

Accountability to God - Part 1

by Leonard Ravenhill

Leonard Ravenhill emphasizes the importance of living in accountability to God, the urgency of sharing the Gospel, and the necessity of revival and forgiveness in the Christian life.

Duration: 29:18

Scripture: Psalm 51:10, Matthew 24:14, Luke 19:10, John 14:1-3, Romans 6:22, 2 Corinthians 5:10, James 5:16, 1 Peter 4:5, 1 John 1:9, Revelation 3:19

Topics: "Accountability", "Revival"

Description

Leonard Ravenhill emphasizes the urgency of accountability to God, arguing that if believers truly believed in the imminent return of Jesus, their lives would reflect that belief through prayer and righteous living. He critiques the complacency of Christians who are satisfied with their spiritual state and calls for a revival that stems from a genuine restoration of first love for Christ. Ravenhill shares powerful testimonies of transformation, illustrating how true repentance and obedience lead to joy and a renewed relationship with God. He challenges the church to confront sin and seek holiness, reminding them that God desires a broken and contrite heart. Ultimately, he urges believers to live as if Christ's return is imminent, impacting their actions and relationships.

Transcript

Because, again, Jesus isn't coming until the world knows, that's what Luke says. The gospel must firstly preach to all nations. You say, I believe he might come tonight.

You don't. You'd live different if you did. If you believed Jesus was coming tonight, you'd have spent half a day in prayer.

You wouldn't have said some of the foolish, stupid things you said. You wouldn't have manifested bitterness and temper and anger. If you believed that Jesus might come tonight, brother, you and I would be living on an entirely different plane.

So forget your false philosophy and theology. David becomes burdened with this thing. Well, you know, it's a blessed thing to have a gospel as big as this.

I like Paul when he's writing to Corinth. That was a moral dump. Paul's life, when I think of Paul's life, dear Lord, there were no airplanes or trains or anything else.

He was born in the historic capital of the world. Crosses. He ended up in the military capital of the world.

Rome. In between, he went to the religious capital of the world, Jerusalem. He went to the intellectual capital of the world, Athens, in Acts 17.

And he went to the immoral capital of the world. Corinth. You didn't need to string 20 adjectives together to describe a rotten man in the days of the Apostle.

Paul, you said he was a Corinthian. When you said that, you knew he lived in a sewer. And yet Paul goes there and he lifts his voice up like a trumpet.

Charles West has a hymn in which he says, All for a trumpet voice on all the world to call. Do you know one reason why we don't have revival that shapes America or the world? It's very simple. Because we're satisfied to live without it, that's why.

When you get to the place where your first love is restored and you're excited, you'll be up fever pitch, you'll say, I've got to go tell somebody somewhere. And not fall over out of fever. Paul never, never, never followed anybody else preaching.

You talk about taking an old car, you don't know what's inside an old car. Well why do you want to take over an old church, they're full of problems anyhow. Go start anew and get to a new country.

But Paul in that moral dunghill says this, If any man be in Christ, I like that. If any man be in Christ, any man anywhere at any time, be in Christ. When we were at King's Island, we were there nearly two years, and I'm thankful my boys went through that course, before they went to the mission field, all on different mission fields.

But when we used to come over the bridge there, down into Canal Street, and when we went down Canal Street, there was an old sign outside the building. Unfortunately they tried to make it modern. Isn't it terrible how they cover rotten old buildings up with a new facade? And I like to look at that old building.

Do you know why? If ever you see it, if you can't find it, get Winky Plattner, he's a bit of a bookworm. I'm not saying he's a worm, I'm saying he's a bookworm. But anyhow, I asked Winky to look out for a book called Water Street, Down in Water Street.

Oh that's a place, if I remember right, Hadley opened it. And he didn't go for the best, he went for the worst. He went for folk that nobody would take in.

Prostitutes, drunks, jailbirds. The folk that lay on the bowery there, if you've never seen them, that's which site would stick in you. Somebody brought an old man in one night on his rubber legs, he was weaving one way and rocking and rolling and drunk, and when they said, if you want to find Jesus, come to the front.

So he came, and said he wanted to find Jesus, and nobody had much sense with him. And so he said he believed Jesus died for him, and so they baptized him. Well to cut a long story short, he holds the world record for being baptized.

Outside of the Mormons, they get baptized every weekend. But, and they get baptized for the day. But do you know this man was saved and baptized 15 different times.

That's pretty good, isn't it? He went to an altar one night, somebody said, go pray with him. No, I prayed with him twice. You pray with him.

I prayed with him three times. Do you want to try your hand? No, no, no, I prayed with him twice too. There's no hope, his brains are gone, he's not good, he's not good.

Poor old Jerry McCauley, nobody wanted him. One old guy that had been to hell and back, as bad as that man ever was, called up to him and began to talk to him. If I remember right, he said something like this, he said, You say you can't get in.

No, they talk to me about, what's it called, about redemption or something. Somebody hits me on the back and says, hold on brother. Somebody else comes and says, let go brother.

I don't know, I don't know. I don't know what it's all about. Well he said, there's a scripture that says, Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.

Now, him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. If he doesn't cast you out, what does he do? Oh he said, he takes me in, he takes me in, he takes me in. And that's how he got assurance.

Yes sir, two amens, yours and mine. Amen, yes sir, assurance. You know old Jerry said, this is so wonderful.

I'll never go to a meeting but what I take a sinner with me. I'll take a prostitute on each arm. I'll take some derelicts on each arm.

And he did that. He'd go lay at the side of the man without shoes. He'd go up to some old harlot and say, Well Jenny, now come on now, you know I'm a new man.

You want to come to a meeting tonight? She'd say, Jerry, are you going to a meeting? Do you got religion? Oh no, I ain't got religion. What have you got? He said, I got Jesus. A lot of people got religion but it didn't do much for them.

Like the donkey that ate the tracks. He got religion but it didn't do anything for him. So Jerry said, no I ain't got religion, I got Jesus.

You don't drink? No, no, no. You don't go with bad women? No, you don't go? No. Jerry, what happened? He said, he gave me a new heart.

Oh, I'm going. To cut a long story short, when Jerry died, you'd have thought it was the mayor of the city they were burying. They laid him in a cheap casket there.

He got shrunk and hollow. He was aged. He was beaten up anyhow.

The drink and lust had eaten his life up. But they said when they laid his body there, his eyes were sunk away deep there. And in a crowded meeting, they opened the door.

And a bunch of women streamed down and every one of them had a white carnation. Every one of them had been a harlot or a jailbird but they had a white carnation because they'd found something called the blood which is able to cleanse. And every one of them bent down and kissed old Jerry and dropped tears in his eyes.

They said that by the time they'd done, those sockets were filled with tears that spilled out of the eyes of prostitutes and jailbirds and drunkards and lousy people. And when the hundred women had come down, they opened another door and a hundred men came down, each wearing a red carnation, symbolic of the blood that had cleansed them. And even those old derelicts shuffled up and bent down and kissed the poor old carcass that was there.

Oh no, he wasn't a theologian. But I said to often, a man with an experience is never at the mercy of a man with an argument. What happened Jerry? Oh, I once read a story about a man in Timbuktu.

No, no, no, no. He doesn't go on that. He doesn't go on a theological binge.

He says, listen, he found me. And all I did was come to him and I cried out, mercy upon me, O God. According to the multitude, blot out my transgressions.

Which means that if you had a blackboard here with a lot of things written on and I go up with a duster and wipe it all out, it's gone, you can't put it back. Let me tell you one thing before I pass to the next section here. I, I, I had the privilege of, of being assistant pastor to Dr. Fawcett in a church, you know, both in England.

And he was going away and he said, Len, you've got to preach for me, I'm going away. And I didn't want to do that. I was very young and I was inexperienced, but I preached.

And I preached that night that if you want to give men their trespasses, who trespass against you, God won't forgive you. You may go through a psychological somersault and persuade yourself, but if you've got any grudges, your sins aren't forgiven. Because if you won't forgive, why should God forgive you? At the end of the meeting, there's a woman, she's a big woman in our district.

Well, she was 300 pounds, anyhow. And she stood there and I, I said, good night. She said, I'm not going, I want to talk with you.

And I said, all right, talk. Oh, no, not till everybody's left the church. Now, she'd been in a drunken brawl a few months before she was saved.

A man said something dirty and she hit him once and he hit the deck. So they sent for the policeman and they said, the cop's coming to get you. She waited round the door.

When the cop came, she hit him like that and he was number two, he hit the deck. And she said, I want to see you when everybody's left. I thought I might be number three, I might hit the deck.

I'm not going to talk here. She said, let's go in the church office. So we went in the church office and I said, sit here.

I'm not sitting. She shut the door and she put her arms up like this and you couldn't see the door. I said, what's your problem? What's my problem? What's my problem? She said, you held me up tonight in ridicule.

You talked about folk who drink and lust and gamble and do all the right, but you, everybody knew you meant me. I said, lady, you weren't even, oh now don't lie about it. You know, you know you meant me all the time.

I said, I didn't mean you at all. I never thought about you. She didn't move and I didn't.

So, waited a few minutes and I said, I'd like to go home. I said, I came to the prayer meeting at seven o'clock this morning and I preached this morning and I taught the class this afternoon and I preached tonight and I'm really tired. Didn't take any effect.

So, I said, well, she said, well, you see, I'll tell you what it is. She said, I've got neighbours on either side of me. When I was a fighter, a drunkard, she said, they locked the doors when I came home at night.

Nobody wanted to talk to me. And she said, radio, I'll go to hell before I'll talk to either of those people. I said, that settles it.

You go to hell and I'll go home. She said, you mean that? I said, well, if you won't forgive, God says he won't forgive you. So, I said, go to hell and I'll go home.

She stood there with her arms folded and I thought, well, this is a problem. I can't phone. There was no phone in the room and I can't knock on the door.

The church was away where nobody would hear. What in the world am I going to do? So, I just bowed my head in prayer then I knelt down and suddenly the building shook. She just fell down, boom, like that.

And she had a bag, a handbag, you know, it looked more like a trunk, these things ladies carry around with them. And she opened it and she put out cigarettes, matches, lipstick, movie tickets. I thought, good night.

This is a place for a woman to start sorting her handbag. I'm tired out. I want to go to bed.

This old reprobate that's been converted doesn't care a hill of beans. And I said to her, well, what are you doing? She looked at me and she said, If I'm coming to Christ, I'm coming clean. She used to buy bundles of movie tickets and she put them there.

A cigarette, a match, even my lipstick I won't need, she said. And some of these other things, I don't need them. Well, I said, that's a good move.

You know, we hear a lot about the fruits of the Spirit. That's okay. We don't hear too much about Romans 6, fruits unto holiness.

We hear less about fruits unto repentance. Do you know why some of us never get stabilized in our Christian experience? Because you've done things you could put right and people don't listen to your testimony because you don't put things right. That's why.

If you owe money, you should try and restore every penny you've ever stolen or misapplied. Go back to people. You don't have to ask God to keep you humble.

The Spirit will keep you humble. If you don't be humble, it will humiliate you. Now, there's your option.

Either be humble or be humiliated. Because God won't let you get by or me or anybody else. She got up from the seat, from her knees.

After she prayed, have mercy on me and give me thy Holy Spirit. And that big face of hers looked as big as a pumpkin. She smiled and she said, She got all of me.

She couldn't get near me really but she put her arms out like this. And she said, It's wonderful. She went home and told her fighting husband.

And he said, I got a new wife. God, I'm going to watch this. You're not going to fight anymore? That relieved him.

She'd whipped him so many times, poor guy. That it was worth getting saved just for him. And she'd whip people in the neighborhood.

They said, Did you hear the news? Did you hear the news? Mrs. Crook, her name was Crook. Mrs. Crook being saved up at the tabernacle? Good night. What are they going to do next? They keep getting these folks saved.

About two months after I preached again, I preached on hell. A husband woke up at 2 o'clock Monday morning sobbing. And she was sobbing.

He said, Honey, what are you sobbing for? Because Ravenhill said, Oh, Ravenhill again. It's forever Ravenhill. What did he say last night? He said, If you're not saved, you'll go to hell.

Now look, I'm saved. And you're going to hell. I don't want you to go to hell.

You know, we've had a happy life. Well, he didn't. He never knew that.

But anyhow, we've had a happy life. And I don't want you to go to hell. I want you to get saved.

He said, Shut up. He slept about half an hour. He did.

And he woke up and he said, Are you still crying? Yes. Oh, he said, Listen, there's no hell and devil and all that stuff. Get to sleep.

She was at our house that morning at nine o'clock. We were a pair of bachelors knocking at the door. Her face was radiant.

I want to tell you something. Did you hear the news? Did you hear the news? No. No.

What happened? She said, About three o'clock this morning, my husband jumped over the end of the bed, threw off the bedclothes, and he knelt down and he cried at the top of his voice, God, be merciful to me, a sinner. I didn't even know he knew it. I didn't even know he knew the scripture.

What did it? Well, I said, We've prayed, haven't we? Yes, we have. Oh, she said, It's wonderful. You know, the neighbors couldn't believe it.

Why, he's got saints. About five weeks after, on the mumbly morning, she was at my door, with Dr. Thorpe's door, rather. I opened the door.

There she was, drenched with tears. And I said, Please come in. Can I get you some, a cup of tea? What happened? She said, You didn't hear the news? No.

My husband working in the coal mine, and the roof fell in and they scraped him up. They put him in a sack. They won't even let me look in the casket.

Her big fat face was all red with tears. And then she smiled. She said, Isn't it wonderful? I didn't get the hang of it for a minute.

And I said, Your husband's dead. Isn't it wonderful? She said, He's in heaven. He's in heaven.

And if I hadn't said, I would forgive my neighbors, that night you said, that I'd really to get it straightened out and forgive my neighbors, God wouldn't have forgiven me. Then I couldn't have told him, really I was saved. And I wouldn't have prayed for it.

But you see, because I obeyed God, he came and obeyed God. And if he hadn't got saved, I'd be the most miserable woman in the world. My husband went to hell, went to hell.

Because I taught him to drink and do a lot of devilish things. But he's in heaven. You see how it worked? David was willing.

David was obedient. She was willing. She was obedient.

She had to go to the neighbors. She had to straighten things out. And people believed, because they saw the results in her life.

All right, David prayed the prayer of the sinner. I'll be quick here. Now he prays the prayer of the backside.

Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation. Have you lost your joy? Oh, I'd like to see you clap your hands and be happy. But a lot of you are putting a mask on.

You haven't got joy really. How can you have joy if you're disobedient? How can you have joy if you've got grudges and secret things in your heart against others? You can't have it. Restore unto me the joy.

I remember preaching in a certain town. I remember it forever. I met my darling wife there.

I preached one Saturday night in this tent and a woman came to the altar. She was something. She could have played the part of a witch without any make-up.

I almost looked for a broom to see if she came on it to church. She was haggard. She had a black suit on.

Her face was drawn and pleated. She had more, as wrinkled as a prune. She came to the altar.

I had preached that night on Psalm 51. Not like this. And she sobbed and sobbed and sobbed.

It was in an old tent. And I said, Could I help you? She said, My name is Mrs. Shepherd. I said, Oh, that's a nice name, Mrs. Shepherd.

I'm 73 years of age. I had no joy for years. The story was this simply.

40 years ago I was an officer in the Salvation Army. I fell out with my companion. The lady who was running the Salvation Army Corps with me.

We quarreled. And I got bitter. And I told her that night.

I said, Listen, I'm going to have my way. And she said, You're not. I rule this thing.

Do you know what she told me? She said, I went home from that meeting. I said to her, Listen, goodbye. I finished with you and the Salvation Army and everything else.

And she said, I went home. I took off my Salvation Army bonnet. I tore it up and put it on the fire.

I took off my tunic. I cut it up and put it on the fire. I got my Bible.

I pulled every peg out of it and put it on the fire. I turned my back on God and the Army. And she said, Listen, after that I went to hear old General Boo because I admired him.

But I never heard a word he said. I heard some of the fiery preachers of the Salvation Army holding men over hell. It never moved me.

She said, Raymond, tonight a miracle happened. I heard God's voice for the first time in 40 years. And I want to pray the prayer of David.

Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation. What a little thing. But she said, you know, even if he does that, I've 40 years of wasted life.

40 years and I can't in any way get back. So simple. I prayed with a girl in Ohio.

She came to the altar. A beautiful girl. She had long braids.

She said, Mr. Raymond, I sing in the choir. I raise money for missions. I teach a class in Sunday school.

I do everything the church asks of me. But the Lord caught me out. She said, in the middle of your message tonight, your voice died away.

And a voice said to me, swimsuit, swimsuit, swimsuit, swimsuit, a thousand times. I never mentioned swimsuits. Who did? The Holy Ghost because he convicts of sin.

She said, I stole it from a fashionable store down the road. I took it home and told my mother I found it in the street. And tonight the Lord said, swimsuit, go and pay for that swimsuit.

It's the only way you can get your salvation restored and the joy of your salvation. I said, all right, I'll help you to pay for it. I'll ask the pastor to help me to pay for it.

I'll go to the shop with you tomorrow and tell the people you stole it. Is your mother here? She said, yes, she's at the back. She's the lady with the big, big hat on.

So I said to one of the deacons, would you bring that late? I don't want her mother to know. No, no, no. My mother thinks I, she thinks I'm a saint.

She thinks I'm an angel. I said, well, you don't and I don't and the dog doesn't. So what good is it? Your mother thinking that.

I don't want my mother to know. I said, well, good night. You're not going to leave me? Sure I am.

Why? Because you want to be a God. Yes, I will. All right.

That girl got so blessed, she jumped up and clapped her hands and ran down the aisle. And she said to the pastor, listen, I've been cheating on you for two years. I was a thief.

I've been singing in the choir, teaching kids in Sunday school, raising money for missions. But I've got my joy back. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.

I'm having a whale of a time. Oh, I forgot to tell you. In between, her mother did come to the altar.

She said, what's my daughter doing here? She's the nicest girl in church. Well mannered, educated, teaches a class, collects permissions. Why, what is she here for? I said, she's a thief.

A what? Well, she told me she's a thief. My daughter is not a thief. I said, your daughter is.

She said, Mother, I never found that swimsuit in the street. I stole it. Stole it? I said, Mother, listen, don't sit in judgment.

Put your arm around her neck. Tell her you forgive her. I said, we forgive her.

God forgives her, whether you do or not. Forgive her. Mother knelt down, you know, like this.

I was sure she'd crack before she reached the bottom. Just expected she'd snap in two, but she didn't. And the girl got up and ran away.

And I was so excited. Praise God that girl got out. I was putting my coat on, got my arm through one sleeve of my coat.

It was running, it was snowing outside. And somebody said, Brother Ravenhill, would you help this lady? This lady with a big cartwheel hat? Now she wasn't at the altar when her daughter made the first confession. She said, Mr. Ravenhill, tonight your voice died away.

And her voice said to me, sewing machine, sewing machine. A thousand times. Now, I never mentioned sewing machine.

Who did? God did. The Spirit convicted her, right in the area where she'd done the sin. She said, my daughter, did you know what she said? That she's cheated me 15 months ago.

I have a mother at home over 80. I've cheated her for 15 years over a sewing machine. I've seen that sewing machine in my dreams.

I could hear it tonight while you were talking. Oh, now, come on. We expect people to come to the altar and have about two minutes there, you know.

Kneel at the altar and you say, well, bless God, you're forgiven. And you've got a mansion on the main street of heaven. You're going to get a free ticket to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

You're going to rule over five cities and have a five-decker crown. And you give them the world and kingdom come in five seconds. It's a lot of, if you pardon the word, baloney.

I mean, if you wouldn't, baloney. Theological baloney. It won't do you a bit of good.

It's nonsense. I'm sure dear Olsen must have told you that Finney would preach as many as 28 nights and leave people in misery night after night. He didn't try and get them through quickly.

You want to commit sin 15 years and forget it in 15 seconds? God says, no, you'd better straighten some things out. You see, David comes here and he doesn't say, Lord, I feel unhappy about this. I'm in a bit of a pain down here.

He says, God, I've got a broken heart about it. A broken and a contrite heart. Thou wilt not despise.

I look at TV evangelists and talk, you come in the ad and smile and say, God bless you, God bless you. It gives a bit of literature. Don't worry, the bus will wait for you before you go home.

And Leighton Ford says, you don't need more than 15 minutes at the altar. My, Finney would have chewed him up about that and Wesley. The man said to me, I like your teaching in the morning and I can't come tonight.

I'd love to come, but I'm going to a meeting because a man has promised me if I go, I'll get the gift of falling backwards. I said, let's see. He made some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some teachers and some falling backwards.

Doesn't say that, not even in the Amplified. Oh, well, didn't you know they used to fall in Finney's? I listened to it, sir. Don't you come out bunking with me.

I've read more of Wesley. I read Wesley before you were born. People used to fall down slain of the spirit in Wesley's day.

But you know what? They had a side room where they put them and it took them three or four hours to come back to a place of total repentance and seeking God. Can I rush through this and say this? Look, don't you, don't you pray for revival unless you're, unless first of all you do as old, what is it, Mr. Moody said, you draw a circle on the ground like that and stand out in the middle and say, Lord, start reviving this circle. I preached in the First Methodist Church right opposite the Abbey Theatre in Dublin.

Some people came to Christ that night. Some were Catholic. Some were Protestant.

And about three years after my wife and I were in a conference in Northern Ireland, a man came to me and he said, well, Brother Raisman, do you remember preaching in the First Methodist Church down in Dublin's Fair City? I said, I do. Remember the people coming forward? I do. He said, my wife and I didn't come.

We went home. My wife said, I don't want any tea. And he said, I don't.

Don't want any snack before I go to bed. I don't. He said, we went upstairs and I sat on one side of the bed and she sat on the other.

We sat there for about 20 minutes, 30 minutes, and I said, she said, why don't you get into bed? Why don't you get into bed?

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