

The Closet, Our Test of Devotion

by Alan Bartley

The closet is a private room where we meet God personally and individually, and it is essential for spiritual growth and devotion.

Duration: 1:08:35

Scripture: Psalm 100:4, Matthew 6:6, Luke 11:1, Romans 8:26, Ephesians 6:12, Philippians 4:6-7, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Hebrews 4:16, James 5:16, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Private Prayer", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of spending dedicated time in prayer and seeking God's presence in the closet, drawing from the experiences of Wilbur Chapman and insights on the challenges and distractions faced in prayer. It highlights the need for serious, intelligent, obedient, expectant, persistent, and faith-filled prayer, while addressing common hindrances like distractions, sleepiness, interruptions, and condemnation, urging believers to resist the enemy and claim the power of the blood of Jesus.

Transcript

I was just reading this great preacher called Wilbur Chapman. He said something very interesting when preaching or speaking to another preacher. When he started out as a young preacher in a particular church, an old man came to him and said, Wilbur, I don't think you'll make it, son.

You're too young for this ministry. Only older men have been in this church. And I'll pray for you.

He thought he was a prank, that's what he said. He thought he was a bit of an old fool. But he was grateful that he would pray for him.

Back to him after a while, he says, there's three men praying for you now. You know, it grew to 200. And Wilbur Chapman said, before I got up to preach any time in my public, I had 18 elders gather round me and fell on their knees and asked God for the anointing of the Spirit of God.

Brothers and sisters, I feel a hardness tonight in the atmosphere in this place. So why I'm telling you that is I want you to bow your head and we're going to pray together. Because if the anointing is not present, the Lord's not giving us heaven.

It's to know where we have ground. We call on the Lord to gather us and help us. And pour out the oil of the Spirit.

Our Father, we come before thy throne tonight. In Jesus' name, we thank thee for the throne. We thank thee, Lord, for the precious blood of the Lord Jesus.

And we thank thee, Lord, that thy word tells us that our Lord Jesus, he spoiled principalities and powers. Bless God, he made a show of them open-minded. We thank thee, Lord, that Jesus is King of all kings.

Bless thee, Lord, that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. The glory of God the Father. And our God, we want to thank thee for so loving us, Lord, in our poor, belated, darkened condition.

That thou didst send, Lord, the very darling of thy chism, thine only begotten Son. Be born of the Virgin. Lord, to ultimately go to Calvary, we come to praise thee, Lord.

Praise thee for Calvary. Praise thee for the victory that was won. Praise thee, Lord, for the power of the blood.

Praise you, Lord, tonight, that, Father, because of Jesus, we can come today. We bless thee, Lord, thou hast done great things for us. We're overjoyed.

And, Father, in Jesus' name, we would come unitedly to the throne of grace and ask, Lord, for the oil of the Spirit. O'er it thy oil we pray in this meeting. O' God, we pray that we would be conscious of the divine presence.

Lord, we pray that thou would come and stand amongst us in thy risen power. O' God, we come against every evil spirit and every dark power of hell and every Lord divisive Satan. We bind the power of the enemy in Jesus' name.

Satan, we bind all your power, all your activities, all your distractions. We bind in Jesus' name. And we pray, Lord, for the release of the Holy Ghost.

Lord, send the Holy Ghost. Lord, come amongst us, we pray. We haven't come merely, Lord, to meet and go through the Lord activities of the Evangelical Church.

But we need thy presence, Lord. And we need the sweet oil of the Spirit. We need thee amongst us.

And we call on thy name. And we pray that thou would help us, Lord, to open all our hearts wide to God and wide to grace and wide to whatever God would want to say to us. Lord, come and speak to us, we pray, that thy protection around us, Lord, pray that thy wing would be over us.

Now, Lord, I give myself unreservedly to thee. I give, Lord, thy cleansing and thy sanctifying power upon me. Lord, tonight for this meeting, for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the edification of the saints, and, Father, for the advancement of thy great kingdom, I take the promised Holy Ghost, the blessed power of the Pentecost, to fill me to the uttermost.

I take, and I bless thee, Lord, that he, the Holy Ghost, will undertake. In Jesus' name, Amen. And Amen.

We're turning to Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 6. Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 6. We welcome you in the Lord's name tonight, and thank you for coming. If there's anyone that's your first night with us, we appreciate you coming. And we trust that the Lord will bless you through the reading and the exposition of God's Word.

Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 6. And we're just reading verse 6 and 7. Matthew, Chapter 6, verse 6 and 7. For thy, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet. And when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret. And thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Amen.

And God will bless the reading from His Word. I want to speak to you this evening on the closet, our test of devotion. The closet, our test of devotion.

On many occasions I have spoken to simply men and women, men and women in the work of God. And my conclusion to the state of the Church and to the spiritual paralysis, all, all goes back to the root of the problem of the closet. The closet is the root cause of backsliding, the root cause of prayerlessness, the root cause of carelessness, the root cause of lack of burden for the lost, the root cause for the lack of concern for revival.

The closet. And so therefore we need to look at what the Lord has to say in these few verses and in other portions of His Word concerning the all important area of the closet. I want to speak to you first on the directions regarding the closet.

Directions regarding the closet. Now the word closet mentioned here in chapter 6 and verse 6, Jesus said when you pray, enter into your closet. The closet is a private room, an inner chamber, a place of secrecy.

And the Lord calls you and I as believers to the closet. The Lord calls us to the place of secrecy, where we personally and individually meet the Lord. Now I have no desire to put you into bondage tonight as to some of the things I will mention, some of the men I will mention concerning their devotional life in the closet.

I have no desire to leave you in bondage, but what I do desire is to let you know what the closet can become. I want you to see that the present spiritual climate in our land is not something to be really seeking or pursuing because let it be known that the church is presently on such a low level spiritually that we can't really enter into the full significance of the value of the closet until we begin to read those who have really explored the closet. I'm not in a position to say that I am an authority on the closet, but I thank God for what He has taught me in the closet, for what He is teaching me, and for what the Spirit of God has revealed to me whilst in the closet.

The Lord said here, enter into thy closet. Now for many young Christians when they come to the Lord they have a real problem about the closet. In fact for many older Christians these problems continue on.

Many can feel that the closet has to be a closed room, a room of the house, somewhere where a literal door has to be present wherein the door has to be shut. But can I suggest to you that that is not really in the Lord's manner. What is in the Lord's mind is the thought of the secrets, the thought of the private place where communion is conducted between the soul and God.

I remember after my conversion and God had deep dealings in my life, five years after my conversion, I was brought up on the farm. And I recall on many occasions I used to walk the land. I knew every acre, I knew every hole in the hedge.

I didn't fix many of them but I knew where they were. And I had a little dog, a little terrier, and he used to get excited when he knew I was going for a walk. It was a daily occurrence.

And I went for a walk and I would have walked literally for my age. And that was my closet. That is where I poured my heart out to the Lord.

And I could bring you to trees and to little nooks and crannies in the hedges where sometimes it rained and where I met the Lord. That was my closet. I remember hearing of the great preacher J.B. Friend.

That J.B. Friend, whenever he rose in the morning, he went for a walk. And I remember one man relating to me who knew him personally. He said when J.B. Friend was out on his quiet time, his lips, he just went... He was walking, his lips just moved.

And J.B. Friend was having his quiet time. J.B. Friend was having his communion with the Lord. He was oblivious to cars.

He was oblivious to traffic. He was oblivious to people. His soul was taken up with the Lord.

It was his closet, but it was outside. And for some of us, the closet may not be in the field. It may not be in the footpath.

I remember hearing of an American preacher. And he claimed that he had the biggest closet in the world. He had a beach.

It was seven miles long. And he walked his beach with God. My closet.

For some, it's inside. I remember a lady telling me that she had difficulty in the home getting peace and quiet. So she took her car down the road and she kept it running.

And she had her quiet time in the car. I heard one lady on one occasion. She had similar problems.

And the only place she could find peace and quiet was upstairs when the children were downstairs. And she locked the door of the bathroom. And that was her closet.

Directions regarding the closet. Helmet. Christian.

How do you closet? Is there a place where you regularly meet with God? Closet. There is a caution regarding the closet though. The Lord said when you enter into your closet, shut the door.

The door has to be shut. Now what the Lord is relating is not literally a door being shut. But it's the picture that everything else is to be pushed out.

Everything else has to go. On one occasion a man was in a telephone case. And I'm sure this has happened to you.

And he was talking on the phone to the person who was speaking. And he says, I can't hear you. They talked to him.

I can't hear you. And a man was standing beside him and he said, shut the door. Shut the door.

I can't hear you. And so many Christians today. I have a number of people.

I remember people coming to my house and saying to me, how does God speak to you? Well if that's what you're saying, then there's a problem with the closet. You're immediately unearthing a spiritual problem in your life if you ask that question. There's a problem with you and the closet.

You don't need to be a prophet or the son of a prophet to understand in Ulster that the closet is largely for sale. There were multitudes today who were in the sanctuary and they were not in the closet. They have not been in the closet.

And if they have been, they have not succeeded in the closet for the very thing which God established the closet for. Because if the closet was successful in the hearts and lives of God's people, things would be happening in the land. Now they might not be seen, multitude of people converted.

But one sure certain thing that would occur if the closet was to be utilized by the saints is that there would be a tremendous driving to the place of prayer in the sanctuaries. When the closet is successful, there is an outpouring of that into the house of God. And so for that reason you don't need to be a prophet to know that the closet has been abandoned.

You know when we're in alone with the Lord in the closet, it can be lonely. It can be lonely. But it's the place of the Lord designated where we share everything.

Where we tell the Lord everything. Now can I just give a word to some of the younger Christians, indeed some of the older ones as well. There are things that are shared in the closet only.

There are things that are not shared in public rooms. And sometimes I have been in meetings and in missions and sometimes when the Lord has been working in the sanctuary and you've preached and the word of God has gone forth and people's spirits have been touched. And suddenly somebody starts to pray and I begin to wonder were they on the moon during the meeting.

Were they on the moon? Because moon men appear in meetings. They appear. And they start to pray and you just wonder where were they? But my dear friends I have no problem in praying about everything and anything.

But keep it to the closet. Now I'm not legislating what you pray for. If the spirit of God comes mightily upon you to pray about something very personal then you pray about it.

I'm not laying legislation. But it's just something that we all need to lay hold on. It's a place where we reveal all.

But you know friends it's a place where you and I can so easily abandon. You know you can't show off in the closet. You can show off in the gym.

You can't be a big fella in the closet. You can't. There's nobody to show off to.

That's why what a man is on his knees before God that he is and nothing more. And for that reason if I were to bring the message to a conclusion now. I have given you sufficient material as to why you should call on God as a believer and say Lord help me in the closet.

I believe with all my heart that the devil wants us away from the closet. For that reason the Lord I believe has been directing my attention during the past week and past days along these lines which we have been ministering in recent weeks. As the Lord prepares our heart because the devil brothers and sisters he wants us to abandon the closet.

And if you're at that place and who of us hasn't been at that place where there have been times when we have abandoned the closet. I want you to get back to the closet. I want you to get back to private earnest prayer.

Caution. The Lord says in verse 7 when you pray use not vain repetitions as the heathen do. Can I say first of all when we go into the closet to avoid hasty words before we look at the repetitious ones.

The Bible says be still I know that I am God. Remember the Bible says when you come into God's presence remember that you are on earth. And that God is in heaven let your words be few.

Don't be just starting to talk. We've all failed that. John Hyde the great praying missionary.

Said whenever as an advanced missionary not as an advanced in age but spiritually advanced. On many occasions when an attendant was requested to pray he would sit in silence for many many minutes. Before he would ever pray.

He never prayed until he knew he was in God's presence. Then he would pray. The caution of being hasty with our words in God's presence.

The hasty of being aware of repetitious words. Just praying, just nodding, just talking. How many prayer meetings where men and women just talk.

Just quarrel words. Caution. But then thank God there's not only the closet and the caution there's the covenant.

The Lord, this is a wonderful covenant in verse 6. The Lord said when you enter into your closet and when you close the door. Pray to thy father which is in secret and thy father which seeth in secret. Do you know brothers and sisters God's looking for us.

God's eyes on the closet. And as the eye of the eternal God looks down on our closet perhaps we weren't there. And his eye looked upon it longingly all day that we might come and have fellowship with him.

But we didn't come. He has looked for days on end and we have not come. Perhaps he has looked for months on end and we have not come.

God's covenant says my eye is upon the closet. My eye. The Lord said for those who go in he said I will reward them with openness.

What's done in secret, reward with openness. Prayer in the closet must not be regarded as merely a duty. If you view the closet as a duty to silence your conscience and to remove guilt.

You have lost the very meaning of the closet. The closet is to be the place where we encounter God. It is to be the place where our soul is drawn out.

As we read in the scriptures that there was that time when Jacob was lying sleeping. And suddenly he became conscious of a ladder and of a holy host that were ascending and descending. And God at the top.

Holy ground. The house of God. Bethel.

That is what the closet ought to be. And if you have never known the thrill and the awe and the joy and the ecstasy of the presence of the eternal God in the closet. You have never come to grips with what the closet is all about.

It's about communion with God. Directions regarding the closet. Desires for the closet.

One writer has said some people treat God like a lawyer. They only go when they are in trouble. Only go to God when in trouble.

You turn with me to Isaiah chapter 65. Isaiah 65. I want to show you what curtails your desire for the closet.

See the reality is that many people have abandoned it. We want to look at some of the reasons why they have abandoned it. Why this spiritual paralysis.

In Isaiah 65 verse 2 we read the Lord speaking of Israel his people. I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people. Which walketh in a way that was not good after their own thoughts.

A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face. Sacrifice in gardens and burn incense upon altars of bricks. Turn over with me then to Isaiah 59.

Isaiah 59 verse 2. The reason why we are curtailed in the closet. But your iniquities have separated between you and your God. And your sins have hid his face from you.

That he will not hear. That's talking about praying. Hear God speaking to his own people.

He said I will not hear you. The Psalmist said in Psalm 66 verse 18. If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me.

Never mind answer not hear. So you can see that what curtails our desire for the closet is sin. Sin in the life of the child of God curtails the desire for the closet.

What are some of the sins that are spoken of in the scriptures that can curtail our desire for the closet. The first one that I have selected is unforgiveness. Unforgiveness.

Mark 11 and 25 we read when you stand praying forgive. If you have wrought against any that your father also which is in heaven forgive you also. If you carry a spirit of unforgiveness to a brother or sister in the Lord.

You might as well abandon the closet. Because what people this is what they attempt to do. People carry all kinds of baggage and sin with them into the closet when they go.

Because they have been told to go. And they see it in the scripture that they need to do it. But it is treachery.

It is treachery. And they go in and it is a form of like a purgatorial penance. That evangelicals have to go through.

If you are to be an evangelical. And the longer you spend in it. And the more pain you get in it.

Then the better evangelical you are. As many people view the closet. But many sincerely as they go into the closet.

Then they are ready to spill out all their ideas. And all the things that they feel God would need to be doing. And so there is a rush for the throne.

And there is a list pulled out the length of today and tomorrow. And it is poured out and at the end of it. They never know whether there is to be any answers to it.

To whether God heard it. To whether it is to be any advance or any principled move of God as a result of it. There is nothing.

Nothing. And they go out as dry as they went in. Go out as weary if not more weary.

Than when you went in. Brothers and sisters there is a reason for that. And if you are carrying the baggage of unforgiveness.

You may as well abandon the closet. I remember a number of years ago. A brother in the logger asked me to do something.

He asked me to pray about it. And I came back to him and I said. Brother the Lord has told me no.

I looked the man. I still do. But I said no.

The Lord said no. He accepted it very graciously. Until he got out of my house.

And I was slag here there and gone. It didn't affect me. It affected him.

He paralyzed his own closet. He affected his own relationship with the Lord. Because you see you can tell.

A man or woman that is walking with God. A man or woman that has a healthy closet. Will have a healthy relationship to all the saints.

To all the saints. Not just your denomination. But all the saints.

Because the love of God is shed abroad in your heart. By the Holy Ghost. And so the spirit of unforgiveness.

Well thank God that man came to me afterwards. And when he came into my home he said. Listen I have something to tell you.

He said I have said things about you that is not true. I have come to apologize. And then I prayed.

That was great. It did me no harm. It was good for him.

And now you are crying some Bible truth. You need to deal with it. If the closet is to be of any value to you.

Not only is there unforgiveness that curtails us in the closet. But unjust criticism. And a bitter spirit.

A bitter spirit. You know there are many Christians and they carry a bitter spirit. They carry something in them that is eating and gnawing at their soul.

And sometimes they have managed to retain it. They have managed to hold it. But at an opportunity when it rises up.

Then it spills out like dying. Like dying. I know a lady.

I got into a situation that was not my neck. I remember a lady contacted me. And I tell you my dear friend.

She gave me something through the phone. She poured out the life. It did not affect me in the sense that it did not affect my closet.

But oh it has curtailed her. Oh she said I am going on well with the Lord. But she is not.

Root of bitterness. Nanny be defiled. Listen if you have a root of bitterness.

You better get it to the Lord. You say but listen it is alright you talking. I have had terrible things done on me.

I have had dreadful things said about me by the Lord's people. I have been wounded in the house of my friends. You may have been brother or sister in the Lord.

So have I. But you know what God has taught me. God has taught me when I am wounded by a brother or sister. That I just stay in the closet.

And I just keep praying for that brother or sister. And what I pray for them is that the Lord will bless them. And that the Lord will do them good.

And sometimes my emotions come back. Like a rebound on me. And they say you don't mean that.

But in my will I am saying to God. In the heart of my being I do mean it. Even though they have hurt me.

Even though they do hurt me. In my spirit I want nothing against them. I want nothing but good to them.

If that is your attitude. God will soon conquer the bitterness. It has got to be broken.

Or it will kill you in the closet. Brothers and sisters in our churches across the land. Our churches are being laid down.

With these things. People are going to look at one another. And we sing hymns and we get through it all.

As though God can't see it. God help us. God help me.

It is like the elder brother. We read in Luke 15. Whenever the young brother came back from the harlots.

And he came to the father. And the father killed the fatted calf. And he got the ring and the guard.

And he put it on. And they all rejoiced. But the older brother.

He was an old cranky boy. He knew everything. He was with the father all the time.

He did everything right according to the law. But oh, he had a bitter spirit. And there is nothing as obnoxious.

And nothing as painful to the spirit of a believer. Who is open to God. As a person with a bitter spirit.

Always seek God. If you have a bitter spirit. He will heal you.

A person with a bitter spirit. Tommy will turn into vinegar in front of you. Keep a sweet spirit.

And it is said of the great missionary there. Down in the south of Cornwall. What was it he said.

When they put me into a barrow. He says unlock the lid on me. He says I will push out the lock.

And shout hallelujah. What was the great holiness preacher. He says no matter where you put me.

Honey will come out. Well I have pulled some Christians. And I will tell you honey hasn't come out.

It is a person's reaction. That tells you what they really like as a Christian. It is not the out front face.

It is when you get them under pressure. You squeeze them. And honey comes out.

And that is the real person. That is the real person. On forgiveness.

And on just criticism. You know. Praying Hyde.

I have mentioned him already. Hyde on one occasion. As he got into close communion with the Lord.

He told her on one occasion. Hyde was thinking of a particular missionary. Who evidently was vexing the Lord's people.

And Hyde in his close proximity. To the throne in prayer. He started to tell the Lord.

About this man's failures. And the spirit of God. Don't criticize in prayer either.

Don't pour out your vial in prayer. Because sometimes your prayers. Can become anything my friend.

But a blessing from God. But your prayers can be used also by sin. Well that is where I am going.

On just criticism. And on willingness. To do what we can.

I will paralyse you in your prayer. Turn with me to Proverbs. Proverbs 21.

Proverbs 21. Proverbs 21 verse 13. Whoso stoppeth his ears.

At the cry of the poor. He also shall cry himself. But shall not be heard.

The Lord said when you see a need. You see it. It's clear.

It's before you. No one bothered you in anything about it. The Lord said when you cry.

I love you. The Bible says give. And it shall be given unto you.

Good measure pressed down. Shaken together. Running over.

What measure you need unto them. Shall be needed to you. You can't out give God.

D. M. Moody on one occasion. Was in a small prayer meeting. There were five business men with him.

They had mentioned that there was a great need. Financially. For some building project.

One of the rich men bowed his head. And he started to pray. A beautiful eloquent prayer.

Ask the Lord to meet the need. At which D. M. Moody interrupted. He said brother.

I don't think we need to pray about that. We can deal with that ourselves. Don't be asking God to do it.

See you can go into the prayer meeting. I used to do it for years. When God had dealings with my life.

As a Christian. I used to go to the prayer meeting. And say Lord pray for the missionaries in Africa.

Way out in that land. That I've never seen. I don't know the missionaries.

I don't even know their name. But you bless them way out there Lord. And then bless the ones way out in Canada.

And if there had been any on the moon. I would have been praying for them as well. Because they were away from me.

But oh my dear friend. Whenever God started to see the need. That was different.

When God said I want to start delving into your life. That was different. It's alright to pray all around the globe.

Pray all around. But God said I want to get into you. And it's alright for you to pray Lord.

Send the missionaries to the foreign field. But Lord I have no intention of going. Well if you have no intention of going to the mission field.

You have no right to pray for a missionary. You have no right to pray for God to bless you. You have no right to bless them.

If you are not willing to be one. And what you ask God to do. You have to be willing to be the answer to that prayer.

When you start praying like that. You'll find that my dear friend. Like Spurgeon said.

Downstairs in the great tabernacle in London. Your closet will become like a furnace. Fire soon rise up in the closet.

Unwillingness to do what they can. Unthankfulness. Lack of praise.

Bible says in Psalm 50 23. He that offers praise glorifies God. We read in that great Psalm.

That we so often sing. Psalm 100 verse 4. Enter into his gates. With thanksgiving.

You know God's gates. Are open to us. The gates are wide open.

Wide open. They're not closed. And God gives an exhortation in the Psalm.
He said listen. When you come into your closet. He says enter in through my gates.
And when you're coming in. He said come with thanksgiving. Let there be a rising of thanksgiving.
As you enter through the gates by faith. Into the very courtroom of God. And he said not only that.
Then go into his courts. With praise. You know friends.
I'm not a Pentecostal. Whatever a Pentecostal is meant to be. In the light of terminology.
What people term me. It's not a good thing to do that. But one thing I do believe.
Is that there is a truth. About the power of praise. That most of the church has lost.
There is a tremendous. Power in praise. Praise can move.
What prayer alone will not move. The apostle had learned that. In Chronicles.
And the enemy was defeated through praise. Desires for the closet pertained. The duration of the closet.
Well the duration of the closet. The amount of time that you and I spend in the closet. Is related to our
heart condition.
Related to our heart condition. Robert. Mary McShane.
Said. It is my noblest. And most fruitful employment.
And is not. To be thrust. Into any corner.
E.M. Barnes said. Nothing can atone. For neglect.
Of prayer. We read of Zacharias. In Luke chapter one.
When he went into the temple. It was the most momentous moment. In Zacharias life.
Told from commentators. That the priest. Could only go in once.
In his lifetime. To go before. The veil.
The little. Incense. Furniture was positioned.
Just in front of the veil. There was the candle. There was the.
He had never been in before. But now he's going in. And the measure of fear.
And trepidation would be upon. The servant of the Lord. Because he's coming in now.
Very close to the holy of holies. Where God dwells. And there's a tremendous.
Because they have known. The judgment of the law. And as he comes in.
In Luke chapter one. He goes in. To offer the incense.

And it speaks in the bible of prayer. A man going in alone. Into the sanctuary.
To be with God. Oh but something. Unusual happens.
In that lonely place. In that closet. Suddenly.
The angel Gabriel appears. And my friends. What a fright it must be.
To Zacharias. You have to realize. That for four hundred years now.
God has not spoken to the nation. Four hundred years. Not a word from God.
Suddenly. Gabriel appears. John the baptist.
And he says. You know what it says. The people wonder.
That he took so long. Wonder do people. Wonder about you.
You're so long. In the closet. Let me read you something.
I was reading recently. A great man of God. Called John Smith.
After family worship. Of the morning. Which Mr. Smith usually prefaced.
By several hours of private devotion. He returned to the exercises. Of the closet.
And sometimes on his knees. And often on his face. Wrestled with God.
Till not unfrequently. A considerable part of the floor. Of his study.
He offered disclosures of feelings. To his friend. A man said.
Once remarked. That he was sometimes engaged in prayer. For two or three hours.
Before which he enjoyed. That unrestricted intercourse with heaven. Which he always desired.
And which he generally succeeded. In obtaining. That's why I'm saying to you.
Don't go very gay today. Our fathers pray. Preachers pray.
Their life. Was prayed. Their life was deposited.
On the word of God. We need God to help us. The duration.
We read of John the Baptist. From heaven. Until the time of his appearance.
We read of Elijah. God said to him. Elijah.
Hide thyself. Then Elijah. Show thyself.
On one occasion Wilbur Chapman. That great preacher. Came to Edith B. Meyer.
Another great preacher. And in the honesty of his heart. As these two men of God.

Talked together. Chapman said to Mayer. He said you know brother.

A lot of the time I'm preaching. And I'm working for the Lord. But I feel I've lost my strength.

Mayer said. Can you breathe. Of course I can breathe.

He said breathe out three times. He didn't catch it initially. So he attempted it.

Third one. Mayer said. That's your problem brother.

He said. Before you breathe out. You have to breathe out.

And before you touch this world. And before you're to be a blessing to this world. Listen.

You have to breathe in heavens air. To your soul. You have to be saturated.

With that world. And that eternity. That this world knows nothing about.

You have to be absorbed in that world. By the closet. By your walking with God.

By your union with Christ in the closet. By your love relationship to him. As you give your soul to him.

As he gives himself to you. And so on. Within the closet.

Then when you come out. A holy glow is upon you. What do we need.

When we enter into the closet. To spend time with God. First of all.

We need serious time. Serious time. Samuel Chadwick said.

Hurry. Is the devil prayer. It's the.

Kind of heart of your brain. Pushing all your things. Killing your prayer.

You're killing what your walls are called. You're killing the usefulness for God. Not only is it to be kind of serious.

One of the great writers said. Dealing in generalities is the devil prayer. Just.

Feeling like this. Feeling without. Just the opposite.

The devil prayer. Isn't it true. I'm sure you've been in situations.

Prayer meetings. I certainly have. I hope I'm not the odd man out.

I hope my wife can identify with me. Sometimes I have to talk to her afterwards. To feel if there's something wrong with me.

But sometimes I've been in prayer meetings. And I want to squeal. I want to run out.

I can wait to get out. Even in generalities. There was nothing there.

No seriousness. No earnestness. No calling on to God.

No consciousness of whether God was present or absent. And nobody apparently caring. Serious time.

A place. You mentioned that. Select your closet.

Find that place for you and go. Whether it's the field or the street. Or wherever it is.

You go and find your closet. Not only do you need serious time. You need the book of God with you.

The book of God. Because when you enter into the closet. You will discover on occasions.

That as you go in to start praying. And you get an earnestness with prayer. And you start to pray over situations.

And people and so forth. Sometimes it's not easy. And sometimes it's not.

But it's good to take the book of God. I was reading of a great English preacher. His name has gone from me now.

But a great English preacher. And this is what he used to do. He would spend half an hour in the word of God.

Just reading the word of God. Just meditating on the word of God. And then he would go to prayer for half an hour.

And then he would come back to the word of God for half an hour. And he'd let God speak to him. And then he'd speak back to God.

And the more you pray. The more you'll want to pray. And the more you pray.

The most interesting thing of reading of prayer warriors. Is that they all acknowledge their prayerlessness. And the amusing thing about those who do not pray.

Are the ones who least feel it. In fact there's maybe some in the meeting tonight. And you feel.

That's all very good. But I have absolutely no intention of prayer. I have no intention of going to class.

I'm satisfied where I am. That is the sign of a backslidden heart. That is the sign of a rift between you and God.

Between you and your maker. And I don't care if you're evangelical. Or you're Baptist or Brethren.

Or if you're Presbyterian or Independent Methodist. I don't care your type or flag. My dear friend.

God looks from the heart. Not flags. Not denominations.

But our heart as individuals before the Lord. And if the enemy can break. And burst.

And destroy. This union with God in the closet. He will do it.

Whatever he can. To prevent you. From spending time.

In the closet. You need the book of God. You need the spirit of God.

You haven't the spirit of God. It's a lonely place. Admire the spirit of God with you in the closet.

It's a lovely place. Lovely. So I was out for a walk this week.

I promised my wee boy I'd take him for a walk. Took him for a walk. And we were only a few feet out of the road.

He said I want to bring the tractor with me. And I knew what that was going to be. So eventually we got the wee tractor out.

And he started waiting it. And we went down the long walkway. But there was stones.

And the wee tractor wasn't easy to move. And as he was going over it. I was walking beside him.

And he looked up at me. And he says Daddy. I'm tired.

I'm sore. I says get off the tractor. I don't want to.

I put my hand on his back. And I started pushing him. I said is that all right boy.

And he began to start moving. And immediately the Lord said to me. That's what I'll do with you in the closet.

Time to get a car. Just you and me. Not easy.

Sore. Painful. Tiring.

And sometimes the Lord puts his hand. And he says now I'm going to help you. My dear friend.

There's a drive comes in the place of prayer. You can feel the fire of God's spirit upon you. You can feel that you're feeling with God.

Do you know anything about it? Do you know anything about it? And it brings a joy and an ecstasy. Just as I looked at that little boy. There was a smile on his face.

And the joy of his father. Was pushing him and bringing him along. He didn't want to abandon it.

Nor should we want to abandon the closet. But to say to our heavenly father. I need help.

I need help. I've dealt with the unforgiveness. I've dealt with the bitterness.

I'm unwilling. I'm willing to do whatever you want me to do. I'm thankful and grateful to you for all you've done.

My heart's wide open to God. And you're in the position to get the hand of the father on you. You need the spirit.

You need faith. You need faith. You know.

When the spirit of God. Is dealing with you personally in the closet. You.

God. Look. It's very unique.

Because God has things for you to do. And God will tell you about them. And as God communicates to you.

And communicate through his word. And faith. In the place of prayer.

Is always intelligent. It has a basis. And the basis of faith is the word of God.

Let's use Abraham as the illustration. Abraham means God. Rather God means him.

And God says. When you borrow the promise. Don't you go.

He has heard the word of God. God has spoken by his spirit. To his servant.

And he's got clear instructions. Intelligent. He's intelligent.

Then he's obedient. He's obedient. He does it.

Whenever God shows you in the closet. Do it. Because if you don't do it.

The closet will become dry again. You see if you're not staying open. And abundant.

And clean. And my friend keeping a wide open soul to God. And every door and window of your life.

Open wide to the spirit of God. If you're not doing that. The closet will become dry again.

You've got to be obedient. Do what he tells you. So not only is faith.

In the closet. Is it intelligent. Obedient.

But it's expected as well. Sometimes people. Sometimes Rachel comes out.

And says to me. If people hear you. Think you're mad or anything.

I'm outside. If she didn't put me out. I chose to go out.

To be part of the guys. And I. I walk. I always walk.

That's just my way. I walk when I'm praying. The better the praying is going.

The faster I walk. Do you know friends. Whenever.

I'm in the study. I'm praying. I'm seeking the Lord.

I'm calling on his name. I am expectant. When I think.

Of the promises. Of God. Faith in operation.

You're expectant. Has God given you promises? Has God told you in your soul. What you're going to be.

Or what you're going to do. Has God revealed that. As you've kept yourself.

Continually open to. Has God been revealing. The secrets.

For your future life. Through his word. As he does.

As you let him. Then you take those promises. To God.
And they'll. They'll turn into fire. And you'll be rejoicing.
In his presence. Blessing him. For what he's going to do with you.
For where he's going to lead you. For the souls. He's going to give you.
I tell you my friend. You're just lost in him. I tell you.
This faith and prayer. Is expectant. It's expectant.
It's persistent. And not only that. It's persistent.
You cannot give up. You can have a great time of prayer. And the following.
Day or morning. Evening or whatever. You go into your closet.
Or out to your field. Wherever it is. And you pray to the Lord.
And this is drama. And you feel he's not there. And sometimes.
We don't prevail. Sometimes we can battle. For a long time.
And we can attempt. Through praise. And attempt through prayer.
And attempt through singing. And attempt various methods. To bring us into.
A consciousness of God's presence. And sometimes we fail. We don't know the answers to that.
Sometimes that happens. But we've got to be persistent. Because we wrestle.
Not against. The principalities of Christ. Very quickly.
The distractions. When you're in the closet. I don't know about you.
But I have loads of them. Distractions. When you're in the closet.
I suggest that they come from. The enemy. Even the most legitimate ones.
I suggest they're from the enemy. The first one is the cares. And duties.
Of what you have to do. Maybe that day. Or the incompleteness.
Things to be done. You start to think. I have to do this.
I have to see him. To see her. To get that.
And all the time. You're meant to be praying. All the time.
You're meant to be in the presence of God. I on many occasions. I've confessed it.
Many occasions. I have been in the closet. And I've come out after it.

A long time. And I don't even know about prayer. My mind has suddenly.
The moment I went to prayer. The moment I have consciously. Decided.
To enter into God's presence. My mind has been. Thoroughly bombarded.
With things which prior to that. Were not bombarding my mind. And things can I say.
When you abandon the prayer meeting. And the closet and you go out. Those things will no longer bombard you.
Distraction. And the devil seeks to distract us. Because he knows.
Better than we know. That if union. And fellowship with God.
Is broken. In the closet. There is a possibility.
Of weakness. And failure free temptation. That was a kid.
The bible talks. The Lord used the parable of the sword. And talked about the cares of the world.
What do you do. To overcome these things. Sometimes you can.
Remove yourself. Because I have found on many occasions. Where the closet is.
Is often the place. Where these cares arrive from. If I am in my closet.
I can see something that needs done. A letter that needs written. A book that needs moved.
To another shelf. A bill that needs to be paid. To send it.
What do you need to do sometimes. You need to just get out. And go away to some place.
That belongs to somebody else. Where you don't need to do anything in it. Sometimes you can concentrate.
On the Lord just. And start to pray. For an individual.
And seek the Lord in that way. Specifically. Aiming and aiming on a person.
Until you become conscious now. And in God's presence now. Cares and duties.
Competitiveness. Can be a problem in the closet. Things that you have to acquire.
That have happened to you. Things I have got to buy. I will need a car.
I will need a hat. I will need a watch. I need to get a home.
And these things come in. They are perhaps legitimate enough. Some are perhaps not legitimate.
But these things can bombard the mind. And there has to be a resisting. Of covetousness.
A binding of the spirit of covetousness. So that we prevail. With the Lord in prayer.

Sleepiness. Sleepiness. I don't know how many times I have fallen asleep.

In the closet. What can you do when you are falling asleep? One thing is to open the windows. If you have any.

Another way around it is to walk. Start walking. You won't sleep.

But it is said by Joseph Paul. That Satan rocks the cradle. When we sleep.

By our devotions. Satan rocks the cradle. Interruptions.

A distraction in the closet. Callers. Telephone.

Children. So many things can come in. I am not saying that you tell the children to run away.

I am not saying that you don't answer the telephone. I am not telling you that. But sometimes you have to see a thing for what it is.

And let it not break the fellowship. When I was a student in faith mission. Dr. Packman was the principal.

A man who was greatly taught of God. Himself in the place of prayer. Remember he used to share with us as students.

He said when you go into the closet. And you spend time there. And you have not come through to God.

Don't forget. Remember. I didn't give her.

I didn't give the boy. He said because when you come to the next time. You will get more earnestness.

And sincerity. And time and effort. Into pursuing your boy.

Until you do get him. Finally. The condemnation.

Of the closet. The devil. Comes together.

Remind you of failure. Remind you of areas of your life. In the past.

Or things that may have happened. Or things that perhaps you said. May be a comment.

And perhaps not even sinful. But he can bring condemnation. And guilt.

And it paralyzes you. Because you can't live. You must face the devil.

Face him. When he brings that. Regarding past sin.

That which has been already confessed. And dealt with. When he brings that.

Or areas where you're unsure. Perhaps maybe you did say something. You didn't mean it.

It came out wrong. Or there was some way where you failed the Lord. If he continues to assault you.

Immediately claim the precious blood. Ask the Lord to forgive you. And then resist the devil.

Fight him on. An American evangelist. Preacher rather.

Went over to India. He was not acquainted. With the reality of the spiritual warfare.
That goes on in foreign lands. Where there is great idolatry. And of course being a man.
That was well acquainted with doctrine. And scripture. He didn't know as much about the practicalities.
Of spiritual warfare. He met a younger pastor. Who wasn't just as educated.
And they talked together. About a person who had got converted. And now they were going to the home.
To take out the idols. And to destroy them. So that the home might be cleansed.
Of all idolatrous spirits. And everything that the enemy would be holding. And clinging on to in the home.
The young pastor. Who wasn't as well learned in scripture. But was spiritually alert.
Said to the man. When you go in. Hold the bible in front of you.
And pray in Jesus name. Of course the educated man. Felt this wasn't an American thing to do.
And he went to the door. Of course as he went to walk in. He couldn't get in.
Because the evil spirits were withholding him. Withstanding him. He was physically a strong man.
Couldn't get in. If you want to read about it. It's in Wesley Jewelers book.
Couldn't get in. The young pastor shouted at him. Hold out the sword.
And pray in Jesus name. And the educated man. Just did what the young pastor told him.
He held out the book of God. And he says. I'm going through in Jesus name.
And he was through immediately. When the devil comes with his accusations. And he comes with his guilt.
And all the things that would prevent you. Having fellowship with your heavenly father. Your heavenly father.
Hold out the book of God. And say I'm going in Jesus name. Going in Jesus name.
Child of God. May God help you. And may God help me.
To get into the classroom. And when we get into it. And stay in it.
God will change us. He'll change us. I don't need to tell anymore.
Let's bow in prayer. Our father we bow in thy presence. We bow in prayer.
For the place of prayer. We confess oh God. How little we know.
Father bless us. Father what we're praying to be tonight. Is a company of thy people.
Lord we would want to know more. We pray Lord that thou. Help us even from this night on.
To give time to God. To give time in the classroom. To know the Lord.

Father we pray that thou. Will thy spirit upon us. Lord this is what you need with us.

Lord if you know nothing. If you were a child. Playing with things.

So great. Help me pray. Lord have mercy on us.

Give me your blessing. In Jesus name.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/yyvEWxda3pw.mp4>

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