

# What Revival Taught Me About God and His Church

by Bill Wright

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*Revival is a matter of focus, and our focus needs to be on God's character and power, not on ourselves or our programs.*

**Duration:** 1:04:54

**Scripture:** Psalm 46:10, Psalm 119:105, Proverbs 2:6, Isaiah 40:28-31, Isaiah 41:10, Isaiah 43:2, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Revival"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of having a proper focus on God and a proper relationship with Him. He emphasizes that when we truly understand who God is and what He can do, our perspective on the church changes. The church is not just a social club or a place of entertainment, but a place where God's power is manifested. The speaker also highlights the need for revival, which is available to those who are faint and in need of God's strength. The sermon concludes with a reminder that God is the ultimate teacher and that we should focus on Him.

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## Transcript

We want to see a miracle-working God. We want to see a supernatural intervention of God. That all sounds right.

And in itself, there is nothing wrong with those concepts, but unless you have a biblical focus of who God is, you'll never be for sure that it was that God of the Bible that has intervened, or whether it was simply the energy of the flesh that somehow got pumped up to do what really only God can do. The foundation of revival in my own heart has increasingly become a greater appreciation for who God is. Isaiah had that.

The prophets of God, as you go through the Scripture, constantly zero on His attributes, who He was. From that proceeds faith. From that proceeds the move of God and trusting God to do what only He can do.

I would share with you today that revival has taught me at least in part, and as I mentioned yesterday, I'm still a learner. And I am learning every day more and more this truth that revival is teaching us that God is really, vitally alive. And God is really, vitally available.

And God is really, vitally anxious. By anxious, I mean He is not a reluctant God. He is alive.

He is available. He is anxious. We see that in the 40th chapter of Isaiah.

And I would like to read a large section of this passage. I want you to get the flavor of it. It's a familiar portion, I'm sure, to most all of you that are here today.

Beginning in verse 9. Would you stand for the sharing of God's precious word? O Zion that bringeth good tidings, get thee up into the high mountains. O Jerusalem that bringeth good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength. Lift it up, be not afraid.

Say unto the cities of Judah. What are the next three words? You ought to underscore that in your Bible if you mark it. Behold your God.

Then he goes on to describe that God that we are to behold. The word behold that is used here is a word which, when the Hebrew was translated into the Septuagint or into the Greek, the word behold was a word which meant to look beyond the surface. It was not a fleeting glance.

It was a penetrating look that crawled underneath, if you please. A scrutinous look. Behold your God.

Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him. Behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. And he shall feed his flock like a shepherd, and he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in the bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

Those two verses are a tremendous contrast on the character of God and his regal royalty on one hand and his gentle shepherdhood on the other. You are to behold God in balance, in total biblical perspective. Verse 12, Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and he hath meted out heaven with a span and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in the scales and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counselor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding? Behold the nation.

First, behold your God. Now, behold the nation. They're like a drop in a bucket.

Did you know that was in the Scripture? All you pastors knew that. They're like a drop in a bucket. And they're counted as a small dust to the balance.

Behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. He began with, behold your God. And then he comes to behold the nation, behold the isles, in comparison to beholding your God.

And Lebanon is not sufficient, verse 16, to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing in vanity. To whom then will you liken God? Will you liken your puny program, your special ministry, your great crusade? What will you liken unto your God? What will you compare unto your God? See, Isaiah is cutting to the bone, to the marrow of the bone.

Who will you liken me unto? For what likeness will you compare unto him? The workman melts with a graven image, just as the best man can do. They want to have some expression of God, and Isaiah says, the best they could do was that the workman melted graven images, and the goldsmith threaded it over with the gold and cast a silver chain. That's for the rich.

But what about the poor? He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation, he chooses a tree that will not rot. That's the best we can do. We compare anything unto our God.

The best we can do in human effort is liken unto a man who makes an image out of gold, who is rich, but a poor man who the best he can do is take a tree and find a tree that will not rot. That's the best we can do. Verse 21, Have you not known? Have you not heard? Hath it not been told you from the beginning? Hath you not understood from the foundation of the earth? It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers, that stretcheth out the heaven as a curtain and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.

That's your God. That bringeth the princes to nothing, he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. Yea, they shall not be planted.

Yea, they shall not be sown. Yea, their stocks shall not take root in the earth. There's the energy of the flesh from God's perspective.

And he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble. To whom then will ye liken me? Or shall I be equal, saith the Holy One? Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number. He calleth them all by name, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power, not one faileth.

Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? What a question to ask after he has stated all of this about God. How do you think you can hide? That's what he's saying. How do you think you could hide from God if God has all the hosts of heaven, all the stars in heaven, and he has them all in their place, and not one of them has fallen? How is it that we think we can hide? Now, here's my favorite part.

I love these verses. Have you not known, and have you not heard, that the Lord, the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, he fainteth not, neither is he weary, and there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power.

You don't have to seek power. You don't have to grapple for power. You don't have to muster up power.

If God doesn't give it, my brother, you don't have it. He giveth power. And he giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might.

He increases strength. Even the youth shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. And they shall mount up with wings as eagles, and they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.

God had a blessing, as I know he does, from the reading of his word. Thank you. May you be seated.

It is in Isaiah's writings that we begin to see that we serve a God who is alive, a God who is available, a God who is not reluctant, a God who is anxious to do what only he can do. That's what God has been teaching me about revival truth in relationship to his person. I am more convinced today than I have ever been in my life that revival is a matter of my focus of attention more than anything else.

We see Christians that are walking around as though they are beggars when they are children of the King of kings and the Lord of lords. And the reason is that their focus of attention is riveted upon what is

happening in their life or what is not happening in their life or where they are in their life or where they are not at in their life, rather than their focus being riveted upon a God to whom no one nor anything, not even the nations of all the world, can be likened unto. To whom will you liken me? God asks that twice.

Have you asked that once in your entire Christian life? To whom will you liken me? To whom will you equal me unto? Will you equal your problem unto me? Will you equal the problem in your church, pastor, unto God? Will you find that God is sufficient because He is alive? Now there is no one here today, I am sure, in this building who would not proclaim God is alive. We believe that. We believe Jesus rose from the dead and that He is alive today and that He is seated at the right hand of the Father and that He dwells in the life of the believer by the person of God the Holy Spirit.

We believe that. Amen? Do we? Do we really believe it? The word in the New Testament for believe can also be translated, and I think many times much more accurately and much more pointedly, as trust. You see, it is one thing to believe, it is another thing really to trust.

But when the Greek writer of the New Testament, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wanted to drive home an eternal principle and an eternal truth, he used a word that you can couple both of those words together. It is not enough to have mental assent without complete confidence in, which trust speaks of. There are many that are walking around with a mental assent that our God is alive, our God is great, our God is good, our God is in charge, our God is on the throne, and we live as though we are absolutely spiritually bankrupt with no life, with no hope in our entire Christian walk.

And we beg God, Oh God, give me more power. And all the time God is saying, I have given you all of myself. And that is where the power is at.

What do we mean when we say to God, God give me more power, God give me more strength, God give me more enthusiasm, God give me more anointing, God give me, God give me, God give me, God give me. What do we mean by that? If we mean anything less than, God give me the revelation of yourself in my life. We have missed the mark.

And you can pray for revival, and I can pray for revival from now until the Lord comes for His bride. And revival will not become a reality until I get my focus off of myself, and off of my programs, and off of my church, and off of the leadership of the church, and off of the leadership of revival, and I get my eyes totally fixed in a love relationship upon God and who He is. The Apostle Paul, who met the Lord, the resurrected Christ, on the Damascus Road, as an old man sitting in a prison, ready to die for the cause of Jesus Christ, penned those great words that we love to quote, don't we? Oh, that I may know Him.

Is that where we stop? We may not stop there in quoting, but we stop there so often in experience. Paul came to the end of his life, and he had suffered much for Jesus Christ, and he had seen God, as few men ever saw God, and lived to tell it. And he said, Oh, that I might know Him.

And it's interesting, he did not use the word in the New Testament, oida, which is the word that I might know Him mentally, through the reasoning of my mind, to use John's concept of the last hour, which was tremendous. But he used the word gnosto, which means, Oh, that I might experientially be linked in and tied in to Him in the power of His resurrection. When the Apostle Paul prayed for the believers at Ephesus in Ephesians chapter 1, he reminded them first that they were blessed.

He said, Man, we have been blessed with all spiritual blessing in heavenly places right now. And he gives them a whole list of how they've been blessed. You've been redeemed.

You've been chosen. You've been adopted. You've been inherited.

You've been set apart unto God. And he goes right through a long list. And then he begins to pray for them.

Keep your finger in Isaiah and turn to Ephesians 1. I want you to just see this. This is a tremendous truth in the word of God. The Apostle Paul begins to pray for them.

Verse 16, he says, I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers. You want to know how to pray for one another? Let me selfishly say, you want to know how to pray for Bill Wright when you think of him? You can pray this prayer any day of the week for me, please. I tell my people constantly, pray the prayers of Paul for your pastor.

For he didn't pray for anything frothy or light. He said, I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, see where his focus is? When he came to prayer, his focus was upon not what God can do, but who God was. Now, he got to what God could do.

But he first riveted in upon who God was. He said, I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation and the knowledge of him. That word, knowledge, by the way, is the same word that Paul used in Philippians, that I might know him.

Verse 18, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened that you may know what is the hope of his calling and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saint. Now, verse 19, here it is. And I pray that you might know experientially, going back to the word knowing, I pray that you might know experientially in your daily walk what is the exceeding greatness of his power.

To us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, what power was he praying for them? Verse 20 tells you. Which he wrought in Christ. Which power he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and he set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principalities and all powers and all might and all dominion in every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come.

And he hath put all things under his feet and he gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. What was he praying for them? He was praying that they might know the reality of the resurrected life of Jesus Christ in their daily walk that would give them victory, just like it gave Jesus victory. That would give them victory over principalities, powers, might, dominion, the works of Satan, the works of the flesh, the works of the world, that you might have victory over it.

But it only comes through that intimate, personal relationship with the God of Isaiah chapter 40. Isaiah chapter 40 again says to us, Have you not known and have you not heard that it is the everlasting God? It is the Lord. It is the Creator of heaven and earth.

It is the All-Sufficient One. It is the Alpha and the Omega. It is the Beginning and the End.

It is the Great I Am. It is the Way, the Door. It is the Life.

It is the Resurrection and the Life. It is all that He is that is on your side. And our focus needs to get riveted upon Him.

You say, My, you get excited about that subject. Yes, I do. I am so tired of watching believers anemically, passively, lethargically walking through their Christian life like they serve a God that has gone bankrupt somehow or some old man who is sitting up in heaven rocking away eternity with no energy and no power and no might to change your and my life.

He is the Almighty God. He is the Everlasting Father. He is the Prince of Peace.

He is the Counselor. He is all in all. And it is Him and Him alone that energizes the church.

He is alive. And until I focus upon Him as the living, breathing God of heaven, the Lord of the church, I will never begin to scratch what revival means. Revival will never rise any higher than my relationship to God.

My relationship with God will never rise any higher than the concept of God through the eyes of the Word. We have been challenging our people at Del Norte for the last few months. Every person that I counsel with and I, not by choice, but by design and some days by necessity, meet with many, many people in crisis and in need.

Last year, we met with some 400 just in crisis. It's too many. Pastors, that's too many.

When I tell you that, I tell myself that. And we're asking God to help us do something about that. And God is doing something about it.

He's raising up lay counselors in our church who I teach now every Monday for two hours, three hours. Three women and two men. Right now we're teaching.

We're teaching our elders how to intervene in the area of crisis counseling with the Word of God so that really they're not counseling, they're exhorting and rebuking with all on suffering with the Word of God. That's all they're doing. That's all I do.

And I am saying to these people, everyone that comes in, without exception, I give them an assignment. I never let anybody talk to me in regards to need in their life. They don't get an assignment.

It's always a biblical assignment because that's the only thing that will change their crisis is to get a vision of God. So right now we have them working through the Psalms and the Proverbs in one month. I got the idea from Bill Gothard when I went to his conference last year.

And he talked about going through the Psalms and the Proverbs in one month. And he gives a list of five Psalms a day and one Proverb a day. You can get through the Psalms in one month.

We took it just one step further because we felt our people needed a vehicle. They needed a way to really profit from that so they were not just simply reading through in one month. I think Bible reading has turned into a race oftentimes rather than an illumination of the Spirit of God.

And so we're trying to offset that. And so we put together some little sheets and one for the Psalms and one for the Proverbs and the one on Psalms. We've encouraged people to record on one hand of the sheet what they have learned about God, his character, his person.

And on the other side of the sheet, what they have learned about the activity of God, of what he has done, is doing, or will promise to do. In the Proverbs we have encouraged them to look for principles of wisdom that come from God in any area. Now you can imagine what their sheets look like that going through Proverbs, every other word.

But in the Psalms we are attempting by God's grace to help our people get a clear vision through the eyes of the Word of God, not preaching and not through a teaching and not through good books. All those things are fine. But just simply through reading and studying the Word of God, what did they learn about God and what did they learn about what God does? Now the reason for that is that all faith will proceed from that.

We have asked people to have faith. And pastors, please take this into light that it is given, and I'm a pastor so I can say it. I say it to me first, and I couldn't agree with Don more than I do right now when he said that revival truth must first touch the heart of the one that is teaching it.

And that is absolutely true. But you know, pastors, we have asked people to have faith in what we say far too long. We have asked them to have faith in who we are.

We are a man of integrity. We are a man of honesty. We are a man seeking God.

And we have asked people, without asking them directly, we have asked them to focus in upon us. And that's why when a pastor falls morally, when a pastor falls in any way in a community, he takes a whole host of saints right down the tube with him. Because indirectly we have taught our people to focus on the pastor as God in the church.

And God never called a pastor to be God in the church. God never called me to be the Pope of the church. God in the church.

God never called me to be that. God called me to be a shepherd. God called me to be an overseer.

God called me to be an under-shepherd first of all. But before anything else, God called me to be a man after God's own heart. And as a shepherd, it's my responsibility to lead my people through the Word of God to God.

I said that in a particular way because I think many of us are attempting to lead people to God through our sermon. You say, well, aren't your sermons word-filled? Absolutely. They better be.

It would end stubble if they're not. But there is a difference between proclaiming truth from a pulpit to the hearts of people and driving people to the Word of God where God alone will be their teacher. How many of us have taught our people? I'm sure all of us have.

Out of John 14 and 16 that when the Spirit of Truth has come, when the Spirit of God was come, He would guide us into all what? Truth. We tell our people now, the Holy Spirit is the teacher. And then we rise up into His place and we try and take His place.

And we do not trust Him Monday through Saturday and on Sunday too to really be the teacher of the church. You cannot teach revival. I'm more convinced of that today than I've ever been.

I've tried to do it. It would just leave you frustrated. You cannot teach revival really.

You can teach certain principles from the Word of God and certain concepts, but revival is something that only God can burn into the inner man of an individual. Only God can do it. But God will not have the opportunity to do it if you do not lift up God for who He is in your church so that your people become awestruck by who He is, literally devastated by who He is, quaking because of who He is.

I am so sick and nauseated with the idea that I hear today of God being our friend and our pal and our buddy and our best friend. We have replaced a God who is holy and righteous and almighty and sovereign and creator. And we have replaced Him with a friendship relationship.

You say, don't you believe God is your friend? Yes, I believe God is my friend, but before He was ever my friend, He was almighty, holy God who was friend enough to show me what a wretched, beggarly sinner I really was. People today have very little concept about the awfulness of sin because they have very little concept about the awfulness of our God. How often you read in the Psalms that David encourages us to stand and to tremble and to be in fear.

Gentlemen, can I encourage you to ask God if it is right for us any longer to stand before our people and when we come to a passage that says, fear God, ask Him if it is all right if you explain that away by saying, now God doesn't mean that you are to be afraid of Him. Have you ever done that? I have done it a hundred times. To my shame, I don't do it anymore.

When I come to a passage where God says, fear me, I tell my people, you better stand and you better quake. And if your knees are knocking, praise God, get down on them because God is holy and I am a beggarly sinner and I have no right to stand in His presence as though I am on the same level He is on. We are.

To whom will you liken our God? To whom will you equal me unto, sayeth the Lord? There is none. I might get carried away with this subject. I might get carried out because of it.

I realize that. What has revival taught me about God? It taught me He is alive. He is not only alive, He is available.

He is available. He is a present help. He is a paraclete of heaven.

He is the resident Christ. He is the reigning Lord and He desires to be the release, divine flow out of your life and mine. I can't stop there.

I can't get planted on that one. You all get to eat today. Let me quickly say He is an anxious God.

Isaiah saw that. He saw that He was an anxious God to work in and through the lives of those who are weak. Someone asked me last night why I believe that revival was not catching fire in the lives of many of our churches.

My response was that it's because we're too strong. We know too much. We've got it all down.

Now, please do not misunderstand me. I do not believe that God puts a premium on disconnecting your mentality to your Christianity. I believe that God has given us the ability to study and to understand the Word of God under the illumination of the Spirit of God.

There is no premium on spiritual ignorance or biblical ignorance. There's no premium on that. But when our study takes the place of knowing God in His person and in His power, then we're in trouble.

The Scripture teaches that God is anxious. In this passage, it says that He gives power, verse 29, to the faint. And to them that have no might, He increases their strength.

Ralph showed you a poster that he has in his office. It shows a little guy running down a rope or sliding down a rope, and there's a knot on the end. And I forget what it said except hang on to the knot.

Right? It says something about hanging on to the knot. When all else fails, hang on to the knot. Is that what it says? Something like that.

I was very interested and I'd like to have that poster. My people would like me to have the poster. I'd put it on the front of my pulpit because they have heard me say it once.

They've heard me say it a hundred times if they've heard me say it one time. Too many of us have a knot, and I've never seen that poster. Too many of us have a knot on the end of our climbing rope, and we need to cut the knot off and fall abandoned to a God who alone can sustain and strengthen and fill and empower and transform from the inside out.

But we're too strong. In verse 28, he points you to focusing upon God as the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth. Then he focuses upon what God does, and he says this God, who is the Lord, who is the Creator, who is the everlasting God from the ends of the earth, this God, He never faints.

By the way, if you want a passage to help people when you're counseling, give them this one. I give this one to everybody that comes to my office. I have three posters in my two studies at home, and they're all about these verses right here.

They're all pictures of eagles. And people keep bringing me another one, another one. I keep bringing them.

I love it. You see, it's the everlasting God. There's the balance, the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

That's His person. What's His activity? His activity is an extension of His person. He never faints.

He never gets weary. There isn't any searching of His understanding. Is there searching of your understanding today? Are you under the... Are you beginning to crumble and to begin to crack because you don't know what's happening in your life, what's happening in your world, and you don't know any way out, and you are fainting, and you are without might and without strength.

You're a candidate for revival. You never become a candidate for revival until you have a focus of who God is, the Lord, the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, and then you recognize what He can do and He alone can do. He gives power.

To who? Who does He give power to? What's it say? Look at your Bible. Don't look at me. What's it say? Oh, what's the Bible say? To the faint.

You're right. He gives it to us who are fainting. He doesn't give it to the one who is, you know, in his track suit and all in shape, muscles toned up and ready to run the race and halfway through the race.

He gives to those who have fallen by the wayside. That's who a candidate for revival is. Clear focus upon God.

Clear focus upon what God can do. And he never gets weary. You ever get weary? Man, I do.

I do. Sometimes I go home at night and I say to my wife, don't tell me one thing that happened today. I want to hear it.

If I hear one more thing, I'm going to scream. We live on four acres out in the middle of the wilderness halfway to Egypt. That's what Ralph and Lou thought when they came to stay with us.

Thought we lived halfway to Egypt. Well, we live out there on purpose. God planted us out there and I tried to sell our place for 18 months and everybody thought we lived too far away from town.

I live 13 miles from the church. I love it there. You know why? Man, I go home.

One thing is, nobody just drops in on us. I mean, they're going to come see us. They've got to plan the day.

They've got to pack a lunch. Yeah, I like that. But the real reason I like to live where I live is that 30 minutes driving to work and 30 minutes driving home, I have very little distractions where I can talk to God, meet God, and let Him talk to me.

And I can redirect my focus, but there are times that I come home after that 30-minute drive and I'll say to my wife, I've heard all I can hear today. I've heard so much about divorce and heartache and incest and I've heard so much about child abuse today. I don't want to hear another thing.

Please, don't even tell me that the dishwasher won't work today. Don't tell me. My wife has lived with me long enough and she is sensitive enough.

She can easily tell when I walk through the door. And you see, it's in those times that I have learned that I need to take my focus and that's what that 30-minute drive does to help. Take that focus off of the crisis, the human dilemma, the human wreckage of that day and redirect it to an everlasting God, a Lord, a Creator of the ends of the earth who gives power to the faint, who increases might to those who have no strength, who has no limit to the searching of his understanding.

Do you realize how that sets you free? Pastor, do you ever get overwhelmed by someone who walks in and they dump their garbage in your office and you're up to your armpits in their crisis and your heart just breaks and you say, Oh, God, I don't know what in the world I'm going to say. May I say to you that's the wisest thing you can say. I've learned that.

I used to always have to have an answer. Somebody came into my office with a crisis, I had to have an answer. And boy, my mind would begin going 100 miles an hour and I'd begin thinking, Okay, I've got to tell him this and I've got to give him that and I've got to get him on this track and I've got to get him on that track.

And many times I say to people now, My friend, I've listened and I've heard and I'm going to tell you in all honesty, I absolutely don't have a thing to say to you. I don't know what to say. Let's pray.

And we get on our knees before God and we begin to focus our attention, see, where it belongs. Not on that human crisis, but we begin to focus our attention upon the Lord, the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth. We begin to focus upon the fact that He's not a reluctant God.

He's an anxious God. He loves to give power to those that are fainting. He loves, He loves to be all in all to His children.

And time after time we get up off our knees and God has already given the answer. God has done it. Because the focus was where it belonged.

Now, you might not call that revival. I call that revival. I believe that is extremely biblical, objective, subjective, whatever you want to put it all together.

That's revival. Because God is doing it. When the twins came to Tucson, one of the concepts that have really helped me so very, very much, and I'll praise God for it till the day I die, is the concept out of the 139th Psalm.

Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me. See if there's any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.

Oh, what a concept that is. And how many times God has driven me to that place where I've been able to say, God, You are the Lord. You are the everlasting God.

You are the creator of the ends of the earth. God, I'm fainting. God, I am falling.

God, I am broken. God, there is no limit to what You can do. Now, You show me what I am by showing me who You are.

And I have literally seen scores and scores of people get on their face before God with no answer from me. None. It has released me in counseling with people so very much to be able to say to a woman or a man or a young person or a child, I think I know what perhaps your problem is, but I'm not going to tell you.

Let's get on our knees and see if God tells you. And God does it every single time. Every single time.

I saw a woman get on her knees one day. She wasn't from our church. It was during the revival, a crusade.

PSYDE II Would you change it? That's a misnomer. If the revival isn't continuing, friend, there's a problem. It wasn't during the revival.

The revival didn't begin when the Suterans came. It didn't end when they left. They said that, by the way, many, many, many, many times from the first day to the last day.

And it's true. It began long before they came. It has continued long since they left.

But it was during the crusade that a lady came to my office one day. She wasn't from our church. She was from another church that I know the pastor very close to.

And she said, Pastor, could I just see you for a few moments? She hadn't made an appointment and she just walked in. Those days I would just come on in, you know. You couldn't hold it back.

It was obvious that she was terribly distressed. And I said, What's happening in your life right now between you and God? She said, You know, my husband and I have been what many people would call the pillars of the church for years. We've taught Sunday school, been your sponsors.

He's on the board, you know, the whole nine yards of all that we do for God. And she said, But I am absolutely a miserable wretch. She said, I have no joy, have no peace in my life.

She said, I carry a gun everywhere I go. I said, Why do you do that? She said, My husband and I own a service station down in the interstate. And she said, You know, we've always tried to serve God.

We closed our business on the Lord's Day because we had dedicated that business to the Lord. And she said, In the last two months we have been robbed twice. And I've been there both times we were robbed.

And we were robbed by men who came in with stockings over their face. And both of them had a gun. They held a gun to my head.

And they told me they were going to kill me. And she said, They took all of our money and everything they could put in a sack and they ran away and the police had never caught them. And she said, After the second time I went out and bought a gun.

And she said, I've determined that if anybody walks in that place ever again, I'm going to blow them away. That lady was hurting. Now, I share that with you to ask you a question.

That lady is sitting in your office. She's told you that. What would you say to her? What would you do to that lady? Man, they may not be coming into your office, but I'm going to tell you something.

They're sitting in your pews. There's people sitting in your pews every Lord's Day, every Wednesday night that are in absolute crisis like that all the time. What do you say to that lady? You say, What did you say? I said to that lady, You know what? I know you're hurting.

And bless your heart. God knows you're hurting. But I don't have anything to tell you.

But God does. Let's get in our knees. And you pray the 139th Psalm verses 23 and 24, and you mean it.

And you wait until God shows you what it is that's really underneath you carrying a gun. You having the attitude that you have right now. You ask God to show you.

She said, Okay. So we got on our knees before the couch. I didn't say a word.

She didn't say anything either. It seemed like an eternity before she ever said one word. I didn't look up.

I just stayed right there before the Lord and asked God to really make His presence known to her life. And I heard her begin to weep. And then she began to talk to God.

It was just like I wasn't anywhere in the universe. She began to open her heart to God. And she began to confess then that she had no idea it was even anywhere in the vicinity of her life.

When she had finished praying and praising God, she got up off her knees and she said, Pastor, I can't believe I just prayed what I prayed. I said, Why? She said, I had no idea that I had such bitterness towards my husband. I had no idea that I had such anger welling up in my heart.

It had nothing to do with the man who had robbed him. It had nothing to do with that. She walked out of my office, went and sold her gun.

Today is walking in the power of the Spirit of God. Now listen, it wasn't because Bill Wright did anything. I didn't do anything.

I didn't do anything. I just knelt next to that lady and shut up. Boy, I'll tell you, some of us have too much counsel to give people.

And it's time that we directed them to the Lord, the everlasting God, Creator of the end of the earth, who fainteth not, neither is weary. There's no searching with understanding. He does have the answer with the God that we would quit running to all our human counselors and just come to God.

And if you are a human counselor, would the God that you would direct them and drive them to nobody else, nothing else than God, this God. Did you hear that beep? Didn't you? I just got this watch a few months ago. My daughter set it and she set it to beep on the hour.

The other day I was in a counseling session and this thing beeped. And this guy said, Whoa, is our time up? Well, our time is up by the schedule. Would you give me five minutes to talk to you about the church? I told you at the beginning this is too big a subject for one session.

You can't talk about what I learned about God and then what I learned about the church in one session. Ralph, you ought to know better than that. There's just no way.

Oh, thank you. What has God taught us about the church? Well, it all ties together. I mean, they really were wise in putting these two subjects together because they dovetail.

When you get a proper focus of God and a proper relationship to Him, it will change your focus and your ideal about the church. The church moves suddenly away from being a social club and a place of fellowship and a place of entertainment and a place of teaching and a place of... You say, hey, you put some biblical things in there. Isn't the church a place of fellowship? Isn't the church a place of teaching? Isn't it a place of training? Yeah, it is.

But before it ever is that, it is the Lord's body. It is the Lord's. It isn't yours, pastor.

I've tried to catch myself and I still do it. Conditioning is hard to change. It takes time in my life.

But I've tried to catch myself from identifying Del Norte Baptist Church as my church. Those are my people. You say, that's a nitpicking thing.

Yeah, it is. It is. But you see, I need some mental help in my life.

I need some things that remind me constantly that the church is God's church. It isn't mine. Now, if I am reminded of that, then I am reminded that if anything is going to happen in that church that is going to resemble, come near revival, the breath of God blowing in the pews, God's going to have to do it.

And my, does that release me from the frustration of trying to gear up and pump up and drum up and work up what only God can do. Men are burning out of the ministry today as fast as we can graduate them from school. You know why? Because we have not, we have not addressed the issues that you are addressing in these few days in our Bible schools or seminaries.

Very few. We have 21 young people that just started in Bible school this year out of Del Norte. And we have a policy to meet with our kids, every one of them, before they leave.

One of us on staff meet with them. When they come home for Christmas, we make an appointment with them. When they come home in the summer, we make another appointment with them.

And we keep drumming and drumming, drumming. Principles we are teaching you, we keep drumming them to these kids. We keep reminding them that the church is God's church.

And the Lord is the Lord of His own church. And therefore, for me to try and do what only God has the right and the ability and the power and the energy to do is absolute stupidity on my part. And young men and young women are burning out of the pastoral ministry, the evangelistic ministry, the mission field ministry.

Today, I honestly believe, primarily because they are trying to do what the Lord of the church only can do and has promised that He will do if we get out of the way. All God really wants from you and me is availability for Him to live His life through. A few months back on our Wednesday night, in our Wednesday night service, we had the privilege of doing a study on what we simply entitled the essence of Christianity.

My, how God worked in my heart. He worked in nobody else. He worked in me.

He was pleased to work in the hearts of our people as well. We found that the essence of Christianity is very, very much linked to revival truth. The essence of Christianity is not me being busy for God in the church.

It's not me working for God, doing for God, serving God, teaching for God, preaching for God, singing for God. How people have grown up being told by well-meaning, sincere pastors, just like I, you got to get busy for God. You got to get on the firing line for God.

You got to serve God. You got to teach those kids for God. We don't have a worker in the nursery.

You got to get in there and do it for God. You say, is there something wrong with serving God? Of course there's nothing wrong with serving God. Aren't we commanded to serve God? Yes, we're commanded to serve God.

But you know, we have substituted serving God for God serving His own church through your body and mind. We have substituted doing for God, trying to do for God what only God sovereignly can do. And so we have learned that the church is God's church.

He owns it. We have learned that He is the Lord of it. Paul says that He is the head of the body.

By Him, all things consist. I'm always amazed at commentaries that deal with Colossians 1 in that passage. I'd love to go through that with you.

But in Colossians chapter 1, in that passage that we all like to run to where it talks about Christ being preeminent in the church. He is the Lord of the church. We pluck it right out of the context where it talks about the fact that all things were created by Him.

And He is the image of the invisible God. And by Him, all things what? Consist. What does that mean? Held together.

By Him, all things are held together. In the very next verse, He talks about Christ being preeminent in the church. The church is consisting, if you please, in the hand of a creative God who doesn't just simply hold

the universe together, but He is holding the church together as well.

May I say to you in closing, I believe in the church. I really do. You say, well you better, you're a pastor.

Listen, I meet a lot of pastors who don't believe in the church. They don't really. It's just a job.

They're getting their paycheck week after week. They're punching in. And most of them punch in late and leave early.

They have not really yet come to the place that they believe in the church. Jesus said, I will build my church. And the gates of hell, all the gates of hell, Satan and all of his hellish demons, they will not, they cannot prevail against it.

Do you believe that? If you don't believe that, you ought to resign whatever you're doing in the church right now until you do believe it. You ought to get out. We don't need any more leaders in the church of the living Christ preaching and living and acting and serving as though this was a job, not a vital relationship with the almighty God of heaven.

It is His church. His church is alive. And He needs men and He needs women who are willing to focus their attention upon Him and believe in His program.

And listen, there is no program outside the church that is God. You say, oh boy, you are about to get in big, big, big trouble. Well, I've been there before and I've got all kinds of scars to prove it.

But I don't mind saying that one because I can biblically support it. You show me one verse in the Word of God, the inerrant, inspired, authoritative Word of God that reveals any other program in the world than the church. There isn't any.

There isn't any. And if you don't believe in the church of the resurrected Christ, if you don't believe in the church that is fitly framed together, fitly fashioned together, knit together by one Spirit into one body, God didn't design denominations. God didn't design divisions.

God designed one living, one united organism, which is the very body of the living, resurrected Christ. With the God, we would begin to hack down and allow God to hack down all of the divisions and the divisive labels that we have put on our church. You say, don't you have one? I sure do, but I'd like to get rid of it.

I'm in a conservative Baptist church. I'd like to just be in the church. If the Board of Elders in our church next week voted to take all the labels off and just call it the church, I'd be thrilled to death.

I don't care what label you've got on your church. If it's under the banner of the cross, it's God's program, and you better start handling it, and I'd better start handling it like God's program, not like my pet hobby horse, not like my job, not like my thing, my program, my ministry. We thus begin to see that the church is owned by God.

Boy, there's a lot more I'd love to share with you, but we've shared enough. We've shared more than all of us will contain. I say to my kids when they go to a conference, if you can take one thing, just one, out of the whole conference home that you can write down in big letters and underscore and claim it as your own, it's worth every dollar, every moment that you sat in those hard seats, it's worth it all.

Just one. Don't try and come home with five or ten or twenty. Come home with one.

If you can come out of this message with one concept, one idea, that God the Holy Spirit can drive into your heart, it's worth it all. You see, God is the teacher. So I don't have to teach you it all.

I don't have to give it to you all. God is the teacher. He is sovereign.

Just focus, would you? Focus in on Him. I challenge you to go through the Psalms. I brought a couple of those papers.

You can reproduce them if you want. There's no magic in them. They just help direct your focus where it belongs.

On God. On God. Tomorrow in the mid-session, I'll change my message a little bit.

We're going to talk about some very practical things about worship in the church and format in the church that flows out of focusing upon God. Let's bow our heads in prayer. You and I have treaded on some very holy ground today in the Word.

And God has spoken to some of our hearts today that we need to trade in a job for a relationship with the living Christ. Some of us, the Spirit of God is showing that our focus has been on being busy rather than being related in an intimate, personal love affair with the Lord of the church. I trust that you'll just take this moment just to be quiet.

I don't want you to raise your hand. I don't want you to make any motion right now. Just be quiet.

And say to God, Lord, I'm ready for you to search me and know me and try me and to see if there's any wicked way in me. God, I want you to show me what only you can see. And whatever you show me, Lord, I'll confess it.

And by your grace, I'll repent of it. And I'll thank you for filling that void with the person and the power and the release of your blessed Spirit in my life. I do that.

Just do that before God. Father, I thank you that you have not left us without the illuminating, convicting, life-changing person of your Holy Spirit in our lives. Father, you have shown each one of us today areas of wickedness, of spiritual deadness in our own lives.

Thank you, Father, that when we're fainting, when we don't have any power, that you, the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth, that you come and you give power and you give strength and you give might that proceeds from your person. How I praise you, O God, that you are alive and available and that you're anxious to bless, you're anxious to transform, you're anxious to fill, you're anxious to cause your people to walk in a new way. Lord Jesus, how we love you today.

And I pray that thou would continue to do what only you can do, what no man could ever do, what no program could ever do, how grateful, Lord, that our confidence can be in you, the Lord, the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth. In his name we do pray. Amen.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/bill-wright/what-revival-taught-me-about-god-and-his-church/>

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