

How to Become a Person of Prayer

by Jim Logan

Developing intimacy with God through prayer is essential for building a strong relationship with Him and experiencing His presence in our lives.

Duration: 1:03:09

Scripture: 1 Samuel 3:1, Proverbs 13:20

Topics: "Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a story about a man who was once involved in guarding prostitutes but later became a believer. The man's wife was a cocaine addict, and they were living in a dark and low place. However, the man eventually recognized the voice of God and had a transformation in his life. The sermon also emphasizes the importance of searching one's heart and being open to hearing God's voice. The speaker refers to a passage in Psalm 139 and encourages the audience to seek intimacy with God. Additionally, the speaker shares a personal story about how God provided for their family's needs in a supernatural way, which influenced their children to become full-time Christians.

Transcript

We got the memo. Well, I have some... I don't know which book to start with. I think I'll save the best for the last.

And that's not really fair either, because they're all different. But I didn't want you to bypass Lloyd Ogilvy's book. I have this at the office, and it is 365 devotions, and each day starts with a prayer promise.

So it's a whole different way. You know, people write devotional books in different ways. I'll tell you, probably the best devotional book out there that we've read in the office that people have used is Blackabee and His Son.

That is... I mean, you can put it down and go back two years later, and it just blesses your socks off, so you might as well not put them on. But this is different. I mean, you know, it's just like, wow, I didn't know how many real prayer promises there were in the Word of God.

And so every day... but this is not the book I mentioned, but this book is back there, and it's worth having. The other one I mentioned, and I really think you ought to look at it, and that is Praying Like the Jew, Jesus. We have a real problem when we read the New Testament.

We read it from an American, Western mindset, and it's not a Western mindset book. You know, they were addressing real, real problems. And so it's recovering the ancient roots of New Testament prayers.

This is an unusual book, and maybe it's not for everybody, but let me tell you, I was really blessed as I went back and looked at Praying Like the Jew, Jesus, and the home he grew up in, the prayers he heard, and he didn't do Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep either as a child. Another book that just turned me off, the title, and yet I know the author, when I was going to church in St. Louis, down the road was, let me be sure I name the seminary, Calvin, not Calvin, Covenant Seminary, which was just down the street from us, and Brian Chappell was then head of the preaching department and so on, and this is strongly Presbyterian. This is the school where Francis Schaeffer went and graduated from, and Brian Chappell was Presbyterian, and he came into our Bible church to preach.

And I'm sitting there, and I already have a predetermined idea of what he's going to preach about. He filled in two different times when I was going to that church, and each time this Presbyterian man preached on people going to hell. I was shocked.

I thought he was going to be a liberal, and this real nice message. I've never heard such hard messages on hell in my life. You're grabbing the seat.

Sitting in the hands of Brian Chappell. Well, anyway, Brian Chappell is now the president of Covenant Seminary, and the name of his book was really sad, but it is an excellent book on prayer, Praying Backwards. See, Praying Backwards, just the title just kind of bothered me, but you'll love this book.

I mean, remember, I'm picking out over 1,000 books. I had them get here that were really excellent books. They're different, but this is really good.

When you pray in Jesus' name, do you always have to put it at the end? I mean, you know what I'm saying, and that's kind of what it's all about here, and it's just having Jesus through all your prayer and everything. It's an excellent book. And then my absolute favorite book.

I have never read a book that when I finished, I was so sad that it stopped. I don't know of a book, of all the prayer books, and it's sort of unfair because when you read so many, it's hard to compare, but this book spoke to my heart. Every day when I came home, I was looking for it.

Ephraim always says, talk to me, because my wife is, I don't want to say a semi-invalid, but almost, and so she doesn't get out very much and is in the house all the time, and so she wants me to talk, and believe it or not, I'm talked out. You know, after 10 hours at the office, I've had it. I don't want to talk.

What's your problem, lady, besides being married to me? You know. But this is the book, and if they run out, you ought to be sure and try and get it. But this book challenged me to go deeper with the Lord and to walk with Him as no other book ever has, and it's in the secret place with God.

Remember we talked about that last night, the secret place? This book is phenomenal. And what's interesting, every chapter ends with a prayer. Some of the prayers are two and a half pages long, and all they are is scriptures about that chapter.

So if you want to see how someone, but they put it in sort of plain words, but they give you the verses where it was from, and I think I included in the material in the back of your book, I can't remember what I sent, but you may have something in there, by the Richards, which is a prayer, waiting on God prayer may

be in there, or the secret place prayer thing may be in there. But anyway, this book, I can almost assure you when you finish it, you'll be sad. Because remember the scripture says, He that walks with wise men is what? Wise.

And when you walk with somebody in a book that is challenging you to have a more intimate and a closer relationship with the Lord, what better kind of challenge can you have? So anyway, this is a great book. There are three piles of letters here, and they're my prayer letters. They're the three that I sent out this year, and they're different, but my prayer letters are always different.

I pray over them about my prayer letters because it costs money to send them out, and you won't get send me money. Being on the board of a lot of missions and teaching in different Bible colleges and stuff, most of the letters I get from people don't encourage me, it's just send me money. We don't mind if you want to send us money, but that's not where we are, and I want the letters to minister.

And so you're free to take one or all three of them if you'd like. And then one other thing I'd like to throw in because, and that is, this is the brochure of the Bible school I run, and it's training young men for a foundational ministry of the first century church. Going back to Acts, why did God birth the church? What is the church to do? And so on.

Anyway, this is a brochure of our school. Our school, we're running it like Cambridge, and we're running it exactly like the medical schools here. There are no grades.

There are no tests. Because when I went to Bible school and taught in two of them, I wanted the class to regurgitate what I taught them. You know, this is what you're to believe.

I told you to believe this. You give it back. That's not what our school's about.

We want our guys to search the Scripture. Let me tell you something. Your kids will not die for your convictions.

They'll not bleed over your convictions. They'll bleed over their what? Their own convictions. Realize that.

And we want these guys to really wrestle with these issues and come up with the whole, as I said before, the whole, what makes our school different from other schools probably, is number one, the emphasis is developing intimacy with God. And there's a pastor here that knows one of our young men that graduated work with Zodiates. So I was glad that he had a good statement to say about Sean.

And he said that Sean said good things about our school, and I said if he hadn't, I'd rip his tongue out. I was so caught up in Mummert's stuff today, I can't tell you. And then when, I can't even think of her name, the singer, Diane, got up and sang Ron's wife.

When she got up and sang, it was everything in me not to cry. Well, did everybody else cry? I didn't know. I mean I was getting chills and everything else.

And I just, I want to thank God for some reason. None of our kids were prodigals. And none of our grandkids are.

And I think maybe, I'm going to get into it, the next session that Ron asked me to do, not what causes, but what about the warfare issues and some of this basic stuff that causes these kids to go off. We're not really talking about the kids, but just people to go off. He asked me to do that.

I think one of the things is, I have a praying wife. And I'm not saying, if you're a praying person and a kid goes off, I'm not saying that, but I'm saying why not our kids? Especially when we're doing warfare, why wouldn't the enemy go after our kids even more so? But my wife is a real woman of prayer. And really believes God.

My wife is, well she'll kill me, but I met her up in Upper Michigan. And my wife can't remember when she received Christ. So in the Bible school I kept saying, I don't think you're saved.

You've got to have a date. And you've got to know when you were converted. She said, I've always believed.

I said, but you can't do that. In the Bible school I went to, you can't believe that. So she grew up and she went to a holiness church.

Thank God for holiness churches. It was Salvation Army. At the Upper Peninsula in Sault Ste.

Marie. And when she went there, when she was 15, my wife decided to backslide. And so she went and put on red lipstick, red finger polish, and went to three movies.

And this is the wicked woman I married. But she's so thankful for the emphasis on godly living. Because all her sisters had babies by we don't know who.

Her brothers had girls pregnant all over the place. And here's my wife in a welfare home. She grew up in welfare.

Committed to God. A pure woman. And thank God.

We need to get some of that message back too. To teenagers. You'd be amazed at what goes on in youth groups.

Some of them. My son's a youth pastor. But I'm not knocking youth groups.

You may be surprised. What the kids are talking about, and what they're doing, and what's going on. Anyway, see what else I want to tell you.

I want to give you this illustration. He's talking. The Brooklyn Tabernacle has a real prayer meeting.

And there was a man. I saw his testimony on video. This man sang in the choir.

But before he became a believer, he was guarding prostitutes. And a cocaine addict. And they would chain him to a dog house.

And he had a wife in the city. And I don't know where all this took place. But that's what he did.

He was of the lowest of low. And his wife was just so tore up. Because he's a cocaine addict.

And he couldn't be any worse than this guy. As far as an evil man. And she, one night, went to a prayer meeting.

At the Brooklyn Tabernacle. On the subway. Because no one drives cars there.

Not in that church. And she left a note. That she's a Brooklyn Tabernacle.

Her husband came home. And he was so angry. He got his pistol.
Put it in his pocket. And came to the Brooklyn Tabernacle. To kill the pastor.
On prayer meeting night. Wrecking his home. And when he came in the door.
Before he got there. The wife cheered. Would people pray for a husband's salvation.
Over 2,000 people are crying out loud. For this man's salvation. When he walks in the church.
Can you imagine? Thousands of people. You know, it's not a Baptist prayer meeting. It's the other kind.
A little on the wild side. And he's back there. And by the time he gets down to the front.
He hands the pastor the pistol. And receives Christ as his Savior. And I would like you to do this.
I'd like you to go through your Bible. I'd like you to be amazed. And look at the difference between praying.
And crying out to God. And in the Psalms, sometimes they're both together. God will hear my prayers.
But my cry will enter into his ears. When you cry out to God. Do you know what that is? That's intense burden.
It's just a cry from the heart. And I think prodigals need more of what? Crying out from the heart. Crying out to God.
Look at that. They are different. And there is a difference.
If you want to do a study on it. That would be great. But I think you'd be amazed.
At the difference between the two. When it talks about praying and crying out. Another thing I wanted to tell you.
When I left Bible college. I'm so thankful I had all the answers. And today after all these years of serving God.
I don't even know all the questions. We get some people for counseling. And they give you the feeling that they've arrived.
I don't think they found the bus stop. Let's see what else. I jotted some things down here.
Here's a good one. I just read this recently. A man went to a counselor and he said.
Pastor or counselor. Can God deliver me from my lust? I mean this is real. And before he could answer he said.
I like it. He said God delivers you from your enemies. Not your friends.
That is profound. That is a very profound statement. And another thing that goes with what Lomert was saying.
Is really excellent. When you go to Bible school. The key to a book is the number of times a word is used.

That's what they tell you. The key to the book of Ephesians is the word in. In the King James anyway.

Forty times in six chapters. You have in Christ, in Christ, in Christ, in Christ. So the book is all about being in Christ.

I believe for years the key to the book of Gospel of John was believe. Because they told me that. 98 times.

But I went to the Bible. And I was looking at this particular word. And I found out that this word was referred to.

At least 120 some times. I mean actually mentioned 120 some times. And referred to almost 200 times when you add the rest.

In the Gospel of John. And it's the book. It's the word father.

I believe the Gospel of John is a book. Not only to understand my father. But there's some guidance there for being a father.

And the relationship between a son and his father. So when you read the Gospel of John. Instead of looking at believe.

Which should be there. But go back and reread this thing of father. And this whole relationship and so on.

Okay. In my travels. I went to a very conservative school.

And they didn't teach me to think. They told me what I had to believe. And I believed it.

I had not been. I just got saved before I went in the army. In the army.

I was up in UP. I was protecting the upper peninsula from the Koreans. And literally that's what we're doing up there.

Guarding the locks. You know the locks up at Sault Ste. Marie.

And then I got back and went to Bible school. The church we went to was a wonderful church. But we didn't get much teaching.

So basically I wasn't growing. So I went to Bible school. And Dr. McGee was my pastor.

And let me tell you, J. Vernon McGee, I love listening to him on the radio today. He is the expositor of expositors as far as I'm concerned. The best program on the radio is J. Vernon McGee.

Sounds like a hick from a barefooted boy from Oklahoma. But let me tell you, he's pretty profound. I just love the man.

So I went to Bible school and I never thought to question what I was taught. You know, because these were brilliant men and wonderful men. And they taught me all kinds of things.

And a lot of things were not wrong. But some of the things were. Everything I learned about warfare was wrong.

Because they didn't believe in it. And even in the area of prayer, there was so little of that. And so I found out through the years, I began to question, why do I believe what I believe? I know I was taught that.

But why do I believe what I believe? What do I believe about prayer? Obviously it wasn't much. You should have been in my prayer meetings. You know, we did the organ recital.

I mean, that's the prayer meetings I was in. I didn't know there was different kinds of prayer meetings. You know, as a pastor, I regret it.

I know I haven't given an answer to God through the prayer meetings I had for the 15 years I was a pastor. And I'm going to flunk it. Because they were not good.

Anyway, so what happens is, when I was going into a new area that I had never explored before, a new area that maybe countered what I was taught, not what I had examined and did my own homework on, there were things that I was going to have to let go of. And it's not always easy to do that. It's just easy to stay, you know, where you are and just be there.

And this is the second paper that God told me to bring. And both of these papers I'm going to give, and they're going to run them off so you can have the rug. This is my favorite one.

It's the trapeze illustration. The flying roadways are trapeze artists who perform in the German circus. When the circus came to Freiburg two years ago, my friends Franz and René invited me and my father to see the show.

I'll never forget how enraptured I became when I first saw the roadways moving through the air, flying and catching as elegant dancers. The next day, I returned to the circus to see them again and introduced myself to them as one of their great fans. They invited me to attend their practice sessions and gave me free tickets and asked me to dinner.

Then they suggested I travel with them for a week in the near future. And I did, and we became very good friends. One day I was sitting with Rodley, the leader of the troop, in his caravan, and we were talking about flying.

He said, as a flyer, I must have complete trust in my catcher. The public may think I'm the great star of the trapeze, but the real star is Joe, my catcher. He has to be there with me for split-second precision to grab me out of the air as I count to him in a long jump.

How does it work, I asked. He said, the secret is I simply have to stretch out my arms and wait for him to catch me and pull me safely over the catcher bar. You do nothing, I said.

Nothing, he said. The worst thing a flyer can do is try to catch the catcher. I'm not supposed to catch Joe.

It's Joe's task to catch me. If I grab his wrist, I may break them, or he may break mine. That would be the end for both of us.

A flyer must fly, and a catcher must catch, and the flyer must trust without stretched arms, but the catcher will be there for him. But I have to let go of the trapeze. You understand what I'm saying? And so many Christians are doing what? They'll never let go and trust God.

And I want to share one aspect of prayer with you now that was very difficult for me. I am extremely conservative. I mean extremely.

And when I walk down the aisle, if she's not singing and playing her music, you will hear, because I'm a squeaky conservative, even my knees squeak when I walk by you. You will know. And so when you're a squeaky conservative, it's very difficult even to go, you know, which may be a little bit emotional, you know what I'm saying? It's just, maybe you don't know.

Maybe you know you've been conservative. But if you are, it's not easy. Let me tell you, it's not easy to break out of my little comfort belief system, and I had to do this.

So I want to share something that was very difficult for me, and yet it's been one of the most blessed things in prayer for me. It's been amazing. I called my wife this morning, and I told her about what you guys are doing out there with this stuff on the floor.

And my wife is very sensitive to the voice of the Lord. And the Lord told her, remember I told you I have two grandsons, one, Jeremiah, that's back, and Malachi, that will be going. The Lord laid Malachi on my wife's heart.

He's in the desert in California somewhere. He gets out of the Marines in January. But the Lord laid upon her heart that he was very discouraged and depressed.

So my wife starts crying out to God for him. She said, Malachi must be going to the, what do they call it, the Marines, that horrible thing you go through at the end. It begins with a C. The cubicle, not cubicle, no Marines here? Anyway, it's the most awful thing you have to do physically, and if you don't make it, you don't get in the Marines.

I forget about the crucible. You go through the crucible. And she thought, I bet Malachi's going.

So she's praying for him. Well, my daughter calls her, the mother of these, and she said, Mom, Jeremiah is so discouraged from all the stuff on the radio where he was shot at for almost two years, laid his life on the line for this country, and all these leaders are knocking and saying all this stuff. Was that all in vain? Is anybody out there behind us? What about those two years where I would go out wondering if I'm going to come back alive? And it really tore him up, the election thing, the negative stuff about what he had given his life to.

It was really tearing him up. And then she said that our other grandson was going to the crucible. The Lord knew.

We didn't. Now, I want to share some stories with you about this. Our pastor, he did something that Ron was talking about.

Our pastor said, I want you to pick one person in your neighborhood and pray that God will give you an opportunity to witness to him. And I had a single medical doctor that lives across the street in a little house, and I prayed for him, that God would open the door for me to be able to share with him whatever it would be, the gospel or whatever I needed to share with this guy. Because one day he came over to, I was getting the mail, and he says, Hi, I'm your neighbor, I'm so-and-so.

And I said, What do you do? And I said, Oh, let me give you a book. It'll explain it. So I gave my book to this guy, and I never saw him since.

And we lived directly right across the street from each other. So anyway, I kept praying and kept praying, God, open the door. God, give me a chance to do this.

And I was out in the parkway. We have sidewalks and then grass. A lot of people do.

And I was pulling some stuff that can grow in there out, and this guy, and this has been almost a year of praying. God, give me an opportunity. Our driveways, I mean, I can back off mine into his.

And so he drove down because he was going to back into his driveway. I looked up, and I saw him. And I said, Man, you look terrible.

And he did. And he said, Oh, Jim, it's so bad. He said, I'll talk to you in a minute.

And so he backed his car into his driveway, and it was one of these van-type things. So I walked over there. And he said, I was run over by a car when I was a kid, and I can't run, but I rollerblade.

And I was rollerblading along the river there in Sioux City, and my dog was with me and he had a seizure. Well, you know, if you're single and have a dog, it's more to you than - because something to wag their tail at you rather than their tongue, you know, when you come home. Did you do it? The dog's always glad to see you.

So for a single person, you know, the guy's really good. People get connected to their animals. And he was really connected to this dog and had the seizure.

And he had it at vet all night long. They couldn't do anything for it. So he was going to put the dog in the back of his van thing on a rug and take it away to the University of Iowa, to the vet school there, to see if they could do something for the dog.

And I thought of a verse in the Bible. I mean, you know, I was prepared to share with him, this isn't the time. If you would die today, would you go to hell? Or do you know that when dogs die, they can't get into heaven? You know, they're outside the gates and that kind of stuff.

Those are not the verses I don't think he wanted to hear. But be sensitive to the spirit of God. And God brought up something that happened to me down in Guatemala.

So I want you to go to 1 Peter 5, 7. Just what God brought up in my mind. And verse 7 says, and a lot of you know this verse. I mean, it's sort of a popular verse if you want to use that or use it a lot.

Casting all your care upon him for he careth for you. You know that verse. You've heard it before.

Well, just before I went down to Guatemala, I just couldn't let go of this. I had to look it up in the Greek. What in the world does careth mean? I know what it means in English, but what did it really mean in Greek? Sometimes you get stuck.

And so I got stuck. And literally it means matter of concern or object of his care. And if you tell me God doesn't care, you're a liar.

Well, I don't feel he cares. I don't care whether you feel it or not. Right? He says he cares.

And I share this in Guatemala with these missionaries. And one of the missionaries had just translated this in the Mayan dialect. He said, Logan, can I tell you how I translated this? And I share this with this guy.

Just what I'm telling you off my head as he's putting his dog in. What concerns you concerns God. Isn't that a beautiful translation of that verse? And when I said that, he started crying.

Because what was he concerned about? This paralyzed dog that he thinks is going to die that he put in the back of his van. And I said, I'm going to be praying for you and your dog. And he drove off.

Now I've never prayed for a dog to live. But let me tell you, I bombarded the throne of grace. God, this is Logan.

I believe in prayer. God, there's more involved in healing this dog, but heal the dog. And since we don't send out those prayer things, you know, that you lay on stuff, we don't have that in our office.

I couldn't send him out a prayer thing to lay on his dog. But I'm telling you, God, we're in trouble if you don't answer that prayer. I'm telling you, I'm going to struggle with it.

I've got to be honest with God. Because I would struggle. I mean, there's more at stake than the dog.

We're talking about a man who needs to know the Lord. And that dog is the key. And I cried out to God.

And you know what God did? He healed the dog. And we became very, very good friends. And he was a backslidden Christian.

He was a prodigal. And it took a sick dog to get to him because I didn't try to nail him with the gospel or whatever. I came alongside and I loved him and was concerned for what he was concerned about.

Anyway, that's all free stuff. But remember I was praying for that opportunity to happen. I'll give you another one.

This is going a little deeper. And this is when I was new at this. I was at a large retreat center which is isolated.

And it was Sunday afternoon. And we were by ourselves. You know, everybody was in the room or whatever.

But there was no meetings because it was Sunday. And I was in the room. And I was quiet before the Lord.

And the Lord told me to go to this guy's room. It just was impressed upon my mind. I need to go see this person.

And I thought, it's probably just me. Well, God doesn't give up. You know what I mean? He didn't give up on me.

He said, I know this thing of hearing my voice is new to you, Logan, but let me. And he kept doing it. And I knew I had to go.

I mean, when you can't get away from it, I've got to go. So I went down and I knocked on his door. He opened the door and he looked at me like, what in the world are you doing? I thought he'd probably be

napping or resting.

And when I saw that look, I thought, oh, brother, that must have been the enemy. I was so sure it was God. And he said, I'm so shocked.

I've been praying all morning that you would come to talk to me. And he said, can you help me? I'm in bondage sexually. And I took him through the material we used and prayed with him.

And he was set free. I knew this guy for two years before I got married. And that when God broke his lost bondage problem, it was broken for two solid years.

What if I hadn't gone? But I heard the voice. I heard the Lord speaking to me. So I know this may be different for you.

It was very different for me. I know there needs to be, remember, God will never lay anything on your heart that will violate Scripture. But what I want to tell you when I look at some Scripture, that God is still speaking today.

He's not giving me another chapter in Revelation. He's not telling me the unutterable things that Paul couldn't utter. I saw that one time.

A guy was an evangelist, and he had this thing, come and hear the unutterable things that Paul couldn't tell you. He was going to tell us. I'm not talking about that.

I'm talking about God being able to lay burdens on your heart. God being able to lay people on your heart. God letting you know when to pray for that prodigal, especially right now at this point in time.

It's right there. You can't get rid of it. You can't get away from it.

You've got to take it to God. And I want to just share this thing in Scripture that really opens it up to me. God said, days are coming, and I will send a famine in the land.

What is a famine? Well, I can tell you one kind of famine. This is so good. When you pastor a country church, and we pastored a country church.

We're 100 miles one way from a major grocery store or pennies or whatever. So it was a 200-mile round trip to go shopping. I didn't know California had places like that, but everybody in our town was either loggers or cowboys.

That's it. Or made their money off of loggers and cowboys. It was such a big town.

We had two gas stations and one bar. Anyway, I mean, you blinked and you were through it. So they told us that people would bring us food.

That's why the salary was so low. I told you I made less than unemployment full time there. Unemployment, I made \$5 more.

We qualified for welfare as a pastor, and I didn't have the heart to go there. We're going to trust God. God wanted me to learn to trust him.

We're trusting him in our ministry. We don't ask you for money. I don't have to tell you about that.

Let me put this, Aidan. I had it down, and I couldn't figure out what it meant, Marguerite and this other person. This other person is in this room.

Right after 9-11, almost all Christian organizations, I don't know if you're aware of that, struggled really bad financially. And we were really having really bad, about two years later, this person, when you get my age, years and whatever, who knows, so don't take my date seriously. But it wasn't right after that.

It was sometime after that. And this friend of mine who's in here is a CEO of an organization, and they were going through terrible times, wondering are they going to be able to pay salaries and all of this. They were affected as well as Christian organizations.

And on Tuesday, Carolyn came to me. She's our girl Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday girl. She's been there 19 years.

You don't get people that usually hang into ministries for 19 years. And Carolyn said, in two days, we close. There's not enough money even to pay bills, let alone pay salaries.

And I'm not one that keeps a lot of track of money. That's why I have her. And we have some kind of a bookkeeper or what you call a CEO.

Not a CEO. The guys that do the money stuff. Yeah, an accountant on our board.

So I don't have to be messing with that. I want to mess with people, not with money. There's nothing colder than money.

And so when she told me that, I thought, well, I really don't want to be in deliverance ministry if God's not in it. And if we're doing God's business, God's way, then God needs to supply. If he wants to shut it down, that's okay.

It's his ministry, not Logan's ministry. You understand what I'm saying? It's God's ministry. But anyway, I thought, well, that's kind of shocking.

In two days, it's all over. And even in the middle of the week, I have to tell these people, well, I'm sorry you have to go with every demons that are left. We're through on Thursday.

I'm just teasing. But anyway. All right.

So on, I believe it was Wednesday or Tuesday, maybe it was Tuesday, that same day, we get a call from this businessman. And for the first month, he had an overage. And he called Carolyn and he said, God has laid you on my heart.

Do you have any needs? This is a God thing, friends. And she said, yes, that Thursday, it's all over. And this fellow said, I better write you a check because I don't know if I have an overage next month.

That's faith. Now, going in the red for months and months and months has an over month that wants to give away some money. And he wrote a check, and it was, I think, the largest check we ever got, or somehow he got the money to us and we didn't go under.

So I called him on the phone and I said, with that amount of money, I said, what are you trying to do, give me a heart attack? Thank God there are people out there that are sensitive to the spirit of God. Because I

would not get on the phone and call anybody and ask for money. To me, that is not the way God has worked in our life, ever has worked in our life.

Okay. So I wanted to bring that out. Another person that was sensitive to the spirit of God.

They had no idea, but had to call us. Okay. Now you know this famine.

I want to tell you about a famine. The first church I pastored out there in Nowhere, California, I hated it. I hated being there.

I'm not a cowboy, and I'm not a logger. I was a flatlander, and let me tell you, flatlanders, I don't know what you call them here, but flatlanders is not a positive thing. That means you don't belong in this little dinky town of 480 people with 60 miles one way, 40 miles another.

I mean, talk about isolated. I don't know how to do steers or all that stuff and warbling. I didn't know any of this stuff, and I don't knock down trees.

You should see these guys that do this stuff. They don't need to go to the gym at night when they're doing this with cutting trees down all day. You should see their arms.

They're bigger than both of my legs put together. Make Arnold Schwarzenegger look kind of puny. And so they said, well, people will bring you food.

Well, I don't know what got into the chickens up there, but the chickens were laying eggs like crazy. And my wife is getting all the chicken recipes and all the cake recipes where you dump in as much of these eggs as possible. We were running every day a reserve and a refrigerator of 12 dozen eggs.

And this is week after week after week trying to use up the eggs. It's worse than zucchini. You know when they say roll up your windows? We also had zucchini coming out of our ears.

So we get a knock on the door, and I open the door, and I take a look, and I start laughing. It was so funny, I couldn't believe it. I said, Marguerite, come here and look.

You won't believe this. And we looked, and there was a double crate of eggs. You know with all those eggs and the cardboard things? A double crate? Hundreds of eggs.

Huh? Yeah. Anyway, it was so neat that afternoon. Youth for Christ people came by.

We never saw them from Redding, California. They happened to be driving through where we were up in the high mountains of California. And we said, by the way, could you guys use some eggs? And for that week, all they had eaten was oatmeal.

They made oatmeal in the morning, and then they fried it for lunch and fried it for dinner and put syrup on it. And when we gave them a double crate of eggs, they were blessed of God. But you know what God taught me? Not always when he blesses me is it for me.

It may be for me to pass that blessing on to someone else. Anyway, I wanted you to have that. I want you to go to Amos, chapter 8. You know my church I hated? I have thanked them again and again and again.

I needed to be there. I needed to be in a very difficult place and a very rough place, and God worked in a mindless way. And you know, I was there in 1960 through 65, and many of those people support us today.

Those farm people there, you know, elderly people send \$10 a month. But God knew I needed to be there. In Amos, chapter 8, God talks about a famine worse than no food.

Let's look at this terrible famine that God talks about in verse 11. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, I will send a famine in the land. Not a famine of bread, nor of thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.

It's a very, very terrible famine when God is no longer speaking to his people. Why did God create us? What was the purpose of the garden? The voice of God walked with them. He created them for intimacy, and intimacy is not developed by one person talking.

I like it. I think I gave it in your stuff. I have so much stuff that's really good.

Calvin Miller is one of my favorite writers, and he said, When prayer is just me talking, I make God one big ear, and me a giant mouth. I want you to go to 1 Samuel. One of the things that I look back on our life, and three of our kids that are in full-time Christian ministry, we have four, three went into full-time Christian ministry, and one married a fellow that has a real job making real money.

But there's times we had to pray food on the table. We didn't have food. Times we had to pray clothes for the kids, and our kids saw that God could provide basic needs supernaturally.

I think that's why they went in. We never had a lot, but we always had what? Enough. And you know what the plague of believers is today? No contentment with godliness.

And if you're not content with what God has provided, you will not be content with what He will provide. And we learned to be content. We saw God move as our family prayed His answer to prayer.

Our kids saw that God was real, that God heard, and God was a prayer-answering God. We could have complained. I think a lot of pastors' kids are turned off just because of the table conversations of the pastor and his wife.

My son went through a terrible situation in Houston. Terrible. I felt sorry for him, but I knew that he needed to be beat up.

God's still sovereign. Did I want my son beat up? No. By the pastor.

And being on staff. His whole staff walked out. They all eventually left.

He had a paid staff of eight working with the youth. So we're talking about a mega church. And he was making more money than I ever made as a pastor, just as one of the staff guys, and some of the staff people made more money than I did.

And he was beat up. And he was talking to me about it, and I said, Richard, that's the same thing that happened to me when I was pastoring in Tacoma, Washington. He said, Dad, did you really have this kind of trouble since pastor? I said, yes, Richard.

This is how many guys never told us. I said, because you were not part of the problem or part of the solution. All they could do is what? Take up a reproach.

Psalms 15 says you take up a reproach. You will be unstable. There's a quality there.

Don't do this, do this if you want to be stable. He that doeth these things shall not be moved. I didn't want to.

What could they do about it? We prayed about stuff together, but we never shared any kind of anything that was negative that took place in a board meeting or whatever with our kids. And thank God we didn't. It was so easy to do that.

But what could they do except get upset? Okay. So we want to look at this famine in the land, and we're going back in Israel when there was another famine of God's word. 1 Samuel 3, verse 1. What am I supposed to be done, Monarch? Is that really? Well, since I'm speaking in exile, I guess I can rob me of my time.

I can go in the elevator and mumble against the guy that spoke before me. I'm waxing eloquent, and I couldn't wax eloquent because I ran out of time. Okay.

1 Samuel 3, verse 1. And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli in those days. Oh, pardon me. The word of the Lord was precious in those days, and there's no open vision.

What's it saying? There was a famine of hearing from God. See, that word precious or rare in those days, no open vision. And visions were quite common but very uncommon at this time.

People were not hearing from God. God had a message that he wanted to speak, but God, pardon me, but Israel had heard God speak before and had chosen not to listen. I think how much in my life because of my theological training and what they told me in Bible school that God was trying to speak to me, and I would not listen because God can't talk today.

That's where I was. If he said that God spoke to you, I knew you were weird. So you're looking at a weird guy.

The thing is I didn't know how to recognize his voice because I wasn't willing to listen. And there's a lot of books, wonderful books on prayer by very conservative men on how to listen to God. And let him lay truth on your heart.

Direct your prayer life. What is praying in the Spirit? It's praying in harmony with the Holy Spirit. That's what Ephesians 6 is about.

And the Spirit can direct you to pray. How did my wife know to pray about these two things that was actually happening and she had no idea it was happening? I mean, that was just today. The Lord knew what was happening, and he knew that she was sensitive to his voice, and if he told her what was happening, my wife would take it and begin to pray for them.

Have you had situations like that where you were praying? You have wonderful missionary stories. You know, their heart up here, God wakes somebody up here, and they pray for them, but that's missions. We're not missionaries, so it can't happen.

Give me a break. Who said God cannot speak today? I'm not saying more Scripture. You understand what I'm talking about? Laying truth in my heart, speaking to my heart, directing me to witness somebody that I wouldn't have witnessed to, and their hearts were prepared.

I didn't know their hearts were prepared. I didn't prepare it. Do you understand what I'm saying? We need the sensitivity.

I'm trying to call you to a sensitivity of God. At least think about it. This is something I'd have reacted to if I was sitting in here.

I would say, Ron, asking this screwball to come, and he ought to throw him out because he's fringy. So if you think I'm fringy, I would have thought I was fringy too, so that's fine. See, his silence overshadowed Israel for many, many years.

But now God was deeply burdened to speak again. And when he spoke, who did he choose to speak to? A 12-year-old boy. But who should have heard God speak? Eli.

What are some things we know about Eli that qualified him to hear God talk to him? He had godly lineage. The second thing, he had judged Israel for 40 years. Third thing, he was the high priest.

The fourth thing, he was the only one that could go on the holies of holies of God. But why did God bypass Eli, who should have been the guy? Go to 1 Samuel 2, 17. It's talking about Eli's sons.

It says in 17, Wherefore the sin of the young man was great before the Lord, for the men abhorred the offering of God. So Eli's sons were doing evil stuff. But the question is, did Eli know it? You know, it's one thing that your kids can be bad and doing evil, but you don't know what's going on.

Did Eli know this? 22. Now Eli was very old, and he heard all the things that his son did unto Israel. How they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

And he said to his sons, why do you guys do such terrible stuff? I hear of evil things with all these people. All my sons, you ought not do that. It's not a good thing to do.

You know, you make God's people to turn and caress, and he goes on and on and on. But he left them in office, his sons. Now he had the right to dismiss his sons from ministry when they were doing immorality.

But he did not remove them. 23. Eli was tolerating sin.

Eli had a godly background. He had status. He had title.

But he had sin in his life. Known sin. I'm not talking about sinless perfection.

Known sin in his life. What did we learn? Background does not set us apart. Status does not set us apart.

Titles don't set us apart. People ask me, what kind of degrees do you have? I said I was burnt once real bad when I was about six. You know, I think it was second degree or something.

Eli knew a whole lot more scripture than a 12-year-old boy. Sin, known sin in your life will close God's mouth to you. If you're not willing to do and deal with what God has made clear to you that you need to do.

You're in trouble. Look at 1 Samuel 3.7. You're not going to hear the voice of God. First of all, if you heard it, you wouldn't obey it anyway.

1 Samuel 3.7. Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord. Neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him. He didn't know the Lord.

But Samuel revered the Lord. Samuel was prepared to obey the voice of the Lord when it came. But the word of the Lord had not been revealed to him.

That's why he didn't realize what was happening when God was trying to get his attention. Remember? He didn't get it. And God said that's it.

No, God did it another time. Still didn't get it. God spoke a third time.

And he got it. See, the neat thing that is so neat is that eventually he got it. And eventually he recognized.

And after that time, he didn't have to ask Eli what was going on. When God spoke to him, he recognized the voice of God. My sheep hear my voice.

And they won't follow someone else once you recognize the voice of God. The first step in hearing God's voice is to deal with sin in your life. I don't want you to search your heart.

There's only two times in the New Testament you're told to search your heart. One is at the communion table, and the other is to see if you're in the faith. Trust Psalm 139, the last two verses.

Search me who? Oh God, know my heart. Try my thoughts. See if there be some wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.

Let me tell you, when the Spirit of God, we're in Worsby. We have a paper we use in warfare to tell the difference between the convicting work of the Holy Spirit and the condemning work of Satan. And many Christians don't know the difference.

And we always have our counselees ask the Lord to show them. The Lord knows. The Spirit knows what's going on.

Don't you try to, you know, I'm going to muck up and go through all this stuff. When you start mucking up, the enemy can help you. You know, when you get through, you're nothing but a downer.

I can tell you right now, in your flesh dwells what? No good thing. Why don't you just believe it? You know, rather than mucking through trying to prove God wrong by finding, you know, when you go through the garbage of your life, to find a piece of pizza that hasn't been eaten too much of. You know, I'm going to prove God wrong here.

Just believe it. What's good in me is what? God in me. That's what it is.

The Lord in me. That's what makes me different than anybody else. The Lord is in me.

And I want to walk with him. And he wants to walk with me. So the first step is just say, Lord, you know, I don't know if I've been listening to you to be able to speak to my heart and to bring issues to pray about or whatever in my heart.

Lord, I just let your Spirit reveal anything. That's the first step. The second step is be willing to be obedient to what God tells you.

My wife says, oh, that's really neat. You know, God wants me to pray about my grandkids. That was the second step.

No, she was willing to be obedient because God knew when he told her, what would she do? She'd cry out to God for it. The third thing to do is Psalms 46:10, be still and know that I am God. Be still before God.

That was hard for me. My mind's always going, all this stuff. The fourth thing is 1 Samuel 2:10, speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.

I'm quiet before God. Speak to me. And the fifth, 1 Samuel 3:11, and the Lord spoke to him.

So, Lord, search my heart. If there's something that's standing between me and you, remove it so that you can lay truth on my heart. Lord, whatever you tell me to do, I'll be obedient to that.

Lord, I want to stand quiet before you and to hear your voice. Lord, I'm ready. Speak.

If there's something you want, God doesn't speak to me every day. I mean, maybe to some people he does to me. I'm kind of hard-headed.

Often I'm too busy to hear God speak, and I don't know that God yells at anybody. And then the fifth thing is God will speak because he knows that you want to hear his voice. And I know that maybe this is totally new to you and I went way over it, but I want you to know this, that for years I didn't listen to God's voice because of my training, not by my examining Scripture.

And go through the Scripture and look at all the men that heard God's voice. What did Paul hear on the road to Damascus? What did the guy do as he was praying? And he said, go and lay your hands on Paul. Of course, that was Bible days.

Well, it's the New Testament. You want to throw out the Old Testament, it was the New Testament. And he said, Lord, I can't go lay hands on him.

He's taking people's names and having them killed. He's letting God know what Paul was doing. And God didn't get all upset with him, did he? You dummy.

I know. I'm telling you to go. But he went anyway.

And I think when he said, Brother Paul, I did. But what? He was obedient. God knew this guy would go in spite of his fears.

And Paul was healed by this guy coming. Just look in Scripture. I don't want you to be weird or strange, but be open.

When you're in prayer time, for God to lay truth on your heart, to cause you to have to go back and get stuck on a Scripture. There's more there than I know. And God wants me to go deeper.

Or God wants me to pray for someone. Or God wants me to go to speak to somebody now. They're on my heart.

He's prepared the heart. I don't realize that. But he's prepared the heart.

And I need to go. I need to share with them. And I need to say, Lord, what is it? What attitude should I go? Father, I just thank you for this time.

I know many here are shaking their heads, yeah, yeah, yeah. That they hear your voice and they're spirit-led in praying. The Holy Spirit lays truth on their heart.

And they know your voice. And they know when to share. And often they know how to direct prayers at times for different people and so on.

But for others, Lord, I pray that they would consider it. I know in the Northwoods we spend a lot of time on this and go through lots and lots of Scripture and look at it. So I can understand if someone's having a hard time.

I would have had a hard time a long time ago. But God, I'm so thankful that you have made me willing to listen to you. And, Father, wonderful things have happened because I was being directed by you and by your Spirit.

And so I wouldn't trade it for anything. I look at my Christian life, much of it as a pastor, was so sterile. You know, I clubbed people with the truth.

I jotted every tittle. And yet there wasn't the compassion. And, Lord, I just pray that people would be open, if they're not, just be open to the possibility that maybe there's a famine in the land today.

And we need more people that hear your voice and will walk with you and follow you and be obedient to what you want to say to their hearts. In Christ's name we ask this. Amen.

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