

The Friends of God

by Bill McLeod

To be a friend of God, we must prioritize prayer, worship, and quality time with Him, and seek to maintain a close and personal relationship with Him.

Duration: 50:53

Scripture: Genesis 18:17-19, Exodus 33:11, Psalm 104:34, Proverbs 27:17, John 15:15, 1 John 1:3

Topics: "Friend Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a personal story about a man from his church who was in distress and came to see him. The man had experienced a family accident and was deeply affected by it. The preacher reflects on the importance of seeking God's guidance and not relying on our own plans. He emphasizes the need for Christians to prioritize spending quality time with God and shares examples from the Bible of individuals who dedicated time to God, such as Abraham and Moses. The preacher concludes by highlighting the transformative power of giving God quality time and encourages the congregation to do the same.

Transcript

You may be wondering as to what's happening over in Israel. In Zechariah chapter 12, God said he was going to make Jerusalem, and Jerusalem sometimes stands for the nation, not necessarily for the city. That he's going to make Jerusalem a cup of trembling, a cup of trembling, and a burdensome stone to all nations.

There are people from many countries in Lebanon, from France, from England, from Germany, from other European countries, from South America, from Canada, and many of them are really cursing Jehovah for what happened, they're blaming him. But God said he would do this. This is not a complete fulfillment, I don't think.

I do believe there's more coming yet. But that's made quite clear in Zechariah chapter 12. For a text in John 15, 14, Christ said, You are my friends if you do what I command you.

And he said henceforth from now on I call you not servants, for the servant doesn't know what his Lord is doing. But I've called you friends for all things that I've heard of my Father I've made known unto you. And you are my friends.

Have you ever thought of it this way, that we are really friends to God? We want to work on that a little bit today. 1 Corinthians 1, 9, God is faithful by whom you were called unto the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Or 1 John 3, 3, that which we have seen and heard, we declare unto you that you also may have fellowship with us.

And truly, he says, our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. In the psalm we sang there was a line, O the purity light of the single hour that before thy throne I spend, when I kneel in prayer with thee my God I commune as friend with Some might say the average Christian has to save up for a whole month to get the hour. And that may be true.

But don't really think of it that way. A friend of God's, having fellowship with God. Someone else said also that the average Christian does not have fellowship with God, he has fellowship with other Christians about God.

You see what he's saying? In John's Gospel chapter 4 there are 10 references to worshiping God. And after that there are 10 references to working for God. And it's not by accident it's in that order.

Because we can't really work for God if we don't know how to worship God. Worship comes before work. 40 days with Christ after the resurrection, then 10 days prayer, and then the advent of the Spirit, and then work that never ended.

But it began with worship. And it's no different in my opinion today. You know, prayer to some is like spiritual PT.

People in liberal churches for example, they say well prayer is a healthy exercise for the soul, but it really doesn't get anything or do anything. That's an extreme position. There's another extreme position which I picked up out of a book entitled Prayer, Asking and Receiving.

And the writer said prayer is driving a 3 ton truck up to the warehouse of heaven and then driving away with a full load. That's an extreme position too. You see prayer basically, first of all, is fellowship with God.

If it's not that, it's not right. You know Abraham was 3 times called the friend of God. When Jehoshaphat was praying with a nation because some enemies were coming, he reminded God that they were the seed, he said, of Abraham, your friend.

He didn't say of Abraham who used to be your friend long ago, which would be more correct if Abraham was slumbering somewhere. But he knew that Abraham was alive and well in the presence of God. That's why he said what he said.

And in Isaiah 41, he says the same thing, Abraham my friend. And in James he's called the friend of God. So this is important, you know, very important to understand.

Jesus picked up on this, you know, he said it's touching the resurrection. Haven't you read that God said I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? He didn't say I was or I used to be, but I am. What he was really saying was resurrection, they're all alive now, they're not dead.

They're in my presence, they're still my friends and my servants. Abraham the father, the friend of God. Then Moses' father-in-law had a number of names, I think altogether four or five.

He had the name Ruel, he had the name Raguel, and both these words meant the friend of God. I don't know how he got that. His parents may have been spiritual people.

Certainly he was a spiritual person and he actually helped Moses in some aspects of his work and worship. The friend of God. You are my friend, Christ said.

If you do whatsoever, I command you. Moses was often called the man of God. I think that title was used more than any in relation to Moses, the man of God.

But Exodus 33 says that God spoke with him face to face as a man speaks to his friend. And this thought is developed in a number of places. Numbers 12, 6, he spoke with Moses and it says mouth to mouth.

Face to face, Deuteronomy 34, 10. If you recall that Moses spent not 40 but 80 days alone with God in the mountain and never ate or drank wine. I've heard people say I haven't prayed all for five minutes.

It's probably because they don't understand that praying is having fellowship with God. You know, if we were to treat our earthly friends the way we treat God, we wouldn't have any. We don't have time for God.

We don't give God quality time. We tag a little bit on here and there. John Song, a famous Chinese evangelist who died just about the time the Communists took over in China.

He'd been in the States and got his education there. And while he never liked the States, he learned something in the States that he never forgot. Brought to China and helped to save China when the Communists took over.

He learned about the family altar. When I was a young Christian, almost every Christian home had a family altar. Nowadays if you ask the average Christian to help describe the family altar, they wouldn't have a clue.

I mean, we lost out, you know. Family altar, Halloween amulet. I had five kids.

And usually at the noon meal but later on at the supper meal when the kids were going to school, we'd have a time before we ate. And we sang some choruses and we read a little bit from the Bible. We'd have one liturgy or seven leading prayers.

We had a missionary book. We all read the story of a missionary to the kids, you know. And it was called the family altar.

And it alters people, you know. It's forgotten. It isn't done today.

I'm surprised that it's not, but it isn't done. We've forgotten. There's other things we've forgotten as well.

So we're teaching our kids that God wasn't really important, you know. You don't want to waste time doing nothing. You've got to do something, you know.

So if our churches are filled with do-gooders that don't do much spiritually, sometimes they do nothing spiritually. Abraham was a friend of God's. A friend of God's.

He gave time to God. Moses gave time, 80 days. How could he do this? I mean, how did he survive? I asked him sometimes, how would you like to live in a tent in a bush in a Canadian shield country for a month with nobody else around? Oh, heaven knows, what did he think about it? Two days are not for me.

But if you're a Christian, would it be that bad? Alone with God? Nothing around but loons and squirrels? My meditation in him should be sweet. I will be glad in the Lord. Oh, how I love your law.

It is my meditation all day. So all day long you find yourself thinking about God and you find yourself talking to God. And sometimes other people think you've, you know, you've kind of gone a little bit off because they heard you talking to somebody that wasn't there, you know.

Don't be alarmed about that. That's the way the Christian life should be. George Mueller was a very busy man with 2,000 orphans and a staff of 300 to 400.

Also co-pastor of a church with 1,200 people. He found time to pray for three hours every day. He said, if I don't pray three hours a day, I can't get the work done.

And on top of that, he spent an hour a day praying with his wife. He read the Bible through from cover to cover 200 times. He read the Bible through 100 times on his knees.

He wasn't worshipping the book. He was worshipping the God of the book. And he understood what it meant to be really a friend to God.

Does that make any sense? I ask God to waken me through the night and he does every night. Usually, I can't, I don't tell him what time, but usually it's around 2 o'clock, you know, and I get up. I can't lay in bed and pray because I'll be asleep in three seconds, but I get up and sit somewhere and just talk to God a little while.

Usually it's not revival anymore. When you wake up like that, do you ever find that he gives you a certain burden or something to pray about? Always, always I'm praying for revival in that particular period of time. Then I get up at four each morning and I've studied 12 chapters of the Bible every morning, sometimes 20, but usually about 12.

And then I spend time praying for friends of mine and I have a long list which keeps getting longer. But I sometimes I just sit and say nothing. He said, God said, be still.

And no ground God. Be still? Some Christians couldn't do it. You paid them \$100 an hour and they couldn't do that.

Sit still? Be still, he said. The Lord is in his holy temple and only one keeps silence before him. Be silent all flesh before the Lord for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.

I was asked to speak at a fellowship of 80 evangelical churches and I didn't know what kind of music they were going to have. The music was so loud. They had three men acting as song leaders.

You couldn't hear a word they said. The music was so loud. Now Wesley, they used music a lot but they had a cardinal principle which all the musicians had to follow.

It was this. The music must never overpower the words. The music doesn't have any message.

It's just a platform to carry the words. I was forgotten in that meeting and at one point the leader got up and he said, you think the music is being loud? Fasten your seatbelts. We're going to blow the roof off this building.

And I voted with my feet. I walked out and went home. I didn't even tell them I was going, you know.

I lived a half an hour away. My phone rang after I got home. I said, Brother Bill, you're on the program now.

I said, well, yes and no. You're not feeling well? I said, you could say that. You're not coming back? I said, no, I'm not coming back.

Well, I have to meet the fellow who invited me to speak at this thing later on and he thought the music was wonderful, you know. You know, it's a substitute for worshiping God. That's all it is.

Music has its place and I love gospel singing. I can listen to gospel songs for hours, you know. That's not it.

Why, you know, they sometimes told us that, you know, I'm a sophomore in grade three. How's it going out? Play skillfully, they say. Brother McClellan, listen to this.

Play skillfully. There's a loud noise. I said, that's right.

But they didn't have amplifiers when that was written. Just turn your amplifiers off. Well, I haven't thought of that, you know.

Anyway, I don't know how I got into this. 80 days. Jack Hiles, and I know there was a little cloud over him when he died, but Jack Hiles, as a young man, pastored a small Baptist church in Texas.

The church had about 50 members and nobody ever got saved. Then Jack Hiles' father, who was an alcoholic, died. And after the funeral, Jack Hiles went to his father's grave.

It was in a secluded place and he knelt there and he said, Lord, I never had enough power to get my own dad saved. There's got to be something wrong with me. I'm not going to eat and I'm not going to drink.

If I have to die, I'll die here. I'm not leaving my father's grave until you give me power to preach the gospel. People, he lay there three days and three nights and all he ever said was this, he touched me.

He touched me. He went back to his church the first time he preached, 18 people were saved. And that church of 40 or 50 members went up to 2,000 members in about six years.

Then he went down to Hammond, Indiana. And while he was there with Gordon Bailey, not ministering but just visiting, and a fellow was showing us around, asking how many members they had. He said, we have 95,000 members.

He said, we're baptizing 200 congregants a week and all. All added, and always added, was the model that Wesley had. And certainly they had it in that church as well.

But that's when it began, getting desperate to have the power of God. He often quoted that verse, I shall be anointed with fresh oil. And he said, if ever I sensed in the ministry that the power was going down, I did it again.

I got others to do it with me. We would fast and pray for a day, two days, three days, until the power of God returned. Fennie did the same thing.

He said, whenever I see the revival fires waning, I have a time of fasting and praying. And it comes back up again. The time spent alone with God is never, ever wasted time.

You know, prayer is not to change God, it's to change me. So that God can, consistent with his eternal purpose outlined in the Bible, God can do the things he always wanted to do, but couldn't do because it wasn't quite right. It's to change me, not to change God.

David was called a man after God's own heart. They were very close. Sometimes people wonder, how come David didn't have to die for his sin with Bathsheba and then kill him, Uriah, her husband? Why did, why was he so quickly forgiven? Well, I'm not going to go into that because I don't have an answer.

The grace of God, of course, comes from the surface there. But he was called the friend of God. Something Saul never could be, although he was king, as you know, before David was.

A man after God's own heart. Are we like that? Are we really people after God's heart? If we aren't, we can't minister effectively to one or to others. John the Baptist, he called himself a friend of Christ.

In John chapter 3. He said, he who has the bride is a bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom who hears his voice rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled. John the Baptist considered himself a friend of Christ.

Do you consider yourself a friend of Christ? Are you treating him like a friend? Are you giving him quality time every day and whatever you can, not just having a stated time for prayer and Bible study, but really seriously talking to him, fellowshiping with him. The apostles before Pentecost, Christ said the same. What? Couldn't you watch with me one hour? No, they couldn't.

They fell asleep. And he came to them three times. And they had to sleep.

And often, well again, people have told me this, you know. I even had a preacher one time, he said two weeks ago I threw my Bible on the floor. I haven't prayed in three weeks.

I haven't even communicated with God in any way for two weeks, you know. Well that was an extreme case. And he had some problems.

He dealt with those problems and as you know, God came back. Sin springs a leak in the cup of joy. That's what happens.

And that's not pleasant to be alone with God because we know there's something not right. And God's going to trouble me about it, so I avoid being alone with God. I don't mind being in a noisy meeting.

I can get a little exhilaration maybe from that, but I don't want to be alone with God. That's a very dangerous sign before Pentecost. But after Pentecost, we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.

But I'm not over it. Okay? Continue to prayer and to the ministry of the Word. I say again, in that order, brethren, we will give ourselves.

We'll just throw ourselves into it. We'll give all the time we possibly can to prayer. In Africa, I read in an African publication an interesting story about a young man.

He'd been to a Christian school. He was agreed to become a Christian. He had only been a Christian a very short time.

He came to missionaries and he said, God has called me to be a pastor. Please give me a church. Well, they had a private meeting.

This kid, I mean, he doesn't even have any signs of having, and he's just become a Christian a few weeks ago. This is crazy. Well, let's just tell him to think about it for six months.

So he told them to think about it for six months. Then they forgot about him. In six months he came back and what about the church? Oh, they'd forgotten about him.

So they put him off for another three months and he kept coming back, coming back. And finally the rascal missionaries got their heads together. They had a church and someone described it this way.

They could have written their own book on the wars of the Lord, you know. They were down about 12 people. And he said, I'll give that kid this church and it'll obviously go belly up.

And then we can say, look son, you know, God may well call you to be a pastor. And when I read the story, this kid was still a pastor and there were 5,000 members in the church. How did he do it? No training? Every now and then he would say to the congregation, God is calling me away.

And I may be gone for a week, I may be gone for two weeks, or I might be gone for three weeks, but I'll come back. You'll pray for me. And every time he came back, he found a cave in the hills and a little creek running by.

He'd take a sack of food, he might fast for three or four days at a time. Then he'd eat a little bit and drink food and books and all of this. But he spent this time alone with God, you know.

And every time he came back from that cave, there was a new revival in the congregation. And sometimes hundreds of people would be saved. Now if a pastor would do that in Canada, they would fire him.

They'd conclude he's gone on a fishing trip or he's gone golfing. You know, right? See we've lost it. A missionary in Africa told me one time, he said, my great fear is that my people in Africa will find out how Canadian Christians live.

If they ever find out, my ministry's finished. He said, my people, they think no one's giving two-tenths or three-tenths or one-tenths, you know. And they all believe in evangelizing, going out and talking to other people about Christ and trying to win people Christ and all of this.

I mean, the work of God was everything to them. They knew how to worship God. They understood that God was a friend.

And friends come first, right? Especially, I would say, this friend. Boxing, and this is interesting, you know, John Sung in China, great event. Boxing in India, great evangelist.

Matter of fact, he used to call him the Billy Graham of India. And most of the missionaries used him. They'd have him for crusades and all kinds of people would be saved.

But boxing, through prayer and evaluation and all this, he came to the conclusion this is not the way to reach India's millions. So he broke amicably with the missionaries. He got a group of men, five or six men together, and explained the passion of his heart.

He said, we're not doing it right. There's got to be a better way. And they decided to do what the Bible said.

Christ didn't say if you fast, he said when you fast, which means he took it for granted that we as children fast from time to time. I'm not going to ask how many of you do that, maybe none of you, some of you I'm sure do, but there's very few that fast. They joke about it, one guy said, every time I fast all I think about is food.

And by the way, he looked like it. But anyway, I was in the hospital a while ago, and the guy next to me was a Jewish doctor. He taught at the medical college and he used to be the head of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, a very musical person.

We happened to be in the same room, you know. So one day he told me, he said, you know, I think I eat too much. And he said, what does the Bible say about that? Well, it calls that person a glutton.

Oh, he said, that's a bad word. I said, there's a worse word in the New Testament. What's that he said? Well, it speaks of a people whose God is their guardian.

Oh, he said, that's a hard one. Anyway, when you fast, not if you fast. So they began to fast and pray.

They decided not to do anything unless they had, as a group, clear guidance from God. Now, I wrote a little book, it's called The Return of God's Fire. It's not available over here.

I've got a copy in India and have a copy in my library. So God showed them clearly what they were to do, when they were to do it, who's to be on the team, and where they were to go. They didn't do, they might have found this one out, here's a village over here, there's 8,000 people there, and there's no Christian work, we better start something over there.

They didn't do that. They did that in the start, and then they saw this was not God's way. So they waited for clear guidance, and they got it.

And the first time they got guidance to go, a certain group, men and women, to a certain marketplace, where you could give out a million tracts in one day, if you really wanted to, I suppose. And they went out there and gave out all the tracts they had, and went back, nothing seemed to happen. They prayed again, and God said, when you got to that marketplace, you didn't wait on me for guidance.

Oh. So then, as he said, we began doing God's work, in God's way, every one of us looking to God for personal guidance in every situation, and not just doing something. And then, he said, the glory of God returned.

He said, we had meetings, every bit as powerful as anything Charles Hingham saw, and that's saying a lot. He died, I think, a year or so ago. He left behind them, I think, about 700 assemblies, some of them with 2,000 or 3,000 members in them, and they had annual conferences where 20,000 people would show up, and this kind of thing.

For India, that was very unusual. But I think he had it right, and he was doing it right. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God, right? Walk on the Spirit, and you won't fulfill the lust of the flesh.

The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary to one to the other, so that you cannot do the things that you would. You can't do it. And some of them, we've got to get back to place where God is our supreme friend, our number one friend, and we give God quality time every day.

Other things will fall into place. People say, I'm so busy, I can't do this. Well, then maybe you're too busy.

I remember hearing a speaker when I was a very young Christian, and he said, after describing some things he'd seen in the Revival time, he said, we think we're busy here in North America, we're just buzzy. And that's true in many cases, you know. You are my friends.

Henceforth I call you not servants, because a servant doesn't know what his master is doing. But I've called you friends. For all the things my Father has made known to me, I've made known to you.

Friends of God. The Apostle Paul would often use the phrase, night and day, praying exceedingly. Night and day, praying.

That seems to be foremost with Paul, too. We know, of course, that Paul had many occasions where Jesus came to him personally and spent time with him. He talked about the abundance of the revelations.

And that's why he was able to say in 1 Corinthians chapter 14, if you think yourself to be spiritual, let them acknowledge that the things that I run into you are the commandments of the Lord. He got it all from Christ. First hand.

Not as the other apostles have for three and a half years. We don't know how long this went on. Possibly all his adult life, we don't know.

There have been many, many personal meetings with Christ. So his fellowship with Christ, now that that fellowship changed the epistles and his power in the church of God. Even today, Paul, I say, a friend of God's.

I have remembrance of you, he said to Timothy, in my prayers. Night and day. And of course having fellowship with God, part of that includes bringing other people before God.

The Lord was singing and we were having a prayer time together. And he had a roll, you know, like theater tickets, they're all about this big and about this wide. And then every little ticket, they were blank.

And he had the name of a person. And he just went by the hour going through these names on this list, you know. Wasted time.

If you used to tell him about the renown, then God would tell him to go and visit a certain person he'd been praying for and he'd lead them to the Lord. He'd pray first. Did you know that that was something the Southern Baptists learned just recently? And they're having a time in their life.

Know what it is? They're not doing house calling, they're not speaking against that, they're just not doing it anymore. This pastor in this one church, he asked God to guide him in a specific way in his service for

God. And it was this.

You pray for sinners by name. You pray for a while and then you visit them, but you never visit them before you've prayed for them. They started doing this, you know what they thought? But one in three of the people in visit get saved.

They've never seen this before. Now it's catching up, there's 45,000 churches in the Southern Baptists denomination and it's spreading all through the denomination. Ralph and Soterra, they're actually alliance people, but they're moving into the Southern states where every second person is a Baptist it seems, and they're in Baptist churches, but they're saying it's exciting to see what's happening.

So we pray for people. You know in South Korea they had that experience some years ago where no one was getting saved. They didn't know how to handle it.

So they did the right thing and they prayed to God for guidance. And here's the guidance they got. And the churches in this particular area, everybody was to agree.

They would make a little list of six people, at least six people, unsaved people, that they would pray for regularly every day. From December, pardon me, from January 1 until Easter. If they met them in the meantime, they were not to witness to them, they were to be friended to them, maybe take them out for coffee, but just pray.

Then at Easter, they were to go to these people and try and move them to Christ. And the first time they did this, you know what happened? 7,000 people were converted. So then the second year there's 9,000, the third year there's 12,000, and finally up to 25,000 a year just by this simple program.

Wouldn't that work here in Canada? I think so. I mean we don't have the time for that. We have more important things we have to do.

And my church in Saskatoon, I didn't do anything about this, but people were complaining to me. One guy said, you know, I'm going out to go to a meeting. My wife is coming in for a meeting.

We hardly ever see each other anymore. Every day of the week, you know. Everything is really moving, groovy, you know.

I didn't like it. I didn't do anything but pray. And all of a sudden, nobody would chair the ladies' meeting, and so it passed out.

Nobody would chair the men's brotherhood, so that passed out. And a couple of other things passed out because nobody would accept leadership, you know. And so when the revival broke, what we really had was a poor meeting that was going like fire, you know.

And then we had three young people's groups. They were doing great. That was really all.

And then God came on the scene. There's an old saying, if you're ever through a revival fire, you have the smell of smoke on your clothes till you die. I'm telling you, you can never forget it.

The power of God. My phone rings. I'm in my office.

There's a man from my church who's working at the university. He was crying so badly. I didn't know what was going on.

He just wanted to see me. I said, come on away. 15 minutes later, he ran into my office.

He found his knees at my desk, his head on the desk, and he wept and wept. The water was running in all directions. I went down to sign up that he's been in an accident in the same room.

And so he said, Pastor, God, the Holy Ghost came. He tore my heart wide open. He showed me everything that ever came in from the time I was a child until today.

Oh, Pastor, he said, it was like looking into hell. I was familiar with the woman, not my wife. I've got to make that right with my wife.

I sought societal wisdom's compensation for him. I got a thousand dollars from the government. I've got to go down on a journey and make that right.

He said, oh, Pastor, I can't stand the pressure of the Spirit of God on my soul. That's revival. We had people come to one of my men in my church.

He was a firefighter. He came to me after a meeting. He stood there trembling, and he said, Pastor, then he just found his knees and started to cry.

He couldn't tell what was on his mind, you know. There's all kinds of things of this kind. God would.

Howard Gardner, you haven't heard of him probably, but he was a song leader with me for a while. And Gardner was a Baptist pastor, six foot three, the life of every party, young people followed by the old. And he heard that a revival team was coming to one of them from Saskatoon, so he made sure he'd be there.

Now, there's a certain pastor in the same conference of churches that he didn't like, whose name happened to be George Bell. George Bell is one of the big names retired. Anyway, he was sitting there.

I saw him. I knew him from the time he was a kid. I was glad to see him there.

And my team gave their testimonies, and I brought a short message. And I mentioned this prayer, this thing, in Philippians chapter two, that he just seemed other, better than himself. He told me later on, he said, at a fast point, the meeting disappeared.

There was nobody in that room who had gone to meet him. He said, the Lord stood right in front of me, and he said to me, do you live that way? And he said, yes, Lord, I do. So then the Lord said, what about George Bell? He didn't like George Bell.

Well, he said, Lord, he's such a big wind bag, I don't know how you can bless him the way you do. That's what he told the Lord. The Lord said, I want you to get up and go down to the altar.

I have something to teach you. I'm tired. We're here.

We're taking ten minutes. He weeps the whole time. He said, oh, you don't want to get down there, do you? Jesus and I put his hand on his hip and reduced him to absolute zero.

And he said, when I got to the altar, I couldn't even find myself. There was nothing there but God. And then he said, the Lord came and said to me, what about George Bell? Oh, God, he said, he's a thousand times better than me.

Now you've got it right, he said. He became my song leader for a year and a half or so when he had some health problems, had to go off the road. For the Spirit of God, a great song leader, tremendous song leader.

What a change. I can't explain to people psychologically what happened when he walked down there. I have no idea.

I can only tell you what he said. And I could see the fruits of it in his life. But that's revival.

Revival comes when we make a friend of God and spend quality time with God and keep pressing it until it happens. You know, the reason why we give God all the glory for the revival, we can't take credit for that except for this. Looking at ordinary church work, I was ready to leave the ministry.

You know, we had 175 members, the church seating 300. Sunday mornings, quite often we were full. Every now and then somebody would get saved.

We'd have an evangelistic campaign. We'd have a team come in, maybe one person, maybe two or three people. And we'd have a pack-a-few program and all these things, you know, to get the crowds out.

And we had one guy, he was very musical, and he would train a choir of 40-odd people every evening to sing in the meeting that night. And it was great, you know, people enjoyed it. One or two people might be converted, one or two backsides restored, and maybe some people start tithing and one or two would join the church.

Then it was all over. And when the team was gone, the church was exactly the same as it had been before, at the door. Thank you, Pastor, for that lovely message.

They slept half through it, you know, but, you know, they were alive. I mean, you hear this all the time, you know. So I made up my mind, I had enough of this, I will never do this again.

So we never had another team come in. Now the church was over-disappointed because we weren't having these people coming in. And then I heard about Ralph and Lucitara, I contacted them, they couldn't come for two years, they gave us two years of prayer to prepare, we really did.

We didn't do anything but pray. We didn't advertise, not at all. Not even in the slightest, we just prayed, and prayed, and prayed, and prayed, and prayed.

All kinds of prayer meetings go. Our prayer meeting went from 25 up to 150, sometimes we had 170 in the prayer meeting, we only had 175 members in the church. And our prayer meetings were hot, it wasn't revival, but they were red hot, you know.

And people would rather miss Sunday morning or Sunday evening than miss the prayer meeting. And then God came. We're supposed to go for a week and a half, we have to go for seven weeks.

Our church, in just a matter of days, was too small. Matter of fact, the first Saturday night we had a meeting, we couldn't get them all in. Then we moved to a neighboring Anglican church seating 600, and

we were there only two nights, it was too small, we had 700 people trying to get in.

Then we moved to the Alliance Church, you could pack 1,000 in there, and that only lasted a night, it was too small. So we moved to a building, the largest church building in the city seating 1,700, and the first night we had 300 trying to get in, they couldn't get in off the street. And I remember the court caretaker came, and he was a Christian, he wasn't even a born-again believer, and it wasn't an even-childhood church building, and so he said, you've got to get rid of some of these people or the Fire Marshal will close this place down.

You know what happened? He accepted Christ as the agent, and later in recent days, hang them on the lights, he said, just to get them in. Anyway, we had to see the wrong, we don't want to see the right. We saw some darkness in the church, which is supposed to be light, you know.

We're neglecting God. Really, when you stop to think, who is God? Some of you have heard this before, but you know, if we took a ride on a rocket, okay, at the speed of light, you'll pass the moon in two seconds from the earth, you'll pass the earth in eight minutes. You'll get out of this local solar system the same day.

But before you get to the nearest office in Europe, it will take you at least three years at the speed of light, and you're traveling at millions of miles an hour. And the local solar system, or at least the constellation, the Milky Way constellation, on which our local solar system is a very tiny bar, to cross the Milky Way system at the speed of light, it will take you 100,000 years. And that's only one of the smaller constellations in the universe, people.

And if this God we're talking about, and we can't give him quality time, how small can we get? How far from God can we get? That's the problem. Somebody said, if God could have any need, it would have to be just a need for fellowship. Why did he make us in his image and his likeness? We are not animals.

Don't let anybody tell you you're an animal. We're not animals. We're people made in the image of God.

In the book of Genesis, when God said, Whoso sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed. Why did he say that? He said that for this reason, it goes on to say, no breaking the connection here, for in the image of God, he made man. Killing a beast, that's one thing.

Killing a man, that's a horrible thing to cause. You're killing somebody made in the image of the God of the universe. That's why he said, Whoso sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.

For in the image of God, made he man. And you know, when people are murdered, the Bible tells us that the blood, God hates that. God hates it.

And that blood can't be cleansed, he said, but by the blood of the person who shed the blood. I'm not arguing for capital punishment, although I would, but that's not part of the message tonight. We sometimes see wonderful Savior, wonderful friend, wonderful life that has no end, but we're waiting till we get to heaven to really be friendly with God, you know.

I mean, this is what we're doing. There was a time when I did the same. You know, I used to know a lot of funny stories.

And people used to beg me to tell them a funny story. I used to tell them, I kept telling them all kinds of them, you know. But I was in a room with them, well, God has got some really tough ways of dealing with

you.

Certainly there was some serious problems. She wanted two of us to come, another pastor to come and pray for her. So we talked to her about the problem, and it was time to pray.

No, she said to me, Bill, Pastor Bill, I don't want you to pray because whenever I think of you, all I can think of is all those funny stories you tell, and I'd rather have frosted the brain. I mean, you can imagine how I felt. I couldn't get over it fast enough.

And I promised God this would end with it ended, you know. There's a place for humor, not without humor. But it has to be very carefully.

It says, neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting which are not befitting, but rather giving of thanks. And that's what we should be doing. People who have great, marvelous, wonderful God out there, He's waiting for some time from you.

And what has He given time? Are we going to go out on the old way? This is the problem. There's not a problem quite like it. May I say this? Any of the other sins we can mention, they're not the ones that are the problem.

The real problem is we're not spending time with God. If we were, these sin problems would vanish in the light of His power. Our secret sins are in the light of His countenance, it says.

There's no such thing as a secret sin with God. And that's one of the reasons why Christians often, they don't want to spend time with God because He might put His finger on something in their life. I remember one time I had a, in Midland, Michigan, we had a men's meeting on a Saturday morning, and God woke up.

Ooh, what a reading. There was about 150 men there, and God was breaking them one after the other all over the place. And at the end of that, this went on until about 1.30 in the afternoon from 8 o'clock in the morning, and a fellow came up and he said, I wish you'd come home and talk to my wife.

She's a witch. He didn't mean she was a witch involved in the occult, he just meant she had a witch-like nature, see. I said, listen, I'm not concerned about your wife, I'm concerned about where you're at.

I'm okay. I said, would you be willing to get down on your knees and honestly ask God to search your heart and deal with everything God chose you? He thought for a few minutes, he said, okay, I'll do that. And he started to break, and he began to confess.

He was committing adultery on a regular basis, and he was calling his wife a witch, you know. Anyway, all this mess cleaned up, and he said, now then, you've got to come home and talk to my wife. Okay.

So about 2 o'clock, they got over to his house, and she told me later on, when I'd say he was my husband, and if something had happened, I was scared out of my mind. He walked in the door like this and grabbed his wife and almost cracked her ribs, begged her forgiveness. They had two children, adopted children, two girls about eight.

I don't know where they got them. They looked like they got them from heaven. Beautiful kids.

And he set two chairs up, and he sat in front of them, and she and I, we sat in the next room just watching through the door, and asked these kids to forgive him for being such a rotten father. And he begged her forgiveness, you know. And then she said to me, I don't know what happened to him, but can it happen to me? I said, yes, it can.

Get on your knees. So she got on her knees. You know the first thing she said? Oh, God.

She said, you were an awful witch, I did. So you wasn't so far off, you know. And then there's a sequel to that, because this is on Saturday, and they were planning to leave later on Saturday to go on a holiday stop in Michigan.

The lady said not to go, and they stayed over Sunday, and I was preaching at another church Sunday morning. So they spoke in the church I was holding meetings in, and a revival broke. There was no preaching that morning.

We had a guy who knew the preaching. He never got to it, because these people gave their testimony, and the whole congregation was melted to tears, you know. Then they went to Upper Michigan, and Wednesday, they went to the prayer meeting there, and Thursday, the telephone rang, and the church, nobody else around.

I asked the phone, it was these people. Hey Pastor, they said, you know what happened? We got revival down here. I said, tell me about it.

He said, last night, they asked us to give our testimony, and we told them what God had done. He said, the whole church came together to meet with God, you know. Anyway, these things didn't happen until we gave God a quality time, and got along with God, and just gave Him a quality time.

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