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## Spiritual health blockers

Beta blockers are a type of medication developed sixty years ago. These blocking agents are used to help with a variety of cardiac issues. Many people know them from use on lowering blood pressure or managing abnormal heart rhythms. Their blocking action can cause the heart to beat more slowly and with less force, and so help lower blood pressure and help return it to where it should be.

In contrast, there are spiritual health blockers that have a negative impact on our spiritual life, on our relationship with God.

Scripture tells us God saved us to have a full, abundant life. He is at work within us to make us more and more like Christ. He has prepared and leads us in a path of good works that count now and forever. He has redeemed us so we can truly glorify Him — the catechism was spot on: our chief end, purpose, is to glorify God and so then enjoy Him forever. Spiritual health blockers disrupt our experience of this. It is important to be aware of these disruptive, negative blockers and avoid, turn away from them.



The list is long. In our brief time today we will consider just four.

**A fuzzy focus.** Those of us who need glasses get this. We don't have 20-20 vision. So we have single, bifocal or even trifocal lenses to help us see things in focus.

Jesus told us not to be worried about or be focused on things of earth, but to “seek first His [God's] kingdom and His righteousness” (Matthew 6:33). The apostle Paul picked up this key truth,

“keep seeking the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on the things that are above, not on the things that are on earth” (Colossians 3:1-2).

How sharp is your focus today? What are you focused on, really? We can identify with the hymn writer, “I see the sights that dazzle, the tempting sounds I hear” (*O Jesus, I Have Promised*). A fuzzy focus is a spiritual health blocker.

**A careless, unhealthy spiritual diet.** Health Canada's current food guide tells us we should eat plenty of vegetables and fruits, eat protein foods, make water our drink of choice and choose whole grain foods. Junk food doesn't make their recommended diet.

Our spiritual food is God's word. Remember that when Jesus went to the wilderness, after fasting for 40 days He was hungry. Satan tempted Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." Jesus' replied, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes out of the mouth of God'" (Matthew 4:1-4). Jesus relied on the word of God. We cannot be healthy, prepared and effective if we do not take in and rely on God's word. Regular reading of the Scriptures, thinking them through, then applying them to our lives and actually living them is essential to spiritual health. As the apostle Paul instructs, we are to let the word of Christ dwell richly within us (Colossians 3:16).

A careless, unhealthy spiritual diet is a major spiritual health road block we are to avoid.

**A hit and miss prayer life.** An old saying tells us that no one is greater than his or her prayer life. In prayer we can draw close to God, align ourselves with God and His will, seek and receive His wisdom, place all our cares and needs on Him, and more. The gospels record Jesus, God the Son, regularly spending time in prayer with His Father. You are probably well aware of what the Bible tells us about prayer. For starters,

- "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving" (Colossians 4:2).
- "With every prayer and request, pray at all times in the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:18).
- "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and pleading with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

A hit and miss prayer life will drain the vitality, joy and effectiveness from your spiritual life.

**A casual attitude toward sin.** God tells us through wise king Solomon, "One who conceals his wrongdoings will not prosper, but one who confesses and abandons them will find compassion" (Proverbs 28:13). The apostle John wrote to believers, "If we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and righteous, so that He will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

We can fall into a casual attitude toward our sin, after all, God has not zapped us, and things seem to be okay.

When God saved us He gave us eternal life, He holds us securely. God is holy, and He never looks the other way at sin. He disciplines His children who do not deal with their sin (see Hebrews 12:4-11). A casual attitude toward sin is a roadblock to full fellowship with God, peace, joy and effective service.

One of the good things about these and other spiritual health roadblocks is that they can be both avoided and removed. They do not have to be permanent, they will not be permanent as we face them and determine to remove them by God's powerful provisions for us.

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