

Laws of Spiritual Progress - Part 1

by Derek Prince

Derek Prince emphasizes that spiritual progress is solely achieved through faith and commitment to God's guidance.

Duration: 21:28

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 5:2, Matthew 6:33, Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8, 1 Corinthians 15:58, Hebrews 11:6, Revelation 22:12

Topics: "Spiritual Growth"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses two lessons they have learned about making spiritual progress. The first principle they emphasize is the importance of taking a step of faith and putting oneself in a position to experience God's power. They believe that progress cannot be made without this step. The second lesson is about the significance of being cautious about what one preaches, as they will eventually have to practice it themselves. The speaker shares a personal experience of seeking God's guidance and realizing the need for further spiritual growth. They emphasize the importance of not speaking rashly to God, as our words are recorded and will be brought before Him in the future. The speaker references the fifth chapter of Ecclesiastes to support this point.

Transcript

I really want to talk about two lessons I've learned about making spiritual progress. The first one is very simple, all progress in the Christian life is by faith. And there is no other way to advance but by faith.

I may have shared with some of you but the Lord taught me that in a very specific and definite and personal way. My wife and I had been on the mission field in East Africa for five years and we returned to Europe and we were on our way to Canada where we were going to do what they call deputation work, traveling through the churches speaking about the mission field. And we spent Christmas with my wife's sister in Denmark and for the first time for a good long while I had no ministry responsibility.

And there's a particular cliff overlooking the North Sea in that area of Denmark which is Jutland, the northern tip of Denmark that I have loved for many years. And I used to like to go out on the cliff and walk up and down and praise the Lord and speak in tongues and release my spirit. And I had no problems because there was nobody there but a few seagulls.

I've always gone on well with seagulls. So I was up there just around about Christmas time 1961 or the beginning 1962 I think and the Lord began to speak to me, not audibly but very very clearly with clear

precise words which came somewhere inside me. I'm sure most of you will understand what I'm talking about.

And he gave me a little review of my past life and service for him. Reminded me of the various things that had happened. And he concluded something like this.

Now you've been a missionary in two countries. You're the principal of a college. You're the member of a denomination.

You have a pension scheme. And then he said are you satisfied or do you want to go further? Well that was an unexpected and rather shocking question. Because at that time I really didn't think there was much further to go.

I look back with shame and embarrassment. But I really thought basically I knew whatever I needed to know. I mean I knew there were lots of things in the Bible I didn't understand.

But I thought from the point of view of practical ministry. I knew everything that was necessary. I knew about salvation, healing, baptism of the Holy Spirit, gifts of the Spirit.

I believed in the authority of the Word of God. I believed that the scripture teaches Jesus Christ is coming back again in person. To receive his church and judge the world.

I believed all those things. I've preached them, I've seen them work. I knew they produced results.

And I wasn't interested in being super spiritual. And getting to know a lot of things that were not of practical value. But the Lord said to me are you satisfied or do you want to go further? Well one of the things I have learned is do not speak rashly to God.

If you look in the fifth chapter of Ecclesiastes. And you don't need to turn there now. But it says in essence that whatever we say to God on earth is recorded by an angel.

And one day when we stand before God. The record of what we said is going to be there to meet us. And Ecclesiastes says don't say it was a mistake and you didn't mean it.

Because it will be too late. So my response to God was well I need time to think this over. So I went away and I thought it over and I meditated on it.

And I prayed about it for about two or three days. And then I went back to the same cliff top by myself. And I got in touch with the Lord.

And I said I'm ready to give you my answer. And this is what I said. And again I really am embarrassed to think.

But this is actually what I said. I said Lord if there is anything further. I want to go further.

And the Lord was ready with his answer. And he gave me a very precise immediate practical answer. He said if you want to go further there are two conditions.

First of all all progress in the Christian life is by faith. And if you're not willing to go forward in faith you cannot go forward. Secondly he said if you are to fulfill the ministry that I have for you.

You will need a strong healthy body. And you're putting on too much weight. And mind you that was Denmark at Christmas time.

And if anybody knows how to celebrate Christmas it's the Dane. From the point of view of food. Well I'm deeply grateful to God for what he told me.

And by his grace I have succeeded in avoiding putting on too much weight. In fact I think I weigh a little less now than I did then. I met a lot of people that had to go to the doctor to be told that.

And pay for it. I got my consultation free. Well when I said that to God.

Without fully realizing it. I made a commitment. In a sense I said all right you take over.

I'll go where you leave. And it entirely changed the direction of my life. In the ordinary course of events I would have spent a year on furlough in deputation work in Canada.

I was a missionary at the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada at the time. And I would have gone back to East Africa for another four or five year tour of mission work. But when I came to Canada I traveled right across the whole Dominion.

From east to west. From St. John's, Newfoundland to Victoria, Vancouver Island. Which is about 4,000 miles.

And I was invited down to the United States. Some things you can only say in some places. And I suppose this is all right to say this here.

But the difference between the Canadians and Americans is very interesting. And I mean you know I'm neither Canadian or American by origin. I'm English.

I spent a year in Canada. And they were polite. You know they were appreciative.

Thank you that was a nice message. I came to the United States for three days. And they said can't you come here.

Come to us. We'll give you this. We'll give you that.

You're welcome. It was really remarkable. And one man who was a lawyer from Richmond Virginia said can I make a tape of what you say.

Well I didn't know much about tapes in those days. So I said OK. And I gave my testimony.

And he made a tape of it. And I suppose I myself have probably sold 10,000 copies of that tape. Apart from anybody else.

And thousands of others have gone around. Well I went back to Canada. And I began to get letters from all over the United States.

From people I didn't know. And places I'd never even heard of. I had to look at the map to find out where they were.

Why don't you come down to the United States. Well I had no intention of doing it. But I had a disagreement with the people that I was working with.

I felt they had failed to keep the commitment. The very solemn commitment that they made. And I felt in a sense I was released.

So I arranged to come down to the United States. To Minneapolis. For just a six month visit.

And this is an example of the things you don't plan. When we got to the border. Which was somewhere in North Dakota.

The immigration man said how long are you coming for? I said six months. He said what kind of a visa do you have? I said a visitor's visa. He said six months is too long for a visitor's visa.

And I had with me my wife and Josca. Is Josca here today? Josca are you there anywhere? She's at work. Well Josca was then four years old.

And she didn't have a passport. She didn't have any papers. She just had us.

So I've had a lot of dealings with officials of governments in different countries. Especially getting people in and out of countries without passports. It's been one of my ministries.

So I've learned don't argue. So I said to the immigration. I said well maybe you could help us.

And he took a look at me and my wife and Josca. I think he really felt sorry for this strange company of people. So I said come in and we'll see what we can do.

So that's how I got to the United States and about July of that year. I was officially admitted as an immigrant with my wife and Josca. Well I know had I applied from outside the country to get in with Josca.

We would never have been admitted. Because she didn't have a passport. She didn't have a thing.

But that was God's way of getting us in. And that's an illustration of what I'm saying. When God plans a thing it works.

And it works much better than we plan it. So I came for a six month visit in 1963. And I've lived here ever since.

And I always like to say I am deeply grateful to the United States of America. Because they have been very very good to me. I would have to say honestly much better than my own people.

Let others criticize America and say what they will. I've lived in many countries. And I know many different cultures.

And I'm grateful to be American. I became a citizen in 1970. I'm still a British citizen too.

And I respect and honor my own country. But the opportunities for Christians in this country as far as I'm concerned are unique. There is no other country on earth where Christians have the same privileges and opportunities that they do in this.

And if you're a Christian in America you should thank God for your nation. I know America has problems. I'm aware of them.

But nevertheless the opportunities are unequal that I know of in any other nation. And I grew up. I was born in India.

Grew up in Europe. I've lived in Africa. I've lived in Israel.

I'm not without experience. So that was a complete change of the whole direction of my life. And God gave me what I would call a post-graduate course.

I think I had graduated but he put me back. And I began to know there were things in the Bible I didn't even know was there. I wouldn't have known a demon.

He handed me one on a plate. God adjusted that. And for about four or five years he gave me a very thorough education in demonology.

Not theory. Believe me. But practice.

And I looking back I realized God would take me right across the continent just to meet one person and see one situation and learn one lesson. Then he'd take me somewhere else. That was one area of education.

The other area really was more important in the long run. And that was the nature of the church. And I'm still being educated in that area.

I was at that time when the Lord dealt with me. I was really a fanatical Pentecostal. I really believed that very few people except the Pentecostals were going to go to heaven.

I couldn't conceive of a Roman Catholic going to heaven. I mean I say that with a certain amount of embarrassment and shame but I actually just could not imagine that a Roman Catholic would go to heaven. And I didn't think many Anglicans or Episcopalians were going.

Believe me. Having spent 20 years in the Anglican Church. Well God has given me a new insight to a lot of things.

And I don't really want to dwell on that. But I just want to point out that none of that would ever have happened if I hadn't given God the authority in my life to lead me on. And what I'm saying is this.

God will not force you. He'll lead you if you're willing to be led. And when I look back at that moment on that cliff stop.

When I said I'm willing to go further. I think that was one of the most important moments in my whole life. And it was a commitment.

And that's how you go forward. You go forward in faith or you don't go forward. There is no alternative.

The moment you come to a place where you're not willing to step out in faith. You've come to the end of the spiritual program. Let me take another illustration.

The Lord spoke to me just recently. Every now and then the Lord really speaks to me personally. When I say speaks to me.

It's usually he'll give me an utterance in an unknown tongue. And then he'll give me the interpretation. While my wife was alive usually he would give her the tongue and give me the interpretation.

But since then he's given me both. I don't seek it. It usually comes at a time when I'm not even expecting it.

In fact when I think I'm most spiritual. I usually hear least from God. And when I'm doing something like brushing my teeth.

I get a real revelation. Because I think one of the things to hear from God is you have to be relaxed. I don't think you can be all tense and religious and hear from God.

And the Lord spoke to me and he said he would open to me new doors. Lift me on to new levels. And show me new vistas.

And I believe that. I want him to know tonight I believe it. And that gives me another picture.

In a certain sense the spiritual life is in a series of plateaus or levels. And when God has got you to the place where he wants you on a higher level. Again it's faith.

You have to step up. And there'll always be a certain pressure against you at that point. I don't know whether any of you here that are really specifically called to service in God.

Like to be an evangelist, to be a missionary, whatever it may be. I will tell you the time between your call and the time you get into your calling. Will be one of the hardest times you'll ever go through.

Every kind of pressure will come against you. And that's God's mercy. Because if you can't hold out.

It's better not to go through. There is that. It's really like a birth.

They say if you help a chick out of the egg. I don't know I've never tried it. It doesn't have the strength to live when it gets out.

It has to make its way out. And I really believe that's true in the spiritual. Every time you're going to go forward.

The pressures will come against you. It's God's mercy that you don't go forward. Unless you've got what it takes when you get there.

I'll give you just another different kind of example. Very down to earth. Some people might consider it unspiritual.

Depends whether you think money is unspiritual or not. Personally I don't. As Jesus said if you're not faithful in the unrighteous mammon.

Which is money. No one will commit to your trust the true riches. In other words money is a testing ground.

Well this happened about four years ago I would think. Four or five years ago. Much the same time.

Just a little after we. I first came to Kansas City here. My wife and I were living in the best house we'd ever lived in.

Let me tell you this story too. When we came to the United States. We hadn't owned our own home ever in our lives.

We had never owned our own car. Yes once. I owned my mother's car for a few years.

It was 21 years old when I got it. We didn't have any money in the bank. And when we stepped out from the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.

We didn't have any insurance. We didn't have any medical insurance. We didn't have anything.

Except the Lord. But when you have the Lord. That's quite a lot.

So when we got to Seattle. Which was the second city we lived in. After we left Minneapolis.

We rented a little white frame house. From the President of the Full Gospel Business Fellowship. Of their brother Fred Dorflein.

It was a cute little house. Very simple. And we were so happy.

We thought this was just the ultimate in houses. So I was sitting there. Just praising God for being in that house.

And he spoke to my spirit. Very very clearly. And he said I have something much better for you.

So I thought to myself. What could that be? You know. So we went from city to city.

And place to place. And in 1968 we ended up in Fort Lauderdale. And we bought a real nice house.

Many of you. Quite a number of you have seen it when you were down there. It was a double corner lot.

Beautiful white Florida style house. Four bedrooms. Three bathrooms.

Etc. etc. Put in central air conditioning.

So we thought. I thought now this is it. This must be.

But after we'd lived there about two or three years. We began to get restless. It wasn't that we were dissatisfied.

We loved the house. My wife said I never want to move to another house. But we just had that strange kind of restlessness.

So she said maybe. We. The Lord wants us to get another house.

So I said well. No harm to. Look at a few houses.

Get in touch with some real estate people. And we did. This is just by the way.

It's got nothing to do with the principles of the story. We. We had.

A visit from two real estate ladies. They actually sold us the house we bought. And they were the typical sort of.

You know. American businesswoman style. Sophisticated.

Rather hard boiled. Sharp. So they were sitting there on the sofa.

Doing all their talking about houses. And I was down in my study. I wasn't there.

My wife looked at one. And she said. You know I think your legs are unequal.

So the lady said. Oh do you think so. And my wife said.

Would you like my husband to pray for you. Before the lady could. You know she wasn't used to that approach.

So I came out of the office. And I said. Let me measure your legs.

And one was longer than the other. The short leg grew out. So I moved over to the next lady.

And said. Let me check yours. And you know.

They really didn't know what had happened to them. And that grew out. So then I said to this second lady.

I said. Let me measure your arms. And she said.

Oh no. She said. I couldn't take any more.

But the. The thing was. That the atmosphere in that room.

Changed completely. The next ten minutes. They were telling us.

All their inner problems. And their. Problems with their husbands.

And their children. And all sorts of things. And that we'd broken down.

That hard. Exterior shell. Well anyhow.

We started looking for a house. And then I went away on a preaching trip. And my wife didn't come with me.

And. She phoned. I phoned one night.

And she said. I think I found a house. So you know.

The first thing a husband always says. You know that don't you. What's the price.

So she told me. I said. Oh forget it.

We are never going to buy a house. At that price. But the Lord kept on dealing.

And no matter what happened. It was always that house. So in the end.

We signed a contract. And we had a closing date. And I had to come up with.

Well over twenty thousand dollars. That I hadn't paid. And we got.
That money. Twenty three hours. Before.
The closing. I got twenty five thousand dollars. Now why I'm saying that is.
Because. I had no ambition. To move into a better house.
I was not covetous. In fact. When I first got to this area.
Where we live now. Which is a rather exclusive. Residential area.
I walked around. Thinking I really don't belong. In a place like this.
I'm only driving a Buick. And everybody else. Is driving a Cadillac.
Or a Lincoln. Or something like that. But I give that testimony.
Because from the time. That we moved into that new house. I would have to say.
My income doubled. For no specific reason. I didn't do more.
I didn't try harder. I didn't pray more. I just took the step.
Now if I had never taken that step. I would never have moved on to that. Higher level.
Now that's a financial level. And again. I want to say finance isn't everything.
But it is something. I don't believe in people. That say money isn't important.
They only talk like that. Inside the church. The moment they get out.
They show by their actions. They think it's very important. I hope I can say this.
In the right way. Today. A thousand dollars.
Means as much to me. As a hundred dollars did ten years ago. I think in terms of thousands.
When I used to think in terms of hundreds. Now that doesn't make me super spiritual. But it's an example.
Of coming up. To a higher level. Now there's many many different levels.
Many different areas of life. But you'll always find. When God is going to take you up.
There's going to be a step of faith. No step of faith. No program.
I could give you. Half a dozen passages of scripture for that. But I'm just speaking out of personal
experience.
As a chance. If you want to go to Israel. Entering their inheritance.
The promised land. What lay between them. The river Jordan.
And they had the cross. No bridge. No boat.

And the Jordan was in flood. That's how the your Lord usually arranged it. When you have the cross.
Your Jordan. It's usually not just the usual level. It's in flood.
But if God's going to do it. It doesn't matter to him. Whether it's in flood or not.
And if the orders that God gave to Joshua. To give to the priest. Was you take the ark.
Ahead of the people. And put your feet in the water. And the water didn't stop flowing.
Till they put their feet in the water. I cannot tell you how many times. In my life.
In one way or another. I've had to put my feet in the water. And then the water stand up.
You say I want to see the water stand. And then I'll walk in. No God says.
You walk in. Put your feet in. I'll be with the water.
That's. I believe it's an unvarying law. There is no program.
Without faith. All right. That's the first principle.
Now the second one. I want to read some scripture. I want to read three passages of scripture.
I am getting rather cautious about what I preach. Because I always end up having to practice it.

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