

The Pastor's Wife and Revival

by Doris Hodges

The sermon emphasizes the importance of revival and seeking God's guidance for pastor's wives, who often face unique challenges and temptations in their role.

Duration: 1:16:22

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:3

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having certain virtues in our lives to bear fruit in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. The scripture warns that lacking these virtues makes us blind and forgetful of what God has done for us. The speaker reflects on the tendency to get busy and lose sight of God's work in our lives. They also address the issue of making judgments and how they personally have been guilty of it. The sermon encourages self-examination and allowing God to search and reveal our true standing before Him.

Transcript

The first chapter, and find out what I believe that God would have us as women to try to develop within ourselves through the power of His Holy Spirit. Simon Peter, it says, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ, grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue, by which are given unto us exceedingly great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge self-control, and to self-control patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

I want us to think about it for a moment. I think those verses 8 and 9 are especially important. If these things, all of these virtues, these characteristics we might say, if they be in us and abound, they will make us so that we're neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But the scripture goes on to say that if you lack these things, you're blind, and you cannot see afar off, and the idea is that you've forgotten what God has done for you. I don't know about you, but often it's easy for me to get so busy in things that I have to do that it's as though everything is afar off. I've kind of gotten away from the whole routine, perhaps, of what I have been doing in the past and knowing how God was working in my life.

Getting busy. The title for this session was Pastors, Wives, and Revival. Well, I thought again now, that was not a title that I chose, Lord.

How am I going to work this? And so instead, you know what I've entitled it, Does a Pastor's Wife Need Revival? And the reason I did that, I remember when we had a pastor's wife speak to the pastor's wives at one of our conferences, and that was the title that she gave, Does a Pastor's Wife Need Revival? And at that time I was not a pastor's wife, and I thought this is going to be interesting to find out what she has to say. I understood from her that a pastor's wife has the same needs as other women. And you know, I really believe that's true.

But she went on to say this, there is one difference, and that is that she is in a unique situation because she finds herself in a leadership capacity whether she wants to be or not. Perhaps that's the only difference between a pastor's wife and any other woman. We all need revival, I believe.

I read an article once, and it was more or less discussed in this article, I believe it was the Sainted Pastor's Wife, that was the article. And she said in there that she found so much of the time that pastor's wives were discontent. And I thought, why would that be? You know, in the past I thought it must be wonderful to be a pastor's wife.

How exciting to always be in the work of the Lord. But already I've begun to find out some of the problems. And I realize that it could be very easy to become discontent if you do not feel that you're in the place that God wants you to be.

Perhaps one of the things that we find is the biggest problem is that the woman did not marry a pastor. I found this to be so often the truth in a prayer room when I've been dealing with a pastor's wife. She did not marry a pastor.

She married perhaps an engineer, or she married a factory worker perhaps, or whatever. He was not a pastor when she married him. And when God called him to the pastorate, in her heart she never felt called to that.

And from all I could understand from different ones that I've prayed with, perhaps that man did not wait until God made it clear to her too. He just decided on his own, I'm going to be a pastor, and she was supposed to go along with him. Now, I'm sure that you know as well as I do that temperaments enter into it a lot.

And if you have a strong, choleric husband who says, this is the way it's going to be, then what's it going to take on your part? Well, I would imagine that the woman would have had to have said, Lord, I do not feel yet that that's for me. But he insists on it, so you're going to have to work in my heart in life, and you're going to have to prepare me for this. But you know what usually happens in a situation like this? Both are just knocking heads.

She's refusing to accept it as God's will, and he's refusing to listen to what she has to say. I've dealt with so many pastor's wives who were in that position. I remember one especially in Grand Rapids.

She and her husband had been in the pastorate for at least, I'll say, 15 years. I can't remember exactly. And I had known of them years before they went to Grand Rapids.

They had been in our area. And you know, you could always kind of tell that woman was not really happy. I don't know how to explain it.

It was always like she had a chip on her shoulder, or sort of like she was untouchable. You just couldn't seem to get near her. And I didn't understand it.

Again, I'm one of those that easily could walk away from that and not pay any attention to them. But when I talked with that woman later, I began to understand the whole situation, and God broke her heart in a wonderful way in one of the crusades there in Grand Rapids. The whole thing was that she had not married a pastor.

And she had resented it the whole 15 years or so that they had been married. And she admitted she had been more of a hindrance to his ministry than she had ever been a help. In fact, she used to even pray that his ministry would not be good because she wanted them to have to get out of it.

How could God bless in a situation like that? No wonder there are so many churches, perhaps, that are having problems if that's the situation. In that article where this woman interviewed many pastor's wives, she said her greatest surprise came in their answer to, what is your greatest need as the wife of a minister? I've got wife of a minister's wife. How do you like that? What is your greatest need as the wife of a minister? Now listen to this.

My greatest need is a social life. Now that's interesting, isn't it? I can see that. I can see how that you might be totally isolated as a pastor's wife.

Because I've heard pastors say that at school they were told you can't get close to your parishioners. You know, you just can't get too buddy-buddy. You have to sort of stand away from that.

And as a layperson, I always felt like I wanted to get to know my pastor's wife better, but I always felt like I couldn't. You know, that she was above me. And I can see, I'm sure that we have lots of laypeople here today, and I'm sure that many of you have gone through that same thing where you didn't feel like you could really be close to your pastor's wife.

Their social life, I can understand that's a very important thing. She said others said, you know, they'd like to be able to say let's go shopping or let's go out for dinner. Sometimes they said something about bowling or swimming with some of the other women.

But they, and they said they even felt guilty if they suggested just going window shopping. And then she said there were others who said they had nothing more to do than window shop. That's kind of sad, isn't it? What kind of a situation is it in a church where a pastor's wife doesn't feel she can even have any fellowship with anybody else? She said, this one who was interviewing said, I said to some of them, you must look forward to pastors and wives retreats only.

Pastors and wives only retreats. Their answer was this, well, yes, except I wish there wasn't so much stress on praying over our problems. And I thought about that.

It's interesting. That's helpful to me as a lay person. They probably would like to get away from those problems a little bit.

She said, I definitely want prayer, of course, but mostly I just like the time to relax at a retreat. I think that Nina and Grace Copeland and Grace McCready and some of us that are on the team can agree to that. Often we have retreats for our team.

And you know what we do? We sit in meetings all day long. And so we've finally gotten the fellas to really think it over. Thanks, Grace.

And they're doing better on that. They're giving us a little more time for relaxation. Another one of the complaints was that the parsonage seems to be a drop-in place.

Said, people drop in while I'm still in my bathrobe at nine o'clock. It's my husband's day off. And he says, let's sleep in.

And then, you know, all of a sudden here comes somebody dropping in. Now she said, did you ever think about a minister being out until two o'clock in the morning? You know, ministering to someone. Maybe he gets called out again at five a.m. At nine o'clock, he decides to relax over a cup of coffee, but somebody drops in.

And perhaps it's a board member. And he drops in with a business matter. And then he goes back and reports and says, here were the pastor and his wife drinking coffee at nine o'clock, and it wasn't even his day off.

She said also in this article that pastor's wife said they wished that their children could be allowed to be successes too, and also failures. And I thought about that. I can remember a few of my pastor's wives, their families, and their children, and some of the different situations, and how difficult it must have been.

Says, some treat your house as a continual open house and expect instant refreshments and unlimited attentions. Now, I don't know, ladies. As I said, I still have all this to look forward to.

So perhaps you can help me on that. But if you were a wife first, and then you became a pastor's wife, it might be good for you to ask God to search your heart as to what your real reaction is to this. If you really are happy to be in that position, or if you are resenting it.

You know, it's so easy to have resentment in our heart and not realize it, because we can call it everything else. One time there was a laywoman that gave 12 qualities that she looked for in a pastor's wife. And I want to read them to you.

The idea of a woman who never formed cliques. One who was always available. One who really trusted God.

A pastor's wife who never seemed to be anxious. One who had a quiet spirit. One who did not hit you over the head with her spirituality.

One who was very supportive to her husband. One who did not try to compete with her husband for the limelight. One whose husband and wife's lives were well balanced.

And the 12th one was that she had that outstanding quality, which is the one where she truly loves God, and where he comes first, and all else seems to fall in place. I pulled this out of my notes that I had taken some time ago, and I thought, Lord, that's quite a list. And I began to look at it for myself, and pray that God would make me this kind of a person.

That I might not be one who would be a part of a clique. That's so easy to do it, isn't it? See, and I think that's perhaps what most pastor's wives are afraid of, that if they get friendly with any of the people in their church too friendly, then it's going to be looked on as a clique. I think you can have close friends in your congregation and still not have a clique.

I think it's very possible, and I think it's what God would have. Out of all of these, though, I found myself thinking a quiet spirit. God talks about that being very precious in the sight of God.

A quiet spirit. As we've often talked about in Revival, a quiet spirit does not necessarily mean one who never opens her mouth. One who does not talk.

That can be one who has an inferiority complex, which we know is what? It's pride. Which is what? Sin. Right.

And so it isn't necessarily that we're saying that to have a quiet spirit, you have to be quiet and never open your mouth. But it also means that to know when to be quiet. When to keep silence.

And for myself, that is a chore. I received a letter back in September 1982, and I'm going to read you the first part, and then I'm going to talk some more about other things, and then I'll come back to it, because I just loved it when I started to read it. You know, you get some letters, and you read a little bit, and you think, I don't know if I want to read the rest or not.

Dear Doris, I do hope you are getting caught up on your rest. Seems like that's still going. Someday I'm going to get caught up on my rest.

I don't know when. I do hope you're getting caught up on your rest this week, although I suppose the time will go fast preparing for your next trip. Before time sweeps away my good intentions, I want to write and let you know what an encouragement your ministry has been to me.

It has been a tremendous blessing to me just watching you relate to women of all ages on all levels, treating each one as important individuals. That is a rare and precious gift. And as I read that, I thought, thank you, Lord.

But you know, when you get that, you're already waiting for the, I thought, what's going to come next? Please forgive me when I say this, but when I first saw you at Rive's 1981 Freedom Rally, I didn't like you. That's happened a lot. My husband had been to the pastor's meetings prior to the rally and came home on Saturday night all excited.

I was happy for him, but none of it rubbed off on me. Remember what Pastor Broom said about praying for your partner when you meet God in revival? Well, remember this now. He went back all excited.

She says, then we went back together for the Labor Day services. Shortly after arriving, I found myself in a room full of unfamiliar faces, all pastor's wives and full-time workers. There was one somewhat familiar face, but I hardly knew her, so I sat alone.

Not having been in any of the previous services, I wondered what all this sharing was about. Did these ladies just come in for the day like I did and suddenly open up their heart for everyone to see, exposing their sins and weaknesses? I would never do that, although I did find it interesting to listen to others admit their faults. And then you came bouncing in all sparkly and bright-eyed, apologizing for being a little late.

You had been counseling someone. You took over the meeting. Not realizing you were the moderator, my quick, critical nature thought, who does she think she is to march in here and invite herself to elaborate on what others have just said? Does she have to preach after every comment? Well, I didn't want to go any further.

And I'm going to stop there for a minute. Because isn't it true how often we sit quietly and observe and make judgments? I mean, I'm guilty of it. You see, as I read it, that's one reason it hit me so hard.

I'm so guilty of it. I may not say anything out loud, but in my heart, I can make judgments. And I can think, boy, oh boy, you know, this is pretty bad.

I did. If you remember my testimony, dear old Dr. Brock up there singing and he couldn't stay on one note hardly. He just quivered so.

And I remember thinking, boy, that's pitiful. Well, you saw some pitiful singing from me yesterday. So anyhow, it was terrible the way I criticized him in my heart.

And then to find out later that that's who God was going to use in my heart to break my heart with his song, let God have his way. He knows what is best. Let God have his way.

He'll give you sweet rest. Let God have his way. Then you'll surely be blessed.

This moment, let God have his way. And Dr. Brock was the composer of Beyond the Sunset. See, now, if I'd have known who he was, oh, I wouldn't have found anything wrong, would I? How we make our judgments, God looks where? On the heart.

I'm so glad he does. Because I'll tell you, I could fool him maybe once in a while on the outside, but I can't fool him in my heart. God knows exactly what's there.

As I think of women, my desire is that they might come to know God in a special way. I think of another pastor's wife, who in fact is the one that I told you used this title, Does a Pastor's Wife Need Revival? Her attitude was this, that she needed revival, but she didn't know it. Well, isn't that true of most of us? I needed revival desperately in 1972, but I didn't know I needed revival.

I knew I needed something, but I didn't know it was that. And as she shared her testimony, she admitted that when this all came about in her life, to become a pastor's wife, the family was older, and that was part of the problem. Her children were teenagers, some of them, and there was great frustration over it.

And I think perhaps it would be because again, as I've talked with pastor's wives, often you live in a parsonage that is inadequate. There's not enough room, or the closets are small, it only has one bathroom perhaps, and it just doesn't measure up to other people's homes, and yet you're supposed to be just

delighted to have it. Things go wrong and so forth.

But she was quite frustrated, and yet she said they were all in agreement about it. They did have a lovely home, and they never wanted to go back to their former life. She says, and yet in spite of this, she built up a resentment toward the pastorate.

She became very tired and remained so most of the time, even though she got plenty of rest. Do you know what? If you're fighting God's will in your life, you can get eight hours a night and still be exhausted all the time. Physical exhaustion can come because of a mental situation.

Your attitude toward your life and the position that God has placed you in, has allowed you to be in. She said the doctor gave her pills, said she needed a mood elevator. She needed something that would lift her up.

She said, I took one to three a day, but she said, you know, all it did was took me down further, and I began sleeping around the clock. Oh, you know, ladies, that's one of the first signs of depression, is when you start staying in bed, don't want to get up. Finally, she said, I realized that the burden of trying to please the people was part of my problem.

I can relate to that. I have been a people pleaser all my life, you know, try to please people. And why? So that they'll like you, right? So that they'll think you're great, and they'll love you, they'll want to be with you.

People pleaser. That's never what God intended. But she said, finally, I gave it over to the Lord during the revival in Pekin.

And here it comes, she says, we were talking on our way home in the car, and she said, we both knew that there was something wrong. We just discussed it, and yet never got right down to what the problem was. But yet each one in their heart knew that there was something wrong there.

So one night during the revival, they went to the prayer room. She said, we prayed Psalm 139, 23, and 24. And you know what that is? Search me, oh God, and know my heart.

Try me and know my thoughts and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. When you come to the place where you pray that kind of a prayer, do you think that you're going to have any more doubts about what the problem is? Do you think there's going to be any more confusion? If you wait on the Lord, wait for him as he searches your heart, it won't take him long. It may take you a while to know what he's trying to get at.

But it doesn't take God long at all to put his finger on the problems in your life, on the sin in your life. Well, one of the things that she found out was that she had built up a resentment over the years. See, again, it doesn't happen overnight.

It's not that one day you're happy as a lark and everything's wonderful, and the next day you're full of resentment. No. It's like building this cement wall.

It's not that all of a sudden all of those cement blocks are there, but it has to start out one at a time, and another one placed on it, and another one placed on it. And when we do not knock down those blocks, when we do not deal with them, all of a sudden there's a wall of resentment or bitterness or whatever in our lives. Another thing she found out, she found out that she had taken up an offense for her children,

and that's easy to do, isn't it? I think sometimes it's easier for us to take criticism about ourselves than it is for us to hear anything against our children or our husbands.

We can listen to it for ourselves and think, oh, well, that's too bad. You know, if they don't like it, that's just too bad. But for our children or our husbands, we're almost ready to fight, aren't we? An offense for her children.

And then what was interesting, like a lot of women, she was her husband's critic. She felt it was her duty as a good wife, and she says it caused a real wedge between the two of them. She says, I felt he needed it, and yet, she says, he did not seem to appreciate it.

You know, it's interesting because when I was in college and took speech, I remember one of the things that happened after you gave your speech was what? Do you remember? They critiqued you. And I remember, you see this nice little crease right here in my forehead? That was always one of the critiques. They said, she frowns.

And I couldn't understand what they were talking about, but now I do. See, there it is. But you know, that's hard, isn't it, when you stand up in front and you're doing the very best that you know how, and then afterwards, all of these people start saying, well, you didn't do this or you should have done that, and you know it's to make you a better speaker.

And of course, I don't know about you, but I can remember most of the kids in our class didn't even want to be there in the first place, but it was required of you. You had to take speech. But to be in that class if you didn't want to in the first place, and then to have people sort of tear you apart, that's rough.

I wonder if perhaps a pastor does not feel sometimes like he's on trial. It's so important how we critique someone. And I think we have to be so careful, and I'm speaking to myself, ladies, believe me.

We have to be so careful that when we do it, we're doing it because we're filled with God's Spirit. And it's not just because it's something we want or don't want that we're saying it, but it's because we feel it's what God would have us to say. And that it's going to build our husband up, not tear him down.

That's going to help him. It says that God showed her she was wrong and that she must give her husband to Jesus. Well, again, that's not easy, is it? You think you give him to the Lord.

I can remember back years ago after I'd surrendered my life to the Lord, and three days later, Susan, my daughter, surrendered her life to the Lord through a morning service. It was in Covenant Community in Redford Township in Michigan that God touched my heart and life on a Thursday evening, August the 17th. And I remember I didn't get home until about midnight because it was 25 miles away.

And after the whole thing was over, they have a sharing time, and it was just such a wonderful time. I really didn't care what time I got home. But when I came in, my daughter, all the lights were out, she'd gone to bed, but she was worried about me.

Isn't it interesting that we tend to worry about our children when they're out and don't report in, but don't think anything of it. I remember one time my kids really chiding me about that. They said, Mom, when we don't come home, you get upset with us.

She said, we're supposed to call you and let you know. And I realized that they worried about me a little bit. But anyhow, I walked in the house, and Susan said, Mom, where have you been? She knew I'd gone to the meetings, but who ever heard of meetings lasting until 12 o'clock at night? And she started to turn on the lights.

And I said, honey, just leave the lights off. I guess I just didn't feel like I could face her face to face in the light and talk to her. And so she said, oh, okay.

And I know that she knew that something had happened because she could sense it in my spirit. But I remember that I asked Susan to forgive me for not being the kind of a mother that I should have been. And I don't know to what extent it went, but we had a precious time just sitting there in the dark.

And I just told her that God had really broken my heart that night and shown me myself as he had seen me, and that God had really done something new in my heart and life, and that I wanted to be a better mother. And she was in her early 20s. But anyhow, on that Sunday, I was already scheduled to sing.

And I remember telling our pastor that God had really done something new in my life at the meetings. And he knew about Ralph and Lucitara because he'd had them in his former church in the western side of Michigan. And I said, pastor, I said, since I'm supposed to sing, would you mind if I just give a short testimony? And ladies, as much as I talk, believe it or not, I never did anything like that.

I could talk about everything, but I couldn't get up and give a message or anything to anybody. That was just not me. But the pastor said, yes, that would be fine.

And so I remember that I got up to speak, and I maybe spoke just a few minutes, and then I sang, Let God Have His Way. And afterwards, I sat down, and the pastor got up and said, you know, I don't think that we need the morning sermon. But he said, I'm supposed to sing He Giveth More Grace, and I'm going to sing it.

And that was interesting because that was a song that was sort of connected with me at that church. I was always being requested to sing He Giveth More Grace, and I thought, I was sitting there thinking, oh, Lord, it's just like you planned this whole thing for me. And as he sang, though, his wife walked out with tears streaming down her face.

And you know, again, at my heart, I just can't explain the change that had taken over and taken place in my life. And of course, I guess those of you that have had that new experience in your life of where God really meets you anew and afresh and changes you completely, you can understand what I'm talking about. But I would never before have ever thought that I could help my pastor's wife.

And yet that morning, I felt God was saying, go out there and see if she needs you. As I walked to the back of the church, I didn't see her. I didn't know what had happened.

So I remember asking our head usher if he knew where the pastor's wife is. Well, I think she wants to be alone. And I thought, oh, well, okay.

So I just stepped aside, you know, and waited back there. And it was just like God's Holy Spirit spoke to him immediately. And he was over by my side within just a few seconds and said, Doris, I'm sorry.

He says, if you feel that you should be with her, he said, I don't want to stand in the way. He said, she's out in the car in the parking lot. And I went out there and I just, when I got there, I just said, is there anything I can help you with? You know, I just felt like she needed just to have a friend.

And you know what it was? It was a problem of her children. There was a need there and yet she didn't feel she could tell anyone why. People expect the pastor's children to be perfect.

They're not supposed to ever have any problems. They're supposed to be perfect. And as I listened, and I can honestly tell you right now, I don't even remember what the problems were, but as I listened, I just let her know that I loved her and that I would pray and that I would be available if she needed me.

And we couldn't have been out there more than 15 minutes. And I saw all these people coming out of the church and I thought, how in the world can the service be over already? Well, as I went back in, I was looking for my daughter and I said to somebody, have you seen Susan? And they said, oh yeah, she went forward. Do you know that after the pastor finished singing, he gave an invitation and 12 people went forward and Susan was one of them.

She said to me, mom, I decided if God could do something new in your life, maybe he could do something new in my life. Now, the reason I share this with you is because I had been talking about this pastor's wife giving her husband to the Lord. I gave Susan to the Lord.

You see, that's one of the things I told her that Thursday night was that I had given her to the Lord and God did a beautiful work in her heart. But you know what? Over the next few weeks and months and years, I gradually would take her back and I would begin to start telling her, you know, what she should do and how to live basically. I suppose I don't even remember.

It was just obvious that I was taking her back and God really broke my heart over it one day. And I went to Susan and I said, honey, I want you to forgive me. I think I've taken you back.

And she said, yeah, mom, you have. She didn't have to think about it at all. She didn't have to guess.

She knew. You can do that without even realizing it. So revival, again, is not a one time thing.

It's not like any of us on the team think that we're perfect. I think so often people who are on the outside looking in tend to think that we think we're perfect because they know that revival is our ministry. But we're not.

We're still seeing God change us moment by moment, day by day. And when we don't allow him to change us, when we become hard or resentful ourselves, and then you know what? Then it's just like the potter who has that hard lump of clay. You know what they do with it when they can't work with it? But they do.

They put it aside for a while. God sometimes has to put us aside if we're not allowing him to continue to work in us. Well, also God revealed to this pastor's wife that her self-consciousness was sin.

She wanted to stay behind the scenes. And yet down deep, she really wanted to run things. Any of you ever experienced that? You know, you're trying to act so sweet and loving and not interested in doing anything, but back behind it all, you're saying, boy, that's not the way to do it.

You know, and if I could get in there, I could show him how to do it. Do any of you understand that kind of thing? She said in the meantime, after she had really surrendered all of these things to the Lord and admitted that they were sin and had thanked God for his forgiveness, she said the church was really affected as a result. Women wanted to start prayer groups for their unsaved husbands.

And you know what happened? Five husbands all were saved. Then she says there was a change in our home. She says, I found out that my husband worked best when our home was peaceful, neat, and quiet.

And knowing her, I wouldn't have thought that she'd have had to work at that very much. She already seemed like that kind of a person to me. She said, I realized that he must be able to relax.

And so she said, I wanted our home, try to make our home that kind of a home. And then she said, I told the kids that I had put them in the Lord's hands as well. And she said, I became relaxed and began to blossom for the Lord.

Now, she said, I had no one to please but whom? God. God. She says, always I had a merry heart before, but now more than ever, I had a merry heart.

And I was able to be the same person at home that I was at the church. One pastor's wife. Well, then there was a lady in Ontario, Oakville, couldn't think there for a moment, Oakville, Ontario.

And I remember this dear person, I just loved this pastor's wife right from the beginning. And again, you know, we don't come into the church thinking, well, now we're sure this pastor and his wife, they have need of revival. And this person has need of revival.

And you know, we really don't. But you know what it is? We just know that most churches are all alike. We all have needs.

And so we go in with the idea that hopefully they'll all have open hearts. And if they have a need, that they'll allow God to meet it. And so as I was with this pastor's wife, I just loved her.

And basically she seemed like she was a very happy pastor's wife. She and her husband seemed to get along well and everything, which I found out they did. But you know what her problem was? She was a worrier.

And that was not real obvious to me. She did a good job of hiding it. She worried all the time.

She said, I had the what ifties. And everybody, we did just like you, we laughed. She said, yeah, I think, well, what if that doesn't go right? Or what if that goes wrong? Or what if she doesn't do this? And what if he doesn't do that? And on top of it all, she had three sons and a husband, all four men.

Now, that's kind of rough. But God showed her that even though that seemed like a minor thing, it was sin. It was really not trusting God with all of those situations.

What ifties? Then there was another pastor's wife from Chicago. And I remember when we went to their church, it was soon after I had surrendered my life to the Lord. And several of us went on teams in those days to different parts of the country.

And I was on a team with several people I didn't even know. And we went to Chicago to have this time. And I remember that after I'd given my testimony and there had been a message given and an invitation to

the prayer room, that many people went to the prayer room.

And I really didn't know the pastor's wife because, again, we didn't really get to know the people that quickly. It was just a weekend situation. And so as it was, the person in charge asked me to kneel by this lady.

And I knelt by her, a young woman. And she was really broken before the Lord. And why? She was a pastor's wife, but she didn't have half the nice furniture that the other women had.

And her home wasn't as nice as everybody else's home. And she had children, but they didn't have all the things that others had. And it was such a bitterness in her heart of how unfair it seemed that they expected so much of their pastor and his wife, even to entertaining and everything, but yet they didn't have the money to do it with.

And they didn't have the home to do it in and so forth. And oh, God broke her heart. And she just opened up so beautifully.

And God really began a change in her life. But I'll say within a year or so, I can't remember how it was, but it was at Pekin, Illinois. I remember that it happened.

She came to the Flames of Freedom rally there. I don't know if we called it that in those days or not. I can't remember what we called it.

Anyhow, she came. And I remember that when they gave an invitation at one of the meetings, I went to the prayer room, as usual, as one of the prayer partners. And the room was crowded.

I would imagine there were 100 people in that prayer room. And out of all those people, who did the person in charge put me with? Put this same woman. And as I started to walk over, I recognized her.

And I thought, oh, no, Lord, I already dealt with her before. It was like the Lord said, you just go. And I remember as I knelt by her and she looked up, she just hugged me.

And she began to cry. It was as though I was the one she could open up to. And, you know, it was funny.

She said, I know, Doris, that I gave all of that to the Lord. But, you know, it was still, it had started eating away at her again. What is it? What do you think it is that causes things like that? When we stop and think about it, it's usually the sins that we don't hear much preaching on.

Until just lately, perhaps. But it's jealousy and envy. And that eats away.

The scripture says that it'll rot your bones. It'll rot your bones to be jealous and envious. And I remember that night, once again, God just touched her heart in a new way.

And would you believe it? A third time at Rives Junction. Same thing happened. I went to the prayer room when the invitation was given and the person sent me over.

And I thought, oh, no, not again. Same person. And that time, it was more or less just a further consecration of her own life and heart to the Lord.

And if I were to tell you who it was, you'd know. I'm not going to tell you. We don't do that.

But you know what? We became prayer partners. Precious prayer partners. We don't see each other.

Hardly ever do we see each other. We even hardly ever write. But I know she prays for me and I pray for her.

Oh, does a pastor's wife need revival? Does any woman need revival? Remember the letter that I started to read to you in the beginning? I want to finish it now. She says, after observing this strange, and she's got it in quotes, meeting for a couple of hours, things began to take shape. I saw that all these ladies were hurting.

They all had different needs and hurts and were not ashamed to bring them out into the open. I was impressed with their transparency. To make a very long story short, the Lord began a work in my heart that was to continue until the 1982 rally in Mansfield, Ohio.

I eagerly attended, fully expecting the Lord to finish the work he had begun, Philippians 1, 6. You know, being confident of this very thing that he who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. And she says, as you know, he did just that and more. And then I looked forward to the pastor's wife's meeting scheduled on Labor Day.

Some of those same ladies were there and again they shared. Only this time I was excited about how God was working in their lives. Their growth and confidence in the Lord was extremely evident since last year.

Others were new to the group and my heart went out to them because I felt I knew what they were experiencing. I prayed for one lady in particular who was in the exact same position I was in last year, wondering, confused, criticizing, seeking. I trust next year there will be a big change in her life also.

One other change was my attitude towards you. No longer were you the strong, overconfident, know-it-all I thought you were last year. It's plain, isn't it? But a dear, sweet, sensitive person who is just as human as I am.

I was moved with your willingness to share your weaknesses and especially the little glimpse into your feelings of loneliness or rather how God has called you to a life of aloneness. That's changed. My heart could relate to that.

I wanted to shout, I will be your friend with no strings attached. Isn't that neat? I wish she had shouted it. In the meantime, she did write a poem about that to me.

When God called us into the ministry, she said seven years ago, he began stripping me of my, quote, treasures, unquote, one by one. Some being my dearest friends. Being the kind of a person that needed at least one friend that I could, quote, let my hair down with, unquote, without her thinking I was unspiritual, I became depressed.

At one point there was such a friend and then she went to Africa as a missionary. I was happy for her but sorry for me. I was back again to loneliness.

Loneliness. Sure I was busy, terribly busy, but there were times when I wanted to call a friend or her call me and just unload. Not to gossip but to share our ups and downs.

Not only did I have a close friend but very little fellowship. Not only did I not have a close friend but very little fellowship at all. In five and one half years not one lady ever invited me to do one thing.

That broke my heart. Now, I'm sure it's because they were like me. I wouldn't invite my pastor's wife at that time to do anything because I think that, well, you know, she's got lots of people that she can do things with.

Isn't it something how we hold back instead of just letting God use us in the way that he would like to? She says, occasionally I would ask someone to go to lunch and so forth but never did anyone initiate it. I'm not criticizing them. It wasn't because they didn't love us.

They had their friends and a busy life and just didn't know they could minister to me in this way. Most of the other pastor's wives I knew in the area had close friends within their church or were content to be left alone which produced guilt feelings in me for not being content also. You know, I can even identify with this business of asking someone to lunch but no one ever initiating it.

Back before something happened to me, I used to say to them, let them know that you have a need. Let them know that you need a friend and that you would like to have them be your friend and all that. Do you know, ladies, that there is a person that I know very well and had her over to my house for lunch with a pastor's wife.

In fact, at that time it was Bob's wife, Jean. I remember that while Jean was in the bathroom kind of repairing her makeup because they were going out that I said to this person, I need you. I really do.

She was a widow also. Had children and was busy with those children but I let her know that I needed her. You know, everybody does get the idea that I had no needs and I guess because basically I am a happy person and it doesn't come across that I am.

She gave up her newborn son and later a precious 16-year-old son. How many times do you suppose there's a heavy heart and you might find fault with the person. They don't act the way you want them to or they are sort of snooty I think or hard to get to know or whatever but you don't really know what's in their heart.

And I'm going to tell you, this was the kind of a person that I thought she was. Very cold I thought in the beginning. Kind of standoffish and everything.

And as we got to talking and she said to me that she could identify a little bit with me being a widow. She said I have a husband but she said I've lost two children. You know, I don't know if my mouth dropped but that's the way I felt.

Why? I couldn't identify with her. I still had my two children. And the hurt that must have been in that mother's heart to lose a newborn baby.

And then later, the story that she told me of how she lost her son. Perfectly healthy 16-year-old and she and her husband and family had moved to Florida in a pastorate and back in the backwoods or someplace there was like a pool where the kids could go swimming and they didn't know anything about it and he went back there and do you know, imagine, the water was stagnant and he got some kind of a germ through that water and died. You know, it just seems so, like how does that happen to a pastor's family? You know, if you'd have gotten even struck by a car you might be able to understand it better.

But to just go innocently into where you think it's a nice little pool of water to swim and to get that. This mother had really suffered and she was telling the Lord, I gave enough when I gave up my home of 20

years moving hundreds of miles away from family and friends, when I gave up my newborn son and later a precious 16-year-old son and then sacrificing my private life to live a fishbowl existence open for scrutiny and criticism. I felt the very least God could do for me was give me a loyal friend but when I quit struggling and let him deal with me, he revealed there were important lessons to be learned.

To be learned how? Through my testing of loneliness. I am learning to be sensitive to the needs of others, especially the friendless. How to be a friend, not just have one.

He is teaching me the value of my husband's friendship and the most valuable lesson of all, what a friend we have in Jesus. Precious woman, I want to read you just one of the poems that I have of hers. Our Rose.

God sent into our home one day a rose of royal strain. Its countenance was bright and gay. Its stay a sweet refrain.

Our rose grew tall in strength and grace. It brought us so much joy that God should manifest his face in lending us this boy. The years sped by from birth to teens, the rose that God had given was plucked by him one noonday fair and planted in his heaven.

The rose we had is now his own to grace his garden fair. That distant land seems more like home now that our rose is there. So God is using that one.

By the way, at the bottom of the letter it says, Doris, you have my permission to use this. So again, it's not like I am sharing something with you that I shouldn't. Well, there's one other I want to just talk to you about, and that is a dear missionary who's gone since to be with the Lord.

Some of you have read her book, Filled with the Spirit, Then What? Mabel Francis. You know, it's very difficult when there are rumors being spread about you. And perhaps you've heard that, some of you as pastor's wives.

You've heard things that are not true, that have been said about you, and it's so hard to deal with things like that, isn't it? And yet here was a dear saint of God, a missionary for 50 years in Japan. I'm not sure how long she'd been a missionary at the time of this, but she had been a missionary for years and years and years, and her brother was the head of the mission, and he'd gone to New York on business. And while he was gone, another woman's husband was put in charge, and she began to spread this rumor about Mabel Francis.

The rumor was that she was immoral, and Mabel Francis was a single woman, never had been married. Supposedly she was having an affair with some man. Well, in the scripture, we are told in Matthew 5, one of the Beatitudes says that when evil is spoken of you, what are you to do? You're to rejoice and be exceedingly glad.

When you are persecuted, and evil is being spoken about you, God says, you're to rejoice and be exceedingly glad. That's not easy, is it? Well, how did God deal with her? He showed her Colossians 3.13, and I want you to turn to it, and we'll read it out of God's word, and then I want to share with you what the Japanese translation is of it. Colossians 3.13 says, Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against you, against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

Now, the Japanese translation says this, if any man have a cause to blame another, forgive him. Well, Mabel Francis read that, and God broke her heart. She forgave the person, even though she didn't understand what God was doing, was asking of her.

Then she began to read in 1 Peter 2, 9 through 20, and I want us to just read it, because I think it's important for us to realize that we are a royal priesthood. Verse 9 through verse 20, But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, and holy nation, a people of his own, that you should show forth the praises of him who have called you out of darkness into his marvelous light, who in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your behavior honest among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God that with well-doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, as free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honor all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the perverse or the unreasonable. For this is thankworthy if a man for conscience toward God endured grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it if when you are buffeted for your faults you shall take it patiently? But if when you do well and suffer for it, you take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

Well, Mabel Francis realized that this was what God was wanting of her. She was a child of the king, and she was representing him, and it was important how she handled this. And as a result of God's dealing with her, he began to bring to light many things.

He showed her her heart, and that's when it's hard, ladies. I can attest to that, and I'm sure many of you could. Evil, the evil that was there, he began to show her.

Envy, jealousy, suspicion. And she wasn't aware of any of these things before this. She thought basically she was a good Christian.

We could go into detail as to the kind of things that he showed her, how she was jealous over somebody else having charge of the service when she thought she was supposed to have charge of it. Little things that maybe you wouldn't even think of normally with a missionary. But God began to show her that he had allowed this hurting experience in her life in order for her to humble herself and be broken so that she could recognize these traits.

Have you ever wondered why God was allowing you to go through certain things? Have you ever come to the place where you felt so sorry for yourself that you felt like you were just in a pit? I have. Self-pity is one of the worst sins there is. It'll destroy you.

It'll take you right down. She had to realize how alive her old nature still was. Here she was teaching death to self.

She was Christian Missionary Alliance, and that is definitely their doctrine. And she was teaching it, and yet in herself she realized that she was still so much alive in that old nature. She realized that Christ said it

is crucified, but she was not experiencing that in herself.

She was not agreeing with God about it. And then in Matthew 16, 24, it says that we must deny ourselves and take up his cross and what? Follow him. And she realized she was not doing that.

God showed her that when the uprising of self, in other words, you know, someone hurts us and boy, we're ready to stand up for our rights, that what? She was to go directly to Jesus. She was not supposed to go first to some friend and talk to them first about it, but rather she was to go directly to Jesus. She was not to make any excuses.

Oh, I don't know about you, but I can sure think of a lot of excuses when I don't want to face the truth that God is showing me about myself. I believe that God has to bring experiences into our lives so that we can see where our old self is hiding. Someone has said, when you really forgive a wrong, it is gone.

True forgiveness does not put it away on a shelf to be brought out at some other time. You know, that's so easy to do. And Don Godfrey puts it this way, bitterness has a memory.

Bitterness has a memory. Mabel Francis was used of God mightily, and yet he had to take her through a very trying, hurting experience to even be able to use her more to the extent that he wanted to. I want us to just end with one other story, and that is of Charlene Wright, who was supposed to be here this morning with you.

I want to just share, some of you might have heard it, but I want to share with you, I know some of the things that she would have shared with you. Charlene and her husband, Bill Wright, came to our conference in, is that Edmonton? I'm trying to think, Edmonton. And they came from Tucson, Arizona.

Even had to borrow coats in order to come because they didn't own any winter coats, and here they were coming in February to Edmonton. And I remember the night they came was on the Wednesday night, like it would have been like this past Wednesday night. They came, and it was very late, and there were very few of us still around.

And I remember that I was one of the ones at the registration desk, and this couple came in, and Ralph and Lou seemed to know who they were, and they talked with them a little bit. And I remember asking them if they'd like a cup of coffee. And this woman was so rigid, you would not believe it.

She said, you know, I thought, gee, what's this, you know? And again, you try to think, well, they're tired, and they've been traveling, and you try to think of all the reasons. But I went to get the coffee, and they came in, and he seemed to be quite friendly. And again, I'm thinking, well, it's probably their temperaments.

You're trying to make all kinds of excuses for why this is happening. And we went back into one of the offices, and Bill McCloud was having a session on the radio, so we were all sitting in there listening to that. And I can't tell you, but I just knew there was something really wrong in this person's life.

I didn't know what it was. I had no idea, but I thought, Lord, this woman is a very unhappy person, I could tell it. And the next day, Lou got ahold of me, and he said, Doris, there are real problems in this marriage.

He said, get next to that gal and try to work with her. I said, hey, I tried last night. I said, she just kind of let me know she didn't want me.

Well, you know, that was part of my job, to get next to her. So I tried to be friendly to her, but I didn't want to overwhelm her in any way. And I thought, you know, you try to learn from experiences, and so I thought, I'll try not to come on too strong.

And so I really just, when I would see her, it would be nice, but I didn't sit with her. I didn't try to get in a corner with her or anything. In the meantime, the pastor, her husband, was in the men's meeting during the weekend, and he opened up to these men, and he gave his testimony.

And what the situation was, and I didn't know this, see, I hadn't heard it, okay, so it was great that when God did break her and brought her to me, into the prayer room, then's when I heard the story. But the pastor told this story, and it's on tape, I even played it last year for some of you pastor's wives that were there, I played part of it. But he told how that he had treated his wife terribly over the years that they had been married.

That when he married her, she was a lovely lady, you know, that he thought she was very pretty and all that, but over the years, he began to try to change her. He wanted her to dress this way and do her hair differently, and he didn't go into detail as much, he told me later, but he did say that he began to put her down, criticize her, and find fault with her, and just knock every bit of confidence out of her. He wasn't aware he was doing it, you know, he thought he was doing the right thing, I suppose, but anyhow, nevertheless, that's what was happening, till it had become a home where it was just constant friction.

And she was to the place where she just thought it was better to get out of his life. And the only reason they were still together was because they, she didn't have the courage to leave him, because of the church people and everything, but in her heart, she just felt she didn't love him anymore, that he'd killed every bit of love for her, because in the meantime, she'd had a mastectomy, so she thought that made her less appealing to him. In the meantime, she'd gained weight, and so that made her less appealing, and so she just found herself thinking, you know, he couldn't love me anymore, and I certainly don't love him.

Well, this pastor, God began to break his heart through his word and through messages he was hearing, and then he heard through Christian radio, their family life radio, about the Sutera twins and their revival crusades, and he thought, I've got to get there for it. And I guess he'd even asked Charlene to forgive him, and it was like, hey, no way, you deserve to suffer for a while. She wouldn't.

She wouldn't forgive him. And the thing was, besides, she didn't really believe him. I mean, as far as she was concerned, he had deceived her too many times, and she just didn't feel she could believe him anymore.

And this was the whole, can you imagine? Here they come to a revival crusade conference, and their people wanted them to come. Their people paid their way up and back, so maybe their people even knew a little bit about it. I don't know.

But this was the situation. She was so hard in her heart, and it was like she had already made up her mind, no way, it's not going to move me. I'm here, but it's not going to move me.

And all the time he was praying. And I remember he shared later how he said to her, honey, let's go to the prayer room. She didn't want to go.

And so he got up and by himself went into the prayer room, and he felt there were too many people, so he started searching out a place, and as he went down the hall and opened the door, he found the office that

Nina and Max were using, and it was dark. And he just left it dark, and he said he felt prostrate on the floor, and he just cried out to God, because he knew her reaction was his fault, even though by this time it wasn't what God wanted, but he knew that basically he was to blame for it. And it was just broken, and he felt like he'd done everything he knew how to do.

He'd asked forgiveness. He'd been trying to treat her better. He'd just tried to make it up in every way he could, but it was one of those things where nothing was happening.

And so he was on his face before the Lord, and he finally realized that God was letting him know, you keep quiet. I don't want you to say one more word. Don't ask her to go to the prayer room.

Don't say anything. Just let it go. And as I recall, it was the Sunday night before we left on Monday that when the invitation was given, she turned to him, and she said, do you think that I could talk to Doris? And he said, well, let's go see.

And out they went. And I was standing in the doorway of the prayer room, and she came up, and it was funny. Like I said, again, there I wasn't counseling anybody or anything.

There I was, and so she came up, and the pastor said, Doris, would you mind talking to Charlene? I said, well, no, come on in, and went to the prayer room. Well, you know, this woman was so full of bitterness and resentment. No way could you deal in that prayer room with all those people around.

And I could see that with about three or four sentences, and I said, let's just go find a quiet place. And off we went into one of the offices. That woman was still hard.

She wanted to talk to me, but she was no way broken. You see, if you're going to hang on to your rights, and that's what she was doing. She had a right to make that husband suffer.

I mean, after all, she'd suffered for years, and how come he should get off just by asking forgiveness? And she was hanging on to all of her rights, and I remember that we sat for ages. I don't remember how long, but I just let her talk. And I asked her, because I didn't know any of the story, remember.

I'm only hearing her side of it. And she's telling me how horrible he had treated her, and how he had been around the house, and that she never dressed right, and she never wore her hair right, and she was too heavy, and she didn't mention the mastectomy. That was her own thinking.

But all these different things, you know, and then I said to her, I said, did he ask forgiveness of you? Oh, yeah. But she said, that's too easy. She said, I know, as far as I'm concerned, he has to suffer a little bit.

And I was really praying, because, you know, you can just thought right out what you think should happen, but I thought, I've got to be sure that she's going to receive it right. And so anyhow, during our conversation, I finally said to her, I said, Charlene, I said, what about what God says that Christ, for God's sake, hath forgiven us? I said, we don't deserve forgiveness. I didn't deserve forgiveness.

And I said, you don't deserve forgiveness, but God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven us. And he says, if we don't forgive, then he will not forgive us. She knew it all.

Right. Pastor's wife. She knew it.

And as we talked, I said something to her about, I remember, do you know the Shakespearean play where Portia wants her pound of flesh? And I said to her, I said, do you want a pound of his flesh? And she looked at me kind of funny. But again, unless God's Holy Spirit breaks you, it doesn't matter what anybody says. And I remember, I just realized I had to be patient and wait on the Lord.

And we sat there together, and there were not even any tears, just hard, hard, hard. And I could see what it was. Satan was fighting on the other side.

I mean, he had her in his clutches. And to let her go, to let her have victory, oh boy, what a difference that was going to make in the lives of that family and that husband and wife and those people in the congregation. You don't want that.

But I'm here to tell you that it's really true, that greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world. And God got a hold of her heart. And as we got down on our knees and she began to pray, softly and quietly, you could hear the bitterness leaving her voice.

You could hear the resentment leaving her voice. And you could hear the compassion, the forgiveness coming in to the point where she was able to finally say, God, I don't even feel that I love him. But I'm going to trust you to do it.

And when we got up off of our knees, she began to talk a little bit. And already, you know, the devil was beginning to make her doubt because she said, well, how am I going to handle it? Because she said, I just don't feel that I love him. And I said, of course you don't.

I said, Satan doesn't want you to sense any love. But I said, when the time is right, God will fill you with his love. I said, you trust him to do it.

And I'm going to tell you the truth. As we were walking out of those offices, I'm sure that in her heart she was really kind of afraid of what was going to happen when she saw him. And it was really neat because it was late.

Do you remember? There wasn't hardly a soul around. And we came out into this great big \$2 million church. And here was like a big support sticking way out, you know, wooden thing.

I don't know what you call it. But anyhow. And all I could see behind it was these legs crossed, these men's legs out.

And I'm looking around for her husband. And she was doing about this time. He gets up.

He says, oh, I didn't know whether you were through or not. And you could hear the nervousness in his voice. You know, isn't it something when you're just wanting so much for God to do something and yet basically still you're scared.

You're afraid. And you could sense it. And I thought, well, they don't need me.

Because she started to walk over to him. And I walked away. And all of a sudden it dawned on me that I'd left my coat in there.

I turned around and they were in each other's arms. Crying together. She didn't have to wait at all.

God began the work just like that. And that's what he wants us to do. But we have to come to the place where we do pray as David did.

Where we examine ourselves, first of all, to see where we are. And then we allow God to search us. We're willing to subject ourselves to inquiry, we might say, or inspection.

Where he can really investigate and scrutinize us. And begin to show us where we stand before him. That we come to him like after having a teaching session.

Where we've been taught as students for weeks and weeks and weeks. And then comes time for the examination to find out if we passed the test. Are we where God would have us to be? He wants to rescue us from confinement.

He wants to set us free from the bonds of sin and the chains that Satan has put around us. He truly wants to become our guide. You know, we're really just like tourists in a strange land.

And we need direction in our lives. And God wants to do that for us. But he also wants to guard us, to protect us, to defend us, to watch over us.

And he also wants us to come to the place where we comprehend fully all the implications of a situation. And find ourselves willing, no matter what the situation might be, to allow God to be totally in control. So does a pastor's wife need revival? I don't know how many are even pastor's wives here today.

I don't know how many are lay people. But I wonder if God has been speaking to you during these meetings even in yesterday and today. And you begin to see that there's some of these things that we've been talking about in here.

Maybe it's even a situation where you know some things about your husband and nobody else knows. But you know it and you've been bitter over it. You know what? God says you don't have a right to that.

No, because if you truly have Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, it says that you are bought with a price. You're not your own. Therefore, you're to glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are his.

It's hard to come to that place where you're willing to say, Lord, you're right. I have no right. It's hard to come to a place where you say, Lord, I agree with you.

Because that's what it amounts to when we confess our sin to the Lord Jesus Christ. We are agreeing with God about what sin is in our life. And when we agree with God, then we can accept his forgiveness.

And once we've accepted his forgiveness, what happens? We're set free. We're set free from the bondage of sin and of self. And we can be filled with God's precious Holy Spirit and finally become the women of God that we want to be and that we know he wants us to be, whether it's as a pastor's wife or a wife or as a single woman.

Whatever the situation might be, it doesn't matter. When we're willing to agree with God, if we confess our sin, he says in 1 John 1.9, if we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to what? To forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all, that's important, underline it, all unrighteousness. Confession is just agreeing with God about what sin is in your life.

And when you come to that place and accept his forgiveness, oh, how precious it is. He really, truly does what the psalmist says. He takes you out of that pit and sets your feet on the solid rock and you can be the woman of God that he wants you to be.

Let's bow our heads, shall we? Let's take just a few moments here to allow God to search our hearts. Ask him to do that. If you really want to be what he'd have you to be, then ask God to search your heart.

Ask him to put his finger on anything, whatever it might be that is hindering you from being the representative of Christ that you should be. You are a child of the King if you have accepted Christ as your Savior. Are you living as one? Or as someone has put it, are you still living as a pauper? Are you appropriating everything that Jesus Christ has for you in your life? If God puts his finger on a sin in your life, confess it specifically.

Agree with God about that. Thank him for his forgiveness. Thank him that you don't have to be in bondage to that any longer.

And then I wonder if you have agreed with God about the old nature, that old self that God says it is crucified with Christ, and yet nevertheless you live. And yet it's not you that lives, but it's Christ who lives in you. And the life that you now live in the flesh, you live by the faith of the Son of God who loved you and gave himself for you.

Have you agreed with God about that? You know, we don't go on feelings. You might say, but I don't feel dead. I often do not feel dead either, but God said it.

Do you believe it? Thank him that you don't have to be in bondage to the old nature any longer. Praise his name that you can be set free from that. And then allow him to just fill you to overflowing with himself.

Thank him for doing it. And again, don't wait until you feel differently. But God says if we ask anything in his name, he will do it.

There is a prayer room off of the sanctuary, and if you feel that you need to get alone with the Lord, we're going to open up this time right now for you to just step out and leave and go to that place of prayer. And if you would like someone later to kneel with you, we'll have prayer partners in there. But just take this time now to get alone with the Lord, and perhaps you just want to go in and thank him for what he's shown you, for those truths that he's revealed to you.

And in the meantime, if you have made this kind of a commitment, why don't you just raise your hand and we'll just thank God together for that. If you made a commitment today to be what God would have you to be, a new commitment, would you just let that be known? Yes, thank you. Many of you.

Praise God. Father, we want to thank you for your goodness to us, for your mercy. Oh Lord, how we praise you for it.

It's so undeserved. But we thank you that you have given it so freely to us. Father, we thank you for these decisions that have been made for you, and we just ask, Lord, that you might continue to reveal yourself to them in a special way, Lord, that they might continue to let you live through them, that it might be seen in their lives at home as well as at church.

Father, for the pastor's wives especially, we pray that you will give them a real freedom in their spirit to minister in the way that you would have them do in their churches. Father, we pray for those that in the past have supposedly had an inferiority complex. Lord, we pray that they might deal with it as sin, and that they might realize that when they allow you to take control of their lips, that they're able to say what you would have them to say, and they're able to do what you would have them to do.

Father, we pray that they might be the wives to their husbands, that you would have them to be, the support that they might need for their husbands. And then in turn, Lord, you would cause their husbands to be more sensitive to the needs of their wives. Father, we pray this for all of the men and women in this conference.

Yesterday, throughout the weekend, Lord, we pray that you might minister to each one. And then, Father, for all of those that have come alone, we pray too, Lord, that they might receive that which you have for them, that which will cause them to be of good courage, to be strong in you, Lord Jesus, knowing that you are able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think. We thank you now, Father, for your love.

Thank you for what you're going to continue to do throughout this day, and we'll give you the praise in Jesus' name. Amen.

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