

# Letter 106

by James Bourne

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual growth and prayer in overcoming trials and temptations, and highlights the dangers of neglecting spiritual matters.*

**Scripture:** Exodus 32:26, Hosea 13:7, John 14:6, Romans 9:16, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Colossians 3:2, 2 Timothy 4:10

**Topics:** "Spiritual Struggle", "Gods Mercy"

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## Description

James Bourne addresses a dear friend who is struggling to speak or write about spiritual matters, advising her to give up these difficulties and immerse herself in worldly pursuits like David did when he fled to the land of the Philistines. Bourne emphasizes the importance of manifesting spiritual life during trying circumstances, encouraging the friend to cry out to God for help and guidance. He warns against being indifferent and careless about spiritual matters, urging her to seek the Lord's mercy and remember that Christ is the only way of escape for sinners.

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## Transcript

[To M. C. B ] London, 1 May 1836.

Dear Madam,

You tell me you have lately felt a great difficulty in either speaking or writing upon spiritual subjects; and I add, if you wish to avoid these difficulties, there can be nothing better for you than to give them up altogether, and escape, as David once did, into the land of the Philistines, so that we may despair of finding you in any coast of Israel. You will then be out of the reach of all such as truly fear God, and would in love caution you. And you may further proceed in your new pursuits, to give them some place in your affections, so as to follow your vain speculations as David did, for a full year and four months; during all which time, it is remarkable to observe, he neither spoke nor wrote on spiritual subjects. See 1 Sam. xxvii.

You will say then, What did he? He spent his time in worldly pursuits; one day he invaded the south, another day he invaded another place, and so enriched himself with spoils and friends, not always speaking the truth. What became of all these proceedings? If you pass on to chapter xxx., you will find the Lord measures into his lap, full, pressed clown, and running over, what he had for some time been measuring to others. He not only lost his family and his property, but the affections of those he sought to win by enriching them; for they presently threatened to stone him.

All these things God designed, under his divine management, to work for good; and David now began again to speak on the subject of religion, for it was pressed out of him by the weight of his calamity. "David was greatly distressed." Now if you, like David, manifest spiritual life under your trying circumstances, and feel distressed, and are enabled to encourage yourself in the Lord your God, and in your heart cry to him, with many confessions of that troop of evils you complain of, and wishfully pray, "Shall I pursue? Shall I overtake?" Shall I regain my spiritual speech? O my dear friend! All your happiness in this life, and in the next, depends upon the important answer, which if you do not gain, sooner or later, there can be no ground of hope for you. It is said "DAVID RECOVERED ALL." And then out of the abundance of his heart he comforted. the church of God. "O Lord open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise."

I grieve to read in you letter the following words--"How very indifferent and careless I am about such matters, in general, and so taken up with the business and cares of this life, that I pass days without anything like real prayer." Now does not the repetition of this make you blush? You will find it as the Lord says, "Therefore will I be unto them as a lion; as a leopard by the way will I observe them" [Hos. xiii. 7]. No doubt matters will take a decided turn shortly, and the question will be, "Who is on the Lord's side?" [Exod. xxxii. 26.] Do not be too hasty in saying that you will soon settle that. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth; but of God, WHO SHOWETH MERCY."

Whatever distressing difficulties you may have to contend with, the Lord has told us that there is in every temptation, "a way to escape;" but man will not always inquire into this way. I can tell you what this way is - it is Christ, the only way of a sinner's escape.

Let these things sink deep into your heart, and remember that whatever trials you are called to be exercised in (no matter how many or how complicated they may be), if sanctified, they will lead you the more earnestly both to speak and to write spiritually, and increase in your communications with the church of God, that you may not be quite swallowed up in the cares of this life. "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world."

That the Lord may discover to you your danger, and graciously apply the remedy, is the prayer of

Your faithful friend in the Lord, J. B.

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