

Friendship With God in Prayer

by Bill McLeod

The sermon emphasizes the importance of cultivating a genuine friendship with God through prayer and obedience to His commands.

Duration: 50:33

Scripture: Jeremiah 17:1, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Philippians 1:23

Topics: "Friend Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of spending quality time with God and listening to His voice. He highlights the need to be still and quiet in order to hear from God. The speaker also encourages believers to prioritize their relationship with God over worldly distractions and busyness. He shares a story of a young black man who felt called to be a pastor shortly after his conversion, highlighting the importance of God's guidance in our lives. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the need to watch and pray, and to give God our undivided attention.

Transcript

Years ago, I made a little covenant with God, and it went like this, Lord, if I'm ever sinful enough, stupid enough to fall into adultery, please take my life. And we have that agreement. But, you see, when I prayed the prayer, I also said, Lord, I'm as weak as anybody else.

I'm trusting you to lead me around this. Okay? The other thing was this, when Satan projects some beautiful gal into your mind, begin to pray for her immediately. He doesn't want you praying for anybody.

You know? That's the way to handle it. I think it was Vance Havner that said, Everybody wants to know what the Bible says in the Hebrew and the Greek. Nobody wants to do what it says in the English.

You know, you hear that a lot. You know, what does the Greek say? What does the Hebrew say? I haven't found that anywhere in the Bible yet. You know? Nobody ever said, what does the Hebrew say? You know? But this happens all the time.

Because people don't like to do what they read, what they hear. John 15, 7 to 17. But my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do whatsoever I command you.

Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knows not what his Lord doeth. But I have called you friends. For all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain. That whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that you love one another." Just that far.

Harold had suggested before the conference began that I bring a message on the cross, and I'm planning on that. It'll either be tonight or tomorrow. God is making it very clear to my heart what he wants me to share.

And I'm very glad for that. It means that you brethren are probably praying to that end. And I know in Crusades when people are really praying that way, it's just so easy to know exactly what God wants you to share.

And so thank you for praying. I want to talk this afternoon about an aspect of prayer that I think is probably the most... well, it's really basic to me to all prayer, and it's not recognized as such, probably not for many even thought about. Somebody said that the average Christian doesn't really have fellowship with God.

He has fellowship with other Christians about God. In 1 Corinthians 1, there's a verse Paul said, "...God is faithful by whom you were called unto the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." So we were called to have fellowship with Jesus Christ. Then in 1 John 1, 3, "...that which we have seen and heard we declare unto you that you also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ." So in these verses, it's indicated very clearly that we are to have fellowship with God.

Now there are some radical views about prayer. I'll give you two extremes. I read somebody said that prayer doesn't really accomplish anything, but it's sort of a kind of spiritual PT.

It's good for the soul. Then the opposite extreme. I read an excellent book on prayer, but the writer said that to him, prayer was backing a three-ton truck up to the warehouse of heaven and then driving away to the full load.

Well, that's an extreme position too. If that's all there is to prayer, we're missing the mark. To some Christians, God is just a cozy thought.

It's nice to know he's around up there. You know, things get out of hand. He's got a fire engine.

If the devil lights some fires we can't handle, you call on God, he'll squirt some water on them. Some people get too tough, God's got a big clump, he'll beat them over the head. And you know, this is the attitude we often have.

Some people go to God every day with a grocery list of the things they want, and they're trying to make a celestial errand boy out of God. They've got God running all over the place doing things for them. And many times our praying is totally selfish, and we miss the mark.

Certainly we miss the mark suggested in these texts that we're supposed to be having fellowship with God. It has been said, and I think truly, that if God could have a need, it would be for fellowship. Have you ever seen a cow pray? Ever seen a horse reading the Bible? Of all the myriad forms that God has created

on earth, not one of them prays.

God can't have and doesn't have fellowship with them. But he made us in his image and likeness because he wants to have fellowship with us. And often we forget that in our praying, I mean.

So I want to explore this a little bit. James said in the second chapter of his book that Abraham was called the friend of God. Where did he get that from? Well, he got it from 2 Chronicles 20 and then from Isaiah 41.

In 2 Chronicles 20, Jehoshaphat was Judah's king. They were facing an army of Ammonites, Moabites, and the children of Mount Seir, a huge army. They had no resources with which to meet these people, and so they called a prayer meeting.

When you don't know what to do, pray. When you need help, pray. I think it was probably the greatest prayer meeting in history because the whole nation was there.

The men, the women, the children, the babies, everybody. And they came and they stood before God. And Jehoshaphat prayed a godly man.

And he reminded God in his prayer that we are, he said, the children of Abraham, your friend. But wait a minute, wait a minute. Abraham had been dead a long while.

Why didn't he say, We're the children of Abraham who long ago used to be your friend. That's not what he said. Of Abraham, your friend.

In other words, he understood that Abraham was alive and well on the other side having fellowship with God. He was still a friend of God. Now, it's important to grasp that truth because it comes up other places in the Old Testament as well.

Moses had a father-in-law who had five names, Ruel, Raguel, Jether, Jethro, and Hoban. I don't know what all this means, but I do know this, that Ruel and Raguel meant the friend of God. He was a priest.

He had some knowledge of God, and I think he communicated some of that knowledge to Moses, his son-in-law. He seems to have been a dynamic character, but very little is written about him. We read about him rejoicing before God and eating before God and helping Moses out, giving Moses some ideas about organizing the nation so he wouldn't wear himself out and so on.

But his name meant the friend of God. In John 15, Jesus Christ said, Henceforth, I call you not servants, for the servant knows not what his Lord is doing. But I have called you friends, for all things that my Father has taught me, he said basically, I've given to you.

I've taught you. And in Luke chapter 12, Jesus Christ said, And I say unto you, my friends. There's an old song.

It's not in my song books anymore. I don't know why. I'll be a friend to Jesus.

Maybe it's not there because people didn't catch it. They didn't see what the writer was getting at. Is that a term that's too familiar? If it is, why did God write about it? Then in Isaiah 41a, God reminded Jacob that they were the children of Abraham, my friend.

This is much later. And Abraham is still having fellowship with God. Then in Matthew chapter 22, the Lord Jesus, in talking with the Sadducees, the Sadducees believed too little and the Pharisees believed too much.

The Sadducees believed there was no resurrection at all and the Pharisees believed there was a resurrection not only of people but of angels. Well, angels don't die. And Jesus Christ wanted to get some truth across to these Sadducees and so He said, He quoted from Exodus chapter 3 where God said, I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Not I was. I am their God. They're alive.

They're well. You're thinking about resurrection. Yes or no? They're in the presence of God.

They're alive and well. And He got that truth across in a subtle way in Matthew chapter 22. He said, All live unto Him.

It's not soul sleep when you die. To depart and be with Christ, Paul wrote, is far better. To be with Christ.

Two men in a church. I pastored many years ago. I had four churches.

I preached four times every Sunday and had three prayer meetings every week and a young people's meeting so I really had to prepare for eight meetings a week. And I was a young preacher and I made up my mind I was going to discipline myself and never preach the same message twice. Even on Sunday I could have got away with that.

One sermon four times. No problem. But I wanted to discipline myself and so I did.

And I thought I was following Spurgeon's example. And then I read in a book one of his sermons one time. He mentioned the sermon he preached.

He said at least 50 times. And I guess if he can, I can. You know Dick Siple, he's one of our... Have any of you met him, heard him? I know some of you know him.

And Dick's a great man of God. He's got a great word. I enjoy listening to Dick preach.

He's been a pastor for many years. He's resigned his church in Regina, Canada. He's from the States.

And he's touring now doing conference work and revival meetings and so on. And he was telling us a while ago he carries 400 sermons with him. So when the revival comes, I can hit the ground running and burn out in a year.

That's what he said. Well, I carry 800 sermons with me, but not here. I don't have 800 sermons here for the same reason, to hit the ground running and burn out.

I'll likely burn out before he does because he's quite a bit younger than I am. Abraham, the friend of God. A mere mortal, a friend of God's.

How can it be? But it's true. Now Moses was called... A favorite title for him in the Bible was Moses, the man of God. He could never get too much of God.

He's also called Moses, the servant of the Lord. And in spite of the position he had as Israel's mediator, he was the meekest man on the face of the earth, it says. Very meek, very humble.

And one day, his brother Aaron and his sister Miriam... And I think there's evidence in the story that Miriam led Aaron into this problem. Now there's a verse that says, The Lord spoke unto Moses face to face as a man speaks unto his friend. Oh, Moses was a friend of God too.

Yes, that's what it said. So then they spoke against Moses because he married a Cushite, a black woman, an Ethiopian. And they didn't like that.

And so they said, Has God spoken only by Moses? Hasn't he spoken by us or to us? And the Lord heard. And the Lord called Moses, Aaron, and Miriam out from the camp. And I can just see Aaron and Miriam looking and winking at each other.

Moses is going to find out. He's going to find out. He's not the big shot after all.

So the three of them are standing there and then God called Miriam and Aaron to step forward. Well, now they're positive. Poor Moses, he's left behind.

And God said to Miriam and Aaron, If I speak to a prophet, I speak through a vision or a dream. But my servant Moses is not so. With him I speak mouth to mouth.

And the similitude of the Lord shall he behold. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? And Miriam was smitten with leprosy from top to toe. That's the reason I think that she was the responsible, guilty one.

She led Aaron into it. He was kind of a weak guy. Because if they were both equally guilty, then both of them would have been struck with leprosy and they weren't.

And God said, If her father had spit in her face, she'd have to be put outside the camp for seven days. Stick her outside the camp for seven days. Which was God's way of saying, Miriam, I just spit in your face.

Don't try this again. Moses was a special friend to God. Then we have some other examples.

David was called a man after God's own heart. We know he turned aside at one point and sinned grievously and paid an awful price for it. Don't think he got away with it.

I mean, four of his children died. Three of them violently. That's the price he paid for sinning with another man's wife.

There's always a price to pay for sin. Payday, someday. Somewhere.

But David was a man of prayer. We know that. Evening and morning and noon while I pray, he said, and cried out, and God will hear my voice.

I prevented the dawning of the morning and cried, which means I got up before the sun was up and prayed. Seven times a day do I praise Thee because of Thy righteous judgment. At midnight will I rise to give thanks unto Thee.

So he prayed before the sun was up. He was praying at midnight. He was praying three times a day.

He was certainly a man of prayer. And no doubt that's why he's called a man after God's own heart. In spite of what happened, that was an incident in 40 years.

He served God faithfully the rest of the time. But he was a man after God's own heart. So it doesn't say anywhere he was a friend to God, but the inference certainly is there.

He loved to spend time with God. You know, I remember hearing a lady one time and it went like this. She said, I hear these stories about people praying for a half an hour or an hour or something.

She said, I'm prayed out in five minutes. I said, I want you to think right now of your very best friend. She said, okay, I've got it in her mind.

I said, are you two talked out in five minutes? Oh, heavens no, she said. We can talk for two hours and it's not over. I said, are you telling me that God is less interesting than your friend is? Is that the problem? I guess she never thought of it that way before.

I should have said this one on the subject of Moses. You know, he spent 40 days and 40 nights in the mountain twice, a total of 80 days and 80 nights. And I was thinking about that one and I said to myself, what were they doing for all this time? Okay, so he's getting the Ten Commandments.

Couldn't he get that in 15 minutes or less? I guess he could. What about the rest of the law? Well, he got some of the law down in the camp. There's an indication of that.

So let's say it took two days for God to give him the law. What were these two people doing for 78 days? I came across the word communing. They were communing together.

And God had found a man who would give him what we call quality time. He wasn't wearing a wristwatch. He didn't have a calendar with him.

He was alone with God, a man of God. He couldn't get too much of God. He wasn't asking God for a bunch of things.

He didn't have a grocery list. And he wasn't trying to make a celestial errand boy out of God either. He was basking in the presence of God.

I suppose they talked about creation and a thousand other things. I don't know. And maybe we'll never really know.

But he was a man of God. And God was not displeased, even although trouble developed in the camp because he was away for this long period of time. God was not displeased, I say.

Daniel prayed three times a day, even after he knew it might cost him his life. He prayed, it says, as aforetime, as he did before. So if somebody passed a stupid law forbidding this, so what? Opens his windows towards Jerusalem and prays as he always did.

Then I remember reading something that brought tears to my eyes. Spurgeon, when he died. Few people realized the power God gave this man.

He had a tremendous intellect. He could read two or three books in an hour, perhaps, and then quote whole pages verbatim. And they said he never forgot anything he read.

Now that makes me look about a half an inch high. He had 12,000 books in his library. And one time, a doctor talked with him, and after half an hour, he walked away and said, he knows as much about medicine as I do.

He could be a doctor if he wanted to. He was walking with a friend under the stars one night. And he said to his friend, it was a beautiful night, he said to his friend, you give me a text and I'll preach you a sermon.

So his friend thought he'd get a tough one. Ah, 1 Corinthians 15. One star differs from another star in glory.

He said Spurgeon stepped back and for half an hour he preached as if there were 10,000 people there. One of the most magnificent sermons about Jesus Christ, the morning star. They said he was always full.

One man spent some hours with him one day and came out shaking his head. He said he's cradled by the Holy Ghost. If ever a man had a reason to be proud, it was him.

He was sick the last 20 years of his life. His wife was bedridden for 20 years and they both agreed God did this to keep them humble. It was such a danger.

He could go anywhere in the British Isles and do something that I don't know of any preacher that could do what he did. He could go anywhere in the British Isles and if there was one hour's notice that Spurgeon was going to preach on the commons in the village, there'd be 10,000 people waiting. Billy Graham couldn't do that.

I mean to bring him in by buses from all over, that's a different thing entirely. But he had a great gift for preaching and particularly for exalting Christ. Somebody went to hear another great preacher in London and then went to hear Spurgeon and somebody asked his opinion.

What did you think of these two men? Ah, he said, Dr. Parker, he's a tremendous preacher. Spurgeon, he has a tremendous Savior. When he was dying, what were his dying thoughts? He turned to Susanna, his wife, and said, Oh wifey, I've had such a good time with my Lord.

And he died. Fellowship of God. He knew what that meant.

They said at the communion table he'd get talking about Christ, he'd be carried away and some people said it can't be real. Jesus can't be that real to him. But he was.

He was. And he lived to preach Christ. He said the only fear he had was that at the judgment his congregation would point their finger to him and say, You were not faithful.

It's the only fear he had. A friend of God's. You know that song, I am thine, O Lord, I've heard thy voice and I've told thy love to me.

There's a line in it that says, Oh the pure delight of a single hour, that before thy throne I spend. When I kneel in prayer with thee, my God, I commune as friend with friend. And some wags said the average Christian would have to save up for two months to get the hour.

Is it true? Is it really true? For some it is. I was asked to speak to a preacher's meeting one time, I forget exactly where it was, somewhere in the States, and there were 45 preachers there and they told me, now this has been set up in very short notice, so they said you'll have to talk while they eat. Okay, so I did that,

I talked while they ate.

Afterwards a fellow came up, he must have weighed 300 pounds, a huge fellow, and he said, God must have sent you here today. And I said, why? He said, two weeks ago I took my Bible and I threw it on the floor and I haven't prayed or read the Bible for two weeks. Can you help me? And so we were able to help him.

God helped him. And so, if there's anything that's wrong about our praying brethren, it's right here. We're not thinking in terms of fellowshiping with God.

We're thinking of informing God about a thousand things he knows all about and other things. It's the way we do it. It's the way it's done.

Dr. Gordon Johnson, I knew him years ago, I think he's retired now, and he was, he went to a place, a guy from my church, they went to have a Coke, and Dr. Gordon bowed his head and gave thanks to the Lord and praised the Lord before they drank the Coke. So this fellow said afterwards, Do you always pray when you drink a Coke? Oh, he said, it's not that, he said, it's just another opportunity to talk to Jesus. He had it right.

He had it right. Elijah spent three and a half years in the wilderness. How did he manage? These people say, wouldn't he go off his rocker, three and a half years in a wilderness situation? As far as I'm concerned, it would be fantastic as long as he had a Bible.

Couldn't understand, how can a man keep his sanity? It's harder to keep your sanity in civilization. You know, it's a crazy world, no matter how you look at it. His counterpart, John the Baptist, spent 30 years in training in the wilderness for six months ministry.

Was that a waste of time, those 30 years? It says, until the day of his showing unto Israel. One day God paraded him out and said, look at my man, filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb. And Jesus Christ said, there have not risen a greater prophet than John the Baptist.

He didn't waste 30 years in the wilderness. People said, why wasn't he out doing a lot of good things, involved in people's problems? God never upbraided him for this. God prepared him for that short ministry.

It was dynamic and powerful. People sometimes think that all that John the Baptist did was say, well, Jesus is coming. I made a special study of John the Baptist one time.

I found he taught 35 different topics altogether. 35 of them. I mean, he dumped a truckload and his courage, even telling Herod, wicked Herod, it's not lawful for you to have your brother filled with swine, which tells me something else, that the Word of God is binding on the unconverted.

Sometimes we think it isn't. And we excuse him and say, well, he's not a Christian, so the Word of God isn't binding on him. Yes, it is.

Remember what Christ said in John? He said, he that rejects me and receives not my word has one that judges him. The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. So the Word of God is binding on the unconverted.

And John the Baptist said, he that has the bride is the bridegroom. But the friend of the bridegroom who stands and hears his voice rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is

fulfilled.

What he was saying was, I'm a friend to Jesus. A friend to Jesus. Are you a friend to Jesus? If you treated your best friend the way you treat Jesus time-wise, would you have a friend? If every time you talked to your friend, you were asking him for money or something else, he wouldn't answer the phone after a while or the doorbell either, would he? But this is what we do with God.

Charles Finney talks about a man, he stayed in his house. The man was a very successful businessman but an extremely devout, spiritual Christian. And he didn't know how this guy could be so full of God when he was so busy in his job.

Then one night, Finney woke up in the middle of the night. He wasn't feeling well and he thought he'd maybe walk outside and get some fresh air. He came down and here was his host kneeling by the fireplace praying to his Bible.

He found that he did it every night. Then he understood. You've probably heard the story possibly of Moody.

He was, you know, one time he visited 85 homes one Saturday. A feat of flesh work, one of his biographers said, now to be admired and remunerated. And he went to a friend and he said, he told him how busy he was and then he said, but I'm not accomplishing anything.

Nothing's happening. I don't know what's wrong. And they were sitting on a veranda and so this elderly Christian said, Mr. Moody, take a deep breath and he did.

Let it out and he did. Now let it out again. He said, well I can't because I breathe in.

He said, that's your problem. That's your problem. You're trying to breathe out, you haven't breathed in.

You're trying to give what you don't have. And sometimes we spend time with God just to get a sermon. That's really all we're interested in.

Get a sermon. Instead of just being alone with God and talking to Him, loving Him, thanking Him, praising Him. Waiting to hear Him speak.

In Mark 13, we're told really to listen. And in Mark 13, it's watch. Watch.

Watch. Watch and pray. Harold Kelm is a PhD in Canada.

He lives in Saskatoon. He teaches philosophy. He's written some books on philosophy that people say are without a peer in the Canadian market.

And he's a very, very godly person. I don't know of anybody that spends as much time in prayer as Harold Kelm does. But some years ago he said to me, Brother Bill, he was not there at the time of the revival.

He said, Brother Bill, my Christian likeness is just flat and I don't want it to stay that way. Can you suggest some books that would help? When somebody asks that question, I usually suggest four books, two sets of two each. Spurgeons, The Early Years, and The Full Harvest, or the two books on George Whitefield's life.

So he bought the two books on George Whitefield's life. He said he was absolutely turned inside out. He saw things in Whitefield's life that he never dreamed of.

You know, the last two years of Whitefield's life, he was so near to death that every time he preached they figured he'd drop dead afterwards. And so they had people, they had a fellow hired to stay with him day and night in case he ran into trouble and needed help. And this young man was with him for two years before he actually died.

And afterwards he said, it's all true, everything you've heard about this man is true. He said night after night, on his knees, weeping for souls of men, an hour, two hours, three hours. Whitefield, great preacher, that was not to say, great prayer, loving as God, alone as God.

Harold Kelman, if he said to you, brother, would you pray with me? You've got to think of two hours. And it'll go like this, all right brother, you pray and I'll watch. And after a while it'll say, now you watch and I'll pray.

And it goes like this, watch and pray, watch and pray, watch and pray. Well how do you watch? What do you watch? I mean, how do you watch? You just kneel there, you watch, watch, you watch. The room is dark, you can't see anything.

We must realize that God wants us to be quiet and listen to His voice, be still and know that I'm God. We don't like to be still, we don't know how to be still. The Lord is in His holy temple and all the earth keeps silence before Him.

Even as Christians, we have to have a lot of noise sometimes to be happy. We lean on this stuff, you see. God wants us alone with Him so He can talk to us.

We can talk to Him. It's a two-way conversation. He's got more to say than I have.

I need to listen to my God. And so it means that we have to put ourselves out, time-wise, to be a friend to God. Would history say that you were a friend to God or just that you were a Christian or a preacher or something? A friend to God, you'll defend God.

If people blaspheme Him or misrepresent Him, you'll be on your feet in a second to say something, even although the crowd may be extremely unfriendly and you run the risk of perhaps losing your life. Whitefield was stoned. They pelted him with rotten eggs.

They threw tomatoes at him, rotten tomatoes at him. They threw dead cats at him. They sicked dogs on him.

They tried to run bulls into the crowd to disperse the crowd. Men climbed trees and took all their clothes off to divert the attention of the congregation away from Whitefield and his preaching. They took him down to the river and threw him in.

It happened to the Westleys as well as Whitefield. And they never turned back. They stood up there.

You know, he had a little portable pulpit he took with him. A bunch of people get on the pulpit and start preaching. That's how they did it in those days.

Now, Whitefield was very dramatic. He didn't sometimes stay on the pulpit. He ran around a little bit.

They said, John Wesley, when he preached, nothing moved but his mouth. He just stood there with his hands at his sides and preached. And they both had, you know, great success.

As far as God is concerned, you have to be what you are. I remember in the church in Winnipeg many years ago, I was a missionary to logging camps and I was a member of the board of the church. When I was home, I sat in the board meetings.

In one board meeting, they got concerned because some people complained because the preacher, when he preached, he pounded the pulpit and he stamped his feet. They thought it was wrong. Brother Bill, what do you think? Well, I said, I read in the Old Testament, the Lord said, I'm not sure if it was Jeremiah or Ezekiel and I have to look it up.

But God said, smite with your fist and stamp with your foot. That was the end of it. Then again, Isaiah 58.

It says, lift up your voice like a trumpet. Declare unto my people their transgressions and to the house of Israel their sins. So to speak like a trumpet blowing.

Stand up and be counted for God's sake. There's an old song that says when you count up those that love the Lord, count me, count me. When you count up those that trust His Word, count me, count me.

Count me with the children of the heavenly King. Count me with those whose praises sing. When you count up those who love the Lord, count me.

We've got thousands of Christians. They don't want to be counted. They don't want to stand up.

They don't say anything. They hear all kinds of garbage. They just walk away.

They feel badly about it. They don't say anything. I remember a gal one time, she asked for advice.

She said, down in the office where I work, it's filthy stories from morning till night and cursing and swearing. It's terrible. How do I handle it? I said, every time somebody swears or tells a dirty story, start singing, Jesus loves me.

This I know. She did it. She said, the office is so sweet now.

Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good. That's how to do it. You know, the average person never sees a real Christian.

He hears about Christianity, but he never sees a real Christian. I was going past a drugstore one day, a bunch of young people standing there. There was a kid there, blaspheming Christ in a terrible way.

I pushed my way through the crowd and walked up and I said, I said, son, you're talking about my very best friend. And I don't like what you're saying. I had 12 pairs of eyes just glued in on me.

Where did this freak come from? I excused myself and walked away. And there was absolutely, total silence. I'll guarantee he'll never forget it as long as he lives.

People, we need to stand up and be confident. And God can use us. If we're a real friend to God, won't we defend him? If you heard somebody blaspheming your wife, would you stand for it? I was in a home one time, and after we were having coffee, and then the gal said, and the husband was sitting right there, she said, I invite you here tonight because I want to talk to you about my husband.

And he turned as red as fire. I knew something was coming. She said, two weeks ago, our teenage son beat me up and knocked me on the floor, and my husband stood there and watched and never said a word and never did a thing.

Then he tells me he loves me. How can I believe him? I said, sir, is this true? He said, it's true. I said, how do you explain it? He says, I'm a sinner.

Never said a word. Never did anything. And his son is beating up his wife.

But we're like that often, you know. People curse and blaspheme, say things about Jesus Christ, and there could be 20 Christians within hearing distance, and there is no word said. Everybody's quiet, playing the cool man so they don't get into trouble.

And it's so wrong. I'll be a friend to Jesus. He wants me for a friend, truly.

Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. And God teaches us things in the night season when we're alone with Him and the telephone isn't ringing and hopefully the babies aren't crying. And God communicates with us.

He gives us songs in the night, it says. My meditation of Him shall be sweet, not of some doctrine of Him. We are told to meditate in His Word, yes.

But we're told to have sweet meditations of our God. I drove once from Regina to Saskatoon, which is 165 miles. As I've indicated and given some evidence, I don't sing.

And I was driving in the car and it was a beautiful summer day and there was all kinds of little clouds in the air everywhere you looked. There were these little clouds. If you're in an airplane looking down, it looks like sheep in a field, you know.

And all of a sudden, zinger, came into my mind that verse, the Lord has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm and the clouds are the dust of His feet. Wow. You know what happened? I got a song.

With four verses. And it all rhymed and then He gave me the music. And I sang that with the tears running down my face for almost the whole way.

Once I got it, I had it. And I could hardly wait to get home to write it down, you know. I got home and forgot the whole thing.

The only thing I remember is this, the clouds are the dust of His feet. That's all I remember. Then it dawned on me, it was between the Lord and I, you know.

Just having fellowship. Quality time is not wasted time. We all... Now remember this, let's just back up a little bit.

Do you believe in predestination? I shouldn't ask that question. Listen, you have to believe it because it's in the Bible. What you believe about it is different.

You might not believe about what I believe about it. I'm not going to tell you what I believe about it. That's not the point today.

But, you know how I get straightened up? Now some people have it this way, that you can accept Christ, you can live like the devil, you can do anything you want and you'll go to heaven when you die. I don't believe that. And the way I got straightened up was this.

I was in danger of falling into this trap, you see. I was reading in Rome's chapter 8 and it says we are predestinated not to be carried to Him in an armchair, predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son. Oh, wait a minute, wait a minute, that's different.

Then I read in Ephesians chapter 1, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. So I was chosen to be holy, blameless and a loving person. Now that's different.

First Peter chapter 1, elect unto obedience. I was elected to be an obedient child of God. If these three things are not there, well, there's more than three, three references.

If these are not there, then I don't have predestination right. And so predestine, let's look at one, to be conformed to the image of His Son. A living epistle of Jesus Christ, known and read of all men, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

Otherwise, we may be like Judah in Jeremiah 17.1, the sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron and with a point of a diamond. It's graven, he said, on the table of their heart. Their hearts were so hard, it took a pen of iron and a point of a diamond to write their sin down.

I don't want that. A living epistle of Jesus Christ, known and read of all men. So in 2 Corinthians 3.18, but we all, with an unveiled face, in the context He's talking about Moses coming down from the mountain with a veil over His face, because the glory of God was on His countenance and people couldn't even look at Him.

God says, we're to come before Him with a veil, a mask taken off. Sometimes we even try to fool God. You can fool your wife.

I suppose we've all tried. You don't always succeed. And other people.

But it's an absolute incert, it's an absolute insult to the omniscient God to try and fool Him. It's better to say nothing than to say the wrong thing to God. God is just saying, be what you are.

You're welcome if you be what you are. You're not welcome if you wear a mask. God wants us to take the masks off before Him first of all.

When Achan came before Joshua, Joshua said, tell me now what you have done and confess to the Lord God of Israel. And sometimes it's not just quite enough to tell God. Sometimes we need to tell other believers.

I know Achan woke up dead anyway in spite of his confession. God had to take his life because 35 people died because of his sin. And he was guilty before God.

And because he runs a moral government, Achan had to die. We all in an unveiled face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are chained into the same image from glory to glory. It doesn't all happen at once.

Even in a revival. Even as by the Spirit of the Lord. It's kind of an unconscious thing that goes on when we spend time with Jesus.

When we fellowship with Him we may not even be aware of what's going on but He's changing us. He's knocking off some sharp corners. I remember talking to a fellow one time.

He said concerning his wife, whether we make love or fight we do it furiously. And they were Christians. And one day I happened to say that God uses our wives to sandpaper us.

And he started to laugh. He laughed till the tears ran down his face. He roared with laughter.

He never said anything like it. And of course what had happened was that hit the nail on the head as far as his experience was concerned. Isn't it true though? God uses our wives to sandpaper us.

It's all part of His program. Be warned before you get married. You know Gordon Bailey was telling me a while ago he said my wife was telling me some of my faults.

And I said honey why is it that I'm the only that you're the only person I know that talks to me like this? And she said sweetly because I'm the only one that loves you. And I give her 100% marks on that. But people you know as we spend time alone with God then we're not wasting time.

We're renewing our strength. We're being changed at the image of Christ. God speaks His word to us.

He shows us clearly what He'd have us do and be in those quiet times when we're alone with Him. But if we're tearing around doing a thousand things some of which need to be done and some of which would be better undone and some of which can wait. Dear people to give God quality time.

I read in an African periodical I want a story I want to share with you before I close. A young black got converted. He could read and write.

He came to the missionaries shortly after he was converted and said God has called me to be a pastor. Give me a church. Well the missionaries had a meeting and said this kid I mean there's just no way.

I mean there's no he's only been saved a few months to begin with. You can't do that anyway. And besides he doesn't give any evidence.

So let's tell him to come back in six months. He'll forget about it. He won't come back.

He was back in six months and said well the six months are up. Where's the church? They'd forgotten all about it. So they had another meeting so let's give him another three months.

Okay so come back in three months. We haven't quite made our mind up yet so he came back in three months. And he kept on.

And so finally they had a church. Somebody said about it they've been scrapping so much they could have written their own history of the wars of the Lord. They were now down to twelve people.

And so they said look let's give this kid this church. Now we won't tell him about its record and it's on the way out it's on his belly now. He doesn't know that.

We won't tell him that. And of course it won't be long after he begins pastoring the church that it will fall totally and then we can tell him well son you know we never felt you were called to the ministry. And that's what those rascally missionaries did.

When I read the article he was still a pastor years later. The church now had five thousand members. Do you know what the secret was? This kid knew his own weakness.

And he found a cave in the hills somewhere. And every now and then he'd say to the congregation God is calling me away I don't know when I'll be back. I might be gone a week or two or three weeks.

Pray for me when I'm gone. He'd take his Bible. Take his sack of food.

He'd fast some days. He'd drink from the creek nearby. He'd just spend hours alone with God in prayer and fellowship reading the Bible.

Fellowshipping with God. And he said every time he came back to the pulpit there was a new revival and sometimes hundreds would be saved. But in our churches if you did that they'd fire you.

He's gone golfing or fishing or something. I mean people are so carnal and worldly they couldn't go along with a thing like this. I mean we're paying this guy to preach in the pulpit.

What's he doing off in the bush somewhere for three weeks? You know. That's how it is. And we're largely to blame because we don't really clue people in the way we should regarding some of these matters.

May I ask you this question as we close? Are you currently giving quality time to God? That's something you have to answer. Are you a friend to God? Do you commune regularly with Him? Do you give Him, I say quality time? You say you're too busy. I heard a man lecturing on Finney say one time we think we're busy when we're just buzzing.

And that's so true. Let's bow in prayer.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/18/SID18404.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/bill-mcleod/friendship-with-god-in-prayer/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net