

The Necessity of Secret Prayer

by David Wilkerson

Secret prayer is essential for a personal relationship with God and for spiritual growth, allowing us to hear God's voice and receive direction and guidance.

Duration: 57:06

Scripture: Genesis 21:33, Matthew 6:4, Matthew 6:7

Topics: "Secret Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his personal experience of how God spoke to him about the amount of time he spent watching television. He felt convicted to give up watching TV and instead spend that time in prayer. He emphasizes the importance of seeking God with all our hearts and how it can lead to doors opening and our world expanding. The speaker also highlights the examples of biblical figures like Daniel and the importance they placed on prayer, even in their busy lives. He challenges listeners to prioritize prayer and not make excuses for not having enough time.

Transcript

This message is one of the Times Square Church pulpit series. It was recorded in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in Manhattan, New York City. Other tapes are available by writing WORLDCHALLENGE P.O. BOX 260 LINDALE, TEXAS 75771 or calling 903-963-8626.

None of these messages are copyrighted and you are welcome to make copies for free distribution to friends. I'll talk to you about the necessity of secret prayer. Let me tell you right off what the Holy Spirit said to me, alright? First of all, He's calling me deeper into that walk in life lately.

And He's made it very clear to me that many in this church, in fact, those who hear me anywhere, if it's going to be on tape, many, many of our problems could be solved if we'd just take the time to get low with God and seek Him, to have a regular, daily, intense time of prayer with the Lord. Now, folks, I'm not going to rail on you. I'm not going to browbeat you with the Word.

I'm going to just go through the Scripture with you this afternoon and tell you how God's been moving on my heart, and I hope it will excite you to follow the path that I believe He's leading me. I know He's led Pastor Carter in the same direction, the leadership of this church, that we would be men and women of prayer. Folks, everything God's done in this church, this church is only nine years old, and everything God has done, a church that's absolutely free of debt, one of the flagship theaters on Broadway, and only God

could do that.

Only God could do that. There's a law now that none of the theaters can be turned into churches, and they did that since we came, so there'd be no way that could it happen again. And right now, honestly, folks, it would take over \$15 million to get anywhere near what God did for us here, and that was an answer to prayer.

This has been a praying church. What God does corporately for the body, He wants to do singularly for every individual here this afternoon. If you hear the Holy Spirit, you'll walk out of here this afternoon with a commitment to pray.

Now, folks, thank God for the all-night prayer meeting. There was an all-night prayer meeting here last night and most Friday nights. That's wonderful.

God does work corporately, but the Saturday night praying all night does not, will not suffice for this private, secret prayer time with you and God alone. All the praying with the saints here will not suffice, will not take the place of that privacy with God. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, I pray that You speak to us now. Oh, God, I don't have anything profound this afternoon. It's simple, but You've been stirring my heart, and I pray, Lord, You speak to every one of us on stage and in the congregation's balcony here on the main floor.

Speak to all of us about our need to get back to the secret closet of prayer. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Go to Matthew 6, if you will, please. Matthew 6. Let's start with verse 4. Matthew 6, beginning with verse 4. That Thine alms may be in secret, and Thy Father would see it in secret Himself, so reward Thee openly. Where does God see best? In the secret.

And when Thou prayest, Thou shalt be as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray, standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Where Thou send you, they have their reward. But Thou, when Thou prayest, enter into Thy closet.

When Thou hast shut Thy door, pray to Thy Father which is in secret, and Thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward Thee openly. And by the way, next verse. And when you pray, use not vain repetitions of the heathen do, for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking.

Amen. But be not ye therefore like unto them, for your Father knoweth what things you have need of before you ask Him. There's a wonderful verse I found in Genesis regarding Abraham.

It just blessed me when I saw it this past week. It just fits so... I'd never seen it before. It fits so perfectly into what I want to bring to your attention.

Don't turn it, but it's in Genesis 21-33. And I'd never seen this before. And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba and called there on the name of the Lord.

And what he actually did was he planted a cluster of trees. He wanted a spot, a thristing spot, where he... it would be a place where he knew he could go and meet God. And these trees surrounded it, just... I don't know what kind of trees there are, but it's a... he planted a grove and over the years it grew.

And this was a place that Abraham, it says, there in that grove, he talked to the Lord, he met the Lord, he prayed. I don't know if you have a special place. You ought to have a place where you go, it's just yours and the Lord's.

Nobody else has access to that. Oh, they may be there, they don't know what it means, but it has a special meaning to you. And you can't wait to get there.

Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba and called there on the name of the Lord. And when you go into this book and you find every man of God in history, in the Old Testament that was used by God, was an instrument of the Lord, an anointing of God, and miracles happened through his life or her life, you will find that they were men and women of secret prayer. They did exactly as Jesus says here.

They had this custom of shutting the world out, separating themselves from everybody and everything in heaven, a quality time with the Heavenly Father. Jacob isolated himself at the Jabbok River to get alone and pray. The Scripture says, and Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

Nobody saw that wrestling match. Nobody was there to give an account. It was something happened between God and Jacob himself.

Wrestling was in prayer. It's a spiritual battle that was raged. Of course, we know that Jacob prevailed in that prayer.

David found a place to pray alone. And I know when David grew up as a shepherd, he loved those times alone on the hillside watching the sheep. Maybe that's where he wrote most of his 3,000 songs, and perhaps that's where David got his revelation of the glory of God and the beauty of holiness.

The Scripture says, David said, As for me, I call upon the Lord, and the Lord shall save me. Evening, morning, and at noon, I will pray and cry aloud, and He'll hear my voice. Daniel went to his room, and he opened the window, and he prayed, but he prayed in secret, and he did it three times a day.

I'm sure he opened the window not to be heard, but to get air, to breathe. He kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God. Morning, noon, and evening, bowed to give thanks and to worship and praise his Heavenly Father.

Jonah probably had the most private of all places. And out of the belly of hell cried I, and you heard my voice. He prayed.

That was some chapel. You talk about being alone? God got him alone, and he said, There I prayed, I cried out from the belly of the well. Hannah, she found a place, even though people around her, and folks, sometimes you can make a chapel, you can be in the busiest street, and she's in the temple of God, and she's praying, and her heart is pouring out to God, and there's not a word being spoken, because she shot up with God in her own heart.

The Scripture says, Now, Hannah, she spake in her heart, and only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. And the Scripture said she was pouring out her heart. Folks, I know what it is to be driving down the road and even have people in the car and be pouring out my heart to the Lord.

And then, of course, you get accused of not listening to anybody. But there ought to be times, when you say you don't have time, time to get alone just like that anytime, and shut the door, shut society, shut everything out, and say, Lord, this is your time and mine. I love it when I'm driving in a car to spend quality time alone with God in that car, or anywhere you go.

This happened to Hannah. Saul, when he saw the light, was told to go immediately to a home in the street called Straight, because Saul was going to experience a whole new experience. Now, being a Pharisee, he'd never prayed in secret.

Pharisees prayed only in the street corners and in the synagogues and the marketplaces. And the Scripture says, Go to the street called Straight. This is the direction to Ananias.

And there's a man called Saul. For behold, he's praying. For the first time in his life, he's alone, and he's praying alone.

A whole new experience for Saul, who later became the Apostle Paul. You'll find it even in the New Testament with Saul. You'll find it with Cornelius, who prayed to God always, but he prayed in secret.

And that's why God said, Your prayers and your alms have come up to me before God. He was shut in with the Lord. He prayed always, the Scripture said.

This man, a centurion, was always in prayer, always seeking God. And God heard him and answered him. Peter goes to prayer.

He finds a flat rooftop. He's waiting for lunch to be served. And he goes up, and God meets him on the rooftop.

Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the noon hour. Now, you know Jesus set the example for private praying. Scripture is full of it.

He constantly sought out private places to pray. And when he prayed, he sent his disciples away. He sent his workers away.

He sent everybody away. Because he had to get alone with his Heavenly Father. Matthew 14, 23.

And when he sent the multitudes away, he went up to a mountain apart to pray. And when evening was come, he was there alone, alone. You find it all through the ministry of Jesus.

And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, departed into a solitary place. A solitary place. Nobody's around.

And there he prays. Mark 6, 46. And when he had sent them away, and these were his only disciples, he departed into a mountain to pray.

He sent them away. This comes right back to what I began with. You say, well, I pray.

I pray here at Times Square Church. I go to prayer meetings. I pray with others.

Folks, it's wonderful to pray with other people. That's a part of God's program. Corporate praying, praying with a brother or sister.

That's a high and exalting experience. But God has to have you alone to Himself. He has to.

If I have learned anything, I will not get direction from the Lord. I will never reach my potential in Christ. I will never have the ministry He wants me to have unless I have quality time alone.

There are times I pray with my wife. I read Scripture with her, but there are times I say, Honey, excuse me. And I have to go in.

And I have time alone. Say, Lord, this is Your time. Pray alone.

This is what Jesus is saying to us. Isolated, alone in an isolated place. Luke 6, 12.

It came to pass in those days that he went out into a mountain to pray and continued all night in prayer to God. You say, well, Pastor Dave, he was the son of the living God. He was supernatural.

There is something that he has that I could not possibly do. But the Scripture says very clearly, He that saith he abideth in him ought also to walk even as he walked. God calls us to seek prayer to avoid hypocrisy.

He said, when you pray, or he said, the hypocrites love to pray standing in synagogues in the corners of the streets. But when you pray, you went into the closet. When you shut the door, pray the Father's secret.

And the Father's secret shall reward you openly. Folks, it is in secret prayer that God most reveals His heart to His people. God touched Daniel when he's in secret prayer, but He also informed him.

He also gave him the revelations only when he was shut in with God. While I was speaking and praying, Daniel said, and confessing my sin, while I was speaking to God in prayer, Gabriel touched me, and he informed me, and talked with me. He said, I have come to show thee, for thou art greatly beloved.

While in prayer, God gave Daniel the revelation that goes all the way through history. Folks, I can't remember a single message I've preached from this pulpit in almost nine years. I can't remember one that I didn't get on my knees.

On my knees and praying, God, speak your mind to my heart. Speak your will. I don't know of any direction He's ever given me that I didn't get along with God.

Now, I've taken some steps that I thought was God, but that was just my own desire. I hadn't prayed them through, and I paid a high price for it. Oh, yes, I did, because I didn't seek God alone, because all direction, all ministry has to come out of communion.

All has to come out of communion. I've learned that a long time ago. If you're not shut in with God, you're not going to get clear direction.

You're going to act out of mercy. You're going to act out of compassion, a good thing that just ought to be done, and it brings great trouble to you because God didn't mandate it. God didn't tell you to do it.

Peter, where did he get his revelation that God was going to move in a mighty way, that he was to follow these men to Cornelius' house? Because he got that word in prayer. God came to him, touched him, and spoke to him and informed him through prayer. John, the emperor Domitian, shuts John up on the Isle of Patmos, and it's there, isolated, alone, that God opens up.

And the whole book of Revelation is the revelation of Jesus Christ to this apostle John, who's alone with God. I don't think when John was dumped on the Isle of Patmos that he was dragged in his head and dragged in his feet and complaining and murmuring. He couldn't wait for the boat to leave.

He said, this is my time alone with God. He was a gracious, glorious man of God, and he said, this is my time to get to know the Lord. And boy, did he get to know the Lord when he was alone with God.

Do you know, folks, listen to me, please. There is not a preacher in America or on the face of this earth that can understand Scripture simply by reading books, by going to Bible college and studying theology. There are preachers that can get up and they're very wordy.

They express the word beautifully. It sounds beautiful. They can sound deep.

They can tell you all about the doctrines. They can talk to you about the historical Jesus. They can tell you where He was born in such details that you never heard before.

But it doesn't bring life because they have not been shut in with God. The man who has the truth, the pastors and the evangelists that have the truth are those that have been shut in with God in private prayer, and there the revelation of Jesus comes. The revelation comes only through prayer.

Yes, they go to the word. They go to prayer with this book. And the only thing they can't understand, they say, Holy Spirit, open that to me.

It only comes through prayer. I've heard great theologians. I went to Staten Island a number of years ago to hear, I don't know if it was Tillich who was a great theologian, and all the priests from everywhere there.

And I was just a young priest and I sat in the back. I sat there for an hour and a half listening to that man. I didn't understand a word he said.

And everybody is oohing and aahing. They didn't understand a word he was saying. They were acting intelligent, putting on a play.

I walked out and said, Lord, I don't want that. I want to know who Jesus is. I'm going to stay on my knees until I can move the heart of people through the Holy Ghost.

Hallelujah. Nobody has ever had the revelation of Jesus unless they've been men of prayer, women of prayer. In Jeremiah, the 33rd chapter, you don't need to turn there, but the prophet's in a deep, dark pit.

The scripture said, when he's there, he prayed. And while he's praying, God says, call unto me, Jeremiah. In other words, pray in this pit.

And I'll answer you. And I'll show you great and mighty things which you don't know. Hallelujah.

He's down there, and God suddenly reveals to him the whole future of Israel while he's in the pit, because this man is not murmuring, he's not complaining. He's praying. In Hosea, the prophet Hosea prophesied that God was going to allure Israel into the desert.

He said, when I get you alone to myself, I'm going to allure you, I'm going to woo you into the desert, because I have to have you to myself. And he said, I'm going to speak comfortably to you. And in the Hebrew, it means, I'm going to make your heart weep for joy, but I've got to get you alone first.

One of our church fathers, Bernard, said, O saints of God, don't you know that your husband, Jesus Christ, is baskful, and he won't be familiar and company? Your lover is baskful. He doesn't want to be intimate with you in public. He wants you alone to himself.

And he said, I get you alone, I'm going to make your heart weep for joy. And I tell you, you show me a housewife that has a daily time of prayer, she shuts off that Babylonian idiot box, and she shuts off all of that garbage, and while her husband's at work, she is praying. She's not on the phone gossiping to some of her girlfriends.

Come on, sister. Yep, yep, yep, yep, yep, yep, yep, all day long on the telephone to everybody, and no time to pray. No time to seek God.

You show me a wife that is alone with God, and I'll show you a woman who can move her husband to God, pray him under conviction, make him so miserable in his sins. She can control her children. She can be the powerhouse for God because she is on her knees.

She comes out. When her husband comes home, she's not murmuring, she's not complaining because the joy of the Lord is in her heart. She's been alone with God.

She has a secret closet to pray in. And you know, I can tell when women don't pray, especially housewives and mothers. They are always complaining.

There is no joy. There is no victory. Nothing is right.

Everything is wrong. And I will tell you, everything probably is wrong. And the troubles pile up because you are not seeking God.

You seek everybody else. You can read books, how-to books. You run to the library, you run to the Christian bookstore and get a book on how to handle your problem.

You don't need a psychiatrist, a psychologist. I'm going to tell you free. This will cost you \$75.

It is. Some sitting on a couch. Some psychiatrist's office.

And he can't tell you the truth. And I'm not trying to be facetious. You don't need a counselor.

You need to shut the whole world out, especially if you have children in school and you have that quality time. Ambrose, one of the fathers in the church, he said, I am never less alone than when I'm alone. He said, because when I'm alone, I enjoy the presence of God more freely and fully and sweetly without any interruptions.

If you're a housewife and your children are in school, God's provided you an opportunity to be alone with God. There ought to be 500 women in this church that this is your church home, that you have spent such quality time with the Lord alone. When you come in here, there's a fire burning in your soul and it touches everybody and everything around you.

We couldn't contain the joy and the glory of God if every housewife in this church was on her knees during the day time. Every day of the week, a quality time with God. All the power and the glory.

Now, I'll get to your husband in just a moment. So, you know, the greatest power on earth is the power that comes through prayer alone with God that delivers you from the fear of man and the designs of man against you. And that's why Jacob, when he's about to fall into the hands of his brother, he gets alone, sends everybody away and gets alone with God because this is the first thing that happens.

God delivers you from the fear and the power of man. He delivers you, sir. That's the work of the husband that you keep your children away from the powers of hell, that you pray a wall of fire around your children, you uphold your wife in prayer, on the way to work, on the job, wherever there's a prayer.

You are learning to breathe in prayer. Pray without ceasing, sir. That's what the Bible says.

Redeeming the time for the hours late. Hallelujah. Jacob actually held God captive by his praying in secret.

He's an admitted crook. He's a worm by his own admission. He's tired.

He's worried. Yet in secret prayer, he obtains power. The Scripture says, Yea, he had power over the angel and prevailed.

He wept and made supplication unto him. He said, I'll not let you go till you bless me. All the husbands and fathers would rise up and say, Oh God, I will not let you go till I know my children are on fire, till I know that there's an angel walking with my family, until you heal my marriage and my home and keep me from pornography, keep me from the sins of this world.

God, give us men who know how to pray, who will take the time to be alone with God. When your crisis looks like you're about to be destroyed, I'm telling you there's a kind of omnipotency in private prayer. This is what you see with Jacob.

That's a kind of omnipotency to be able to hold God captive. And God says, let me alone. Let me go.

That's a kind of omnipotency that God entrusts in his people who pray. You can control events. You see this omnipotency in prayer when Jonah cries out to God from the belly of the whale.

Then Jonah prayed out of the fish's belly. He said, I cried unto the Lord by reason of my affliction. He heard me and my soul fainted.

When my soul fainted in me, I remembered my Lord. My prayer came in unto thee, to thy holy temple. And the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry ground.

Now, folks, that's a powerful statement. Upon dry ground. What if he'd spit him out in the middle of the sea? It'd have been shark bait.

How long do you think he'd have lasted? God made that whale a very uncomfortable cruise ship. Took him in the direction he's going and dumps him out on the shores near Nineveh because he prayed. And I'll tell you what, I believe that fish turned all the way around when he began to pray.

And there was an omnipotency in that prayer. That prayer was moved on by the Spirit of God. You know, that whale couldn't get too close because it would get beached on the shore.

God wasn't going to kill that whale because he does everything right without reproach. And so he had to get him there where God knew how far he could swim. I mean, God put him right to the centimeter.

Right to the spot. And I don't know, he tickled the bellies well or what, and he made him vomit. And out comes Jonah on dry ground.

I'm not going to try to figure that one out. Only to say what a power, what an omnipotency there is in private prayer. Hallelujah.

Glory to Jesus. It was said of Martin Luther, when the Reformation was in great danger because of persecution, he went into his closet and he wrestled all night with the Lord and he came out leaping and dancing the next morning and said, We have overcome! We have overcome! The next day, Charles V made a proclamation that ended the persecution. The next day.

That's omnipotency in private prayer. Oh, I like the story I read of Mr. Dodd who told the story of a group, a prayer group that was trying to cast the demon out of a possessed woman or possessed man, I think it was. And they couldn't cast out the demon, so they decided to call a day of fasting and prayer and invited the demoniacs in.

They gathered together in this room to fast and pray, to cast out the devils, the demons in this particular person. And a knock comes on the door and there's a poor, ragged little old lady asking admission. She said, Can I join you? And they wouldn't let her in.

They thought, Well, she's not in unity with us and she might disturb our purposes. So they kept her outside the door, didn't let her come in. So she just knelt outside the door and started to pray.

And within moments, the demons cried out of this person, Get that little old lady out. I can't leave until you get her out. Get her out of here.

She's the one who had the power. She was the prayer warrior. It was said the demons cried out.

The woman behind the door. It's always the woman behind the door. The man behind the door, the secret closet door.

The devil knows those who pray. You got a secret closet, the devil knows all about it. He hates it.

It's his worst enemy. That's where all the cannon shot is coming from. This is the end of side one.

If prayer is so important and so necessary, why do so few Christians pray? The number one sin in the ministry is the lack of prayer. Everywhere I've traveled over the years, that has been the number one. Brother Ravenhill told me once, he said, Brother Dave, you want to bring conviction on preachers? You want to see them run to the altar? Talk to them about their lack of prayer.

And I saw him one time get up. He said, Dave, watch what happens. And he started preaching about the lack of prayer.

He couldn't even get an altar. They started running and crying and screaming. And God's Spirit came down and convicted because he knew.

He knew. Over all those years, that prophet knew that preachers don't pray. It's a rule.

But if preachers don't pray, it's a rule. What's happening out here? How few Christians pray? And why is that? First of all, they say, I don't pray because I'm waiting for the Holy Spirit to move me. Well, some people have been waiting a week, two weeks, months, years, and they're still waiting.

Thirty years I'm waiting for the Holy Ghost to move on me to pray. Let me tell you something. You can't be saved without the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible says, if you don't have the Spirit, you're none of His. You're not His without the Holy Spirit. Now, who is the Holy Spirit if He's not a spirit of prayer and supplication? He is a spirit of grace and supplication, according to Zechariah the prophet.

If you have the Holy Ghost in you, there is an urgency to pray. Now, the Holy Spirit is always willing to pray. It's our flesh that is the problem.

And see, if you're going to wait for your flesh to be ready, it will never be ready. The Holy Ghost is ready all the time. You have to overcome your flesh.

You have to take your flesh by the back of the neck and say, come on. You're going in. Shut the door.

Forget your flesh. I don't care how tired you are. It used to be, I'd say, if you're tired, go to bed and get up and pray when you feel better.

I don't do that anymore because the flesh will always be tired. You can run a marathon and feel great and come into the prayer closet and you'll get tired all of a sudden. The devil will see that your flesh is weak.

His spirit is willing to pray. God is not going to deal with your flesh. You're going to deal with your flesh.

You're going to bring it under subjection. Paul said, I bring my flesh under subjection. If you're going to pray, it's a discipline.

You take the time. You set the time. All through the Testament, all through the book here, all through the Old Testament, you find, and he set his heart to seek the Lord.

He disciplined himself and said, I will seek God. I will pray. I will seek the face of the Lord.

Hallelujah. Let me tell you what one great writer said. Prayerless people are forsaken by God, blinded by Satan, hardened in sin, and every breath they breathe makes them liable to all the judgments of God.

People who don't pray have forsaken God. How do you say you love Him when you don't take quality time alone with Him? How do you say you love Him? How can you say you're His disciple? Reason number two that most people don't pray is because they say, I am too busy. I simply don't have the time.

Now that amazes me. That absolutely amazes me. When people say they don't have time, when I read my Bible about Abraham having 318 employees, a far-flung empire, an enterprise of cattle and camels.

This man was busy. He had families. He had generations under his care.

Moses had the problems of hundreds of thousands to oversee through the wilderness. David was king over millions. He led a mighty army.

Daniel was a government leader over an empire. And these men all had time to pray. Kings, leaders, mighty men of God, they had time to pray and they were far busier than anybody in this generation.

But they took time to pray, morning, noon, and night. Let me tell you, you come to me and say, I'm so busy, I don't have an hour a day to pray. And I'll come back and tell you that on Judgment Day there's going to be a record of all the dilly-dallying hours that you spent.

Everybody wastes more than an hour a day just on small talk, on sports, on television, doing all of these things. Don't expect to stand before a holy God and bow your head and say, Well, I would have prayed more, but I didn't have the time. And then he says, Angel, read it.

Give them a history of every hour you wasted, every hour spent, recreation, sports, all of these things you said you didn't have time. No, it's not a matter of not having time, it's a matter of not taking the time. It's not taking the time because the heart is not yearning after Him.

The Scripture says every king of Israel was to take a copy of the Word and write the law in a book, and it shall be with him. He shall read therein all the days of his life that he may learn to fear his God and keep His words and do them. This was the commandment to every king.

Every day of your life, you keep this Word beside you and you read it. It's the only way you're going to keep my laws. The only way you're going to be obedient to me, God says, you keep this law before you and you read it and you keep it there.

David said, I meditate in it night and day. Night and day. It was the praying, actually, of men like Hezekiah and David and Samuel, all these men who prayed.

Their prayer was the secret of their success in whatever they did. It was their praying. People say, I don't have time to pray.

You are robbing yourself of the very cause of your blessings. You're cutting off the cause, the reason for the blessings of God. The Scripture says Hezekiah, or that David sought the Lord and David grew greater and greater for the Lord of hosts was with him.

It says of Hezekiah, he trusted the Lord as God, he claimed to the Lord, he prayed to the Lord as God, and the Lord was with him and he prospered whithersoever he went forth. Now, it's an absolute fact that those who say they have no time to pray are no doubt the greatest wasters of time, of their private time, when they are not involved in their business. Ecclesiastes says, go ahead, walk in the ways of your own heart and the sight of your own eyes, but know this, that for all these things, God will bring you into judgment.

He says, go ahead and say these things, go ahead and live for yourself, but just remember, God's going to bring you into judgment. I'm going to close this message with just, I've got more notes here, but I want to just follow the leading Holy Spirit here. It's been, my goodness, thirty-eight years, 1957, 58.

Pastored a little church in the hills of Pennsylvania. And let me tell you how a prayer life begins. I'm not the greatest prayer in the world, but all my life I've prayed, since I was a child.

And my father kept telling me, David, there's only 24 hours in a day. You have the same amount of hours as Elijah had. You can pray as diligently and as long and as faithfully as Elijah or any other man of God in the Old Testament.

My father pounded that lovingly, reminded me constantly, David, God always makes a way for a praying person. God always makes a way. Others may not find a way.

You may not get the education. You may not have all of the money and things that they have, but God always knows the man or woman who prays and God will make a way. My dad died when he was 54 years old, but I remember that more than anything else ringing in my mind.

David, God makes a way for a praying man or woman. And He has done that. I got away from that when I pastored a little church up in the hills of Pennsylvania, Phillipsburg.

Not the one here in New Jersey, but way over in the middle of the state of Pennsylvania. And there was a major blessing, but folks, there came a time I said, God, there has to be more than this. I don't want to be a mediocre Christian.

It wasn't I wanted to be somebody great. Wasn't looking for some great ministry, but there was a hunger in my heart for more of the Lord. I wanted to know Him and I wanted to know more of this word and I wanted the revelation that I had a problem.

I was addicted to television, television at night. I'd come home from preaching a sermon and I'd watch the late movie. They had what they called late movies years ago.

And in those days, those movies were just cowboys shoot them up, you know. It's not like it is today. But God spoke to me and He said, David, think of the hours you spend watching this thing.

If you get this out of your house and just give me the equal time, give me the time you spent watching television, give it to me, spend it in prayer and I'll use you. I'll turn your life around and you'll never be the same. Within a week it was gone.

And I went into my little room and I shut the door and I said, all right, Lord, now it's your time. But there was something It's not in our nature to pray. But there's something about the Holy Spirit when you set your heart.

You say, Lord, I'm tired of the way I'm living. I'm tired of the defeat. I'm tired of the lack of fruit.

And there you begin to read what God has done. I really said, God, I don't see happening in my life and ministry what's happening in this book. I have fallen far short of it.

There was a major blessing but I said, oh God, there's a whole world dying and going to hell. And I can't just sit here drinking pink lemonade and playing baseball with my kids. God, there's got to be more.

There was a burning in my heart. And I started going out into the woods, driving out there. You've heard me tell this story.

And I would go up in an opening up there and my wife could see the car. Anybody came out, she said, he's up there, blow the horn, he'll come out of the woods. And I would come out occasionally.

But people, fortunately, didn't want to disturb me. But I had a little Bible about this size. I'd sit under a tree and begin to feed on the word and begin to pray.

My mother has that Bible. My mother's going on 90. And she carries that Bible.

She won't let it go. Because that Bible's marked every page. Because when I was on my knees in those woods for months, God began to break and melt my heart.

He began to show me the whitened fields to harvest. He began to tell me his heart. Things I'd never seen or heard or known.

I would come into church and try to teach my Sunday school class and just collapse. Weep and break. They thought I'd have a nervous breakdown.

Folks, I'd never been saner in my life. Because there was a moving, there's a breaking. God has to break up the fallow ground.

That comes through prayer. Seeking his face. And into his word.

And I'm telling you this, that God would excite you to get on your knees and begin to seek his faith. He can break the log jam in your home. Every problem you've got, you can pray that thing through to a conclusion.

You can pray it through, brother, sister. And I'll tell you, when you start disciplining yourself and say, I'm going to pray, God does something supernatural. It's like making a snowball.

You're on top of a hill and you make it and you roll it until it gets about this high and you push it and suddenly it picks up its own momentum. You've got to run to catch up with it. I mean, it just rolls and gets bigger and bigger.

And you're not putting, you're just trying to keep up with it. And folks, you've got to the place where every day I was so excited, I'm going to go and meet the Lord. I got so excited.

I'm going to have time with him. And I began to resent anybody or anything to interrupt me. Folks, I have read the story of people who had lifetimes of prayer and seeking God.

They would walk out on kings to keep their appointment in prayer. And I would keep my appointments with God. And I would start preaching to the trees, prophesying.

That's where he taught me to prophesy, in the woods. Hallelujah. Oh, that one day after months of prayer, I'd look out over the hills and God said, over those hills there's a whole world dying.

I didn't know anything about drugs, alcohol. I didn't know the world was so wicked. I was in a nice little town of 1,500 people.

I was safe. Nice little parsnips. Lovely children.

New York was like Hong Kong. But there was something brewing in my heart. I knew God was doing something because it's called the upside downness of prayer.

When God is ready to do something in your life supernatural, he will stir you. There was a stirring. There was a shaking.

And I knew I'd never be the same. And when I picked up Life Magazine and saw seven boys indicted for murder at a murder trial, God spoke. This is what it's all about, David.

Now you're going to go. I'm going to use you now. I've been preparing you for months now.

You've been on your face. Now I'm going to move you. And folks, when you begin to seek God with all your heart, doors begin to open of their own accord.

God begins to enlarge your border. Your world is so small when you don't pray. When you pray and seek God, your world gets larger and larger and expansion after expansion.

Folks, I had no idea where he was taking it, but he made me a promise. He gave me Psalms 25. Who is he that feareth the Lord? Him shall he teach and the path he shall choose and the seeds shall inherit the earth.

I didn't know I'd write some 35 books that would go as seed all over the world. I didn't know what that meant. He said, the secret of the Lord is them that fear him.

The Lord will show him his covenant. And he's beginning me now after all these years into his covenant. He's kept every word that he's ever promised me.

But now he's been calling me back again. And I believe he's calling this church back. Folks, I went, I came to New York City and God raised up a ministry that's now all over the world.

But folks, I still remember the first five or six trips to New York, the first one, I couldn't get 50 miles out of town. I had to stop the car and go pray. Just stop it on the side of the road.

Run up behind the trees and get down and seek the face of God and weep and cry. And I didn't know why. And I'd go another 50 or 100 miles and stop and pray.

I still go down on some of these highways and there are trees and landmarks that I still recognize that still warm my heart because that's where I met God alone. Nobody else, I met God alone. And I walked these streets and cried.

And I was on the subways and cried. And on the Staten Island ferry boat and cried and wept because God enlarged my vision. And He wants to enlarge your vision.

He doesn't want your whole world to wrap around just you and your little family. Thank God for that. But He wants to enlarge your work and your vision.

And He won't do that unless you get along with Him and seek His face. When He said, come and establish a church, that was another six months prior. Six months shut in with God.

Six months laying on a carpet to seek in His face. And that's why you're sitting here. Will you stand? Hallelujah.

Folks, look right this way for a moment. I'm not going to stand up here and scream and yell and say, why don't you pray? But I'm telling you now, 95% of all your problems can be solved on your knees. How many out there in this church can say honestly, Brother David, before I die, before I stand before the judgment seat of Christ, I want Him to use my life.

I want Him to use me. Raise your hand. I want God to use me.

Can you honestly say, Lord, I don't want to waste my time. I really want, Lord, to make my life count. You know, God has a way of making your life count.

He has a way of opening up doors for you. He won't put you in this pulpit. I'll tell you what, He'll give you His own pulpit.

He'll give you His own way. I'm not talking about just preaching ministry or evangelist or pastor. I'm talking about a million ways God has of opening doors of usefulness and bringing ecstasy into your heart and your life.

If you have not been praying, I've just about given up completely. I was thinking about coming to church today. I've given up completely trying to cry aloud and spare a knot and try to get people to pray.

I can just tell you what He's done in my life. I can tell you what He's done in all of these lives that we mentioned because they disciplined themselves to seek the face of God. Rather than come down this altar and shedding a river of tears and doing it emotionally, I would rather, where you're standing right now, say, Oh God, forgive my wasting of time.

Forgive me for not being a man or woman of prayer. And I would to God that by the Holy Ghost, by the power of the Holy Spirit, you could make a pledge. You can make a commitment right now as you walk out these doors this afternoon.

Brother Dave, I want to join you. I want my heart stirred and I want to take the first step. I want to discipline my body because I know I have the Holy Spirit in me and the Holy Spirit is ready and willing to supplicate and pray and seek the face of God.

And I want to be a man or woman of prayer. I want you to raise your hands to the Lord right now. And I want you to pray with me right now that you, by the Holy Spirit, can make that commitment.

Oh Holy Spirit, come. We can't make commitments in the strength of our flesh. But Holy Spirit, You who abide in us, God, come now and help us to overcome our flesh.

Our flesh will hold us back from the secret closet. Our flesh will make us tired and weary. Our flesh will cause us to yawn.

Our flesh will cause all kinds of thoughts to interrupt us. But, oh God, if we'll just stay there and say, No, I'm staying, I'm staying. I am going to seek the face of God.

Things have got to change in my life. Things have got to change in my home. I want God to use me.

I don't want to be an empty vessel. I don't want to stand before God without fruit. I want to be fruitful and multiply.

I want God to use my life. Spirit of the living God, come now. Convict us if you must of our lack of prayer.

Do what you must. Oh Holy Spirit, awaken the church of Jesus Christ to have a secret closet of prayer to get alone with God. To seek Him with all that is in Him, I pray.

Amen. I'm going to open the altars. You know what I want? Boy, this is going to take a lot of courage.

But if you'll acknowledge this before God. Open confession. Open confession.

That's the way to make your commitment. If you stand here now and say, Pastor David, that's me. I am not a man of prayer or I'm not a woman of prayer.

I would like to be, but I have not been. I want you to confess that before God and come down here now and ask God to change your life. The way you live.

That you become a man or woman of prayer. Now that takes, and I see people taking that strong step. If you're backslidden, if you've been running from God, if you don't know Jesus, come and join these that are coming right now to make a heart confession before God.

Up on the balcony, just go to the stairs on either side and come down any aisle. Move in close, please. Make room for this.

Move in real tight, if you will, please. Hallelujah. Beloved, I believe the Holy Spirit is doing a very deep work in so many hearts here.

Now, folks, I've been praying regularly. I have my precious quality time. But God's been calling me lately.

He's saying, David, you've got to dig in. You've got to dig in now. Folks, we have to dig in.

We have got to seek His face as we never saw it before. We're not going to make it otherwise. We just don't have the strength.

We've got to have power from on high. And you can't borrow it from somebody else. You need oil in your vessel with your lamp.

You need oil. That's going to come through quality time with God. Will you raise your hands right now and pray with me right now? Jesus, forgive me.

I have neglected You days on end. And I repent publicly before God and this people. I have sinned against God.

I have wasted time. I have not sought the Lord with all my heart and soul in mind. Forgive me, Lord.

Help me now to make a commitment to overpower my flesh, to bring my flesh in subjection, to seek the face of God, that there be a release of the Holy Spirit, that the Spirit may pray in me according to the mind of God. O Holy Spirit, come now. Draw me.

Woo me into the wilderness. Make my heart leap for joy. Teach me to pray.

Teach me how to pray. Teach me how to make my petitions known. And draw me nearer to You, Lord.

I want to pray. I want to pray every day. I want to pray with fire and with love in my heart.

I want it to be more than a burden. I want it to be a joy. Thank You, Father.

I know You hear me. Now let's thank Him. He's faithful.

God, You are faithful. You are a faithful God. Hallelujah! Thank You, Jesus.

You've heard us. You've forgiven us. Now look at me, please.

Here's what I want you to do. I want you tonight, before you go to bed, before you go to bed, talk to the Lord. Have it out with Him and say, God, I can't do this in my own strength.

I'll fall in and give into my flesh. But you have got to come to a place where you find out where you're going to pray and try to find a special time you're going to pray. If you have to get up a half hour early or an hour early, if you have to go to bed a half hour or an hour late, you take that time and you mark it.

See, the flesh is so that if you don't mark it, I've got a lot of things marked down. You mark it down. I want you to get a 30-day calendar or something and I want you to mark down that time that you prayed before the Lord and remind yourself.

Have something around your house to remind you of the commitment you made in this service. I'm asking you to make that for the next 30 days and if you do, your snowball's going to be halfway down the hill. And you'll have to start running just to keep up with the glory of God in your soul.

Hallelujah. Prayer is going to become a wonderful experience to you. You're going to see heaven open.

God's going to start answering prayer. The Lord has not answered. Folks, this is a wonderful way to open up all the rivers and let them cause them to flow.

Hallelujah. And let the joy of the Lord become your strength. Glory to God.

Now, Lord, I can't make a change in the heart of these who have made this humble confession that they've not been seeking You. God, and I look at this mass of people who confess this and then I begin to think of what could happen if after today they begin to seek God. If everybody that's at this altar and in these aisles will go home today and before going to bed have a half hour or one hour just unburdening their heart, just telling You how much they love You.

If all they can say, Lord, that's how I start. If all I could say was, And I begin to just love You and worship You. Lord, if that's all they can do at first, then You'll put the words in their mouth.

You will pray through them, Holy Ghost, because You said You're willing. You're willing. The Spirit is willing to pray.

Lord, You're going to pray through these. Many here, Lord, are becoming men and women of prayer after today. You're going to cause them to be men and women of prayer.

You're going to open their heavens and You're going to shut the gates of hell. Hallelujah. Against their family, all the gates of hell and all the weapons of the enemy.

God pulled them down through prayer. You said we pull down these strongholds. Let them do it in secret.

In Jesus' name, Amen. This is the conclusion of the tape.

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