

The Christian and His Devotional Life

by Gerhard Du Toit

Gerhard Du Toit emphasizes the necessity of a disciplined daily devotional life for spiritual growth and understanding God's will.

Duration: 1:21:39

Scripture: Isaiah 66:2, Luke 13:10-13, John 5:19, John 20:21

Topics: "Devotional"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of spending time with God and disciplining oneself to His Word. He compares time to a piece of eternity and states that any time spent outside of God's will is wasted. The speaker shares a personal experience of leading a Bible study group where a young man came to Christ and began spending an hour in God's Word every day. The sermon also touches on the background of another individual who had a history of violence and struggled with his natural instincts, but found transformation through counseling and seeking God's guidance.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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Can you put up your hands please? That's wonderful. They say to us that 70% of your growth as a Christian is depending upon what you read. Now, the most important book in our lives is the Word of God.

I learned the English language through the Word of God. My background, my native tongue is a dialect that we speak of as Afrikaans. And it's a combination between German and Dutch.

I mean, just come here, Brother Denny, I want to teach you something. Say Ack. Say what? Ack.

Ack. S. S. A. A. Bobba. Bobba.

Jan. Jan. He just said I'm in a boom . . . It can be recorded . . . Anyone haven't got a place for me to stay tonight? Anyway, so, when God spoke to me about, I'm sorry my brother, please, please forgive me.

Oh man, I feel like I can cry now, anyway, we, when I, when God spoke to me about Britain, I had to learn the English language, and so, I, someone gave me an old translation, an old Bible, King James Bible, and for, I bought myself the Old and the New Testament and cassette, and for seven years I committed myself to the listening of the Old Testament for ninety minutes every morning and forty-five minutes every night, and I think in that seven, those seven years, I went through the Old Testament forty-nine times, and I went through the New Testament eighty, eighty-seven times, or eighty-four times, and the Word of God became part of my life, and when I went to the British Isles, I never took one of these old Webster dictionaries with me, but I took the Word of God with me, and if I was looking for a word to spell, I would think about it, and I would say, now that word is in Romans chapter twelve, and I would go to it, and that's where I found it. So, the Word of God is the most important book, book of our lives, but then there are some wonderful books that you and I can read. I try, and the last seventy years, and I'm just sharing this with you because they say men listen to cassettes easier than reading, and they said our wives find it easier to read, and I sometimes have difficulty when I read a book that I read so fast that I don't really get what's in that book, and what I've done for the last seventeen years, I have been reading books with a microphone like this onto ninety-minute cassettes, and in my library I've got loads of books that I've read onto cassettes, and then if I get into the car, or a van, and I drive for nine hours, or eighteen hours, or whatever, I listen through these books, and if I listen through a book five, or six, or seven times, then that book becomes part of my life.

It's a little book, and what I normally do, I read the life story of someone, I don't read his life story onto cassette, but like one year I read the life story of Dr. Andrew Murray, and that year I tried to read all the books of Andrew Murray onto cassette, and the next year I took Oswald Chambers, read his life story, because then I was able to understand where he came from, and then I tried to read everything Oswald Chambers wrote, read it onto cassette, and then re-listened to it. One year I made the mistake to try and do it with Martyn Lloyd-Jones, and I mean, you know he preached fourteen years out of Romans, and spent eight years in the Epistle to the Ephesians. In fact, I don't think it's true, but they said to me that he began to preach out of Ephesians, and young people got married, and went to the mission field, and came back with children, and he was in chapter one verse three.

Anyway, there are two books. If you were in our session yesterday afternoon, and some of you have been coming and telling me some of the breakthroughs that God has given to you, and if you've been trusting God for the witness of His Spirit, that your life is totally surrendered to God. If you sit here and you didn't agree with me yesterday afternoon, I want you to go and pray about it.

I want you to go and ask God and say, God, is there really a life in the fullness of the Spirit of God? You go and ask God about that. Because sometimes when we disagree with something, if I disagree with what someone says, I get alone with God, and I say, God, you need to sort me out in this one, and you need to speak to me about that. If you've trusted God for the fullness of His Spirit, this is a great little book, Helps to Holiness.

This book belongs to Brother Dennis, so don't ask me if you can get it. And then there is another book, and this is a must, if you are serious of God, my brother, you need to get hold of this book, by Richard

Taylor, The Discipline Life. I kind of believe that God can't bless a life which is not discipline.

I just firmly believe that in my relationship with God, that if I want the blessings of God in my life, then my life as a Christian needs to be a life that is disciplined in the presence of God. And I also mentioned to you yesterday that we have this material, and if you are really keen, we will be able to maybe make copies of this, that I quite often use in counselling people in the fullness of God's Spirit. And the first chapter deals with stepping into the blessings of God, then secondly, standing in the blessings of God, and thirdly, staying within the blessings of God.

How do I maintain the fullness of God's Spirit in my life? Because it's conditional, and I do that through consecration and through obedience, and through abiding and through prayer, through Bible study, through discipline, witnessing, understanding my human limitations and growth, and there is a whole chapter about that, and if you want us to make copies, I'm sure we can do that. There are maybe some of you here this afternoon, and upon your heart is there a tremendous sense of guilt, because you have been exposed to so much light, and so much light has been coming to your heart. Now you need to know that God does not condemn us, but the Spirit of God convicts us, and I really want you to get through to God these days.

God is doing a tremendous deep work in our lives, and I'm serious when I said last night that I'm challenging you to come and spend a half night in prayer on Friday night. You see, the Bible is saying to us in Romans chapter 8, there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Why does the Bible say that? Well, God is saying that to us because He said, for that which the law could not do, Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh, and condemned sin in the flesh.

Why did He do that? So that the righteousness of the law would be fulfilled in us. You see, the spirit-filled life is not a life where I can do what I want. The moment when God's Spirit takes control of my life, a new law comes into operation, and which law is it? It's the law of the life of the Spirit of Christ.

That's the law that comes into operation in my life. The law of the Spirit in my life as a believer. So I don't think God wants us to be under condemnation, and God don't want us to have the wrong sense of guilt.

One other thing, and I'm taking a minute or so because we are copying some material for you at the back. I've got something that I put together a few years ago on communications that comes from God. When do I know that it is God that is speaking to me? When is it myself, and when is it the voice of Satan? At the back I've got a page here, the difference between the voice of God and the voice of Satan.

The voice of Satan is always loud and strong and clamorous, but the voice of God is always quiet and persuasive. The voice of Satan never deals with specifics, but is often dealing with things in general terms. The voice of God is always to the point.

The voice of God is specific, and God is not a God of confusion. The voice of Satan is always demanding, and always trying to get an immediate decision. The voice of God is always leading.

Time is always a great asset to know the voice of God. I often say to people, God is never in a hurry and very seldom late. The voice of Satan perplexes, creates turmoil and mixes up, but the voice of God is always clear and distinctive.

The voice of Satan is never marked by a restful and a peaceful spirit, but the voice of God gives us great rest of certainty. The voice of Satan is always afraid of the devil and will draw back from it, but the voice of God is always open and willing for counsel and question. Sometimes people come to me and say, you know, God spoke to me, and then I say, well are you willing to open for the counsel of spiritual people? They are cautious about that, and I often wonder about that kind of guidance.

The voice of Satan brings depression and discouragement, but the voice of God brings great encouragement to the believer. The voice of Satan appeals to the lower instincts, and he suggests, I want, but the voice of God appeals to the higher instincts and suggests, I ought. The voice of Satan disappears if the Christian refuses to listen to it, but the voice of God grows stronger and stronger in my personal relationship with God.

So if you would like to get a copy of that, I am sure we would be able to do that. Now I have some material on the subject of temptation that I would love to share with you, maybe in ten or fifteen years time, if you are still alive. We are going to give you some material, but it is not coming, so what I am going to do, I am going to start this afternoon, so as we do that, why don't we just bow for a moment of prayer.

Father, we come to you this afternoon in a time of tremendous blessing, a time in which God is searching our hearts on very, very deep levels in our personal relationships with you. Lord, you are doing it in my own life, and I believe that you are doing it in many of our lives today, and I believe in my heart that only eternity is going to reveal what God has been doing in our lives this week. Lord, I was praying this morning and saying to thee how I would long to be in the midst of revival.

And Father, we can't work it up, and we can't bring it down, we can't manipulate that sense of the presence of God, but Father, we can pray, and we do not know if in your sovereign grace and mercy you have chosen these days to find the people that are ready to be in the midst of an outpouring of your Spirit. Lord, maybe you are doing a deep work of revival in our hearts, and we pray that you will forgive us if we just look for the outward manifestation of it. But Father, you know that we are just insignificant little people, and you know that we deeply long sometimes to seek out working, and we trust you that you will do that.

Bless me in this time of sharing with these men about this tremendous important aspect of my relationship with God. In Jesus' name, Amen. I would like to speak to you this afternoon, if I may, on what I would consider as the third most important aspect of my relationship with God.

The first most important aspect of my relationship with God is the fact that he saved me, and that he came into my life and he gave me the witness of his Spirit that I came to Christ. And the second most important aspect of my life is the fact that God brought me to a place of absolute surrender to his will for my life, and he called me into ministry to serve God and to live for him. And then the third most important aspect of my relationship with God is what I would consider as the discipline of my daily devotional walk with God.

For the simple reason that my Brethren and Sisters you and I can't take people further spiritually than that we are ourselves. And we can only impart to people that which we possess in our personal walks with God. I remember when I went to study theology in my own homeland of Africa, that the very first night of our coming together with the president of the school of students, and it wasn't a big Bible school, there were only about 27 of us students, and I love to be in a Bible school like that.

But he met with us as students and he made a statement that has been with me for the rest of my life since that night. And he said to us as students, he said, you did not only come to this school to get to know

the work of God, but he said most of all you have come to this school to get to know the God of this world. And in that Bible college, Bible school where I studied was there a rule that every morning at 6 o'clock the bell would go off in the school and then from 6 o'clock till half past 7 was the expectation from the faculty that every one of us as students had to be on our knees before God and we were involved in what we used to speak of those days as our quiet times, or our personal devotional lives.

And I have learned through the years the tremendous value of what it really means for me to meet with God on a daily basis. I mean just as the people of Israel when they were in the wilderness, God gave them their food on a daily basis. And do you remember how the Lord Jesus said in the gospels, he said, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every, every, every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God.

And I began to ask myself is it biblically true for me to stand here this afternoon and to say to you as a believer that God's expectation from your life is that you would come to the place where you discipline yourself, where you begin to spend time with God on a daily basis. You see time is a piece of eternity. My brother, one hour outside of the will of God is wasted time.

And you and I need to find the will of God for our lives and we need to follow it and we need to finish it. The son of God, God had the blueprint for the life of the son. Do you remember how he said my father worked he did too and he said, it said so do I. He said the son can do nothing unless he sees the father doeth it.

And I began to ask myself is it biblically true to stand here this afternoon and to say to you that God's expectation from you is to meet with God on a consistent basis. And I came across this verse in the prophecy of Isaiah and I'm sure you realize that the prophecy of Isaiah is called the miniature bible. Because there are 66 chapters in Isaiah and there are 66 books in the bible.

The first 39 chapters of the prophecy of Isaiah is speaking to us about Old Testament events and prophecies. There are 39 books of the Old Testament and the last 27 chapters of Isaiah from chapter 40 onwards is speaking to us about the coming of the Messiah. And there are 27 books in the New Testament.

That's why he was called that great evangelical prophet. And he prophesied about the life of the Savior and this is what he said. He made the statement he said, the Lord God hath given to me the tongue as the learned that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.

And then he made the statement he said, he wakeneth me morning by morning. He wakeneth my ear as the learned. If I would look at the Hebrew text of that, it's saying to me that morning after morning the Son of God was awakened by the Father who spent time in the presence of his Father.

And then I come to this verse in the first chapter of the gospel of Mark. This is what the bible said about Jesus. And in the morning rising up a great while before day he went out and departed into a solitary place and there the Lord Jesus prayed.

Now if it was necessary for the Son of God to spend time in the presence of his Father then how much more is it necessary for us to spend time in the presence of God as God's people? I want us to look at what I would consider the reasons why I believe God wants us to do that. I want us to look at the requirements, the kind of tools that you need in order to do that. And then if time would allow us I want us to look at the regulations of how do I go about in these times that I spent in the presence of God.

So what are the reasons that you and I need to develop this kind of a lifestyle? First of all I believe that God wants us to develop this discipline in our lives simply because of the fact that God has given unto us a spiritual constitution. You see we are of what theologians would refer to as a trichotomy. And the bible is saying to us that God has given unto us a body and a soul and a spirit.

And my brethren God has given unto us a body so that through the senses of my body he will make me conscious of this world in which I find myself. And when the spirit of God comes to dwell within my life my body becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit of God. That means that God wants to sanctify my eyes the way that I look and the places where I look.

He wants to sanctify my ears, the things that I listen to. He wants to sanctify my emotions. I mean emotion is something wonderful that God has given unto us but if emotion is not sanctified it can be very very destructive.

And it can become very much part of the psychic. I mean you remember in the gospel or rather in the book of little book of Jude the bible is speaking about sensual people who do not know God. And the word is the word psyche and the Greek text.

It comes from the word psychic. And psychic power is a very dangerous thing. I mean believe it or not but with psychic power people has been risen from the dead.

With psychic power amazing things has happened. I remember sitting in a Christian coffee house one night in the city of Middleworth in South Africa when a psychic sat in front of me with a spoon and turned to me and I was with some young believers and turned to me and he said I have the power to let this spoon stand upright and I looked him straight in the eyes and I said in the name of Jesus Christ by the blood you will not do it in this room. And he couldn't do it.

But you see if our emotions is not sanctified it become very very destructive because what will happen to us we will move from experience to exposition. And you and I will interpret the word of God in the light of our experience. And whoever does not fit into my experience I will not be willing to accept.

But the biblical pattern is experience as exposition and then experience. The New Testament epistles what is it? It's doctrine application. And you see the doctrines of God's word is the skeleton of my relationship with God.

God has given to me a soul. And what constitutes my soul? Well my soul constitutes my personality, my emotions, my will, my intellect to a certain sense and God has given that to me to make me conscious of myself. You see when you become a Christian you don't lose your identity.

God wants to sanctify my personality and he gives me my identity in the Lord Jesus Christ. And I'm precious and I'm important to God. And I'm crucified with Christ yet nevertheless the life which I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God that loved me and gave himself to me.

You see God has got no duplicates. Every one of us are originals in the presence of God. Sometimes my wife said to me, Daddy what a place this world would have been if everyone was like you.

Then I say well maybe something would have happened. You see God has got no duplicates. And then my brethren God has given to me a spirit.

And why is it that God has given to me a spirit? Well God has given to me a spirit so that through my spirit he makes me conscious of himself. A God consciousness. Now when you and I have come to Christ and we accepted him as our personal saviour what really happens to us is that we receive the Holy Spirit of God.

You remember in the Acts of the Apostles when Paul came to the church of Ephesus and he said to them have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed? And I mean they didn't even know that there was a Holy Spirit. But when you and I were converted what happened to us? The Spirit of God comes to dwell in my life. And where does the Spirit of God comes to dwell? It seems to me that the Bible is saying to us that the Spirit of God probably comes to dwell within my spirit.

You say why do you say that? Well you remember in Romans chapter 8 the Bible is saying to us in verse 16 that the Spirit of God bear witness with what? Bear witness with my spirit that I am a child of God. And you remember in John chapter 3 when the Lord Jesus spoke to Nicodemus he said to Nicodemus he said the wind bloweth and we do not know where the sound is coming from. He said so is everyone that is born of the Spirit.

So it seems to us that the Spirit of God comes to dwell within my spirit. And let me affirm again what I said yesterday afternoon that I do think that from God's perspective is it possible for us to be born of the Spirit and be filled to the Spirit at the exact same moment. But my experience in counseling the people of God is that I found very few people that really would be able to say that in their relationships of God.

But the Spirit of God comes to dwell within my spirit. And the Holy Spirit of God my Brethren is a person. And I received him as a person.

And remember he never ever speaks of himself or about himself. He always brings me back to the Word of God in the light of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now I do not know if you would appreciate me saying this to you but whenever I point someone to the Lord Jesus I never ever say to those people that they are born again.

I never do that. I believe that it is the work of the Spirit of God to witness to them that they have been born from above. And it normally takes me about 3 hours to sit down with someone who is ready to give his life to Christ at the table with two open Bibles and a notebook.

And I systematically share with them God's plan of salvation. And we go through man's condition and we go through God's provision which is the Savior. And we go through man's responsibility to repent.

And then we go through God's promise. And in those 3 hours cover I would say probably around 100 to 125 passages in the Word of God. And I let him read them out loud.

And I ask him questions about it. So that he would understand what the Word of God is about. You see you and I dare not expect someone to respond to the Gospel unless the intellect of that person is absolutely satisfied and convinced by the Word of God.

You see when we speak about the doctrines of repentance, the prodigal son said, I will rise and I will go to my father and I will say to my father I sinned against heaven and in thy sight. And then the Bible says, and he arose and he went to his father. The decision to follow Christ.

God do not bypass my mind. I mean the mind is involved in making a decision to become a follower of Christ. But my brethren it is not enough that my mind and my intellect is convinced.

And I mean the authority of God's Word. As you let people read the Word of God, the authority of God's Word, convince them of what the Gospel of Jesus Christ is all about. And once they are convinced by what the Gospel of Christ is about, their intellect is satisfied.

And then what's the next step? Their heart is stirred. You see you can't sit under the Gospel of Jesus Christ and not be affected by it. I mean it affects the emotions.

You realize what Christ has done for you on the cross. And the combination between an intellect that is absolutely satisfied and a heart that is stirred, brings me to the realm of the will. And my will is strengthened because my intellect is convinced and my heart has been stirred and it brings me to the realm of the will and the will is strengthened.

And my brethren the decision to become a follower of God, of Christ, to ask Him to come into my life is in the realm of the will. Not so much in the realm of the intellect or in the realm of the emotions. It's in the realm of the will.

You know why I say that? Because Jesus said to His disciples, He said, He that willeth to do my will shall know of the Gospel or the doctrine that I am speaking about. Now you remember in John chapter 3 verse number 14 when the Son of God used that illustration with Nicodemus and He said to him, Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so shall the Son of Man be lifted up that whosoever believed in Him should not perish but have eternal life. Now Nicodemus was a Pharisee.

I mean he knew the Old Testament law and he knew the prophet. And he knew what happened in the book of Numbers in chapter 16 how they sinned against God and God allowed those serpents to come in amongst them. They were bitten by those serpents and as a result of that they were dying and then Moses found mercy with God and God said to Moses, Moses I want you to make a brace of serpent and lift it up amongst the people and as they look to the serpent they will live.

And what really happens is that when you deal with someone and he realizes he is lost in the presence of God and the Spirit of God in his conviction of sin and of righteousness and of judgment, He does not only convict him of their lost condition but the Spirit of God also convinced him of the righteousness of God. And when He convicted them of their lost condition that they were born in iniquity and in sin that their mothers could not see them, what the next thing that the Spirit of God does, He focused their attention upon the cross. That is why Jesus said, just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness.

I mean when you realize you are lost, does the Holy Spirit of God leave you right there? No, no. He focused you upon the righteousness of God and He focused you upon the crucifixion of Christ. And as He would do that, you trust Him and the miracle of a new birth will take place in the life of the person.

Now, when that happens, I never say to people that they are born of the Spirit of God. I point them to the Savior. When they are ready and when we deal with man's lost condition, I turn to them and I say to them, I said, where are you? And if they say, I'm lost, then I say to them, well maybe we should leave you right here for a week or two or three weeks so that you think about it.

And if they are ready for me to leave them, I don't go further than that. I mean people need to realize that they lost my brethren before God can save them. But most of the times, by that time they are so convicted

and so broken up and so affected by the Word of God that I say, well maybe you give me time to go and think about this.

They say, no, no, no, no, I want you to explain to me more. And I love to hear that from people. And then after they understand everything and I know they are ready to give their lives to God, we kneel down and I let them pray out loud.

My brethren, if they can't pray themselves, out loud and say, God, I know that I'm a sinner. I know that I'm lost. I need You to save me.

I ask You to forgive me my sin. I ask You to cleanse me in Your blood. I confess my sins before God and I ask You to become my Savior.

I mean, if I can't pray that, after You explain to them everything, then I don't know about it. And when they trusted Christ, I turned to them and I said, no, I can't say to you that you are born again. I said, God, need to witness to your spirit that you are born from above.

To give an illustration, I was involved in a 10 crusade. We used to have 10 evangelistic campaigns in Africa. And I tell you, if you ever preach in a tent, it's tremendous.

I think there is more of the presence of God in a tent than in a church. I mean, we preach and the dust would rise, boy. I mean, we just had a wonderful time and God saved people.

Oh, it was precious days. This lady and her husband came to the services and we very seldom, if ever, made any invitation before the 14th or the 15th and sometimes the 17th night. I mean, they really knew what God was going to save them from.

And I remember it was a Friday night when this lady and her husband sat in the service and she wept through the service. They hardly missed the meeting. And the Saturday morning I went to the house and he unfortunately was out, but she invited me into this little house.

And when I came into this house, the first thing that I recognized was the condition of the house. I mean, the place was like a pig stall, you know. It was just a mess.

And I remember I stood there and I said to myself, thank God he didn't send me to clean this house, but he did send me to share the gospel. And I sat there that day and I began to share the gospel. She was under tremendous conviction of sin.

And we systematically went through God's plan of salvation. At the end of that, she was ready to ask God to come into her life. We knelt around the kitchen table and she prayed the sinner's prayer.

And she asked God to save her. And I mean, I knew that the Spirit of God, that God did a work in her heart. And we sat down and I said, Madam, I can't say to you that you are born of the Spirit.

I said, God, need you give you a witness of the Spirit. And three days later I came back to do follow up work and knocked at the door of the house and she ran to the door of this little woman and opened the door and invited me in. And it was amazing, you know, when I stepped into the house, the first thing that I recognized was the fact that the house was clean.

I remember I stood there and I said to myself, well, my boy, if nothing has happened to the woman, thank God something has happened to the house. But you know, when God touches the lives of people, he also touches their circumstances. We sat down that day and I said to her, I said, Madam, has God given to you the witness of the Spirit that you are born from above? And she looked at me and she said, Gerard, she said, when you said that to me the other day, she said, I did not really know what you were trying to say to me.

I did not understand it. But she said, something happened. She said, three o'clock this morning I was awakened.

I was lying next to my husband in bed and I was wide awake. And she said, these words came to me, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. And though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool.

And she said, I cannot get away from those words. She said, can you please tell me where I can find them? It is the Word of God, you see. You see, the witness of God's Spirit is, just as I said yesterday, in the Spirit for life, it is like a scale.

And the one side of the scale is my experience. And my brethren, the experience of justification is going to be affected by where I am physically and emotionally and spiritually. And those things will affect the experience.

But on the other side of the scale is the Word of God. And if you ask me this afternoon, you say, how do you know that you've been saved? I will say to you that there was a moment that the Spirit of God witnessed from the Word of God. And it spoke to my heart.

And I knew I was born of the Spirit. Maybe you sit there and you say, well, I'm just a young believer and what does God's Word say to me? Well, you remember that wonderful verse in 1 Peter chapter 2, when God is saying to us in His Word, as young born babes desire to the sincere milk of the Word of God, so that you may grow thereby. You see, Peter was a family man.

And whoever comes to Christ and has just been converted, we just point a fellow to Christ in one of our Bible study groups out in the town of Chilliwack, about an hour and a half from our house. And we had a Bible study group that meets there. And we're going through the Acts of the Apostles.

We have been going for about 18 months now. And we are just started in Acts chapter 5. I mean, we're taking our time. And he sat there.

He was invited to the group. And one night he sat next to me and I turned to him and I said, Frank, I said, what do you think of this? And I mean, he didn't know what it is. And I said, tell us a little bit about where you are in your relationship with God.

And I mean, he was just thumping around and he didn't know what he was talking about. And I said, Frank, I said, open your Bible at John chapter 3. And he said, read to me those first 14 verses. And he read it and I said, explain to me your understanding of what it means to be born again.

And he said, I don't know about this. And I said, do you want me to explain to you? And he said, yes. And I stopped the Bible study group right there.

It's about 25 young believers, young Christians. And I stopped right there. And for the next two and a half, three hours, I systematically explained to him God's plan of salvation.

I mean, I wish you could have seen these young Christians. They sat there with their mouths wide open. And we got to the place where I said, do you realize you're lost? And he was just sobbing.

He said, I'm lost. And these young Christians sat there and saw someone coming to Christ. And at the end of everything, I turned to him and I said, do you want to give your life to God? He said, I'm absolutely desperate.

We got on our knees. And when I saw everyone was on their knees before God. And Frank got converted right in our Bible study group.

And do you know what he's doing? He's spending an hour in God's Word every day. While he's sitting there sobbing, he said, well, I'm not a young believer. What is the Word of God saying to him in my spiritual constitution? The Bible is saying to us, solid food belongs to those that are strong.

I wonder, my brethren, if you would allow me to ask you if you learn the secret of systematically studying the Word of God. I wonder if someone would come and knock at your door at three o'clock in the morning and stand at your door and said, I've got an hour and a half or two hours to live. And within an hour and a half or two hours, I'm going to be swept into eternity.

Would you be able to sit down with that person and explain to that person how he can give his life to God? Sometimes I come across men like us in these days and they say, you know, I'm not studying the great doctrines of God's Word and I'm not systematically studying the Word of God. If you are a believer and you have been established in your relationship with God, you have learned the secret of studying the Word of God systematically. The year before last year, I spent a year in the Epistle to the Romans.

The last three months of every year, I pray about my quiet times in the following year. And I said, Lord, what do you want me to do? It's so vital that I need to have God on a daily basis. And I felt God spoke to me about the Epistle to the Romans.

And I gave myself to Romans for every single day. It took me 58 minutes every morning to systematically go through the Epistle to the Romans. And after three months, God began to open that book to my heart.

And I began to make notes and I began to ask myself, what is Paul's perception of the character of God in Romans? Because your perception of the character of God will determine how you live for Jesus. I began to ask myself, how did he see the Lord Jesus? What is he saying to us about the Spirit of God? What is he saying to us about the great doctrines of the Bible? What is he saying to us about justification and about sanctification? And day after day after day, as I exposed myself to Romans, the Epistle to the Romans became part of my life. The writing to the Hebrews is saying unto us, solid food, for it belongs to those that are strong.

Ah, my brethren, there is a little verse at the end of the Gospel of John. And every time when I look at that verse, it blows every circuit of my mind and it gives me a new lease on life. Because the Son of God looked at His disciples and He said to them, He said, as my Father has sent me, He said, so sent I you.

Will you allow me to ask you this afternoon, as you go back to your wife and your children on Saturday, or maybe on Monday, ah, what is going to happen if God breaks through in the Revival on Sunday morning

and there is church and you are gone and you have missed it? These fellows were at the prayer at once a number of weeks ago and I prayed for them every day and soaked my heart in prayer. And one morning I got scared to death. I thought God was going to send Revival to that prayer at once and I was going to miss it.

And I said, how much money have you got in the bank? And then I missed it altogether. God obviously didn't send Revival because if He did, Brother Denny wouldn't have asked me to come. But I wonder if I can ask you, are you studying the Word of God systematically? Is God's Word becoming part of your life? Is the Spirit of God taking the Word of God, my brethren, and apply this Word to your life? I think of the cleansings of what God is saying to us in His Word.

I think of that great verse in 1 John 1, verse 7, when the Bible is saying to us, if we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship one with another. In the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, did some cleansing us from all or every sin. You say, how does it work? It's like the little stone in the river and as long as I keep that stone in the river, the water is flowing and there is that process of cleansing taking place by spiritual constitution.

And alas, alas, I've met many of God's people who say, oh, I've been a Christian for 20 or for 25 years in my relationship with God. And you hear all these things and then you counsel them and I say to them, will you turn to me to the first epistle of John? And they are flipping around somewhere in the Old Testament. Don't know where it is.

Oh, my brethren, I wonder today if you would allow me to ask you, is this, this, this, this Word of God, is it becoming part of our lives? Is the Spirit of God implying this Word into my life? Am I exposing myself to the Word of God? And I would like to suggest to you that sometimes there is such a danger that you and I can rely upon conferences like this and you say I'm taking those tapes home and I'm going to services and we build our relationship with God upon those things that we are exposing ourselves to. My brethren, I want to say to you that the place where God is speaking to me is not so much when I listen to someone else or when I expose myself to a conference that the place where God is speaking to me is when He is ministering to my heart from His Word. The Word of God becomes part of my life.

Secondly, it's not only because of my spiritual constitution, but it is because of spiritual correction. Do you remember what God is saying to us in His Word? He is saying to us that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. And it is profitable for reproof, for correction, for instruction, and for correction in righteousness.

I wonder this morning if you would allow me to ask you, my brethren, are you and I sitting under the correction of God's Word in our relationships with God? I think of that wonderful little verse in Proverbs chapter 3 when the Bible is saying to us, my son despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of His correction. That little word in the New Testament in the Greek text is a very amazing little word, correction. It is speaking about something that you are straightening up again.

And you see every one of us that are sitting here this afternoon, we are coming so far short of the glory of God. And God is looking at our lives and He is looking at His Word and He is saying to us, listen, if you are not going to spend time with me on your own, if you are not going to discipline yourself to my Word, I want to bring the stature and the life and the ministry of Christ, of Jesus into your life. I want to straighten that into your life.

And you need to sit under the correction of my Word. That same little Greek word is found in Luke chapter 13 when the Bible is saying to us about the Lord Jesus, where He laid His hands on this little woman and immediately she was made straight. You see here was a crippled woman.

I mean, you could see her walking, maybe spend everything she had on physicians. And there was this cripplingness. And the Son of God came and He spoke a word and He touched her and suddenly she was made straight.

And when you and I sit under the correction of God's Word, my brethren, may I suggest you that what God is doing, God is in the process of making us straight. I think that is why Romans chapter 12 is saying to us, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. I mean, there is no perfect service.

In fact, that word, present yourself, is in the aorist imperative mood. Paul said you are going to give yourself to God once and for all. Then verse number 2 is saying to us, and be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that ye may prove that it is that good and acceptable and the perfect will of God.

2 Corinthians 3 verse number 18 is saying to us, as we in a mirror, and Paul was referring to those women at Corinth who made those little mirrors, as it were, and he is using that illustration, he said, as we in a mirror are in a process of beholding the glory of God, he said we find ourselves being changed from one degree of glory into the other. No wonder this afternoon if you would allow me to ask you, my brethren, is God in the process of changing our lives? Is God in the process of changing your mind? Those mind-settings that you and I had, those patterns of thinking, if you and I are not going to give ourselves to the Word of God, those patterns and those mindsets, you are not going to change. I mean, your heart will maybe be hungry for God, but there is no correspondence between the mind and the heart.

He wants us to change. I sometimes go to my wife, you know, I go to her and say, I say, Mommy, do you think you can see Jesus in my life? And you know, my wife, oh boy, I thank you for my wife, because she is always honest. She would say, well, the other day I was not so sure about that.

Then I just ran back. You see, my brethren, it is not our actions, it is our reaction. And you are what you are under pressure.

I mean, I saw Chambers say, sometimes what God allows in our lives is like one of these rulers, and God bends it, and bends it, and bends it, and we feel we are going to break, because He is building up Christian character. And sometimes God wants to do something in our lives. If it is my prayer life, so many of us, including myself last night, I got a loan of God about my prayer life.

And maybe you were downstairs, and you made a commitment, and you say, God, I have given myself, I want to spend time in prayer, I surrender my world to God. And you are saying to Him, in your word, can't you even watch for one hour of me? God, I see the importance of that. God needs to confirm it from His word, you know.

You say, well, why do you say that, Pastor? I am saying that because the day when you leave this conference, I tell you, it is quite possible that hell is going to let loose upon you, and the fires is going to come. You say, why would these fires come? Because God is going to test that which He has done in our

hearts, it is real. The Bible is saying to us that everyone that shall have Godly in Christ Jesus is going to suffer persecution.

I mean, it is possible that you go back to your house, and your wife suddenly begins to realize, my husband is different. And you can make the mistake by getting on your own before God, and say, God, I am going to speak to Him about their lives, and I am going to ask Him about this. And God says, no, no, the Bible says, if I see someone which is doing a sin, which is not unto death, which is unto death, God says, the only thing which you are allowed to do is to pray.

Your wife is going to see the difference in your life, by the way that you can learn. In South Africa, where I was born and brought up, there is an area which is called the Karua, and during the spring, and our springs are in the fall, not this year, in April or so, because it is the other part of the world, and there is an area called Namakoland, and these beautiful little flowers come up there, I call them Namakoland daisies, I mean thousands of acres of flowers. It is just beautiful.

And if you walk amongst those flowers, there is a little plant, and if you stand in that little plant, or you just walk and you stop, and suddenly there is this beautiful fragrance coming out. And you thought, what in the world is going on? You take another step and it is gone, and then you take a step back and step on it again, and then as you step on it, you see this little plant, and what you have done, you have stepped on this plant, and you have crushed, crushed this little plant. And because of the fact that you have crushed this little plant, that wonderful fragrance is coming.

I wonder what happens when people step on you and me. You see, if I am dead to Christ, I mean, then I am dead. I mean, if we have a corpse here of something, and I say this carefully, but if there is some dead thing lying here, I mean, you can kick it, it is not going to react.

You can step on it, it is not going to do a thing. I saw a little cartoon one day of someone tried to illustrate the old man, and there was this coffin, and in this coffin was this man lying, and he wrote, I am dead to Christ, and then the next little coffin in this cartoon is, he lift the lid off, and a little head came out and said, hello, am I really dead? Is God correcting me through His Word? My brethren, the Christian life does not go like this, you know. The Christian life goes like this.

You remember those men that were trying to conquer Mount Everest many, many years ago, and there was a big group that left from the base camp, as it were, and then they were climbing up, and then they established another camp, and all of them, and then they were climbing up, and they established another camp, and then it was still, I think, about maybe 1500 feet or so towards the summit of Mount Everest, and fog began to settle upon the mountain, and they were expecting a blizzard, and the men said, no, we cannot go on, we cannot go on, it is too dangerous. But there were two of those men that said, no, no, we are going to get to the summit, we are going to get to the top of this mountain. These other men said, no, we are not going with, and those two men went, and they have never been seen since that day.

And when the others realized, we had better go, get down, because of the blizzard that was coming, and they went down to the base camp, and when they came down to the base camp, the news came out that there were two of them missing. The question that is asked to them by the news reporters, what happened to the two men? And they made the statement, they said, when we last saw them, they were heading for the summit. Are you heading for the summit? Spiritual correction.

I don't know if you realize today, the tremendous efficacy of cleansing that there is in the Word of God. If you sit here this afternoon, my brother, and you are struggling with evil thoughts, or some of these mind patterns that we have been talking about, you get yourself full of the Word of God, and God is going to cleanse it out of your system. Listen to what God is saying to us in Ephesians, chapter 5, He said, Husband, love your wives, even as Christ also loved a church, and gave Himself for that sacrifice.

And then the next verse is saying to us, so that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word. You see, the Word of God corrects us. God sanctifies us through His Word.

Jesus turned to His disciples, and what did He say to them? He said, you are already clean through the Word that I have spoken unto you. He prayed for them in John, chapter 17. And how did He pray for them, my brethren? He said, Father, sanctify them through Thy truth.

He said, Thy Word is truth. The psalmist said in Psalm 119, wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? He said, by taking heed according to Thy Word. He said, I have heard Thy Word in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee.

And maybe you will differ from me on this passage, but I would be absolutely honest with you when I say to you that I believe that when Jesus said to Nicodemus in John, chapter 3, unless a man is born of water and of the Spirit, I believe that water could be the Word of God. Titus, chapter 3, verse 5 is speaking about the regeneration of the washing. 1 Peter, chapter 1 is saying to us, being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible wine, but by what? By the living Word of God that liveth and abideth forever.

Now, I would like to challenge you today, my brethren. How much time are you spending on God's Word? The time is virtually gone. Not only spiritual correction, but spiritual counsel.

I sometimes think there are many of us that want counseling, and you know it is our problem. We really want people just to tell us the things that we would like to hear, because people are so sympathetic. I mean, I need to watch myself consistently.

Are people coming for counseling? And my heart is so broken for people. I mean, you love people so deeply. And there you and I sympathize when God is dealing with someone.

Spiritual counseling. Is God still counseling you through His Word? The Bible says if any man needs wisdom, let him ask of God. God will give it liberally to that person.

What is wisdom? Wisdom is the application of a divine revealed knowledge of God's Word. One of the most wonderful things for me in counseling is that, listen my brethren, my philosophy of counseling is so simple. It is 95% of what God is saying in His Word, and 5% that God allows us to say about the Word.

And it is tremendous when you counsel people on the basis of the Word of God, and you just sit back. That is why we need to be so grounded in the Word of God. Because when you sit back, and when I counsel someone, I just sit back and I say, God, what is Your Word saying about this problem? I mean, I think of the disciplining of our children, and the principles that we are following with our little daughter.

Whenever she does something wrong, she breaks the rules that Mommy and Daddy have set in the house. Those are the things that we want. Those are the things that we want.

And the moment when she breaks those rules, and it is a process, and it takes time, or we turn to her and say, Monica, we want you to go to your room. And I leave her in her room for about 10 or 15 minutes, and then I come into the room with the Word of God under my arm. And I say, now we are going to find out what the Bible is saying about this rule that you broke that Mommy and Daddy have set up, because you see, there is nothing, nothing, my brethren, that your children could do wrong, that the Word of God is not speaking about.

The other day she thought she played a little trick on me, and she hit the checkbook. She didn't realize it was the checkbook, and I thought it was stolen. Well, I tell you, her bottom knows the sign of a checkbook.

But I read to her. I read the Ten Commandments. And I said, my darling, Daddy loves you.

And I read to her, and I said, I don't have a choice now. I need to spank you. I said, I'm going to pray with you, and then I need to spank you.

And you stay in your room, and if you raise your voice with your children when you spank them, you've lost it. She will remember the checkbook for the rest of her life. Counsel.

Spiritual conflict. I don't want you to misunderstand me, but my brethren, I wonder if you would allow me to ask you, has Satan lost your address? I mean, this is serious. Is there some stronghold in your life this afternoon? You say, what is a stronghold, or a foothold? If I've got a piece of property, or if I've got a farm in this area, and there's maybe two square acreage of property that belongs to you right in the middle of my farm, you can do whatever you want there, but you've got a foothold on my property.

And I wonder if you would allow me to ask you if Satan has a foothold in your life. Maybe something which happened in the past. Maybe your background.

Maybe your father, because quite often our fathers, our perception of God, so much relate to the way that I was brought up. And you have a perception of God as a tyrant, that's just standing there, ready to whip me whenever he wants. God needs to change that.

Maybe you sit here this afternoon and you've been abused. And I wonder in these days, who has not been abused? When I move in midnight circles out in Western Canada, I'm sometimes afraid to see God sending revival, because so many people are going to land up in jail. When God sends revival, this all comes to the surface.

You sit here today, and you've been abused, and you've never ever made peace with it. And the closer you get to God, the more tender it becomes. You don't need to go to a psychiatrist, you just come to the Word of God.

A couple or two years ago when she was physically abused to the degree that her mother drove a fork into her head, and it spanned like this, and she ran out of the house. And that happened a number of times in the fifties. And she sat in the service with just a abused, crumbled little individual.

And I made a statement to God that I hold her for Him. Her husband came to me after the service and said, would you please come to our house? And we sat for five hours, and everything came out. And when it all came out, we began to take it to the blood.

And when everything was cleansed away, we went to Isaiah chapter 53. And the Bible says He was wounded for our transgressions, and He was bruised for our iniquities. And the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we were healed.

And I turned to her and I said, Darla, read those verses. When Jesus died on the cross for you, she was a believer. When Jesus died on the cross for you, He took the abuse to Him.

And I would never forget, she had the Bible like this, and she got hold of it like this, and as she got hold of it like this, she began to weep. And she wept, and she wept, and she wept for probably an hour. I mean, her husband had to bring a towel.

She was just smashed up. And every twenty minutes or so, she got herself together and she looked, and she said, did He really do it for me? And God brought healing. And maybe you sit here today, and the past is haunting you.

Satan, I mean, he's just on your case. Especially when you are so exposed to the presence and the light of God. God wants to bring healing.

Maybe you've been involved in the occult. I mean, you know, people adopt children today, and I warn them, I say, you need to find out what happened in the background of those children. I mean, people buy houses today, and those houses were infiltrated with this evil stuff.

You need to walk through the rooms of those houses, and pray there, and ask God to take everything which is evil out. We dealt with a situation some time ago of a woman who had a son who was so deeply involved in these things, and she was affected by it, and we had to sit down with her in biblical counseling. And when my friend and myself came into this room in this house, as we passed the washroom, there was just that evil presence there.

I mean, just, you know, I just sensed something. And in our counseling of this woman, we asked her, we said, tell us about your son, and she began to tell us about him. And I turned to her, and I said, madam, I said, where did he spend the most of his time? She said, in the washroom.

This is serious stuff, you know. She said, Gerard, are you saying to me that I should go into some of these Christian bookshops and buy every book on the occult? Rubbish! I mean, I'm ashamed to walk in a bookshop, and I find more books on the occult than I find books on the subject of prayer. And I want to warn you this afternoon, you see, we're living in such a spectacular age, that if there's someone who's involved in the occult in this area, and there's maybe a priest in the Satanist movement, and this person has so-called been converted, and then they put him on a pedestal, and they give his testament to thousands of people.

I tell you, that's very, very dangerous. Because 90% of the times, they just fall right back into what they were. They say, well, what do you say, should they not testify? I said, give him ten years.

Ten years in the Word of God, before you allow them to open their mouths in public. Is there a struggle in your life? Be close to this. We had a phone call from a man, about two years ago, up in northern British Columbia, who phoned me and he said, I've just been charged with sexual assault.

He was a Christian. He sat in my ministry. He was so godly, it was unreal to be true.

And I knew there was something wrong. And I said, what happened? And he said, I need counselling. And he came down.

And he sexually assaulted a girl of 11 or 12 years old. And when we began to spend time with him in biblical counselling, and we looked at the past of this man, and you see, I believe God wants to deal with these things when we are converted. But again, it often doesn't happen.

And when we first began to spend time with this man, I found out that he came out of a background of violence. His great-grandfather's name was Duxos, was one of the bodyguards of Al Capone. His mother committed suicide.

There was murder in the family. And all these curses came upon this young man. He said, I hate women.

And I had such a resistance. And he said, yet, I've got my natural sexual instincts. And he said, I lost.

And we began to counsel him. And then after God met with him, he asked me, he said, Gerard, will you write to the judge and ask him to be very, very wonderful and give me a very small sentence. And I said, not in your life.

I said, you're going to pay the price. And God is going to use you in jail. Conflict.

We were involved with two churches, the Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Brethren Church in a conference and prayer. And the Tuesday night, God began to breathe upon those sessions. We had two sessions every night.

And such brokenness came upon these Mennonite people that it was just spontaneously seeking God. I mean, people were sobbing. It's almost something like some of these nights.

The Tuesday night, I walked back to the pastor's house, stayed in the little attic up there. As I walked back, I felt God whisper into my heart, just an impression by the Spirit of God and said, you need to realize that prayer is not a weapon, it's a battlefield. And that night, about half past one or twenty to one or so, I was awakened in the room where I was.

And it was the most evil presence in that room that I ever encountered. I mean, people talk about the smell of death. It was almost like the smell of gunpowder.

And I knew it was Satanic. And I was lying in my bed and I couldn't move. And I was dumbfounded.

I couldn't reach to put the light on. And I don't want you to misunderstand me, but it was as if someone was trying to choke me. And don't misunderstand me, but three inches above my face was the most ugly face that I've ever seen in my life.

And I couldn't get a word out. But the only thing that was clear was my mind. And I began to concentrate on the blood.

And in my mind, I began to sing hymns about the blood. And I began to quote passages about the blood. And this battle was going on.

I thought I was going to die. I went down for about twelve or fifteen minutes. And suddenly the Spirit of God took a verse out of Revelation and it planted into my mind and it said, They overcame him by the

blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.

And the condition was, and they did not love their lives until the end. And I said to God in my mind, I said, God, you know that I don't love my life until the end. And there was a moment when God broke it.

He said, you look for these things not in my life. You don't look and try and find people that you can counsel. And whenever it comes across your path, you pray about it before you get involved there.

And just close to this, we counseled someone who was involved in these things. And I came back to my house the evening. And when I came back to my house the evening, I said, my wife said to me, well, how did it go? I said, it was tough.

And about, I think about eight o'clock that night, we put our little girl to bed and prayed with her. And Monica fell asleep at about eight thirty. It was as if hell broke loose upon the life of my child.

We ran into the room and there she was just groaning and agonizing in the bed. And my wife stood there and she said, Daddy, maybe we should call the ambulance. And I looked at it and I felt in my heart, this is not physical.

And I said to my wife, I said, my darling, I think it's a demonic attack. We fell on our knees next to Monica's bed. We hold on to her and we began to pray.

We prayed and we prayed and we prayed. And after about maybe forty or forty-five minutes or so, it left. God gave us victory.

And our little girl calmed down. And we were just, I mean, wiped out. And we put her back in her bed.

And half an hour later, she was back. We were back on our knees. And by eleven o'clock that night, I turned to my wife and I said, you bring me a pillow.

My wife put two pillows under my knees. And that night, I slept with my daughter in my arms in the bed. And whenever those attacks came, it was right there.

Five o'clock the next morning, God broke through. And she quiet down and fell asleep. And I got up from my knees and I went into my study to have my quiet time.

But you know what happened to me? I took offence at God. And I got on my knees and I said to God, Lord, why did you allow this to happen to my daughter, who is not indwelt by your Spirit? You didn't allow this to come to me or my wife. And the Spirit of God nailed me.

As if God said, you've got no right to ask me what I allowed to happen or not. I got hold of the blanket and for the rest of that day, I was on my knees, on my face before God, sobbing my heart out, because I took offence at God. You saw in Africa when a missionary cast out evil spirits, that the evil spirit turned upon him and said, you did something twenty-three years ago and you've never confessed it before God and you need to take the missionary out.

I wondered, my brother, are we clean in the presence of God? Father, we ask as we talk about these things that you will cover us under your precious blood. And yet God, I pray, Father God, I pray for our families that you will protect them. And Father God, I pray that if there is any one of us in this session this afternoon, and there is some foothold or some strangle, and God needs to sort it out, that you will do it

before the end of this conference.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

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