering the Way

1. Let's Consider a Twenty-First Century Example

Spiritual erosion in a church is heart-wrenching, whether in the first century or the twenty-first.

2. Let's Return to a First-Century Setting (Selected Scriptures)

Ephesus was a church founded on solid biblical teaching, but with its growth, it became a body tested in many different ways—leading to wise counsel from a mentor who urged and encouraged a timid colleague. However, over a period of thirty years, erosion crept in.

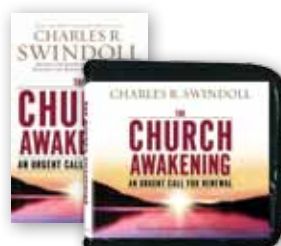


Starting Your Journey

Four never-to-be-forgotten lessons come from looking at the Ephesian church. First, erosion is happening in once-strong churches. Second, erosion *can* happen without a church realizing it. Third, erosion *will* happen in churches that fail to heed warnings and stay vigilant. Fourth, erosion *could* happen even in your church.

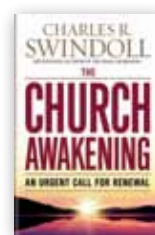


Tools for Digging Deeper



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