

# Henry Blackaby Interview

by Henry Blackaby

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## Description

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## Transcript

My name is Henry Blackaby, and presently I'm President Emeritus of Blackaby Ministries International, and I've written *Experiencing God*, which has been used greatly of God, well over sixty languages and probably seven million copies, and I've written another book especially that I've appreciated on revival from the biblical perspective, and it's called *Fresh Encounter, God's Pattern for Revival and Awakening*. And of course I've written with all five of my children and my wife, and these are very, very exciting and challenging days for me personally and for our ministry. And so that's who I am and what I'm doing at this point in my life and my ministry.

To me, revival is an encounter with God, initiated by God, which immediately calls us to repent and turn around and go with him, and the whole kingdom of heaven is right next to us. So that statement by Jesus in Matthew 4, to his people, repent for the kingdom of heaven is right next to you. And Peter and the fishermen and Matthew left everything and followed him and found themselves right in the middle of the mighty power and activity and presence of God.

And so God has always wanted his people to experience him, but they're going in the wrong direction. In other words, if they had been in revival, they would have been seeing the mighty work of God. So even

today I ask myself the question, with tens of thousands of churches and millions of God's people, why does revival tarry? Because God's people are ignorant of the word of God and ignorant of the encounter with God.

So they're not doing what God told them. But it's not complicated. It's pretty simple.

But we're unaware of what God requires in revival. But to me revival is simply when God's people return to him and he returns to them. And you'll know when you've returned when God has returned.

And that is a mighty moment in the life of an individual or a church or a people of God. Revival in the Old Testament usually came at a time when God saw his people in a serious decline. And he always called a prophet and gave the word to the prophet, what do you need to tell my people? And if they repent and return to me, I'll return to them.

And so the prophet is God's last line of defense to call the people back to himself. In our day there's a serious decline in the people of God. Now we look at the nation, but God looks at his people.

As goes the people of God, so goes the nation. So if you want to know what condition the people of God are in, look at the condition of the nation. We're not light anymore because the darkness is crowding in.

We're not salt anymore because we're not deterring anybody from their sin. And so I believe this is a time for God to call forth his people to come together to pray. And to pray not just for God to move mightily, but for God to grant to them repentance in our day that is required before God will do a mighty work.

It's obvious we don't know what that is because we're not doing it. And I don't see God's people, especially the leaders, crying out for repentance. They would say like Israel, where in do we need to repent? And I'd say stand before God and ask him, because unless God intervenes in the life of his people, the nation is going to come under increased remedial judgment until there's final judgment.

The remedial judgments of God are the progression of judgment to see if his people get the message. And if they come before him and repent, if they don't, he increases the judgment. And if they don't come then, he increases it again until finally the judgment will fall.

But my prayer is that God's people, especially the leaders, will recognize the activity of God in remedial judgment and call God's people to repentance and a returning to him. A person ought never to be confused about the nature of revival and the nature of sin. The scripture is very, very clear.

Our problem is this is probably the most biblically illiterate generation of believers and leaders I've ever seen. And when I talk to someone about what God's got on their agenda, they'll tell me, and then I'll say, and what scripture did God use to bring you to that? They're bewildered. They're not using the scripture as the basis, but the Holy Spirit always uses the Word of God like a sword.

And he uses the Word of God when we pray. And yet, when I see people behave today, they're not behaving from the Word of God, but from human reasoning. And of course, the world's method of success is numbers, financially and otherwise.

But God's not looking for success, he's looking for obedience. And in the book *Spiritual Leadership*, we define spiritual leadership as moving people onto God's agenda, not onto our agenda. But I think many of the leaders of God's people have bought into the ways of the world, because they don't know the ways of

God.

And so the world says if you're going to be a leader, you need to enlist people to follow you. But God says a spiritual leader leads people onto God's agenda. And when I've talked with many of them, they've said, well, how do we know the difference between our voice or God's voice? And I'd say, if you don't know the difference between God's voice and your voice, you're in trouble at the heart of your life.

I said God's voice is very, very different. So because so many leaders of God's people were confused about the voice of God, we wrote a book, *Hearing God's Voice*, just to help people to understand how do you recognize, hear, and obey the voice of God. So we have a generation of leaders who are disoriented from the intimate fellowship with God.

And when I talk with them, and many leaving the ministry, they have already left off their time in the Scriptures and their time in prayer. So they come empty and frustrated. But I've not seen someone who spends serious time in the Scriptures and serious time in prayer that ever is discouraged.

You cannot stand in the presence of God and be discouraged. But we have let the world influence us, and the media that shows us success, mostly numbers. And some who are deeply disoriented to their worth and their value in the presence of God, then take their worth and value from the world.

And I think we've, as churches and as denominations, we have let the world come into our way of thinking and behaving. Well, there are many, many people today who are experiencing brokenness and sorrow and pain, even suffering, and they wonder where God is. Well, he's where he's always been.

Our problem is we're disoriented to the relationship. So we try to use human reasoning to describe God or revival. Revival is not just a private thing.

Biblically and historically, revival is always corporate. And we've lost the corporate. We've lost the interdependence with others.

And so if you try to have revival personally, you may be very disappointed because you won't even know where to go. God has to initiate, but when he initiates, it's always for all of his people. He may start with someone like Evan Roberts and others, but it always moves to a corporate experience where the people gather together, and the presence of God is so profound.

Every person who has chosen to gather with others of God's people is profoundly transformed. Individuals are transformed, but so is the corporate life of the people of God transformed. And then, of course, in the corporate revival, it then spreads incredibly.

If it's just one individual, it may stay there, and they may have a good time with God, but that's not revival. That might be a renewal or a transformation. But revival, to me, biblically and historically, is always corporate.

There is a cost to revival, and I'm one that believes that probably revival will never come through a megachurch because they're self-sufficient. They don't need God. Revival comes out of desperation, and a megachurch is not there.

They're successful. Why do we need revival? We're already in revival. And I'd say no.

You have no reference point to genuine revival, and you just assume that success, the world's way, is revival. And I'd say no, not at all. And it may be a lonely individual in a small country church that cries out to God, leads his people to cry out to God, and suddenly the presence of God comes as a refiner's fire.

Now, Malachi 3 says the messenger you seek will suddenly come, but who can abide the day of his coming? Because he comes as a refiner of silver and a purifier of gold, he'll refine the spiritual leaders, the sons of Levi, so that all the worship of his people will once again be acceptable. And so revival is the coming of revival or a refiner's fire. That's not comfortable.

It is exposing everything that ought not to be there, affirming that which should be there. And so even those who study revival oppose it, because they know what it will cost them and their church. And it is a very demanding encounter.

But when he comes, Malachi says, he'll come as a refiner's fire. We may say, well, Lord, we want you to come so we can praise you. He said, I don't come any other way.

When I come, I come in my full presence, and it will expose your sin radically. But if you don't want your sin exposed, don't call out for revival. I think there has to be a word to the leaders of our day.

Anyone with any spiritual sensitivity realizes our greatest problem is not the financial collapse, but the spiritual and moral and ethical collapse. And even those in the highest offices are collapsing with incredible sin. And I would then urge the leaders of our day to seek a very clear, unmistakable relationship to God, to spend time unhurried in the presence of God and His Word every morning, so that God can guide you through the day.

If they're not a people of the Scripture, they cannot be a spiritual leader. And our generation needs a spiritual leader. One, I call them spiritual statesmen, men who when they stand up to speak, everybody knows this is an authentic, genuine leader of the people.

They know by His words, by His actions, by His lifestyle, His family. And I would say the leaders of our day need to be more than political leaders. They need to be spiritual leaders.

And that has a very serious prerequisite. And of course, 2 Chronicles 7, 13, 14 and following is very crucial. If you see God bringing judgment, if He withholds the rain or send pestilence among His people, then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves, and many in Washington have lost the ability to humble themselves.

They have taken to their head being elected, and so they're very proud. But if we do not humble ourselves and pray and seek His face and turn from our wicked ways, then He will not forgive our sin nor heal our land. Our land needs desperate healing, but God's given us the prerequisites.

And I'd say to the leaders, if you're a leader, you need to know God's prerequisites for healing America. And there's a scripture that has impacted me from Luke 12, 54 through 56. He said to the disciples and the leaders of His day, the Pharisees, He said, you know how to detect the weather, and you adjust to the weather, but you do not know how to recognize the time in which you live.

And in the next chapter, He goes on to say, unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Says it twice. And of course, His people never did repent.

And in 70 to 72 AD, the Roman general came and destroyed the temple, destroyed Jerusalem, scattered the people of God until 1968. Jesus warned them, unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. And that happened.

So I would say, go back to the scriptures and believe God for America. He's not going to bypass us simply because we're in the 21st century. He's going to say, did you not read what I've written? Did you not read history and how I've behaved to nations that would not repent? Now you're in line.

I've sent you 9-11. I've sent you the hurricanes. And now I've sent you a financial collapse.

And the last great revival in America was preceded by a financial collapse in Wall Street. And so here we are and God's saying, and what do I need to do yet to get your attention? But I don't hear God's people, the leaders, calling God's people to pray and repent, reading the signs. They're not reading the signs.

But unless we repent, we shall also perish. God seems to constantly be surfacing scriptures on prayer and the life of Jesus in prayer. He got up early to pray, prayed all during the day, prayed all through the night.

Gethsemane was a climax of His prayer life. And God's seeking to conform us to the image of His Son. And He preeminently will be seeking to affect our prayer life.

If we do not recognize God affecting our prayer life, He is not conforming us to the image of His Son. So recently a verse has impacted me from John 16, 24. Ask and you will receive that your joy may be full.

Whenever a person prays and God hears and answers, it brings incredible joy just to know the relationship is there and effective and working. So I'm asking the question, can prayer change the direction of the nation? Can prayer stop the terrorists? Depends on how big you believe your God is. I believe God will hear us when we pray, but we need to seriously take the Word of God to pray and then do it.

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