

# Keys to Personal Revival

by Michael L. Brown

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*To experience ongoing personal revival, we must make and keep our relationship with God the number one priority, cultivate intimacy with Him, and stay ablaze for Him through prayer and devotion.*

**Duration:** 1:28:32

**Scripture:** Romans 12:9

**Topics:** "Spiritual Intimacy", "Personal Revival"

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## Description

Michael L. Brown emphasizes the importance of maintaining a vibrant relationship with God as the key to ongoing personal revival. He discusses the necessity of daily spiritual renewal, cultivating intimacy with God, and recognizing danger signs of backsliding. Brown encourages believers to prioritize their relationship with God above all else, to challenge themselves spiritually, and to give away what they have received from God to keep the revival fires burning. He concludes with a call to action, urging the congregation to live in a state of spiritual fervor and to actively seek God's presence.

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## Transcript

And we ask you to speak to us in a living, life-changing way, to open the eyes of our understanding, to change us. Lord, we want to be ablaze, we want to stay ablaze. May the name of Jesus be exalted to the full in us and through us.

We ask it in his name, amen. You can be seated. I want you to turn with me to Romans, the 12th chapter.

I'm going to speak to you today about keys to personal revival. In particular, keys to ongoing personal revival. Keys to keeping revival fires burning.

Revival is not the kind of thing that should be needed all the time. The ideal is for us to be red-hot, living for God, our eyes set on Jesus, pursuing him, burdened for the lost, working for the Lord, full of his joy, enduring hardship and suffering. Without this roller coaster thing of going way down, we start to compromise, we start to backslide, we lose our prayer life, we lose our burden, we come to a point of crisis, then we have to cry out.

God lifts us, sends revival, awakening, renewal, and then we start to go back down. Ideally, we should stay up. Jesus himself never needed revival.

I don't mean that you won't have emotional ups and downs. You will. You may leave the greatest meeting of your life where God moved in the most awesome ways you've ever seen, and the next morning wake up overwhelmed with a feeling of darkness and hopelessness.

Sometimes it's just that attack of the enemy, the backlash after a victory. Sometimes it's just God saying, well are you getting excited over outward results or is your greatest excitement knowing me? Sometimes it's just emotions get frayed and there's a letdown after the high. Emotions can deceive you, emotions can go up and down.

I'm not talking about your emotional state. I'm talking about your ongoing spiritual state, your commitment, your walk. It shouldn't be up and down and up and down and up and down and up and down, constantly needing renewal and revival.

There should be a daily renewing. There should be an ongoing renewing that keeps us revived, that keeps us alive. We often quote the words of Watchman Nee.

He said, by the time the average Christian gets his temperature up to normal, everybody thinks he's got a fever. We're not talking about doing anything weird or wild or extreme or extravagant. We're talking about getting back to normal.

We're talking about the people of God living as the people of God should live. Romans, the 12th chapter, will read verses 9 to 21. Love must be sincere.

Hate what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.

Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor. Serving the Lord.

Let me read that again. That's the key text for us today. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor.

Serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need.

Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you. Bless and do not curse.

Rejoice with those who rejoice. Mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another.

Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil.

Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath.

For it is written, it is mine to avenge, I will repay, says the Lord. On the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him something to drink.

In doing this, you'll keep burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. The things that God calls us to do, even blessing those who persecute us, and feeding our enemy if he's hungry, and walking in the joy of the Lord, these things are impossible for someone whose spiritual

fervor is down.

The things that God calls us to do as believers, taking up our cross, denying ourselves, these things are not possible unless we are ablaze for God. You can't do it just in human power. You can't do it just by willing it.

You need to have that fresh, ongoing relationship with God. There needs to be vitality in your walk with God. And I want to give you some points, could wind up being about seven, we'll see, that are keys to ongoing personal revival.

Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor serving the Lord. Stay ablaze. Stay ablaze.

First point is this. This is to help you walk in ongoing personal revival. Make and keep your relationship with God the number one priority in your life.

Make your relationship with God the number one priority in your life. Keep your relationship with God the number one priority in your life. There is nothing more important in this world than your relationship with God.

You may say that you believe that, but do you act on it? Do your actions and the choices that you make, the way that you live, the way that you spend your time, do those things indicate that you really believe it? You know, we can talk about eternal things. We can talk about relationship with God. We can talk about heaven.

We can talk about hell. We can talk about burden for the lost. Someone can look at your life and look at my life and find out what we really believe by how we live.

If we really believe something's important, we put emphasis on it. If we really believe that there's going to be disaster tomorrow, then we plan for today. You know, when you hear that a terrible hurricane's coming and it could shut everything down for several days, well you make sure you're stocked up on certain foods and certain necessities if in fact that's going to happen.

If you believe that you're about to be chosen for a certain position and you need to be in certain physical or mental shape for it, you prepare for it. If you believe that your relationship with God is the most important thing in this world, then it's going to translate into action. It's going to translate into lifestyle.

It's going to translate into certain decisions and certain priorities. Your relationship with God is far more important than, quote, the work of the ministry because you will only reproduce who you are anyway. And no disciple is above his teacher anyway.

So if your relationship with God is weak, what you produce in the lives of others will ultimately be superficial. If your relationship with God is weak, you'll not be hearing clearly from heaven and bringing something fresh to God's people and leading them in the way that's pleasing in his sight. If your relationship with God is not fresh, there won't be an anointing and an empowerment to bring the word and to do the work in a life-changing way.

It says in the book of Proverbs that he who troubles his own household will inherit the wind. As I was praying and thinking about that this morning, I was struck by the fact that it's very much parallel to what I'm talking about here. You can have all these awesome things.

You could be rich. You could have all these industries with your name on it. You could have all these churches with the denomination that you planted.

You can have all these things going on, and yet if you trouble your own household, if you're a lousy husband, a lousy wife, a lousy mother, a lousy father, you lose the respect of your family, and your kids turn against you. What have you gotten out of all of it? So your name is known everywhere, but inside you're empty, and the thing that was most precious to you in this world is lost. So all your colleagues respect you, but your kids are on drugs, and one committed suicide, and your spouse left you.

Same thing spiritually. So what if you're considered a great man or woman of God? So what if you can point to all this great fruit? If your relationship with God, if the home base, you and your Heavenly Father, if that is not where it should be, so what about all the other accomplishments? What does it mean? Make your relationship with God the number one priority in your life. It's more important than your job.

It's more important than the ministry. It's more important than the relationship with your spouse. It's more important than your children.

It's more important than reaching the lost. Everything will flow out of your relationship with God. When your relationship with God is right, everything else will fall into place.

You know what's amazing? You'll find yourself getting done what you need to get done for the work of the kingdom. You'll find, in fact, that when you put God first and quality time with God first, that everything else basically falls into place and the things that shouldn't be there fall off to the wayside. You'll find clarity of thought that you know what pleases God and what doesn't.

You'll find an ability to love with a divine love and minister with a divine endowment so that what you do lasts forever. You'll find life. This is eternal life, Jesus said in John 17, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you've sent.

That's eternal life. Knowing God. That is the very source of who you are.

Knowing Him. Walking with Him. Enjoying Him.

Serving Him. Make your relationship with God number one. Look with me in Luke, the fifth chapter.

Steve preached last night on the account of the man with leprosy, reading the accounts from Matthew, Mark, and Luke. From Matthew 8, Mark 1, and Luke 5. Here in Luke 5, after the leper is healed, verse 14, then Jesus ordered him, don't tell anyone but go show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing as a testimony to them. Yet the news about him spread all the more, because the man went and told everybody.

Yet the news about him spread all the more so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. Look up from the text. Everybody wants to hear Jesus now.

Everybody wants to come to be healed. And he came to set the captives free. He came to heal the sick.

He came to proclaim the good news of the kingdom. Everybody wants to come and hear Jesus. The crowds are flocking.

This is his moment. Verse 16, but Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. First time I ministered in Israel in 86, I was speaking at a, doing a three-day prayer and intercession conference.

And I was writing down notes on this verse. And I wrote down, in spite of the crowds, he often went off to pray in lonely places. And I felt the Lord check me, not so much in spite of, but because of.

The only way that he could have anything to give to these people, the only way that he could do anything in effective ministry to touch them, was if he got alone with his father. And not only so, you know that more important to Jesus than even touching this hurting and dying world, was communing with his father. That he longed to have times with him.

You read the Psalms. If the psalmist is sick, what's the thing that grieves him more than anything? He's unable to get to the temple. He's unable to go and worship God with everyone.

When David's fleeing for his life in the wilderness of Judea, Psalm 63, what's he cry out for? God, you are my God, Elohim, Eli, Atah. God, you are my God. Ashacharach, I'll seek you early.

Longing for God, thirsting for God, hungry for God. Having the kingship again is not that important to him. Being the big man in the country at that moment is not that important to him.

What's important is, God, I want to go in the temple. I want to worship you. I want to be there in the praise of the people of God.

Number one priority. A strong, healthy, vibrant relationship with God. Leonard Ravenhill always used to say, put it in writing many years ago, no man is greater than his prayer life.

And I was thinking about that a few years ago when it seemed that God was powerfully using someone. And people close to that person said, you know, this guy virtually never prays. He just kind of walks in a certain anointing from God and doesn't really seem to have much time alone with God in prayer ever.

Now, I wasn't judging the individual. It seemed that earlier in his life, he sought God for many hours in prayer. But I asked myself, well, what about what Brother Len used to say, no man is greater than his prayer life.

Here's somebody that seems to be having a tremendous impact for God on many lives and yet seems to have right now very little or no personal prayer life. And then I thought a little bit more about what Brother Len was saying. And he didn't say no man can seem to have a big ministry unless he has a big prayer life.

He didn't say that. He didn't say no man's ministry in the eyes of man is bigger than his prayer life. He said no man is greater than his prayer life.

God's looking at the person. God's looking at you. God's looking at me.

He's saying, how deep are you anyway? How spiritual are you anyway? How committed are you anyway? See, nobody can stop you from being totally devoted to God in your heart and your soul. You can be married to somebody who hates God and puts all kinds of restrictions on your private life. You may be a woman here married to an unsaved man.

Maybe he knew the Lord and fell away. Maybe you got saved after you were married. And he puts all kinds of restrictions on you.

But he can't stop you from loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Nobody can stop you from having a pure heart. Nobody can stop you from being deeply in love with Jesus.

What God's looking at ultimately is who you are. Not so much what you've done, but who you are. And then when that's right, what you've done.

And he'll reward you for your works and show appreciation for what you've done. The second point is related to the first. You'll find that each point is related to the first.

Most of my teaching is normally a one-point message hammered in from about 20 different angles. Today it's under the guise of a seven-point message. Point number two.

Cultivate intimacy. Cultivate intimacy. Not just making your relationship with God the number one priority in your life, but cultivating an intimacy with God so that you don't just have the ministry mentality.

I remember some years ago I was coming back to Maryland, having been overseas a while for a few weeks. Then I got back from overseas, ministered in the States, came back home, ministered elsewhere in the States, came back home. And it was over a period of several intensive ministry engagements.

And I was talking to the other brothers, the other leaders that I work with. And I said to him, you know, I've been praying a lot, but I feel robbed of my relationship with the Lord. Because all of my praying has been preparing to minister.

All of my praying has been, it doesn't take me long to prepare a message. I prepare my heart before the Lord. But, you know, I've written up extensive outlines that I've used for a whole year's teaching, sometimes, you know, in less than 45 minutes.

It can just, you know, once the ideas come, I can lay it out clearly. And I can give you all the scripture references and all the points and so on. You know, I can do that quickly.

But I pray for several hours before I'd minister and before I'd get out and give the Word to people to prepare my own heart. But the primary thing I was doing was praying to get ready to minister and praying for the ministry and praying for God to move on the people and praying for lasting fruit and for the anointing on the Word and to hear clearly what the Lord wanted me to say. And I felt robbed.

I said, Lord, what about this, my time with you? What about just seeking you for you? What about just communing with you? What about just worshiping you and enjoying you for who you are? Some of us are such spiritual workaholics and are so purpose and goal driven that if we don't have a project, we lose our spiritual bearings. We lose our sense of spiritual purpose. And look, I understand, having been in school all through my graduate years, you know, you go to college and then you go get your master's and Ph.D. So you're in school all the time.

And, you know, always learning languages or having tests to take or papers to write or then a dissertation to finish. I remember when I finished my dissertation, there was a strange feeling of kind of hanging in nowhere because I'd been working towards a particular goal and things that God had called me to do and getting them finished. And I'm always working on a book.

If, you know, normally several books at a time, finishing one and working on a few others, getting them started the same, you know, always that's going on. And always a new thing that we're doing, raising up

the school here now, serving in different capacities. And it's same with you.

Whatever is going on in your life, your life is filled with different things, different than mine, but it's filled. Different responsibility here, different project here, different ministry commitment here, different thing you're praying for here, building program here, outreach plans here, whatever it is. And sometimes if you step back from that, you realize, aside from what you're doing, you have very little depth of relationship with God.

When you take all the scaffolding away, all the projects and all the other things that are not the heart and soul of it, you take all that away, what are you left with? Who are you, really? You know, it would be like somebody getting up here and looking like this huge hulk of a man, you know, with all these football pads on, just looking huge. But when you take that off, he's got triple pads on and he's got, you know, triple shoulder pads on and, you know, everything around to make him look huge. He's actually a real little guy.

For those of you growing up who saw The Wizard of Oz, then saw it again when you were saved later and realized that it wasn't the most Christian movie, just in terms of, you know, nice witches and bad witches and so on. But, you know, there's The Wizard of Oz at the end, so terrifying, booming voice. If you've never seen this, if you're from another country, forgive the illustration.

How many of you did see it? I didn't ask how many have it in your video cabinet now. It's not the kind of thing, you know, you're raising your kids in the Lord and you show it to a six-year-old kid, you know. Oh, mommy, I want to be a good witch when I get older.

I really like the nice witch. But there's some good moral lessons at the end of it, right? So, you know, there's The Wizard of Oz and the thundering voice. Well, then when you get behind the curtain, it's just a little man with a big apparatus around.

That's the way some of us are with ministry. You've got to face it. You've got to be honest with yourself.

You know, you know how to run things. You know how to carry yourself with a certain authority. You know how to administrate.

You know how to govern the board. You know how to speak powerfully. But on the inside, there's very little.

And between you and God, in terms of intimacy, there's very little. Cultivate intimacy. You want to stay revived.

You want to stay on fire. Really get to know the Lord. I've spoken on that theme several times here in the revival.

Knowing the Lord. Do you really know him? Is Jesus honestly, truly your best friend? You need to think about that. You need to ask him, even if you don't hear an immediate answer.

Ask him and reflect on what his answer would be. Does Jesus think that he is your best friend? It's one thing for you to say, oh, yes he is. I mean, philosophically, yes.

I agree with it in theory. Oh, amen. Oh, yeah.

Oh, yeah. He's my best friend. You know, it's wild down here.

How many of you are not from what's called the Bible Belt? You're not from the, you know, the Southwest and, you know, all the way over this part of the United States. You're not from the Bible Belt. Raise your hand.

Norway, you are not from the Bible Belt. Raise your hands. Not from the Bible.

This is really the beginning of the Bible Belt here, and it goes all the way across. Goes through Alabama. Goes through Texas.

Goes into, you know, Midwest states, Oklahoma, those kind of places. In the Bible Belt, it's often been said you have more Baptists than people. In the Bible Belt, man, there are churches everywhere.

It's unbelievable. I've never seen anything like it. Everywhere.

Everybody goes to church. You'll be amazed when you hear baptismal testimonies tonight, how many people will tell you. And their testimony, I was raised in church, but I never knew the Lord.

I went to Christian school, Christian church, Christian college, and I got saved six months ago. You'll hear it all the time. People know the terminology.

You go to restaurants on a Sunday, they're all packed right after church. In fact, it's good. It's an incentive to let the Lord move on Sunday morning so that you don't run into the crowd there.

Let them finish early. Here, meet with God. Have the blessing of meeting with God and going to a restaurant that's not His fault.

I was at a Chinese restaurant a few months ago, picking up a takeout order for a family, and there was a guy there. There was a little bar, and there was a guy sitting there, and he had a drink, and he didn't like the way it was mixed. Some well-known drink, but I didn't know what he was talking about.

And he said to the guy, yeah, you need to put more of this and such in, and he said to me, isn't that the way you make it? A little of this and a little of that. I said, I haven't had a drink in more than 25 years. I said, Jesus changed my life around.

I was a heavy drug user. I drank. Jesus changed my life around.

You know what he does? He takes the glass. He goes, amen to that. With a glass of liquor in his hand, amen to that.

It's weird down here. We've had people. I mean, it blows our minds, Friday nights.

I've always loved Jesus. I just want to say this. Even when I was in adultery and using drugs, I always loved Jesus.

Something's wrong with that picture. Jesus said, if you love me, keep my commandments. Or if you love me, you will keep my commandments.

The tree is known by the fruit out of the abundance of the heart. The mouth speaks. You know, we have one guy said, I thought I knew the Lord.

I was doing drugs and stealing cars. I thought I knew the Lord. And I came to the revival and God really dealt.

You know, and then I found out what it really meant to know the Lord. I got saved. But we hear people talk like that.

And you may do the same thing unconsciously. Oh, yeah, Jesus is my best friend. Really? Oh, yeah, I love him more than anything.

Really? I could see him saying, really, cultivate intimacy. Listen, those of you who have been married for a number of years. To have a solid marital relationship, you realize you need to spend quality time together.

But but honey, we went to church together. We drove in the car back and forth together. That may not be quality time for honey.

You need to make efforts raising kids to spend quality time with them. You need to go out of your way to get alone with that person to go out for a meal with that person to just talk heart to heart what's going on. You need to do the same with God.

You need to cultivate the secret place. It should be that there's a jealousy within you to get alone with God every day. There's a jealousy within you to just spend time with the Lord to just read his word to hear from heaven to pour your heart out to him.

You say, does that mean every time I pray, every time I read the word, it's going to be like heaven opens and I hear the music, you know, it's going to be like an old movie music and like, oh, and and I'm going to come into the presence of God. It's going to be kind of like, you know, I run in and heaven opens and a light comes down in my study or in the bedroom or and it's and the Lord just says, oh, I've been waiting for this moment. You say, oh, I too, Lord, have been waiting for this moment.

And you, oh, oh, and the angels just look on and go, oh, may not always be like that. Maybe sometimes that the first 15 minutes on your knees feels like 12 hours. One brother, K.P. Yohanan, heading up gospel for Asia, talks about he decided to pray for an hour.

In the early days of developing a prayer life, he decided to pray for an hour and prayed for everything he could possibly think of praying for, covered all the bases, everything he could pray for, he prayed for, thinking it must be several hours have gone by. I looked at his watch and it was five minutes. So when you cultivate intimacy, you're investing time.

You're investing time. You're saying it may take a while. Sometimes when you cultivate intimacy, say with a spouse, you may have to talk some issues through.

You may have a disagreement. You may just have boring time because nothing exciting is going on. But the relationship and sharing hearts is what it's all about.

Being sensitive to one another's needs. Sir, when's the last time you got along with God for a day or more? Ma'am, when's the last time you got away with God for a couple of days? When's the last time you said, listen, no appointments this Thursday night, no TV, no going out, no doing this, no doing that, no answering the phone, nothing. From seven till midnight, I'm getting alone with God, just with the Bible.

What stops you from doing that a few times a month? We just make choices. We have time to hang out with friends. We have time to pursue hobbies.

We have time to, there's never enough time to do all the work of ministry anyway, so why don't we prune down so that we can put God first. Families take vacations, you ought to consider just taking a vacation with the Lord. Scheduling time to just get away, whether it's for three days or for a week, and just meet with God.

You may have some high points of your time alone with him, where heaven comes down in an extraordinary way. You may have some times when you feel like you're in a valley all alone. But you spend that time, you spend those hours, you get on your knees, you worship the Lord, you stay in the word.

Cultivate intimacy. I think you understand that. Can you relate to the Song of Songs, the Song of Solomon, being sung as a love song by the Jewish people, applying it allegorically to God and Israel, and then by the followers of Jesus, applying it allegorically to Jesus and his church? These are obviously love songs.

There are different interpretations on the Song of Solomon, but I believe you can clearly see the courting, the coming together as a couple, the intimacy, the union, the celebration of love. It's graphic, it's earthly, in the sense of man and woman. It's beautiful, it's passionate.

Can you apply it to you and God? Can you read it in terms of your relationship with God? Can you worship God in those terms? Thousands of saints before you have been able to. So I don't relate to God in a touchy-feely kind of way. I'm not talking about that.

I'm talking about heart and devotion. Number three, look for danger signs. Look for danger signs.

You want to stay on fire? Look for danger signs. What do I mean? Let's say someone had a physical condition that was life-threatening. There were certain symptoms that arose.

You began to feel a certain way, experience pain in certain parts of your body. You didn't know what it was. You ignored it for a while.

Finally you went to a doctor. He couldn't quite figure out what it was. He sent you to a specialist.

He had more tests. They couldn't figure out what it was. They finally found this unusual disease that was life-threatening, but they caught it in time.

A little bit further, it could have been too late. Through extensive treatment and therapy, you were able to recover from that. Now, ten years later, you see those same symptoms coming up.

You're going to jump on that immediately. You know exactly what it is. You know exactly how to deal with it.

You know that it's life-threatening. You don't play games with it. You look for those danger signs.

It needs to be the same with your own spiritual life. Beware of signs of backsliding. Beware.

What are signs of backsliding? Steve often hits on some of them. They're common ones. I've found many people that have taught on this have hit on the same things through the years.

When you begin to backslide gradually, you lose your passion and desire for God. You lose your burden. You do what you do out of rote.

You may minister. You may preach. You may serve.

You may be a missionary, but the burden, the passion is gone. You may pray. You may study the Word, but your love for the Lord, the fervor is gone.

You're just doing it like a job. Jesus rebuked religious leaders of his day, taking prophetic words from Isaiah 29, that although the people drew near with their lips, their hearts were far from God. A danger sign is when you lose sensitivity towards sin.

You become spiritually numb. Things that used to trouble you don't trouble you anymore. Things that would have grieved you deeply don't grieve you anymore.

You find yourselves doing things today that five years ago you would have condemned someone for doing. I don't mean condemn them to hell, but say, my God, he's in the ministry, she's in the ministry, they call themselves a Christian and they're doing this? They need to repent. They need to get right with God.

That's abominable. And now you do those very things. Things that you would have assured me you wouldn't do.

Another danger sign is your resolution against sin. Your victory over sin begins to weaken. Oh, man, I would never do that.

And you do it. Can't control your temper. Can't control lusts and appetites of the flesh.

In the past, you stood firm. No. In the past, that anger rose.

You said, Father, give me grace. Man's anger doesn't accomplish God's righteous will. Short-tempered person exalts father.

You just took hold of the scriptures. Love is not angry. And you composed yourself.

Now you're out of control and you stay out of control. Now lustful temptation comes. You're just hooked.

That bait comes by. You're hooked. Let me tell you something.

The devil's setting you up for the kill. You say, well, why doesn't he just come in for the kill? Because you're too strong for that so far. You know, if there's a sport, a violent sport like boxing, you know, why is it that the guy wears the opponent down? Because he knows that opponent's still dangerous.

And when he's got him totally weak, then he'll go for the knockout unless he can just do it one shot. Otherwise, he's got to take some risk to knock the guy out. And if the other guy's strong, he'll knock him out.

Devil comes in, a little temptation, fall. Boy, I can't believe I did that. You picked yourself up.

He waits a little while. Comes again, same thing. Fall again.

Now it's a little closer in time. Comes again, fall again. Now it's a little worse.

Danger sign. He's coming in for the kill. You read about the relationship of the children of Israel with the Canaanites.

God said, don't intermarry with them. Don't worship their gods. Destroy their idols.

You're to be a separate holy people. You know, maybe they get into the land of Canaan and some of these Canaanites don't seem so bad after all. They're not so wicked.

Seem like nice family people. Two kids. Met a lot of nice people.

And what's the matter with their religion? There's a lot of depth to it. We're just so narrow in our thinking. There are many different gods.

They know gods of fertility. They know gods of the storms. There's a lot there.

They become kind of fascinated by it. And the next thing, they start to intermarry. I kind of like my son to marry that gal.

After all, she's pregnant already with my son's baby. Why not? And so what if we have different standards? After all, Yahweh's standards are unrealistic. Nobody can live those out.

Next thing you know, there's intermarriage. Next thing you know, the standards drop. And you know what happens after a little while? You keep reading through the history.

The Canaanites become the masters and the Israelites become the slaves. That's what sin will do. Maybe you used to be free.

Maybe nothing bound you. Oswald Chambers said, make it your habit to have no habits. Maybe nothing bound you.

Maybe nothing enslaved you. Maybe nothing kept you down. Now you're enslaved.

You are in danger. You are backsliding. You need revival.

You want to keep revived. Look for danger signs. When they crop up, look at it.

Take notice of it and deal with it. Go to God in real repentance. Seek his face.

Change things in your lifestyle. That's the time when you deal radically with sin. That's the time when you say, uh-uh.

Maybe you weren't around television much in the past. You had problems with certain shows, but you say, hey, I'm much more disciplined now. I don't waste time.

I don't watch any of that polluting stuff. In fact, you got this cable vision that came in because it had these other channels, and you were fine for a while, but now you find yourself watching sexually explicit or gratuitously violent movies or movies filled with profanity or anti-God themes or laced with unclean things. Now you find yourself looking forward to watching some of these.

Now you find yourself leaving prayer meeting early because you know there's a particular thing on you want to catch and it's sinful. You may just have to get rid of television. If you can't control it, if you can't

deal with it properly, you may have to just get rid of it.

You take ruthless action when it comes to sin. Same with computers. If you had a problem with pornography over the internet, you discover one day, maybe by accident, maybe out of curiosity, that you can type in a certain word.

Maybe you typed in a word that was an innocent enough word and found some strange site linked to it that was a sexually explicit site and hit on your computer. What is this? And maybe you were even fairly ignorant about what you were doing, and the next thing you see images that if you wanted to go out and buy magazines like that, you wouldn't know where in the world you could even get them. And here it is on your computer screen.

Now, next thing you find that when everybody else is asleep or the house is empty, well, you're supposed to be doing something constructive, using your Bible software on your computer, writing out the newsletter for the church, answering letters of people in need. Instead, your heart's pounding, and you're being led like a brute beast to all these sites. You say, what do I do? If you cannot walk in discipline there and get victory there, stay away from computer and time.

You say, brother, that's ruthless, that's radical. If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off, throw it away. It's better to go to heaven with one hand and to hell with both.

Jesus is saying, be ruthless, be radical. And I'm one that virtually never goes anywhere without a computer. If I'm traveling somewhere for one night, I've got my notebook computer with me.

I'm at it all the time. Writing all the time, journaling all the time, in touch with people via email and fax around the world all the time. But if I had a problem in that area, I'd have to stay... I ask myself that question.

What if I had a problem in that area? What if I messed up in that area? What if on a regular basis or a semi-regular basis, or once in a blue moon, I'd sit around and download pornography into my computer, and I found no way to walk in discipline over it? Would I be willing to put the thing down as a horse? I examine my heart over it. In other words, would I practice what I'm preaching? I said, yes, I would. Look for danger signs.

Are the symptoms of backsliding arising? Paul wrote to the Galatians and said, what has become of all your joy? Remember the joy you used to have? Remember the overflowing life that was in you? Remember the worshipful spirit you had? Where is it? Danger sign. When the peace goes, when the joy goes, and this can be joy in the midst of trial and difficulty. Maybe you just lost a loved one and you're in a state of mourning.

I understand that. I'm talking about your ongoing normal life in the Lord. Where's the joy? Danger sign.

Number four. This ties in with number three. This is not one of these shout-me-down feel-good messages.

Number four, walk in discipline. Walk in discipline. You want to keep the fire burning? Walk in discipline.

You keep the flesh down on a regular basis. Several of us are leaders just talking about the intensity of the schedule here. It's easy to make excuses for not exercising.

I'm not primarily talking about physical discipline, but I'm going to touch on it for a minute here. It's easy to make excuses, but God never accepts excuses. You need to discipline yourself to be disciplined.

Paul wrote to Timothy, 2 Timothy 2, and told him to endure hardship as a good soldier of Messiah Jesus. There's a battle. There's a war.

It says in 1 Peter 5, to be sober and vigilant because our adversary the devil goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. We're told to resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that these same kind of sufferings are being experienced by our brothers in the world. There is a battle.

There is a war. Walk in discipline. Live as a soldier.

Is there any discipline in your sleeping habits? Is there any discipline in your eating habits? Is there any discipline to fast? Is there discipline in your times with God? Is there discipline in shutting off the TV, putting the other book down, putting the novel down, getting off the phone? Is there discipline in your life? A sign of a backsliding heart, a sign of something wrong, is no discipline. When you walk in discipline, you'll find that there is grace on you to run your race. You'll find that the two things feed on each other in a positive way.

That discipline brings a sense of blessing and the sense of blessing brings more discipline. To run, to persevere, to be strong, to be firm, to not back down. Are you disciplined? I'm going to tell a little story here.

I want everyone to smile at me first and to say, we really love you. You need to say it with more conviction. We really love you.

Okay, good, I feel loved. Now, I wouldn't say this if not for the fact that I'm in the process of shedding some pounds, okay? If I was like a stick up here, then I would feel like I was pointing fingers at others and not pointing them at myself and I would have to come at this story from a different angle. So this is not someone in a glass house throwing a stone as much as saying, well, I'm trying to throw stones at my own glass house already.

I had a translator in Finland who said to me, he said, I find dieting very easy. He said, in fact, he said, I found it so easy, I started 200 diets last year. I was going to speak one time at a local women's aglow meeting on Long Island.

One of the students was there with me in Christ for the Nations when we lived on the island. And I asked him if he wanted to come along for the meeting with me. The one thing I knew was this.

There would be some very sincere godly women, but where I was told the meeting was going to be held, it was a fairly rich, ritzy part of Long Island. The meeting was going to be held at a restaurant and I kind of surmised, I don't know if it was by the spirit or just logical deduction, I pretty well surmised what the crowd was going to be like. I think I spoke at a couple of women's aglow in those years.

So I had just a slight inkling of what it was about. I knew there'd be serious godly women, but I knew in this neck of the woods they'd probably be pretty rich and maybe a little bit worldly. Maybe not super disciplined, although probably some great prayer warriors and real disciplined saints among them.

And I got there to speak and I didn't have a message yet. We were praying as we're going. I said to Ronnie, the student with me, I said, the Lord just gave me the message, too fat to fly.

And I thought this might not be the place to bring this message. I remember distinctly as we were having an outpouring in the church where I was in 82 and 83 on the island that during a time of coldness in my life, late 70s, early 80s, God really brought a wonderful outpouring, shook me, brought me to repentance and sent an outpouring of the spirit that changed me and the fires burned in me ever since. These last 15 years.

And that's why the idea of gradually getting colder is very real to me, because I was still a leader in the church, I was still an elder, I still taught the adult Sunday school class, I was active in ministry, I was doing many good things, I was a serious believer, but I was gradually backsliding. I had remembered distinctly that we opened the church every Sunday night for prayer because people were so hungry to pray in a church that previously was a pretty prayerless church. And one Sunday night, just, you know, we were having these awesome prayer meetings, three, four hours of more powerful prayer meetings.

And it's one Sunday night, just, it's kind of dull. I remember one of the brothers there, just in his kind of deep voice said, brothers and sisters, problem is tonight we're too fat to fly. You know, we all, it just so happened that a lot of us had a real big meal right before we got there and then went to pray and were a little bit weighed down.

Well, anyway, I was going to preach on too fat to fly. Now, bear in mind, this is at a restaurant where you have a real nice meal before you speak. Now, I would never eat before I speak.

If I'm going to preach or anything like that, I won't eat for a good five, six hours before then. So I was not going to have the meal anyway. But all these ladies are there.

The crowd was pretty much what I expected. And they asked this one brother in each of the locales where they would meet, they would have a local pastor, local spiritual leader as the covering of the group. So they had a local pastor, a brother that was there, a Spanish brother, seemed like a very, very dear man, really loved the Lord.

But he was big. Now, here I got my message, too fat to fly. And they said, brother, so and so, would you please pray over lunch before Dr. Brown, Brother Brown, whatever, brings his message.

And I look and this guy gets up there and I thought, oh, wrong title for the message today. And then he prays, Lord, he said, you know, I love to eat. That's how he starts the prayer.

Oh, oh, now you have to realize I'm obedient. So there is no possibility of changing the subject or changing the message or changing the title. And I did want to point out that my main emphasis was on being too spiritually fat to fly.

Nonetheless, I had to cover all the ground and all the bases. Now, I just want to stop and clarify something for a minute here. There is a story about a woman who was very, very heavy, who was about to get married the next day, was several hundred pounds overweight.

And I believe, well, I can't tell you if it's true or not. I heard it is true, but who knows? And she went to see Gordon Lindsay, who is the founder of Christ for the Nations in Dallas, went to be with the Lord in 73. In fact, his daughter is here this week.

I'll have to ask her if it's a true story. She goes in and she said, Brother, would you please pray for me that I would lose all this weight before the wedding tomorrow? And according to the story, he said to her, I'm sorry, this kind only comes out by prayer and fasting. Now, here's what I wanted to clarify.

Some months ago, as I was praying in the revival, as I was praying for brothers, I just especially gravitated to putting my hand in the brother's heart or sometimes on his stomach. And just, I was praying, God, the burden in my heart, put in their heart. Lord, your burden, your fire, set them ablaze.

And, you know, sometimes just pray for the brothers, touch them on the head, the same as I pray for sisters. But many times I just find myself doing that as I prayed for brothers. And often, you know, I had people say, you slugged me, I can't believe you did that.

It's like, well, why don't you watch as I go around and pray for people tonight? And, you know, one pastor got really upset because he told me I slugged him, he doubled over, he fell, collapsed on the ground. And his wife said, he never touched you. As he got close to you, you went flying.

And then when he got back to his hotel room and the same thing hit him, he realized it was God. I'll just touch people like that. Sometimes, in fact, lately, you know, just so no one can make any mistakes, I've just touched him with my finger.

But I don't want it to look, you know, like I'm trying to put on some kind of show or something. So I've been sensitive about that. But I wanted people to realize, you know, I'm not going like that.

You see that, you know, you're behind. You see me touch the guy like that. Next thing you see him double over, go fly over pews.

You know, you may have noticed as we were praying for some people last night, it may have been one of you gentlemen that are here. You know, and I pray for you and you're like, flying back. You know, it's just never saw it happen like that before.

It may never happen again like that. But here's what I wanted to clarify. Some brothers like me who could take off a few pounds, if I put my hand on your stomach, I was not praying for an instant miracle.

Nor was I trying to make you feel especially uncomfortable. Okay. Nor was I praying for the fire to somehow burn up fat calories or something.

Okay. So I want to make myself clear. But some of us are too fat to fly in general.

We are too indulged with worldly earthly things, be it foods, be it entertainment, be it sports, be it hobbies, be it soft living, whatever it is. If you will walk in discipline, you will find it to be a key to ongoing revival. That was number four.

Number five. Challenge yourself. Keep your standards and vision high.

Challenge yourself. There should always be a goal in God that you're striving after. I love what John Davis said last night.

He was talking about the preacher, the old preacher. Someone said to him, what's the greatest experience in God you've ever had? He said, I haven't had it yet. Challenge yourself.

I remember talking to my wife one day, some years ago. And I said, tell me someone that we know. Tell me a brother.

Tell me a leader that I should be like. I said, somebody alive in our midst today. She said to me, Smith Wigglesworth and John Lake.

Now, Wigglesworth died in 47 and Lake died in 35. Some of the greatest men of faith used miraculously by God that the church has ever seen. And I said, that's not fair.

I said, somebody living today. She said, well, if they did it, you can do it. There's always that.

It's nice to be married to someone who is not particularly impressed with you. The flesh doesn't always appreciate that. But it's good for you spiritually.

And what would happen if you were a baseball player and you had just made it into the minor leagues. And everybody around you was like, wow, you've made it. You're in.

This is awesome. And you didn't practice much. You did.

And you never got out of the minor leagues. Whereas if you really worked at it. And if you said, I want to be the best hitting shortstop that baseball's ever seen.

And you discipline yourself and you were ruthless on yourself. And you had people critique you. And you worked out and you took extra practice and did this and did that.

Maybe one day you'd attain to that goal. Or if not, you'd still get farther, far higher than you ever could have if you didn't shoot for that goal. Richard Crisco said the other day, the youth pastor here at Brownsville.

We're asking God for 500 teachers to come to our teacher appreciation service. It's a totally outrageous number. Totally miraculous, almost impossible number.

Total number of students in the county is somewhere around 22,000. 500 teachers. They got somewhere between 50 and 100 teachers.

Could have been more than that. I don't have an actual count. See, that's all they got.

When's the last time that you had a youth service in your church where 100 local teachers came? You tell me when you've heard of that happening. Just in a local church. Set the vision high.

Challenge yourself. William Seymour. The man that God used to ignite the Azusa Street Revival.

He got so hungry for God when he heard Charles Parham teaching on the baptism of the spirit. The power of God, the way the apostles had it. Divine love.

Signs and wonders. He got so hungry for God. He prayed for hours.

Hours. Every day. While working a job, while helping pastor a small church.

Five and a half hours a day. When he got to Los Angeles, the hunger got deeper. Five and a half hours a day.

Not just for a week or two, but month in, month out. Month in, month out. As the months rolled on to more than a year and to years of praying, seeking God.

He gets to Azusa Street desperately hungry. When he gets to Los Angeles, Azusa Street came later. By the way, he ended up on Azusa Street.

Because the house where they were holding meetings on Bonnie Brace Street had a porch. And when so many people began to gather on the porch, the porch started to collapse. They had to find someplace else.

But why were they meeting in front of a house? Because the church where he was preaching barred the door so he couldn't preach there anymore. They locked him out. That's where the great modern Pentecostal outpouring came.

He upped his prayer times to seven hours a day. You say, look, no matter what I do, it's not physically possible for me to pray seven hours a day. I'm not asking you to pray seven hours a day.

I mean, the Lord may tell you to do it for a week or something or for the rest of your life or for one day. For most people, praying seven hours in one day would be a huge accomplishment. In any one day in their lives, let alone every day.

For some, praying one hour in a day would be an accomplishment. But you look and see what happened in Azusa Street and see the divine explosion. There was something going on behind the scenes.

There was something going on behind the scenes. I read something like that and it challenges me. Man, what if I tripled my prayer life for a while? How could you do that without cutting back on this or that? Now, for some, that's no threat because three times zero equals zero.

Or to get your prayer life, man, does that mean all the way up to 15 minutes a day instead of five? What if you're praying an hour a day and the Lord says, go for it for a month? Go after me for a month. What would happen if you really went after God? See, you keep that standing, wherever you are now, we're thrilled with what God's doing in Revival. If this is a typical Friday night, you'll be blown away when you hear the baptismal testimonies tonight.

This is week in, week out, we're thrilled. The atmosphere at the school is tremendous. We finished our class yesterday, the class I teach to the students on history and characteristics of Revival.

I gave the last portion of the class to Dr. Hennessy from Southeastern College that was here. He brought a terrific word to the students. Excellent teaching.

And then we just finished with prayer and the prayer intensified. God came down powerfully. Forty-five minutes later, altars are filled.

Most of the students haven't left. People seeking God, people weeping, people crying out. That's just our school.

Dr. Hennessy finally came into my office. It was six o'clock before he got done as people were praying and talking with individual students. An hour and a half after class had ended.

We're thrilled with what's happening. But we're just beginning. We're just scratching the surface.

We're just in the early stages of what God wants. We want to see the city shaken like it's never been shaken. Oh yeah, we can tell you reports about the crime rate in the area.

Bucking the statewide trend and dropping in different ways significantly. We can talk to you about the impact of the Revival on some of the bars. We can talk to you about some of the dramatic conversions.

We can talk to you about churches experiencing exceptional growth through the community since the Revival. Those that have gotten in the river with us. But we can also say, man, we're just beginning here in Pensacola, let alone across the nation.

What God's doing across the nation or in your home country. You will keep revived by challenging yourself, by setting the standard higher. In my book, *How Saved Are We?* Chapter called, *Redeeming the Time*.

I have some quotes from George Whitefield. That man pushed himself. Lived from 1714 to 1770.

Only 55 years of life. Died in his 56th year. But he must much rather, as he said, I'd rather burn out than rust out.

Some estimate that he preached 18,000 messages in his life. Some say it was as many as 30,000. Sometimes he spent between 40 and 60 hours a week ministering the word.

Can you imagine that? Crisscrossed back and forth from England to America. Back and forth by sea. Some historians believe that in Whitefield's day, every American heard him preach face to face at least once in their lifetime.

This guy gave himself for God. And yet you'll read some of his correspondence where he says to his friends, you know, don't. You don't have any sympathy on me because he was sick and different things.

He said, spur me on. You know, tell me to wake you sleeper. You know, just feel like a slug that was doing nothing.

Saying, oh man, I just want to be stretched out for God. We have a brother that's coming to minister to our students at the end of October. One of the most radical Christians I've ever met in my life.

Dear brother, friend named David Hogan. Out of Louisiana. Then on the mission field in Mexico, jungles of Mexico.

Other parts of the world, Spanish speaking countries, Central and South America. Some works in other parts of the world, but the primary base in Mexico. He's been in my home.

I've been down on the field with him. I know some of his closest friends and coworkers. I know his pastor.

I know his board members. I tell you that to tell you the guy is for real. What I didn't tell you was that he and his workers between them.

The Mexican workers and his American workers with them. Between them, they have seen more than 200 people raised from the dead. He's lost about 12 of his men to martyrdom that have been killed for preaching the gospel.

He himself was shot once. He's been stoned. He's been sliced with machetes.

He often fast every other day. His wife, I don't know if she still does it, but when we asked her a few years ago, she would fast for 30 days and then eat over the next 30 and then fast for 30. Think of that alternating months of fasting.

I made reference to that Friday or two ago, you know, just struck me again. And sometimes during the eating month, she would fast every other day. If the workers were fasting every other day.

I certainly got your attention with the story, huh? Came back from Finland one time and David Hogan was ministering in Maryland and our invitation in conjunction with the school. And I came in just in time for his night service. He finished ministering.

We had an altar call. I got up and spoke to the people also. Everyone was crying out to the Lord.

And I sat down next to him. And I looked him in the eyes. He's got these beady eyes.

I looked him in the eyes. I said, man, I said, I am so ashamed of my lack of discipline. And he looked at me.

He said, me too. And we said, we better go to God for mercy. We just both fell on our knees and pleaded with God for mercy in our life.

Me too. Set your standard high. Challenge yourself.

There are places in God you haven't touched yet. There's an anointing in God you know nothing of. There's fruitfulness in the kingdom.

Beyond what you've been even willing to ask for or imagine. Challenge yourself. Oh yes, be realistic.

All right, Lord. I'm not asking you for 100 people to be raised from the dead after this testimony. I'm asking you for 10,000.

Yeah, but you haven't even seen anyone healed of a cold yet. You know, don't change the name of your ministry, you know. Raising the Dead Ministries International.

Don't change the name of your church to Threat to the Kingdom of Darkness Fellowship. When you can't even get victory over TV pollution. Be realistic.

But then challenge yourself. Keep your standards high. As far as standards of holiness.

You say, man, you guys are strict with the holiness you preach here. Same as I preach for years, same as John Kilpatrick preached for years. Just as we read the word and we understand what the word says, it seems pretty clear to us.

And I believe most of our differences with holiness issues derive from the fact that our hearts have become hard. You know, you may have a European guy who doesn't faze him at all when he's at a book stand or a newspaper stand somewhere. All these magazines have women, you know, naked, naked chests.

And America at least has to be slightly covered or the magazine has to be covered. A Christian man would see that or someone right with God, see it and turn their head away immediately. And we'd rather walk to another newsstand than one that was filled with that stuff.

You may be from Europe and say, man, that's nothing. You Americans get all bent out of shape about some lady in a bikini. We see a naked lady doesn't faze us.

That's not holiness, that's hardness. That's because the standard's gone down so low that you've lost sight of things. You know, read newspapers in England.

Read, you know, just some of the major newspapers. Someone was talking about a major newspaper in Australia with me the other day. There, you know, you open to a certain page or on the back cover and there's a naked woman.

Society's used to it. Man, you Americans, you get all bent out of shape over these things. No, God hates these things.

Standards fall. It's not that God's standards change. I would rather, though, stand before God and God say to me, you were a little too strict on yourself.

I would rather he say that to me. It really would have been okay if you watched this. It wouldn't have been so bad if you were doing this.

That wouldn't have been so bad. I would rather have God say to me, you were a little too careful. Than have him say, you fool.

You blew it all for the gratification of the flesh. When you're driving up the side of a mountain and there's, you know, just a fall. 500 feet off the side of the cliff.

I would rather be a little too careful, drive a little too slowly. Than say, no problem, man. I can handle this and be off the deep end.

I would rather say, but that kind of strictness condemns people. No, it condemns people generally as a condemned attitude. You'll find that most people who struggle with condemnation struggle with it no matter what church they're in.

Whether the church preaches the love of God or preaches hellfire. They tend to feel condemned. A lot of other people feel condemned because they want to keep sinning.

But you find when God meets people and gives them the grace to live a holy life, they don't feel condemned. When they turn from sin, they find grace to live above sin. We're not whipping people saying, get that out of your life.

You're bad, you're evil. Now go do it. We're saying, come to Jesus and ask him to cleanse you and wash you and say, God, I'm through with that stuff.

And he'll give you the power. It's his power, it's his grace. You don't have to be a slave to sin.

There's no condemnation in that. Friends, there's life in that. We found that you can take a certain amount of poison in your system every day.

It will weaken you a little bit, but it won't kill you. Now don't get fanatical and try to get rid of all the poison now. That's legalism.

No, that's freedom. That's health. Get rid of the spiritual poison.

Let me just say this. If you're in a society or a city or a church or a nation that has very low standards, prepare to be a voice in the wilderness. Don't come up as some self-righteous person.

But say, these are the standards of God. And if we don't live by them, we will die by them. Keep your personal standard up.

So what if people judge you? So what if you walk in humility and they still say you're just a self-righteous, holier-than-thou person? So what if people say, who do you think you are? Say, I'm just trying to please the Lord. I'm just trying to do what's right in his sight. He says in his word that there should be a hint of sexual immorality among us.

He says in his word that no drunkard, that no greedy person, that no extortion, that no immoral person will enter the kingdom of God, period. And I want to enter the kingdom. I want to have the smile of God on my life.

How pure is too pure? How holy is too holy? I want to be like Jesus in thought and word and deed. If it's not appropriate for him, it's not appropriate for me. Two last points.

I said you must make and keep your relationship with God the number one priority in your life. You need to cultivate intimacy. You need to look for danger signs, signs of backsliding, signs of lack of discipline, victory.

Four was to walk in discipline. Five, challenge yourself. Keep your standards and vision high.

You'll find in the books of mine, when you read my books, you'll find they challenge you, but you'll find what also challenges you in my books is the quotes of others and the examples from the lifestyle of others that have challenged me and continue to challenge me. Expose yourself. This is number six.

Expose yourself to other men and women of God and other moves of God. Expose yourself to other men and women of God and other moves of God. I often use the example of ping pong fever striking Christ for the nations when I taught there in the early to mid 80s.

We had a ping pong table set up in the basement of the school. Students would be playing, faculty would be playing, so we finally decided we'd have a tournament. And then our games, boy, they got up there way, way, way higher than they'd ever been before.

I mean, we were really playing well. And I remember after the tournament was over and one of the guys had won, they said, yeah, Alan's really good. He even won, when he was at college, he won some ping pong tournaments in college and so on.

We had a Vietnamese friend visiting us, a refugee who had come to America that had lived with us when he first arrived from Vietnam. He was born in China, moved to Cambodia with his family, then to Vietnam. Only took up table tennis, as they would call it, some years prior to coming.

But he was the best in our church, which was filled with refugees in those days, late 70s, early 80s. He was the best among all the Vietnamese. And I remember when I would play him, he'd demolish me, but that was years ago.

Now my game had gotten really good. And he called, we hadn't seen him for a while, he was going to come visit us. And I said, hey, bring your table tennis paddles.

We'll play a little bit. And I'm thinking, you know, I've really gotten good. He probably hasn't played that much.

I hope I don't embarrass him. Because, I mean, we had really gotten good. The shots we were making were amazing.

Way away from the table. How did you get that, man? Awesome. Returning slams.

Spins. We were legends in our own eyes. And Va came in, our Vietnamese friend, and we started to volley.

And, you know, volleying back and forth. Getting things going. And, you know, I just kind of hit him.

One of my decent shots. And he hit it back. And I thought, alright, I'm going to give him one of these monstrous slams.

And just powered. I mean, just perfect shot. Probably one of my ricocheted backhand slams.

And as I'm just, you know, you hit it and you enjoy it. Because no one's going to touch it. You know, you follow through.

And as I'm following through, the ball is bouncing back at me. And then he would just say, try this. Because ours weren't that good.

Try this. And he'd throw the ball up and slice it. Remember so distinctly.

It would go this way. Go straight up. We had our five best players come up to the table.

Almost all of us. Just remember this one poor guy, Chris. The ball would serve to him.

And he hit the ball and went straight down on the table. I remember he looked at his racket. What happened? See, you can be a spiritual superstar in your own little group.

Powerful man of God. The whole anointed woman of God. Until you get around some other people.

I mean, you're thrilled that the headaches are leaving the moment you touch the people in Jesus' name. And you go somewhere else and cripples are walking. Man, you've got such a burden for the lost, it consumes you.

And then you get with people at the moment they talk to you about their country, they break down weeping. Our Indian brother came up the other night and just said, second largest nation in the world. Soon could be the largest.

With the growth rate in India. You know, one billion people needing Jesus. And I said to Steve, I said, every Indian minister I know has a desperate burden for his country.

I prayed with our Indian workers there and the moment they begin to pray, they're sobbing and tears pouring down their cheeks. Sobbing and sobbing. For India, for souls.

You get out of the mission field, you go to different parts of the world. Don't go just to give, especially as an American. Go with a humble attitude to serve.

And you'll find when you get out with people who are really sacrificing for the Lord, you're changing more than they're changing. Oh, they're blessed to have you come. Maybe your white face can draw some people.

Maybe the Lord will use you with some of the wisdom and anointing he's given you, but you'll be changed more than they'll be changed. Expose yourself. It's a whole world out there where God is moving mightily.

You might think, man, this is awesome. I've never seen anything like it until you see something a hundred times more powerful, more wonderful, more glorious. I visited a church that I'd been in frequently before and known for fervor and real vibrant worship.

It was a good service. Excellent service when I was there. Then came back to Brownsville the next night.

I was blown away by the difference in the level of intensity here. It was like night and day. The other place was good and fine, but the intensity here was exploding.

There's a lot that God's doing. Expose yourself. To other men of God, other women of God, other moves of God.

Read about people outside of your own little group, at own little camp. Attend a conference that's different than any conference you've attended before. Just see what God is doing.

It'll keep the hunger. It'll keep you stimulated. Get out to other parts of the world where people are sacrificing for their faith.

Read about the martyrs, today's martyrs. Get your heart stirred. It'll keep you saying Lord more.

And then lastly. Key to ongoing personal revival. Number seven.

Give away what you have. Give away what you have. I've often said that stagnating saints soon stink.

Everybody say that with me. Stagnating saints soon stink. You want to try that once more? Stagnating saints soon stink.

Norwegian translators, you must have every word start with the same letter. In Norwegian. One problem with a lot of the current renewal emphasis.

And I won't touch on this now. I've got a whole chapter in the Holy Fire book. Called the prophets of the 13th year.

Where I talk about this. But one of the problems in a lot of current renewal movements. Is just bless me, bless me, bless me, bless me.

Come and get prayed for and get blessed. Come and get prayed for and go down into the power. And soak in the spirit.

And you're blessed and you're touched. But for what? To be blessed and touched or to give it away. God loves you.

Yes, because he loves you. And because he wants to use you. He invests things in you.

Why does he bless you financially? To meet your needs, yes. So that you can feed your family and take care of things. But also so you can be a channel of blessing to others.

You want to be a channel. If you're a channel, it's endless what can pour through you. You know, if there's a lake and that lake ends at a certain point.

Water, you know, can't keep running into that thing. Because there's no way for it to run out. It's got a limitation.

But if there's no end on the other side. Whatever's poured in can be poured out. Whatever's poured in can be poured out.

I find when I'm tired, when I'm weary, that's the time to give. Almost all of us before praying for people at night. Are on the verge of collapse.

Sometimes we physically stagger. Because of the anointing. Sometimes we physically stagger.

Because we're so tired. I'm not exaggerating. I mean, that's how wiped out we often are.

Come prayer time. But virtually every night by the end of prayer time, you're stronger. Far stronger than when you start.

Give away what you have. Be a witness. Maybe years ago you witnessed all the time.

Getting the habit of just being a personal. Well, I'm a pastor now. I'll tell you this, then we got to close.

One time in Italy. I've been to Italy more than any other country. Been over there 11 times.

We were in Catania in Sicily. I was with a British pastor. Who with his wife.

Have been missionaries. In Italy for over 40 years. They've got a church there.

I don't know, maybe 700, 800 people. But he's on the road now. He's kind of a statesman speaking.

Stirring hearts around the country. But he pastored for years. But he's always been a soul winner.

We held these meetings at his church. And. Come back from the last night of meetings.

They'd gotten these. Pizzas ready. You know, we're going to eat when we got back.

I was tired. I was hungry. I go upstairs to the apartment where they're waiting for us.

He's just parking the car. Man in his 70s. He buzzes me.

Do you have your shoes off? Well, yeah. And put them back on. Could you come down? Okay.

I mean, I really wanted to sit and eat. But okay, I'll come down. I didn't know what the issue was.

Thought he needed help. Maybe with his cars. And he's an older man.

And he said, listen. He said, we drove by. As we left the church.

Church was 20 minutes away. He said, when we drove over there. He said, as we left.

He said, I saw these young people on the street. Smoking cigarettes. Hanging out.  
Different things. He said, I had a burden of witness to him. And I thought, well, we got to get back.  
And I didn't. He said, I feel like I missed God. Would you go with me? In his 70s.  
This is how we lived. He said, the only way I know how to do it. Is to go all the way back to the church.  
And then to turn back from that route. Otherwise, I can't recreate where they were. Here he is in his suit.  
We go back. There they are all hanging out in the street corner. As worldly as they come.  
Guys and girls just ready to pair off. And do what they did that night. And he gets out of the car.  
And just gives them tracks. And starts preaching the gospel to them. In Italian and witnessing.  
And I just shared my testimonies. He translated briefly. And we went back to the house.  
And he just didn't want to risk missing God. He wanted to reach out to those people. You know, I came up first.  
He said, oh, God spoke to him to go witness to people. He says, oh, he does that all the time. In his 70s.  
Give away what you have. Don't become a professional minister. Touch lives.  
Touch people. God's blessed you here. Pour it out on others.  
Pray for others. Serve others. You're weary, share your faith.  
You want to keep what you have? Give it away. You want to try and empty. And need to get refreshed and renewed.  
But when God's touched you. Out of that overflow, you minister. And there'll be a continual life source.  
The life of God coming into you. You pour it out to others. They give praise and thanks to God.  
God's life comes back to you to touch you. Friends, it is God's will that you live. In a state of spiritual fervor.  
Renewal. And he will keep you strong. If you cooperate with him.  
Everybody stand, please. I've challenged you in certain ways. I've sought to be as practical as I can.  
I want to pray with you now. I've got to meet with some folks over at the school momentarily. So I'm going to make a quick exit from here.  
Scott Volk will be here. If you have any questions that you need answered. If you want to talk to him about our ministry.  
Or the school or something. He'll be able to answer questions for you. But we're going to pray.  
And sometimes it's right to all gather around the altar. And seek the face of God. I feel more than I need to encourage you.

To go out of here and act. On what you've heard. Those that need to spend a little time before the Lord.

Before we have to clear the building. To get it ready for tonight. The altars will be open.

But otherwise we're going to pray. Send you on your way. To go and do the will of God.

Let me ask one thing here. How many pastors or pastoral staff or elders. Do we have here? You raise your hand.

On the mission field or traveling ministry. Do we have? If you raise your hands. Okay.

And how many in some type of full-time ministry position. Teaching other than what I mentioned. Any others that I just.

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