

# Why God Says No

by Bill McLeod

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*Bill McLeod's sermon explores why God sometimes says no to prayers, emphasizing the importance of sincerity and confession in our communication with Him.*

**Duration:** 52:30

**Scripture:** Psalm 84:11, Proverbs 1:23-33, Jeremiah 5:25, Zechariah 7:13, Acts 18:6, Acts 20:26-27

**Topics:** "Prayer"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares personal anecdotes and stories to emphasize the importance of sharing the message of Jesus Christ with others. He highlights the regret of not sharing Christ with a neighbor who passed away and the consequences of sin in hindering God's blessings. The speaker references Bible verses such as Isaiah 1:15, Jeremiah 5, and Psalm 84:11 to support his points. He encourages listeners to not make excuses about not having the gift of evangelism, but rather to be faithful sowers of the gospel. The sermon concludes with a story about encountering a group of salesmen wearing red suits on a plane, illustrating the unexpected opportunities that can arise when sharing the message of Christ.

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## Transcript

I would like to read Proverbs 1 and then Zechariah 7. And Proverbs chapter 1 beginning, we'll begin at verse 23, where God says, You turn at the reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you. I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called and you refused, I have stretched out my hand, And no man regarded, that is, no man paid attention.

But you have set up not all my counsel and would, that is, would have none of my reproof. I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear comes. When your fear comes as desolation and your destruction comes as a whirlwind, When darkness, when distress and anguish come upon you, Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer.

They shall seek me early, but they shall not find me. For that they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord. They would, that is, they would have none of my counsel, they despised all my reproof.

Therefore they shall eat of the fruit of their own way and be filled with their own devices. And in Zechariah chapter 7, something quite similar, verse 8, Zechariah 7. Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Execute

true judgment and show mercy and compassion to every man to his brother. And do not oppress the widow nor the fatherless, the stranger nor the poor.

And let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart. But they refused to hearken and pulled away the shoulder and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yes, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law and the words which the Lord of hosts has sent in his spirit by the former prophets.

Therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts, therefore it's come to pass, that as he cried and they would not hear, so they cried and I would not hear, says the Lord of hosts. But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not. Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through nor returned, for they laid the pleasant land desolate.

If God calls, if God speaks and I don't respond, then he says a time will come when you'll call and I won't respond. It's just as simple as that. That's exactly what it said in Proverbs chapter 1 and again here in Zechariah chapter 7. Some years ago I made a special study on the subject of prayer and I was amazed to discover how much there is.

There are about 400 prayers and then if you include the 200 prayers in the psalms, you know they're called ejaculatory prayers. They're like say two words God or three words God save me or God deliver me. Those are prayers too but they're different than the 400 type prayers we were talking about.

So altogether probably 600 or more prayers. There are 1500 references to prayer in the Bible altogether. I made a reference system through the entire Bible on the subject of prayer and when I did that study I came to see something I had known dimly before but I saw it clearly afterwards and it was this.

I knew there were some places, a few places in the Bible where God refused to answer people's prayers but I didn't know there was over a hundred. Over a hundred places in the Bible where God refused for various reasons. He refused to answer prayer and these I think was 108 or 110 and these fall into three major categories.

This doesn't include everything. There were probably 20 or 25 different reasons but the three major categories were selfishness, insincerity, and no confession of sin. Selfishness as in James chapter 4. You have not because you ask not, you ask not, you ask and receive not because you ask amiss that you may depending on the translation some say spend it on your pleasures or consume it upon your lusts.

And so sometimes we pray selfishly and this was a major category and then insincerity. Balaam would be a good example of that. You know he prayed and he had many meetings with God.

He saw visions of the Almighty. He talked with God. He even gave a wonderful prophecy of the coming of Messiah.

But a New Testament makes it very clear. It talks about the way of Balaam, the son of Boaz who loved the wages of unrighteousness but was rebuked for his iniquity. The dumbass speaking with man's voice forbade the madness of the prophet.

He was mad. Insane in a certain sense. He said and it was a prayer, let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his.

But you can't die the death of the righteous unless you live the life of the righteous. And that he was not prepared to do. There are some people who think well you know I'll repent on my deathbed and I'll get saved.

Billy Sunday used to say the deathbed repentance was like burning the candle of life in the service of the devil and blowing the smoke in the face of God. You know there's a lot of people planning getting saved at the 11th hour and they die at 1030. You can't plan on that.

If you've known the gospel for years don't plan on getting saved at the last minute because God doesn't play around with things like this. We have to be very very careful in this regard. In sincerity.

Do you know how Balaam died? He died on the end of a sword in the hand of a Jew. He did not die the death of the righteous as he had prayed and no doubt planned. He may have been deceived because God dealt with him, God spoke to him.

And he thought he was some special kind of person. But he was not a righteous person at all. And hence he died as he did.

And then no confession of sin. In Hosea chapter 5 there's a verse that says they, that's Israel, they shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the Lord but they shall not find him. He has withdrawn himself from them.

Now if they're going with their flocks and their herds to seek God it's obvious they're going to offer animals in sacrifice to God. So why would God walk away? Well in the same chapter, the last verse, gives us the answer. Here's what it said.

God said, I will go and return to my place until they acknowledge their offense and seek my face. Now they were seeking the face of God, probably earnestly. I can't say honestly.

But God was not listening because they were not acknowledging or admitting their sin. And by the way, the marginal reading here says that the Hebrew language says until they be guilty. So Jeremiah 3.13, only acknowledge your iniquity that you have transgressed against the Lord your God.

I was praying with a man one time at the altar and he was confessing sins with a great struggle. And finally he turned to me and through clenched teeth almost he said, it's so hard even to tell God himself that you're guilty. I said of course it's because of our monstrous pride.

Only acknowledge. God said I'll go and return to my place until they acknowledge their iniquity and seek my face. And if you take the first letter of the first two words in the third phrase, it spells S-I-N.

Selfishness, insincerity, no confession of sin. So the one thing that stands in the way is sin. Then there's so much in the Bible related to this.

If you'd ask me the most important thing a Christian can do, you kind of get caught here. Should he read the Bible? Should he pray? Well Christ said, my house shall be called a house of prayer for all people. He never called it a house of preaching.

He didn't call it a house of singing. He didn't call it a house of fellowship. He never called it a place for good works.

He called it a house of prayer. And one of the saddest things to see in North America is the fact, not only that in many churches the prayer meeting is pitifully small, but that now in hundreds of evangelical churches in North America, there is no prayer meeting at all. You know what they tell me? We need Wednesday night.

We need that night for clubs. We've got so much, so many things organized and going. Simply have to have it.

We just don't have time for a prayer meeting. Strange. In John's Gospel chapter 4, there are 10 references to worshipping God.

There are also in the same chapter, 10 references to working for God under different words like sowing and reaping and laboring and so on. But it's very significant to me that all 10 references to worshipping God occur before there's any reference to working for God at all. It is as if God is saying, true service rises out of true worship.

If I don't know how to worship God, I don't know how to work for God either. It ought to be evident, and it isn't. But it should be.

And I'm sure many, many churches are struggling simply because they're not really praying. Sometimes pastors say, well, my people, I urge them to pray at home. And I'm sure they're doing that.

Well, that may be so. But we have examples in the Bible, Acts chapter 4, when the entire church lifted up their voice to God with one accord. And what was the result? They had a second Pentecost.

They had a second revival, an extension of Pentecost in Acts chapter 4. It says they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness after a prayer meeting where the whole church was there. A pastor of a church that became a very large church. At one time, they had a large Wednesday night prayer meeting.

And over a period of time, as the church grew, they needed this Wednesday night thing. And so gradually, prayer was just put right out. Eventually, they got to a place where they had a dozen pastors.

And some years later, he asked me, he talked to me about this problem. He said, you know, we don't have a church anymore. We have 12 churches under one roof.

And he said, I can see clearly that what has happened is, we did away with the prayer meeting, and the prayer meeting, the church came together. The church came together to pray. Now we don't have that anymore.

And he said, we need to go back to that. And I think he was right. My house shall be called a house of prayer.

But then we can pray all we want. We can pray day and night. And sometimes God just says no.

He said, if I call and you don't listen, then you'll call and I won't listen. Is that fair? Well, it must be because that's what God says He does. Selfishness, insincerity, no confession of sin.

We need to think about that. Then, just to look at the importance of prayer. The Christian life begins when a sinner prays.

For it says, Romans 10, whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. It doesn't say, whosoever shall pray the Lord's prayer, or pray an eloquent prayer, or start to pray with our Father which art in heaven, and end it within Jesus' name. It just says, whosoever shall call.

I remember reading years ago an interesting story about a fellow in England. He was a drunkard for years. Nobody bothered preaching the gospel to him because he was such a hopeless case.

They called him Old Born Drunk because nobody had ever seen him sober. They concluded he was born drunk. Well, a Christian worker had compassion on him, presented the gospel, and the fellow said, yes, he'd like to be a child of God.

He'd like to be forgiven of sin. And so the worker said, well, now pray. Well, he didn't know how to pray.

He never prayed in his life. He never had a clue. And the worker got a little bit nettled and kept urging, now pray.

Come on, pray. This is how you get saved. Pray.

So finally the guy said, hooray for Jesus. And he was converted. Do you think God had any difficulty interpreting that prayer? Well, I don't think so.

Whosoever shall call. And the Christian life, not for all, but for some, will end when a saint prays, like Stephen when he was dying in Acts 7. He said, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. Wouldn't it be nice to know you're at the end of life's journey, you're going to go home, and you pray a little prayer, Lord Jesus, I'm coming home.

Wouldn't that be nice? Probably not many of us will die that way, you know, but some of us will. And then the Christian life is carried on by prayer. The early disciples, it's written in Acts chapter 2, they continue steadfast in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship and breaking of bread and in prayers.

They continued steadfastly in prayers. I mean, it didn't have to be urged, as it seems so many of us have to be urged today to attend prayer meetings or to pray regularly as we should. I read something interesting recently, helped me a great deal.

This was from an overseas country, a third world country, and they were in an area, very little was happening. And so they prayed for God to give them a plan to reach the lost. And it started with prayer.

Here was a plan. It's so simple, you might find it hard to believe. I don't know how many churches were involved, but all the people were asked to make a list of five unconverted people, people that they would pray for beginning January the 1st and continuing to pray once a day at least for this person or people until Good Friday, five names.

Then on Good Friday, they would try and win unto Christ. And the first year they did this, there were 8,000 people saved in their churches on Good Friday. Well, then they knew they'd stumbled onto something.

They did it the following year, there was 11,000 converted. And finally, within a very short period of time, six years or something, they were seeing over 25,000 people converted on Good Friday with this very, very, very simple system or method. But it started with prayer.

We all agree that prayer is powerful. We sing about it. We talk about it and all the rest of it.

But somehow we don't practice it. We don't really believe it in our heart of hearts. And we sort of give up and figure somehow God isn't in business or something's wrong and then something is wrong.

Very likely it's our unbelief that we don't believe God. Hebrews 11, 6 says, well, faith it is impossible to please God. All things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing you shall receive.

What things soever you desire when you pray, believe that you have received them. It's in the past tense. And you shall have them.

That God will fulfill you with all joy and peace in believing that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love, in whom though now you see him not, yet believing you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. People, it's everywhere you turn in the Word of God, our praying has to be accompanied by faith.

Matter of fact, it's not something that comes after, like you rubber stamp something you wrote down. You pray in faith. You're believing as you pray that God is listening and that God will answer.

Now, the Christian life is carried on by prayer. It says in Romans 12, continuing, instant, it means urgent in prayer. Our First Thessalonians chapter 5, rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks, this is the will of God and Christ Jesus concerning you.

I think three times Paul said, night and day praying exceedingly, or night and day praying for you, night and day. I don't think he meant he spent hours, hours, hours every day praying for this person or this church to which he was writing. But he's trying to emphasize the fact that prayer was everything.

He was praying for them, night and day. And I like that word, exceedingly. So the Christian life is carried on by prayer.

You remember in Ephesians chapter 6, where you have the armor for the Christian, and after the armor is all delineated there, it's all clear what we're supposed to have, the sword of the Spirit, the shield of faith, breastplate and so on, everything, the helm of salvation. Then he says, praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching there unto, with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. And then Paul adds, and for me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds, that therein I may speak boldly as I ought to speak.

And that's what happened, to go back to Acts chapter 4 again. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and they spoke the word of God with boldness. When people are filled with God's Spirit, the first thing that happens is they become bold.

They lose their fears. They're not ashamed of Christ. They're willing to talk about Him as the Holy Spirit may lead them.

So, then in John 15, 7, it says that prayer brings glory to God. If you abide in me and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, so shall you be my disciple.

What does he say? He's really saying it's through prayer that we bear much fruit. Years ago, as a young Christian, I read a story of a lady who had learned about prayer, the importance of prayer, had gone as a missionary to China. And when she got there, she faced a problem, because she couldn't find a kindred

spirit among the missionaries that were there.

They all believed in prayer, but they were all busy evangelizing and so on. And so she showed her how to do it herself. And the devil used to jump on her, she'd be in her room, she'd be praying, and she'd hear the other missionaries going out to evangelize in the streets.

The devil really got after her about this. She evangelized too, but she spent hours a day in prayer and waited on God. Then she went out as God led her.

At the end of the first 12 months, she had led more people to Christ than all the other missionaries in that mission station put together. So obviously she was doing something right, like praying hide in India. He's been dead a long time.

When I was in India, some of the nationals wanted to take me over to where praying hide used to be. We couldn't fit it into our schedule, so we never got there. But his name still has a fragrance in India.

He was the man who prayed usually 10 hours a day. He even prayed about every meal. When the dinner bell rang, he'd pray and say, Lord, do I go or do I stay and pray? Sometimes the Lord would say, go.

Sometimes the Lord would say, stay and pray. And so they stayed and prayed. We don't really understand that today, in North America at least.

It's something that's forgotten. You know, we brunch and we munch and we crunch and we lunch. You know, plus, I mean that's life.

When we get together, we have to have a cup of coffee. When we get together, we should pray. Didn't Paul say in 1 Timothy 2.8, I will therefore let men pray everywhere.

When two Christians meet, why not pray? I will therefore let the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting. This was many years ago. A brutal man had told the, I led a lady to the Lord.

She was Welsh. And she'd been in Wales at the time of the Welsh Revival. She was a very young girl then.

But she told me she was an Anglican woman. And she said, you know, walking down the street, you suddenly see a bunch of men, maybe two, three, four, six, or eight men. They get on their knees in the sidewalk.

They put their arms around each other and they would begin to pray. And she said, I used to walk past groups of men like that. And she said, all I knew was this.

They've got something I don't know a thing about. And it bothered her all her adult life. And I happened to come along and preach the gospel.

And she found Christ as her Savior. But it all went back to the old Welsh Revival, where people are not even ashamed to kneel on the sidewalk and to pray. The Christian life is carried on by prayer.

It brings glory to God. That's what it says in John 15, 7. It brings joy to men. In John 16, Jesus Christ said, hitherto, which means up until now, you've asked nothing in My name.

Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full. And let me say this, if you're a Christian believer and you're not seeing God answer prayer, I can guarantee your joy is not full. Because that's really what He's saying here.

That your joy may be full. But when you pray and God answers, it does something for your spirit, does it not? You rejoice. God did it.

And sometimes God does things you can't really understand. How did He ever do that? Well, He did it because we believed Him. I remember years ago, I had to drive to Portage of Prairie, Manitoba.

From where I was about 150 miles, I had to meet a certain guy there. And all I knew was his first name. Ever had that kind of a problem? I didn't know his last name.

I didn't have his phone number. I didn't have his address. All I knew was he lived in Portage of Prairie, 15 or 20,000 people.

How was I going to find him? Well, I committed to God in the morning. I said, Lord, now You'll bring me to this man. I don't know how You're going to do it.

You're going to have to do it. And as I was driving down the main street of Portage of Prairie, driving slowly, looking around to see if I could see him anywhere, up ahead I saw a sign that said post office. And I suddenly remembered I need to buy some stamps.

So I pulled into park and he walked by in front of the car. I mean, now you think of all the things the Lord had to coordinate. Had to get that guy out of bed, breakfast, get him down there.

Had to get me there at the right time, 150 miles and all that. I mean, it's just incredible. But things like that happen all the time.

When we trust God, when we believe Him for His guidance through prayer. Glory to God, joy to men. And then thirdly, it leaves a biting fruit.

In John 15, Jesus Christ said, 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 is, your fruit should abide. That whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, He may give it to you.

So we get a biting fruit, a fruit that lasts through prayer. That's what He's saying there in John's Gospel chapter 15. O thou that hearest prayer unto thee shall all flesh come.

This was David in the Psalms. It's almost like a title for God. O thou that hearest prayer.

He addresses God as the God who hearest prayer. The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are open unto their prayers. Peter quoted that in 1 Peter chapter 3 from Psalm 34.

God's eyes are on the righteous. The prayer of the upright is God's delight. Can you think of anything that would make God to be delighted? I mean, anything here on earth? Well, I can't.

You know when they had this dedication service, it wasn't a Christian service, but for Gardner Dam on Diefenbaker Lake, all the big names, the big shots were there, you know, and they had this dedication ceremony. You know what I noticed? God never sent the lowliest angel into heaven to grace the

proceedings. I mean, God would only have to inhale or exhale once and the dam would be gone.

It's nothing. There's really nothing we can offer God in a sense that would be to Him extraordinary. But the Bible says the prayer of the upright is God's delight.

People, He's delighted when we pray and our hearts are right and we pray in faith. On the other hand, in Proverbs also it says, he that turns away his ear from hearing the law, that's the word of God, even his prayer shall be abomination. So my prayer can be an abomination to God or it can be a delight to God depending on where I'm at in my heart.

So God doesn't answer prayer sometimes, over 100 times in the Bible, and no doubt all of us here have had that kind of an experience where God says no. And sometimes if we keep on asking, then something happens. Recording the Psalms, He gave them their request but sent leanness into their soul.

You keep bothering God about something He doesn't really want to do, maybe it's something selfish or you're being insincere, whatever it is, God may give you what you're asking for and afterwards it'll be a curse instead of a blessing. But to be very careful here, totally surrender in our heart to God no matter what God does. We thank Him, we praise Him for it.

Paul didn't always have his prayers answered in a positive way. God told him when he prayed three times in 2 Corinthians chapter 12, my grace is sufficient for you. Paul, I'm not going to answer this prayer but I'm going to give you grace to stay with the problem you've got, to overcome.

And Paul said, most gladly therefore by rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. He said, I take pleasure in infirmities and reproaches, necessities, distresses and persecutions for Christ's sake. For when I'm weak, then I'm strong.

We don't understand that sometimes here in North America. Everything is geared in another direction. All right.

They made their hearts as an adam and stone lest they should hear the law and the words which the Lord of hosts had sent in his form of prophets. Therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts. Therefore it's come to pass that as he cried and they wouldn't listen so God said they'll cry and I won't hear.

And many times dear people when God refuses to answer prayer, we don't have to look any further than this. We've hardened our hearts and God will never make that kind of mistake. Never in the lives of his children.

Now, sometimes you have to be specific. I had a friend, he was a missionary in West Indies years ago and he said down there, you can't talk about sin in general terms. You've got to be specific or they know what you're talking about.

So let's be specific. What kind of sins? In Jeremiah, it talks about a woman treacherously departing from her husband. In Malachi chapter two, three times, not just once, three times it talks about a man dealing treacherously against his wife.

And that's about the proportion. I mean for every woman that'll deal treacherously against her husband, there's three guys that'll do it to their wives. I mean that's just about the right proportion.

But in Malachi, here's what it says. This have you done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, with crying out, insomuch that he regards not the offering anymore, nor receives it with goodwill at his hand. Well, when you listen, you read it, you say well now wait a minute.

He's kneeling there, he's praying, he's crying, he's weeping, he's crying with a loud voice. Hey, this man really means business. And God says no.

God said no. You're guilty of dealing treacherously against the wife of your youth. I can't hear you.

You can pray all you want, you can cry all you want, you can scream as loud as you want, but your life isn't right with your wife. A deacon in a church in Ontario said to me one time, he said, you know, there's got to be something wrong. I don't know what it is.

He said, you know, I can pray in front of 200 people in church. I can pray at a rally with a thousand people there. I don't have any problem.

I can pray at the community. I can pray anywhere if I'm called in to pray. No problem at all.

But he says, my wife is in the crowd. I can't pray at all. He said, why? Well, I said, it's quite simple.

It's because you're a hypocrite and you know it and she knows it. And you know what he said? First of all, he just looked at the floor for a bit. He kind of scratched his forehead and said, well, yeah, yeah.

That's the problem. That's the problem. The Christian worker said the same thing to me one time and he said, I don't know what it is he said, but there's something wrong in my life.

My prayer life is a shambles, you know. So I said to him, I just, the Lord put it in my mouth, I'm sure. I said to him, is it possible that deep down in your heart you have bitterness against your wife? He just stared at me and finally said, Bill, that's it.

I felt ever since I got married that I married the wrong girl and I blame her. They didn't have to get married, that was not it. I just felt he married the wrong wife, the wrong woman, and he held it against her and he dealt with it.

And God blessed him and God is blessing him today. Almost every week the churches and souls are being saved. But that was a problem, see.

And so men, we are to love our wives as Christ also loved the church. That's a big order. It's impossible apart from the grace of God.

And may I just say this, men, don't waste time trying to make your wife think the way a man thinks because they don't. They just don't. My mother came in one time and she said, I passed Mrs. Smith on the sidewalk and she never said a word to me.

I think she's mad. And I said, well, mother dear, did you speak to her? She didn't say anything, why should I? You know, now a man wouldn't do that. If he saw a guy coming, the guy was in the daydream, he'd hit him with his elbow going by, hey, you need to have a good, you know, it's different.

And it's the same thing if there's a party and two women show up and they've got the same dress on, one goes home and changes, you know. But if two guys meet and they've got the same suit on, hey, where'd

you get your suit? At Blasteen's. How much did you pay? 125.

That's where I got mine. Paid the same thing. Great suit, isn't it? You know.

People, it's different, see. So men, don't make the mistake of trying to make your wife think the way a man thinks. They don't think that way.

And it says in 1 Peter chapter 3, as most of us know, likewise you husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered. And it's the same word that Paul used when Paul said, this was Peter, but when Paul said, we would have come at you, even I, Paul, once in the game, but Satan hindered us. It's the same word.

And so sometimes if our attitude to our wife is not what it should be, then our prayer life is crippled. And someone had been in this problem for years and years and years, angry with their wife. Why did the Holy Spirit say to Christians in Colossians chapter 3, husbands, love your wives and be not bitter against them? Because he foresaw that thousands of Christian men would sometimes be bitter against their wife.

That's why. And of course, a wife treacherously departing from her husband. You know, many times I remember hearing a Christian worker's wife say to another gal, oh yes, I obey my husband, but I needle him all I can.

I push him all I can to get it the way I want it. Do you think God would be pleased with that? Not at all. That's not the way to operate if you expect to have the blessing of God in your heart and life.

And so it says, dear women, listen, it says that you are to be subject unto your own husband as unto the Lord. And if you're not subject to your husband, you're not subject to Christ. You can't be subject to Christ if you're not subject to your husband.

That's really what he's saying. So it may be this, or it may just be, you remember the Lord Jesus in Matthew 5 and in Mark 11, he talked about this problem when you stand praying, forgive if you have ought against any, or when you bring your gifts to the altar, if you remember your brother's got something against you. And people, it doesn't say if you've got something against your brother.

It says if you remember that your brother's got something against you, leave your gift, go and make it right, then come back and offer your gift. Very simple. We all know this.

It's in the Bible. We've heard it probably many times before, but many times again, we don't do what we've heard. Then we keep asking God to, you know, to answer our prayers.

And God doesn't, and we're angry about it. There's a verse in Proverbs 26 too, and it's kind of relevant to some things happening in Canada this last year too. It says the curse will never come without a cause.

The curse causes shall not come. If there's a curse in the land, there's a cause for it. If there's a curse in your life, there's a cause for it.

If something's not right, and it should be right and could be right, but it's not, there's a reason for it. And dear people, all we have to do to find out what the reason is, ask God. He's so willing to show us.

You know, in Job it says that God never takes his eyes off the righteous. Isn't that comforting? It's very comforting to me. It's also a little scary.

You know, if you're living in sin, that's a little scary that God's eyes are always on you. He never takes his eyes off the righteous. He never slumbers.

He that keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. I heard about a fellow while he couldn't sleep at night. He went to the doctor.

He got pills and stuff. He still couldn't sleep at night. He just couldn't sleep at night.

And then he read this verse that he that keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. And so he prayed and said, dear God, if you're sitting up all night watching, there's no point in me doing this. And from then on he was able to sleep.

Because God was watching, you see. He never takes his eyes off the righteous, it says, but with kings are they on the throne. Yes, it says he establishes them forever, and they are exalted.

But that's not where it ends. Then it says, and if they be bound in fetters and be held in cords of affliction, what then? Then he shows them their work and their transgressions that they have exceeded, and he opens their ear to discipline, and he commands that they return from iniquity. People, I don't know how often over the years someone has said something like this.

I've asked a thousand times to show me what the sin is, and he never shows me. You know what I say to people like that? I say, okay, who's lying? You or God? Well, I know. Oh, God is? No, God can't be.

What are you getting at? I'm getting at this. In Job it says he shows them their work. He'll show us what the sin is.

He said so. But the problem is we don't want to hear it. Our conscience has been troubling us maybe for years, and we're doing, you know, what Freud said.

He likened conscience to a little bird sitting on your shoulder, whispering in your ear, and his advice was shoot the bird. And some of us have done that, you know. We keep saying no and muzzling the bird until the conscience doesn't seem to work anymore.

After all, remember there's certain adjectives that modify the meaning of this particular word. Conscience, evil, seared, weak, defiled, or dead are all used of the conscience in the New Testament. And it may be that for us if we have been saying no to God, the conscience also bearing witness, and the thoughts are meanwhile accusing or else excusing.

And so the conscience will excuse or accuse, as the case may be, when you listen to what God is saying. So people, He never takes His eyes off you. He's established you forever.

You're like a king on a throne, and you're exalted, risen with Christ. But you may be bound in fetters. You know what happened to Simon the Sorcerer in the book of Acts.

He believed and was baptized. There's no reason to doubt that he was a true believer. But Peter had to say to him, your heart is not right in the sight of God.

He didn't say you're not saved. He said your heart isn't right. He said, I perceive that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.

Do you know what the problem was? I think he was bitter because now Philip had all the attention of the village, whereas before he was a big shot. And he was bitter over that transfer. He continued with Philip, wondering how he could get the power back, I guess, or get back to where he'd been before, and it just was not working out.

So he was bitter. Then he was in the bond of iniquity, and that tells me that he probably never made a clear break with the occult, because there were many people in Samaria who had unclean spirits. And when Philip came, there was all kinds of people being delivered from unclean spirits.

And this guy Simon was the sorcerer that these people had been looking to, and he was responsible for all this. And I guess he hadn't broken completely with it. He was still in the bond of iniquity.

And dear people, this is the problem. If they be bound in fetters and be held in cords of affliction, then he shows them their work and their transgressions they've exceeded, and he opens the earth to discipline, and he commands that they return from iniquity. And when all this happens, what happens? He begins to answer prayer again, and God begins to bless.

I met a man in the sawmill up in, where was it now, northern Manitoba somewhere. He told me he'd been a Christian worker for 15 years, but he quit and went to work in the sawmill because in 15 years, he said, I could not honestly say that I ever saw God answer one of my prayers. He said, I couldn't be a hypocrite and continue on, so he went to work in the sawmill.

Whenever I think of that man, I have to think of George Mueller. Remember the man of faith and prayer from Bristol, England? He had recorded in a ledger 85,000 answers to prayer by the time he was 85. He lived to be 94, so likely over 100,000 answers to prayer.

Now, is God a respecter of persons? Why would God answer prayer for George Mueller and not for this man in the sawmill? The Bible says God is no respecter of persons. That's clear. However, there's one place in the Bible that says God is a respecter of persons.

Did you know that? In the Psalms, Though the Lord be high, yet he has respect unto the lowly, but the proud he knows are far off. I'm not saying that the sawmill worker was proud, but something was wrong, for God is no respecter of persons. And if I'm a humble person walking in humility before God and men, God will hear my prayers, God will answer my prayers, God will do the things that we're asking him to do.

Asking you shall receive, seeking you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. Every one that asks receives, and he that seeks finds, and to him that knocks it shall be opened. But Jeremiah said, Jeremiah chapter 5, he talked about some things God wanted to do for his people, but then he said, your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withheld good things from you.

People, I don't care who you are, there's good things God wants to do for all his children, but our sins hold them back, and God can't do it. Psalm 84 11 is the verse that says, the Lord God is a sun and shield, the Lord will give grace and glory, no good thing will he withhold from those that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

Maybe one of the reasons why the channels are clogged and God doesn't answer prayer is because they never share Christ with anybody else. People often excuse this by saying, well, I don't have the gift of an evangelist. Well, neither do I. God didn't call me to be an evangelist, that's not my calling.

But whether you have the gift of an evangelist or not is not important. Listen, God needs sowers as well as reapers. You remember in John 4, Jesus Christ said, I sent you to reap that, for on you bestowed no labor.

Other men labored, and you were entered into their labors. And herein is that saying true, one sows and another reaps. God needs sowers as well as reapers.

And maybe you're a sower, but even a sower will sometimes reap, and a reaper may, certainly will sometimes sow. That's not the problem. But God expects us, you shall be witnesses unto me.

So I don't say God wants us all to be sower winners. I say God wants us all to be witnesses. His Spirit does the winning.

And He may use you and He may use me. But you know, the average Christian just doesn't do it. Somebody, a friend of mine put it this way, he said, you know, if God brought a sinner and dropped him right in the lap of some Christian, and the guy bowed and said, I'd like to be saved, there's still some Christians who wouldn't tell him.

You know, people listen, just if you'll pardon something personal here, when I was first converted, I was the shyest person in Canada. I couldn't, when I walked down the sidewalk, broad daylight, if I saw anybody coming, I'd cross the street. I used to go down the streets like this, you know.

Man, woman, or child, didn't really matter. I knew all the back lanes in West Winnipeg where I lived, because nobody came down the back lanes. I used to walk in the back lanes.

You know, when God called me to preach, it was the worst night I ever put in. I was in a bush camp, a cunning pulpwood, and I just told God, I said, God, there's no way I can do this. You know I can't do this.

You know I just can't do this. Get up in front of two people right away, every thought's gone. Trying to talk and no words would come out.

This kind of problem, you know, terrible. But the Lord nailed me to the wall with that verse in Philippians chapter four, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. And every time I said I couldn't do it, he hit me with that verse.

I'll tell you, God knows how to pulverize you. So finally I said, okay God, it's a deal. If you open the doors, I'll walk in.

And right away, people started asking me to come and speak to a ladies missionary society, young people's meeting, something was incredible, you know. But I'll never forget the first time when I stood in front of 30 people and there was 30 pairs of eyes staring at me. I'll tell you, it was terrible.

But I chose a long chapter, 1 Corinthians chapter 12. I figured if I'm persecuted in one verse, I can flee to another, you know. And I managed to do it.

You know when I walked home from that meeting that night, I was just jumping and I remember saying, hey God, we did it, we did it, we did it. I couldn't believe it. But the second time was as hard as the first

time.

But I stayed with it, dear people. And talking to people personally is not easy. It's harder than preaching to a crowd.

Everybody knows that Charles Spurgeon is one of the greatest orators and preachers that the world of the church has ever been blessed with. Not many people know he was a great personal worker. He said he had a lot of timidity.

He was a shy person and he had timidity, a lot of that. But he overcame that by the grace of God. He used to pass out tracts and talk to people in parks and pathways and so on.

Not many people know that about him. But I don't think it's honest to be a great preacher if I'm not trying to win people to Jesus Christ. I fail sometimes, I have to admit that frankly.

But we just try to stay with it. And you know sometimes some marvelous things happen, unexpected things that God does. And some of you maybe heard me tell this and I'm going to quit in a few moments.

But I was in a plane, I got on a plane, I got on the plane and I looked down the plane and there were four couples sitting there, different places in the plane, and they had red suits on with red hoods and things over their, just their hands sticking out, over their feet and everything, a big red suit. And I happened to get a seat next to one of these guys. And he was a huge fellow, you know, his wife was just the size of a minute, you couldn't even see her next to him.

And I said, hey man what's with the red suit? And he laughed and said, well we're sales and we work for the same company. And he said, we're invited to go to St. Louis, Missouri to a sales convention and we were told if we'd wear one of these suits, he said, we had a chance to compete for some very valuable prizes at the convention. Well he said, our suits cost \$28, my wife's suit cost \$28, mine cost \$28, we won \$1400 worth of prizes, wasn't that a good deal? I said, it was an excellent deal.

Hey man, that was great. So we talked a little bit and then I said, because we never had much time together, but now and I said, listen man, would you mind if I told you how I became a Christian? He looked at me and looked away and then he said, okay. So I told him how I became a Christian.

By this time the plane had landed, you know, he never said a word. And so as I was getting ready to leave, he was going further than I was getting off, I offered him a gospel tag, he just grabbed it like that and he zipped open the bag and threw it and zipped the thing shut and sat looking like this, you know. But man, this guy, you know.

So I reached out my hand, took a hold of his hand and said, I'm so glad we met, I hope we meet again and took a hold of my hand, the tears running down his face and he said, you'll never know how you've helped me. You'll never know how you've helped me. And I couldn't get my hand loose and people were piling up behind me in the aisle trying to get by, I was already in the aisle and finally just had to pull my hand and got loose.

And I went down about six seats, you know, and I turned back to wave and he jumped to his feet and he just hollered, you'll never know what you did for me today. That's exciting. I mean, and people, we miss all kinds of opportunities like this because we're ashamed, we're afraid, you know.

And Christ said, if you're ashamed of me and of my words, I'll be ashamed of you when I come in the glory of my Father, the holy angels. Whatever you do, don't make that mistake. All of us have a mouth, all of us can talk, all of us talk about the weather and the kids and the politics and the situation in Asia or someplace.

Why can't we talk about God? And if we don't, we've got a problem and that may be the reason why God is not answering our prayers. You know, in Ezekiel chapter 3 and again in Ezekiel chapter 33, God said something like this to the prophet, son of man, I've set you as a watchman to Israel. If you see the sword coming, you blow the trumpet and anybody dies, they don't take warning and they die, you're clear.

But if you see the sword coming and you don't blow the trumpet, anybody dies, I'll require their blood at your hand. Now, Paul picked up on that when he's at Corinth in Acts chapter 18. He was preaching about Jesus the Messiah and he had no problems.

But when Silas and Timothy came, it says Paul was pressed in his spirit and he testified to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. It says they opposed themselves in blasphemy. Do you remember what Paul did? It says he shook his raiment and he said, your blood be on your own heads, I'm clean.

From henceforth, I'll go to the Gentiles. That was Ezekiel chapter 3. That was Ezekiel chapter 33. In Acts chapter 20, Paul said to those Ephesian elders, he said, I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men for I've not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

That was Ezekiel chapter 3. Ezekiel chapter 33 and a verse in Isaiah chapter 1, God said, your hands are full of blood, bloody hands. A couple came to me one time. Well, actually, the wife came.

We were a bunch of us having a picnic and he was standing there and she came over and said, you know, one of our neighbors died. They said they live right next door to us. They were in a car accident.

Both he and she were killed suddenly just a couple of weeks ago. And they said, you know, we lived next door to them for two years. We never, ever shared Christ with them.

We partied together. That is, we had picnics together. We drank coffee together.

We talked about this and that together many times over the fence in each other's house, but we never, ever said a word about Jesus Christ. And she said, you have no idea how we feel. I said, I can understand it.

We've had stories like this all across the country of Christians that could have, did not because of fear. And people, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me when I pray.

He that covers his sins shall not prosper. Who so confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy. We want revival to come.

We'd like it to come in some great big, like a big downpour of rain. We had a nine inch rain in Winnipeg a while ago. We had 10,000 basements flooded in the city.

I'm very thankful mine was not flooded. I'm no better than anybody else, but just the way the Lord worked it out. But you know, the curse causes never comes.

But sometimes we think in terms of some big revival thing hitting us just bang, you know, we made up our mind we're not going to do anything until it happens. A brother of mine, my younger brother Keith, when I talked to him about accepting Christ, he said, look, it hits you like a bolt of lightning. He said, it's got to hit me the same way.

If it hits me the same way, I'll become a Christian too. I said, Keith, it never hit me that way. I said, it was something I had to do.

I had to repent and turn to Christ and receive him in my heart. And he just walked away. But years later, he did accept Christ as his personal Savior.

And he understands, of course, much better today. No, God is speaking to each of us in these meetings. We trust, pray for it.

Don't come to a single meeting without praying first that God will speak to your own heart and God will speak to every person in the building. Then as God speaks to people, let him be God in your life. If God is God, let him be God in your life.

Let him have his way. Nothing between my soul and my Savior. Nothing between.

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