

# The Secret Place

by Michael L. Brown

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of prioritizing our relationship with God and experiencing intimacy with Him in order to live a fulfilling and meaningful life.*

**Duration:** 1:27:24

**Scripture:** Joshua 1:8, Matthew 5:3-4, Revelation 22:21

**Topics:** "Spiritual Priorities", "Inner Strength"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of focusing on the unseen and foundational aspects of our lives, using the analogy of a tree. He highlights that while the branches and leaves of a tree may be visually appealing, the roots are what provide stability and nourishment. The speaker then applies this analogy to our busy lives, questioning whether we have more responsibilities and demands on our time than Jesus did. He encourages listeners to prioritize their tasks and focus on what truly matters, rather than getting caught up in busyness and flailing.

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## Transcript

And I pray, God, that by Your Word, by the ministry of Your Spirit, You would pierce to the very depths of our being. Get us back to basics. Expose the folly of human activity that is not grounded in You.

Draw us in, Father, and give us grace to not be hearers only, but to be blessed and be doers of the Word. In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen.

You can be seated. We're going to be reading from a number of Scriptures, but we'll start in Psalm 91, talking about recovering the secret place, the place of intimacy, the place of meeting with God alone as the foundation of our very lives. Let me say categorically, without qualification, that if there is one thing in my life, one thing in your life, that must be in order, more important than any other area.

I can say this without any need to qualify the statement. It is the fundamentals of your relationship with God. I don't care what's going on in your marriage.

I don't care what's happening with your finances. I don't care what's happening with your health, although each of those things are very important and of importance to God and of importance to you. I don't care what's happening with your church life.

I don't care what's happening with your ministry, although that's important to God and important to you. The bottom line, the most fundamental question is, how is your relationship with God? How deep is it? How strong is it? How intimate is it? And more than that, how is your relationship alone with God? Excuse me. That's all right, we just had a perfect illustration.

Thank you, brother. You're obedient to the Lord in more ways than you know. In all of our sessions here, teaching well over, I don't know, a hundred something just day sessions in the revival, there's never been a single time that while I was speaking, someone had to come and interrupt me.

He's just doing something in obedience to something he was asked to do, but it's an illustration, so remember it and we'll come back to it. How many of you will have no trouble remembering it? The most fundamental question, how is your relationship alone with God? Just you and Him in the secret place, in that place where there are no other eyes watching you, in that place where there is no one to hold your hand, in that place where there's no one else to see what's really going on on the inside of you, how deep are you really? How grounded are you really? How far do your roots go down really? How much intimacy and communion and relationship is there really? When the music stops, when the lights are off, when the crowds are gone, when the moral support isn't there, when the challenge isn't there, when the need isn't there, when it's just you and God, who are you really? Psalm 91 is a classic psalm. There's no authorship attributed to it.

Ancient Jewish tradition says Moses wrote it because he wrote Psalm 90. An ancient Jewish tradition says that if the psalm does not tell you who wrote it and the psalm before does, then that means they wrote both of them. There's no way of demonstrating that.

It's just tradition. But the words are well known to many. And some have memorized the whole psalm and spoken it in times of danger and crisis and difficulty.

I'm just going to read some from the Hebrew and translate and explain, and then go to some other Scriptures and come back to this. It says, Yoshe B'seter Elyon He who dwells It's talking about where you live. It's talking about where you abide.

Yoshe B'seter Elyon He who dwells in the secret place, or you might say, the hiding place of the Most High. Etzel Shaddai Yitlonan That One will encamp night in, night out, in the shadow of the Almighty. Yoshe B'seter Elyon Someone who lives in a particular area is called the Yoshe of that area.

He's an inhabitant of that area. That's where he dwells. Right now, I've moved out to Florida with my family.

So I am a Yoshe of Florida, an inhabitant of Florida, a dweller in Florida. This is talking about where you live. This is not just talking about something you do here and there.

This is not just talking about part of a disciplined life. This is talking about the fundamental place that you abide. And as I'm going to challenge you to enter into that place, it goes beyond entering into that place.

There's a sense of living in that place. The sense in which the psalm is speaking of is speaking of the lifestyle of being hidden in God. The lifestyle of taking refuge in God.

The lifestyle of encamping, dwelling, lodging, literally lodging night in, night out, under the shadow of the wings of God. What I want to communicate to you is that all flows out of your time alone with Him. That all

flows out of your intimate relationship with Him when no one else is around.

And ultimately, that intimate relationship when no one else is around can be just as strong when everyone is around. You can be just as much in the hiding place, in that secret place with God, with a million people around you and a million eyes on you, as you can all alone because it's heart to heart. There's one period an author said the heart alone sees God.

God alone sees the heart. That's where the communion is. Yershei b'seter el yom.

He dwells in the hiding place of the Most High. Etzel she'da yitlunan. We'll lodge night in, night out in the shadow of the Almighty.

Amar la'adonai. I will say of the Lord, ma'axi, my refuge, ma'tzudati, my stronghold, my fortress. Elohai eftakvo, my God.

In Him will I trust. I want you to go back with me to Exodus chapter 33. If you were up here ministering and the anointing of the Lord was on you, you would be able to turn and it would automatically turn to Exodus 33 even though it wasn't marked.

When you think of Joshua, what do you think of? When you think of Joshua, don't you think of the warrior? Don't you think of the man of courage, the man of faith? The man who along with Caleb said, we can take the land when the other ten spies said we can't? The man who led Israel into the Promised Land? The man who passed through the Jordan and it split? The man who took the enemy kings and put his foot on their necks and said, this is what the Lord will do to all of your enemies? He was a warrior. Conqueror. True.

Let me give you a picture. You look at a tree and that tree may stand 50, 60 feet tall and it's huge and that's what gets your attention. And the branches go out and the leaves just cover a beautiful shade.

The tree is just... That's what you see. Look at those branches or maybe it's a smaller tree, but it's a fruit producing tree and that's what you focus on. Look at the fruit coming out of it.

Look at all the activity. Look at the beautiful change in colors with the seasons and so on. Look at that.

But friends, the most important part of the tree is what you can't see. Those roots, if that tree is 50, 60 feet high, do you know how deep those roots go? Or do you know how widely spread those roots are? Do you know how big and thick those roots are? I mentioned last night that my wife is a gardener. And I am not what you would call a gardener or even a gardener's assistant.

One day I was helping her do some work where we lived before in Maryland. And she knew. I mean, in my mind, I'm writing books.

In my mind, I'm inside studying and praying. And she could see that I'm a little distracted. And she said, come on, come on, help me out for a while.

She said, it would be good for your muscles. I said, do you mean it will be good for our marriage? Just a little time together. But she knows that this is not my specialty.

In fact, shortly before we left, I promised her I'd help her do some things before we moved down. And we had to do some weeding. And I went outside to work with her.

And within five minutes of just using this little trowel and pulling things up and so on, I was amazed. I felt this pain in my hand. I had already blistered and worn away the blister.

I mean, that quickly. I had to get these gloves on and keep working. You know, you don't get rough hands sitting at the computer and turning pages of books, you know.

But one thing I found out, man, I'm trying to pull these things up. There was so little, but there were roots on them. And then if you've ever had to dig up something bigger, man, it's unbelievable.

The roots. And I don't know whether it was a 50, 60 foot tree. I can't imagine how far out the roots would go.

How thick and strong they are. We tend to focus on the branches. We tend to focus on the trunk.

We tend to focus on the leaves. We tend to focus on the fruit. But the real essential ingredient that feeds the whole thing and makes it what it is, is the roots.

And the reason that some people seem to have a dynamic ministry and suddenly topple is because they've got no roots. They're dynamic. They're charismatic.

They can do a lot. They've been given certain gifts, but there are no roots of character. And there are no roots of intimacy.

And there are no roots of being tried and proven. And there are no roots of having walked things through with God when no one else is around. And they can grow quickly and look good, but suddenly resistance attack comes and, man, they take a fall.

Or worse still, they go on with this ultimately successful ministry in the eyes of man. It's wonderful. It's great.

They're great performers, but you get near them and their character stinks. You get near them and there's no grace about them. Why? No roots.

What I want to say to you is that what we see of that trunk of the life of Joshua, what we see of those branches of the life of Joshua, that was real. That was who he was. But what really made him who he was was his secret life of prayer.

What really made Joshua the conqueror, what really made Joshua able to look out and see the enemy and not be scared was because he saw God. Leonard Ravenhill often said this to me. He said, the man who is intimate with God will never be intimidated by man.

If you're intimate with God, you won't be intimidated by man. If you see the face of God, no other face is going to bother you or faze you or strike you. When I talk about seeing his face, I mean spiritually, knowing him, relating to him, experiencing him.

Look at this account of Joshua. We read in Exodus 33, after the Israelites sinned with the golden calf, if anyone was going to meet with God, God would not dwell in the camp with the rest of the Israelites. So if anyone was going to meet with God, they had to go outside the camp to a tent that would be put up.

And it was called, because of that, the tent of meeting, because that's where people would go to commune with God and meet with him. Now Moses, verse 7, used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the tent of meeting. Anyone inquiring of the Lord would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp.

Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose and stood at the entrances to their tents, watching Moses until he entered the tent. And by the way, this is the strength of Moses' life, his intimacy with God, his passion for God, his jealousy for God. To give you another Ravenhill quote, no man is greater than his prayer life.

No woman is greater than her prayer life. I chewed on that a few years ago. Brother Len went to be with the Lord in 1994.

I chewed on that because I watched some ministries that seemed to be tremendously anointed and seemed to be doing a lot. And I was convinced that God was working through these individuals, and yet, because of the busyness of their schedule and the intensity of their lifestyles, mainly ministry schedule, I understood that they spent very little time alone with God in prayer. And I chewed on what Brother Len said.

Is it true? Is it real? No man is greater than his prayer life. Look at the ministry this guy has. Look at how God seems to be using him.

Look at this. Look at that. And I believe it's all true, and I believe the fellow was sincere.

Not a charlatan. Not a showman in any way. Sincere.

But then it struck me, that's not what Ravenhill was saying. He was saying no man, no person, no woman is greater than his or her prayer life. Who are you, really? When you stand before God, a lot of the other stuff is going to get stripped away.

One brother had a vision in prayer, or while sleeping he had a dream. In this dream, he heard the Lord calling him forward to give account. And he was about to tell the Lord, Lord, you know everything I've done.

You know I've never married, so I could serve you. Lord, you know this. You know the signs and the wonders and the miracles.

He was ready to list all this. Had it all in his mind in the dream. And the Lord calls him and says, come a little closer.

I want to see how much of my son I can see in you. And the guy woke up from his dream in a cold sweat. Not how great is your ministry.

Not how big are your branches. Not how beautiful are your leaves. But who are you really? As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance while the Lord spoke with Moses.

What an awesome scene. What an incredible picture. I preach on this chapter about Moses and his cry, hareini na k'vodecha, show me Lord your glory.

Please show me your glory. But I want to focus on Joshua. Whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent, they all stood and worshipped each at the entrance to his tent.

God was saying, Moses is one of my intimate ones. Moses is one of my boys. I talk to Moses face to face as a man talks to his friend.

No, not Moses fully seeing the face of God, but that communion. God speaks, Moses answers. Moses speaks, God answers.

Like a man to his friend. And all Israel knew it. There's a Jewish tradition that says when Moses died, God wept because He said, who's going to intercede for my people now? The Lord would speak to Moses face to face as a man speaks with his friend.

Then Moses would return to the camp. But his young aide Joshua, son of Nun, did not leave the tent. That's it right there.

Why was Joshua picked to succeed Moses? Why was Joshua picked to lead Israel into the Promised Land? You might get other evidences of his character or other things, or the way he served Moses or whatever. But to me, that's the whole thing right there. He went with Moses.

He got a taste of God's presence, God's glory. He'd leave. Moses, the man of God.

Moses, awesome servant of the Lord. Moses, that was high enough in God's economy that he's compared to Jesus. Oh, Jesus is greater than Moses, but think of just being compared to Him.

Being compared to Jesus. Moses. And yet Joshua stays.

When Moses leaves, Joshua stays. Caught up with God. Meeting with God.

If there's any deep call that I hear from year to year from God, beyond any other call, beyond any other burden, beyond any other thing, it's come away. Come away. Come away.

Look with me in Mark's Gospel. First chapter. If we could only weed out the interruptions and weed out the distractions and weed out the busyness and get back to basics, we could shake whatever nation we come from.

A man or a woman caught up with God, shut in with God, filled with God, led by God. We'd shake the world, friends. And yet we get so busy working on, man, those leaves don't really look right.

What should we do? Well, let's paint the leaves. Those leaves don't look right. What should we do? Let's go to a leaf seminar.

Those leaves don't look right. Maybe the problem is the roots are not getting nourished. I don't know what's the matter with this tree.

There's just not much fruit. Maybe we'll plant different trees. Why not check the roots? Check the roots of your spiritual life.

Listen, I am embarrassed by the simplicity of it all, by knowing that if I would spend more quality time with God on a daily basis, that I would see God work through me more wonderfully than I have ever seen a hundred times to one. It is so simple. And everything else will flow out of that.

My time alone with the Word of God would be deeper and richer. My ministry to people would be deeper and richer. My ears to hear correction and instruction from the Lord would be more in tune with Him, more acutely able to hear.

Family time would be more productive. Writing time would be more productive. My personal witness would be more vibrant.

My whole life would be more Christ-like. But I know the simple answer to it all. That's why everything in me is pushing, pushing, pushing more than I can think in years.

The secret place. Get back to that hiding place. Take refuge in God.

It was Corrie Ten Boom who said this. And I went into our ministry administrator's office the other day and just needed to check something that was on her computer. And I walked in and there was the screen saver that she had.

There are those words coming across it. The words of Corrie Ten Boom. I quoted them in my book *How Saved Are We?* The chapter on redeeming the time.

She said this, so simple. Beware the barrenness of a busy life. Beware the barrenness of a busy life.

A few years ago, while preparing to preach in New York City over for Times Square Church one night, I had a wonderful morning in prayer. And while praying, it was March 6th of, I think, 95. I just was stirred after my morning with God and wrote down what the Lord was saying to me.

Too much time working for God. Not enough time waiting on God. I'll repeat that.

Too much time working for God. Not enough time waiting on God. Too much time attending to His business.

Not enough time adoring His beauty. Just some prayer a few nights ago towards the end of the year. Looking back at the year, reflecting, praying.

Always try to take stock of things. I review my journal at the end of the year. Go through it.

Look at things the Lord was dealing with me about. Look at things I recorded. Ask myself, have I dealt with this? Have I changed this area? Have I grown in this area? What can I learn? Always trying to review.

Always trying to take stock. Always trying to evaluate things before God. I want to just race through my whole life and then at the end think, ah, I could have done it all differently.

I want to stop. I want to examine myself as the Word tells me to. I want to pray as it's prayed in Psalm 90.

Lord, teach me to number my days that I can gain a heart of wisdom. I want to know what it means to redeem the time. One thing that was just underscored to me again.

God. Not ministry. Not activity.

Not service. Not revival. Not school.

Not people. God must be the center of my life. Mark, the first chapter.

Let me ask you a question. Does anyone here have more responsibility than Jesus had while he was on the earth? You know, I've gone through every kind of organizational tool, organizational software on my computer and little organizational toys. I've been through all of them.

And I try to use something, anything that will keep me motivated to stay on top of schedules and to-dos and so on because my life is scattered in so many different areas. I don't mean it's a scattered life, but there's, you know, heading up to school and heading up our ministry and doing scholarly research and writing and then popular writing and then the involvement in the revival and outside preaching and ministry and going to other countries and ministering and having a family and so on. And, you know, that's just a partial list.

You've got your list. I've got mine. It's a lot of different areas.

And I'll try to keep myself motivated, you know, with this thing and that thing to stay on top of things I need to do and projects I need to stay involved with and promises I made to get this done and that done for people. I always think about this with a smile that in America, you know, we're big on time management. We've got all these, you know, executive classes and time managerial excellence and all this stuff and pastors and everybody's got to have their day timer.

I joke about this. You go over to India and day timers go out the window. Time management goes out the window.

One of our favorite slogans in India is hurry up and wait. You know, come on, come on. Everybody's got to get on the bus.

Come on. We've got to go to the next city. You get on the bus and you sit for two hours and don't go anywhere.

Or you get on the bus or in the car and you travel for 20 hours and go 200 miles. We've done that kind of thing. And you get there when you get there.

You know, time kind of takes on a different meaning. But some of us, man, we're busy. We're busy and we've got this scheduled and that scheduled and every kind of minute of the day worked out and planned out and budgeted out or others of us are just chaotic but we're going, you know, from the moment we wake up to the moment we go to sleep at night and it looks like at the end of the day hardly anything got done and man, there's just so much to do.

Let me ask you. Does anyone here... I gave a little piece of my life. You could give me a piece of your life.

Maybe you're married and you're home with kids and watching the kids and taking care of things and out working and all these kinds of responsibilities. You're busy. I ask you.

Do any of us have more responsibility than Jesus did? Are there more demands on your time and my time than there were on Jesus? I don't think so. How many times is it that you can't even eat because the crowds of people are surrounding your house wanting prayer? How often has that happened to you in the last week? Last month? This lifetime? That's not the norm, friends. You know, the little... We get swarmed to pray for people at the end of the night.

That's nothing what happens here. Think of everywhere you go being surrounded. You can't even get into a town or a village.

Someone's healed. You've got to bring them outside to pray for them because you know the moment word gets out, you won't be able to get near that place anymore. That's how it was with Jesus.

And think of all the villages he had to go to and all the people where he had to teach, preach, and heal. That was his pattern. Teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and disease.

That's an agenda. And then only a few years to do it because he's marching towards his destiny of dying for the sins of the world. What a schedule! And then he's got to disciple these guys so that when he leaves, there'll be a core of men who can take this message to the ends of the earth.

And yet, with great regularity, Scripture paints the picture of Jesus getting alone to get with his Father. If he could do it, what's my excuse? Well, he didn't have a nine-to-five job like I do. Friends, you don't have a 24-hour job like he did.

He doesn't have four kids screaming at him all day. You don't have hundreds and thousands of kids and people screaming at you all day. Look at Mark 1, verse 35, very early in the morning while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went off to a solitary place where he prayed.

It's almost like he's saying, you can take everything from me, but you can't take my prayer life. See, I came down from my Father in heaven. We communed eternally.

We knew one another's glory. We knew unbroken fellowship in a perfect place. Now I've come down here to this pigsty called earth.

There's one thing you're not going to take from me, and that's my intimate relationship with my Father. And he knew that the only way he could accomplish the Father's will on this earth was by remaining in vibrant contact, fellowship with him. He said, I can only do what I see my Father doing.

How did he see what his Father was doing? Obviously, everything flows, time alone with God, and the lifestyle lived caught up with him. Do I mean that he had a vision every day? I'm not saying that. He could have had a thousand visions a day.

That's not the issue. He was the Son of God. But certainly he knew what his Father was doing.

He knew when it was time to do this and it wasn't time to do this. He wasn't just flailing his way through life. But he started where he needed to start, alone with his Father.

Still dark. Don't you think he had an exhausting day? Don't you think he pushed himself to the physical limit? But he gets up early. Why? Because some things are non-negotiable.

For most all of my believing life, and really before that, before I was saved, I was a late night person, and most of my books are written after midnight. Most of my best time seeking God for years has been after midnight. Most of my best study time has been after midnight for years.

And if I'm really in the flow, God's moving on me to write, and I'm caught up with things, it's not uncommon for me to go to sleep at four in the morning. When people will talk to me and say, you know, we've got 6

a.m. prayer. Would you like to come to our 6 a.m. prayer? I tell them I'd love to, it's just hard for me to stay up that late.

That's my orientation. You know, Steve was the opposite. Before Revival, he would get up between three and four every morning to seek God.

For years, lived like that. Three in the morning or four in the morning, he'd be up seeking God for a few hours in prayer before the day started. When Revival broke out, he was getting home at three, four in the morning or five in the morning.

He'd get home and watch the sunrise as he got home. But to this day now, he'll go to sleep probably between one and two. He's still up at five-thirty or six to seek the face of God.

He's an early morning person and that's got to come first. His morning's with God and he'll grab a little nap, maybe an hour if he can later in the afternoon. I don't like to get up early if I can avoid it.

I push myself. Trust me, if you come over to my home and stay with me, I'll be up way after you're up late at night. And if it's a ministry day or any responsibility, I'll be up before you're up.

But I don't like getting up early if I can avoid it. How many of you kiss the alarm when it goes off in the morning? But you know something, when I have a plane to catch, if I'm about to go overseas for an important, you know, three days of ministry, and I've got a plane to catch, man, I'm up probably every hour on the hour through the night looking at the clock. I don't have time here.

It's only 2 in the morning. You don't have to be up until 5. Look back again. It's only 3. You don't have to be up until 5. I'm up at 5. I'm up before 5. I've already had three dreams that I overslept and missed the plane.

Why am I up at 5? Maybe I just want to sleep at 2 o'clock. Why am I up at 5? Because I have no choice. Because it's non-negotiable.

Because the only plane that's going to get me to the place where I'm going for this national conference leaves at this particular time, and I have to get that plane. Period. That's how you have to look at prayer.

It's non-negotiable. It's not an option. There is no other way around it.

There is nothing else that you can do to replace and substitute. There is no excuse. There is no replacement.

If you miss that, you fill in with something else. No. It's non-negotiable.

Whatever you have to do, whether it's getting up early, which is the more biblical pattern. Steve's pattern would be the one you could argue for more biblically. You know, getting up to get the matter before the sun comes up and the sun comes out and melts it? Starting your day in that sense? Or if you're a midnight person, a late night person, and that's in the Word too? Whatever it is, you've got to make that a non-negotiable.

If Jesus, in the midst of His exhausting schedule, found it important enough to get up while it was still dark and pray, what is that telling me? Why do you think He fell asleep in a boat? Why did He fall asleep in a boat? I have a deep theological question I only want those who are really deep in the Word, who are really, you know, probably in ministry for at least 20 years, because this is a serious question. I see some

of our students here, I'm sorry you haven't been in school long enough to answer this, I'm sorry. But for those who are really deep, why did Jesus fall asleep in the boat? Wait, wait, we've got some guys that are deep over here, and they must be very humble because they're not ashamed to say that they're deep.

The answer is, He was tired. Woo! He was good, man. I'm impressed.

How long have you been saved? Since 75, and you knew that already in only 22 years. Excellent. You've only been saved, and you knew it also.

It's amazing what God can do in a few short years, huh? He fell asleep in the boat because He was tired. You say, Brother, now I see why I've come from around the world to Pensacola to just get this revelation. Bob Gladstone, one of the faculty members at our school, a real gift from God to us here, he looked at things, he looked at his own life, and he saw that his schedule was such between teaching classes, he teaches 10 hours a week in the school, between teaching his classes and feels committed from the Lord to be in revival every night.

He and his wife just had their third child. They've got two little kids and now an infant, just a little over, not even two weeks old, serviced with the baby last night. He looked at things and saw there were certain things in his schedule that could not be adjusted and realized the only things that could be adjusted were eating and sleeping.

And he figured that looking at Jesus, that Jesus lived in a similar way, that sometimes He didn't have a chance to eat because of the press of ministry, and that the fact He was sleeping in the boat meant He was tired. I don't think that He got all the sleep He needed every night before that and just decided to sleep more in the boat. He fell asleep because He was tired.

Why? Because maybe He'd gotten up early. What I'm trying to tell you is He's a man like we are. He made decisions and there were consequences to His decisions.

When I get up early, I'm tired. Yeah, but you got to meet with God. And in your time meeting with God, you got some clarity to see you could cut away a few other activities so you wouldn't be so tired.

You say, but this is just an isolated instance of Jesus doing this. Do you know how many little isolated instances there are like this in the Word? Another time. Here, let's go over to Mark the sixth chapter.

There are enough isolated instances that gives us a life pattern. Jesus feeds the 5,000. Verse 45, Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of Him to Bethsaida while He dismissed the crowd.

After leaving them, He went up on a mountain side to pray. He sends them off. Now He's got to get with God.

He's got to get alone with God. You know how some of you live? You ever hear the story about the man who lost his wrist watch and it's nighttime in a city. It's under a big light.

Street corner lamp there. And he's on his hands and knees looking around. And someone says to him, What happened? He said, I lost my watch.

He said, Well, I'll help you look for it. He said, Did you lose it around here? He said, No, but the light is better. Some of you spend your whole lives flailing, I mean the light is better here.

This is easier. I can work better here. Instead of stopping and saying, Wait a second, what am I supposed to be doing? Busy, active, moving, flailing.

You can watch your life and it's a whiz. Can't even keep up with you in a day, in a week, in a month. Whoa! Activity, busyness, ministry.

God's saying, Why are you doing this? I haven't called you to do this. Why are you living like this? There are people with far more responsibility to you than you have and they have far more peace. People with far more load to carry and they have far more grace about it.

John Wesley said, Though I am in haste, I'm never in a hurry. I may have said it backwards, trying to think. But his point was, as busy as he was, he was never rushed.

As busy as he was, as intense as his schedule was, he was never rushed. He was at peace. He would get where he was going when he got there.

I'll find myself, you know, before I get into the driveway, you know, just as I'm getting close to home, the seatbelts are already coming off. Why? You know, before I get to a place, if I'm going through a drive-through teller at a bank or something, I've already gotten everything out, even though there's going to be a line of cars in front of me, I've already gotten out. Why? I just started looking at habits as indicative of attitudes.

You know, the plane arrives. It's going to be three minutes before it gets to the gate. Plus, you're supposed to keep your seatbelt on.

Why take it off then? How long does it take to take that thing off? I mean, try it. Next time you're on the plane, how long does it take to put the thing on, take the thing off? Why not wait until you're actually at the gate? Why not chill out? Now, let me just balance this for a second before I go back to Jesus. I know that some people here, if I could use plain language, are lazy bums.

I would not use that language. I won't use that because I don't want to offend anyone. But if I were to use plain language, I would say that some of you here are lazy bums.

However, I won't use that term so that you can see how gracious I am in my speech, not wanting to offend anyone. I know that some of you are anything but blurs of activity. I know that some of you are anything but going, going, going, moving.

And you just need to build a little discipline into your life, right? You need to go through the book of Proverbs and look at what it says about the sluggard and do a checklist and say, is that sluggard me? And then look at the diligent person and examine your life and repent and step back. And if you need someone to take you by the hand and put you on a schedule, even if you hate it, do it. Many sluggards get into a place like the army or the navy and suddenly get whipped in shape because they have no choice.

And then once they're whipped in shape, they love it. But I'm speaking to those in ministry. I'm speaking to those with families.

I'm speaking to those with jobs. I'm speaking to those who are just caught up with busyness and activity and it is so many of us. I'm not speaking to those that spend their whole day sleeping and just thinking about what they're going to do and planning on getting a job.

I'm planning on getting a job. For those planning on getting a job in 1998, major plans in 1997, 1998 is here. Don't plan it.

Do it. But some of us would pray if we had more time. We would commune with God if we could break away from other things.

But there are too many demands. Tell that to Jesus, friend. You look at the prayer life of Paul.

You want to do a study. Go through the beginnings of Paul's epistles. Most of his epistles, he'll talk about how I pray for you day and night, how I pray for you with tears, how I pray for you without ceasing.

And you think, Paul, how in the world did he do it? Because it was non-negotiable. A few months ago, I did some evaluating of my schedule. And it's common.

It's our privilege. It's our joy. But all of us involved in the revival, I would say on average, spend between 70 and 80 hours a week in ministry-related activities.

I would say that's normal and on average. And it's a wonderful privilege. And wives are in order.

Families are in order. Personal lives are in order. Thank God.

We're not burning ourselves out. We don't have one foot in the grave. Our families are not falling apart.

What use would it be if that was the case? Would all the ministry be? It would be worthless. The other things were not right. But I stepped back and I looked at things and I said, okay, realistically, in the course of a day, I never get nearly everything done on my list of things to do.

I'm always writing books. I'm always engaging in things. I've got stacks.

By the way, if you have a book that you'd like me to review, send it to me in the year 2010. Stacks of, you know, from good friends. Would you read this? Could you review this? Could you give me some thoughts on this? Would you write a blurb about this? Stacks of that.

Stacks of my own stuff I've got to get to publishers. And then the blessing and the curse called email, especially when your personal address gets out to people. And you look in there and, you know, I went through some email the other day and thought I might as well discard this one back from February.

I don't think I'm going to answer. This is just about a month ago. I don't think I'm going to answer.

But I kept the thing there in my files. You know, if you're not familiar with email, you know, mail that comes through the computer system. You look at it and there's no way in the course of a day to meet with the people I want to meet with, to spend time with the students I want to spend time with, spend time with staff and faculty.

You know, there's just no way at the end of a day that I could get everything done. Every single day, for multiplied months, it is always the case. So I just made a decision.

If certain things will not get done every day, I have to decide what will get done. Period. Now let me explain.

I'm just trying to be practical. I'm not trying to impress you with, wow, what insight. I mean, I gave you that awesome insight as to why Jesus fell asleep in the boat.

That should impress you enough. Someone said, I came to Pensacola and they're not very deep. Tell them what we teach.

Tell them that we actually tell you why Jesus fell asleep in the boat. But I'm trying to impress you. I'm trying to be practical here.

I'm trying to speak to you where you live. I said, if I know at the end of the day many things will not get done that I want to do, the one thing that I will not allow to be undone is my time in prayer and my time in the Word. And I don't mean totally undone.

Obviously, it wouldn't be totally undone in any day. But undone in the sense of not completed, not adequate. You could always pray more.

You could always read the Word more. You could always witness more. You could always give more.

You could always fast more. You could always do more. But there is a sense of, I've met with God.

There is a sense of, I've spent that quality time with Him. There is a sense of, I've taken in His Word and I said to myself, whatever in the world it's going to take. Why is it that the email can get done, but I didn't spend more time in prayer? Why is it that this meeting got accomplished, but I didn't spend more time in the Word? Why is it this other writing got done, but my time of intimacy with Jesus wasn't fulfilled? That's perverse.

That can't be. You have to make a choice. Life's not just going to fall into place.

I went to Brownsville. I was anointed. I was changed, yes.

But now you're going to have to make choices based on that change. Man, I'm just kind of flying good. Keep flying and get so locked in, so grounded, so committed, so determined, that even if you feel nothing for six months, you will not move an inch from your time with God, from your intimacy with Him, from your prayer life.

I've used this illustration sometimes. But some years ago in my study in Maryland, my office, I'm just surrounded by books on all the walls. I've got a large library.

And I was praying, and I kept getting distracted in my prayer time. Sometimes you can pray an hour, and you haven't prayed five minutes. In my book, Whatever Happened to the Power of God, I have a chapter that deals a lot with wrestling and prayer.

It's called Prayer is Mightier than the Pen. There's a little quote I have there from Scottish Presbyterian minister Moody Stewart. A little rule of prayer.

His first rule, he had three rules, but it's the first one that really caught me. Pray until you pray. That was his first rule.

You didn't pray three hours, and you haven't prayed two minutes. You may have the quantity, but not the quality. And I was just so distracted in my prayer time.

You know, the moment you start to pray, remember you haven't balanced your checkbook. The moment you start to pray, you notice your nails need clipping. The moment you start to pray, you remember some project you promised to do.

I mean, all the stupid things come flying. Whether it's the devil or it's your own mind, either way. Curator and author Richard Sibbes said that when we go to pray, the devil knows that we go to fetch strength against him.

Therefore, he opposeth us all that he can. Yeah, there's a spiritual battle that our own minds can wander to. But I was just so distracted, I said, God, these next minutes, I just want to totally focus in on You in prayer and put away every distracting thought and just get my heart set on You.

And the next thing I remember, I was pulling off a volume on the shelf called Encyclopedia Mikra'ita, Hebrew Encyclopedia of the Old Testament, looking up the reference to Yachin and Boaz. What's Yachin and Boaz? The names of the two pillars in Solomon's temple, checking the reference to see if I had the reference right in 2 Chronicles. I remember, I'm pulling the volume and looking and it hit me.

Where in the world did this come from? Here I'm about to just focus in on the Lord and just, Jesus, I want my heart and mind to be filled with You and thoughts of You and not distracted with a million other things while I'm praying. I mean, we can do so many other things and we're not distracted, and yet when it comes to God and worship and adoration and prayer and petition, we're so distracted. No sooner do I do that than I'm thinking about the names of the pillars in Solomon's temple.

How many of you have meditated on that subject? What it was is there were some Hebrew books, a commentary on some religious Jewish literature, and it had those names on it, and as I was praying with my eyes open at that moment, I looked up and saw those and my mind started running. I didn't even realize. The next thing, I'm out in left field somewhere.

Within seconds of saying, Oh God, I just want to focus in on You. And here I go to teach on the secret place and getting alone with God and getting back to the basics. And no sooner do I start teaching than someone comes up with an announcement, an interruption.

They were sent to do it. Didn't have a chance, I guess, to write it out or it wasn't clear. They had to communicate it to me orally.

So what a perfect illustration. By the way, I will now fulfill my end of this. Sister, I don't know if you're expecting to see Sister Brenda, but she won't be able to make it today.

The message is for you. You got it already? Okay, great. My hands are clean.

I was praying this morning and just preparing my heart, meditating on some scripture. And then I just took a break for a minute and just wanted to check on a news-related item. Just got on my computer for a second, checked something on the news.

The next thing, I was going to another subject. And this is going to be a one-minute thing, breaking away for a minute and coming back. And I said, not this morning.

If there's any time where I'm not going to now get distracted and go on a tangent here, tangent there, it's now. You know, this is the age of total distraction to keep somebody's attention. I'm not around television

much, but one time I was watching and the sound was down and there was a commercial and it must have been 30 or 40 images flashed through in a 60-second commercial.

You know, Americans now, you know, you can't jog unless you have a, you know, a walkman with music going. There's always got to be some other activity. We don't know how to just quiet ourselves and quiet our souls and get deep with God.

Take His Word and chew on it. Digest it. If you've heard the teaching that the Hebrew word for meditate means to chew the cud, that's nonsense.

It no more means to chew the cud than it means to be a space astronaut. The Hebrew word principally used for meditation has to do with reciting, saying, repeating. Joshua 1.8, Lo yamush sefer torah zemi pichah, this book of the law, this book of teaching will not depart from your mouth, the Haggitah bo yamam balaylah, but you will meditate on it.

It won't depart from your mouth, no. Recite it, repeat it day and night so that you can observe to do all that's written in it. Then you'll prosper and succeed in the things of God.

We don't know how to take something. So many of us don't. Digest it.

Chew on it. Repeat it. Recite it.

Think about it. Get it into our system. Get alone with God.

Open the Word. Get on our knees. Take a psalm and pray it out loud to God and go through the words and say, Oh God, this is not how I'm living.

God, this is not what my heart says. Take the commands of Jesus and read them. Lord, what does it mean to be poor in spirit? Where is that blessedness? Where is that true happiness? Show me what it means.

Lord, how should I mourn? Not the sorrow of the world that brings death, but Godly sorrow. What does it mean? And you talk to Jesus. And you take things in.

You put your roots down deeper and deeper and deeper. And you do like the Lord did. You have to get up early in the morning before anybody else.

You may have to throw cold water on your face first. You may have to take a shower. You may have to do what you need to do to wake up, but then you wake up.

And you get that time with God. Better to be tired later in the day and have to catch a nap or go to sleep early, but to have had that precious, priceless time with your Master. Everything else is going to pass.

Everything else is going to fade. You get to the end of the book of Revelation, the 22nd chapter, and what's the goal of it all? What's the climax of the whole plan of redemption? And His servants will see Him. They'll see His face and will serve Him forever.

That's what's going to be left in the end. That's got to be the foundation now. Build things that are going to last forever.

Build into yourself things that are going to last forever. I just did a quick review of passages having to do with prayer in the Gospels. Some of them talk about Jesus praying.

Others talk about His teaching on prayer. When you pray, go in your closet and shut the door. All things you ask in prayer, believe and you will receive.

The Lord teaches us to pray. Then some things talk about His own prayer life. The end of His life, the Garden of Gethsemane.

What's He doing? He leaves the others here. Just a few guys come, I've got to pray. This is the crisis point.

This is the point of agony. This is the point of burden. Too great for me to bear.

I've just got to get along with God, but I need you guys with me to get with God with me. I've got to get away from everybody else. I've got to get away from everything else.

Some of us remind me of a person you see stopped up by the roadside, standing there by a stalled-out car. Why did their car stall? They had a long trip to take, and they didn't have enough gas to make it all the way. Well, why didn't they stop and get gas? Well, they were late, and it was a long trip, and they were busy.

What a fool. What a fool. You don't have time to not stop and get gas.

Otherwise, you will be a stalled-out vehicle on the side of the road. Same thing with our whole life in God. Other things can wait.

Other things must wait. Prayer is the priority. Fellowship with God is the priority.

Intimacy with God is the priority. I don't want to flail my life away. I don't want to stall out on the side of the road.

I want to finish the race. I want to fulfill that which Jesus died for in me. I want to apprehend that for which He apprehended me.

How's it going to happen? Intimacy with Him. It's all going to flow out of that. That's the beginning, and that's the end, and that's the middle.

Look in Luke's Gospel, chapter 6. I've often taught on the prayer life of Jesus. Even here in the Revival, Luke 3 is He's baptized. What's He doing? Praying.

He's baptized, and He's praying. That's when heaven opens, and that's when the Father speaks. This is my Son.

And I'm, well, please listen to Him. And I've always felt that that was a pattern for life in ministry. When we pray, heaven's open, and God speaks.

If God's going to give you a platform, He'll do it. He can say to the whole world, listen to that one. That's my son.

That's my daughter. Listen to them. I've given them a word.

Listen to them. He can suddenly give you a platform to speak to the world if He wants to, or to speak to your community, or to speak to your unsaved loved ones, or to speak to the church. If you write with Him

in private, heaven opens.

He says, that's my boy, that's my girl. You listen to them. Same in Luke 9, it goes up on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Brother just gave me a real neat insight about that passage. God so clearly confirming His Son as the Messiah, the Chosen One, the prophet like Moses. He says that again in Luke 9. They go up to the mountain.

Why? To pray. And as He was praying, He's transfigured. And God says again, this is my Son, my Chosen One, whom I delight.

Listen to Him. While He was praying, His face is transfigured. I've looked at that as a pattern for life.

You'll be transfigured as you pray. You'll be transfigured as you meet with God. Luke 6, I'll come to it in a minute.

I was looking at all these different passages on prayer in the Gospels, just reviewing them over a few seconds, just running through them. And it struck me like this. All of the exhortations, believe God for this, ask for this, ask for this, ask for this, and that's part of prayer.

Asking is a foundational part of prayer. Going to God and saying, Father, You know our needs. You know this crisis we're in.

You know this one needs healing, Lord. You know we don't have the ability to get our kid through school. Father, I know You're calling us to the mission field, but there are no funds.

I'm asking You to do this, I'm asking You to do this. Lord, You've given me this book to write. I'm asking You to cause it to get out.

We're asking constantly. God wants us to be asking constantly. Like Charles Spurgeon said, like it or not, asking is the rule of the kingdom.

You don't have because you don't ask. Ask, ask, ask, ask, ask. You will never weary God with your asking.

He delights in your asking. It will weary Him if He's given you the things to do, and you're asking Him and you already have the ability to do it. It will weary Him if you're living in sin and you're asking.

But if you're right with Him and you're asking for things that only He can do, ask, ask, ask, ask. But it struck me that all those asking promises and all of those asking exhortations flowed out of the deeper source of relationship with Him and intimacy with Him. And out of that, ask, ask, ask.

Some of us put our whole emphasis on how to get from God, how to receive from God, how to believe God. And that's all important. But it's got to flow out of the foundation of the roots of intimacy and relationship.

Look at what Jesus does here in Luke 6. I'm sorry, verse 12. One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray and spent the night praying to God. One time He gets up early in the morning and prays.

Another time, everybody else leaves. He prays that night alone. In the middle of the night, He has to meet up with the disciples, so He just comes walking on the water to catch up with them.

Here, He spends the night praying to God. Why? The next morning, He calls His disciples, chooses 12, and He designates them apostles. Aha! The next morning, He's going to call His 12 apostles.

This is a big move. What does He do? He spends the night praying to God. Have you really submitted your life to Him? Are you doing what God's called you to do or what your own mind has told you makes sense? Are you doing what God's called you to do or what other people are asking you to do? Are you doing what God has called you to do or just where life has taken you? Do you know that you know that you know that the main course of your life is exactly where God wants it to be? Oh, there might be little things and specific things.

Do you know that you know that you know that the car that you are driving is the car that God wants you to drive? I don't really give a hoot. Unless you had a problem with driving over the speed limit and now you go out and buy some car that can go 150 miles an hour. Okay, so you know, repent and get rid of the car.

And if that was the word for someone here, get rid of the car and give the money to the building fund because that was God speaking to you. Or give it to the poor. Or give it to our brother to help the orphanages in Romania.

But, you know, that doesn't matter. Brother, do you know for a fact that the tie you're wearing is the tie God wanted you to wear today? Well, I prayed a lot about it to be honest with you. I really sought to hear the Lord.

I had a couple of ties that matched this black suit. This is the one I chose to wear today. Yes, I chose to wear it.

I cannot tell you that God led me to wear this. And I don't think He cares. But let me tell you, I know beyond any possible shadow of a doubt that I am exactly where God wants me to be.

Serving in the revival here, heading up the school of ministry, traveling, writing, doing other things. I have no question whatsoever that all the main areas of my life are right where they're supposed to be with God. I've just got to keep getting deeper and become more like Jesus and be more consumed by Him, more dominated by Him, more in love with Him, more serving Him sacrificially.

And I want that to be the cry of my heart until I see Him face to face. But I'll tell you this, if the roots weren't there, I couldn't talk like this. Or if I did, I'd be deceived.

You say, Brother, and there's always someone who hears things legalistically, so I want to help you. Brother, are you telling me that if I don't pray five hours a day, even if you don't mention time or anything, someone's going to hear this. Brother, are you telling me if I don't pray five hours a day that I can't be guaranteed the blessing of God on my life? Did I say that? We have several hundred witnesses.

Did I say that? I haven't said that. Have you heard me mention a time frame that is required yet? No. Am I telling you to be like Reese Howells? According to Leonard Ravenhill, he heard this from Reese Howells' own wife, the man about whom Norman Grubb wrote the book *Intercessor*.

Phenomenal man of prayer. Am I telling you that you've got to be like Reese Howells, who over an 11-month period at a time of crisis prayed 12 hours a day and only came out one day, and that was for his mother's funeral? Am I telling you to be like that? Nope. I'm not telling me to be like that.

If I prayed 12 hours a day, oh, yes, I'd be a world shaker, but you wouldn't see me. Am I giving you a time? No, I'm not. I'm telling you that you know what it means between you and God to make this the foundation.

I'm telling you that you know between you and God what it means to make this the priority. Someone said, if I hem in my mornings with prayer, my days will not come unraveled as they go on. You know what it means to get along.

You know what it means to abide in that hiding place. You know what it is to take refuge away from the storm. You know what it is to shut out the busyness of life.

You may have to do it because your house is so filled with activity. You may have to get into a bathroom and shut the door. I remember the church I was saved in, the founding pastor, an old Italian brother, big man, highly respected man of God.

Those days when I was first saved, I had a very light high school schedule and there was a great hunger for God. By the time I was saved, about a year, year and a half, I would average six or seven hours alone with God every day. I had a wonderful schedule.

God gave me the grace, the discipline. The hunger was there. I'd spend six, seven hours alone with God every day, three hours in prayer, two hours reading the Word, one hour memorizing Scripture.

I used to memorize 20 verses every single day. I did it for six months. God just enabled me to live like that.

I remember my knees were hurting, just for hours on my knees. And I was talking to this older man of God. He said, Brother, one time I prayed so much I got water on the knees.

I couldn't kneel down. I said, Brother, Brother, what did you do? He said, I prayed sitting. Wow.

He's deep. What a man of God. Friend, you meet with God in the bathroom.

You can meet with God, you can get alone in your car and roll up the windows and meet with God. You can find a broom closet somewhere and meet with God. There's a place where you shut the world.

You might have to be in a room with a hundred other people and meet with God alone. You may live in a nation that such that there's virtually no privacy at any moment. You can get alone with God.

You know what it's like to put your roots down. I ask you, do you know what it is to live in that place? And let me say in all candor, there must be sometimes at least of extended hours alone with God. Everybody's different.

There's some people that seem to thrive in the Lord and if they could spend an hour in prayer a day, they're world shakers. And there are others that if they don't spend three hours in prayer a day, they're backsliding. And there are others here, if you spent a half hour in prayer a day, it would be light years ahead of where you are.

You'll work that out between you and God as you grow, as you seek His face, as you get deeper. But let me tell you, based on the human being, the structure of who we are, the way that we just get going, going, going in a certain direction, it's hard to make lifestyle changes. All the distractions, all the pulls, all the activities, and it could be the idols of sports and the idols of entertainment, the idols of materialism and greed, along with the other sins and lusts, all those things pulling at us, calling us to bow down and worship them, stealing our time, our attention, our energy.

It could be love of leisure. It could be love of money. It could be a million things.

Love of ministry. All these things pulling us away. Knowing what the Word says, knowing the way we're made up, you're going to need to chart out some time to get alone with God in a quality and in a quantity way here and there.

Let me ask you this. I'm not going to go on too much longer. We're going to close by just going through Psalm 91 briefly.

But let me ask you this. Honestly. For most people here, don't you have at least some control of your schedule? Don't you have at least some ability to make decisions in your life? I'm being as mild about this as I can to try to include everybody here.

Don't you have at least some of... Do you choose, I think I'm going to watch this on TV tonight? Then you have control over your schedule. Hey, hon, why don't we go out with some friends tonight? You know, thinking about vacation next year? You've got control of your schedule. Man, I'm just going to relax.

What are you doing today? I think I'm going to work on some stuff around the house. You've got control of your schedule. Oh, we're just getting together, having a nice breakfast, doing this and some of the ladies.

You have control of your schedule. Why not make some quality decisions to cut some other things out and schedule in some quality time with God? If you've never prayed a whole night and gotten alone with God for a whole night, don't answer the phone, don't put on the television, don't respond to anything else. You're just going to get alone with God.

If you've never done that, why not look at your schedule? If you need your husband to help you out, ladies, you know, with the kids, you need a friend, you're a single mom, you need a friend to help you, or sir, you need someone to offload some responsibilities or get your wife to help you with something, why not say, okay, I've never done this, I'm going to schedule out, you know, from 7 in the evening until midnight and just get alone with God. I'm going to take a day, I'm going to get away on a Saturday, spend from 10 to 5 just alone with God, just the Lord, me, and the Word, and do it. If you've got vacation time, I'll tell you, for years, I could look at schedule and I could tell you when I got away for 3 days or 4 days or 5 days or 6 or 7 days alone with God several different times over the years and I could point to that, but I couldn't point to when I just had 5 straight vacation days.

We would just do things a few days here, a few days there. I'm not saying that's the lifestyle to emulate, I'm just saying that for me it was more important to choose that and it was fine with the family for me to choose that and to say, oh, here's a free break time, we can all just go do something. We do things at other times and in other ways.

Let me tell you flat out, if you watch television more than you pray, you're out of the will of God. You can say whatever you want to say, you can be as spiritual as you want to be. I'm not talking about watching

sinful stuff either.

If you're watching sinful stuff, for a second you're out of the will of God. And let me tell you something, I don't believe there's any good reason to spend more time watching Christian television than being in the Word and prayer. Even good Christian television, there is some good Christian television too.

I talked to a guy in Italy one time. I'm coming to the end and going back to Psalm 91. I was ministering over there and a guy came to talk to me through a translator.

He had a tough life, man. The schedule he had, the work he did, the pressure he was under, the world, the atmosphere he was in, family. That's tough, he had me going for a while.

When do I get with God, brother? When do I meet with God? When do I pray? How do I do it? I get up this time in the morning, I have this going on all day, and this and this and this and this, and then I get home at night. He really had me going for a while. I said, let me ask you a question.

He said, do you read the newspaper at all? Oh yeah, I get home every night, every night. Read through the newspaper? Oh yeah, every night. Huh, interesting, but you have no time for the Word.

You watch television? Oh yeah, I do. Every night? Every night, yeah. About how long? About two hours.

Huh. Now don't tell me that's family time either. Let's make a split.

Spend one hour with family and one hour with God. How's that if you're concerned about family time? Two hours watching television. Read the newspaper.

Who knows what other activities. Okay, you have a hard day at work. You need to just relax.

Fine, just relax for a few minutes. Just relax with the family. Or just close your eyes and chill out for a few minutes.

Fine. What about Jesus? There it was. He made lifestyle choices based on what was important to Him.

If it was important to me to be in better athletic shape, I would be. It's obviously not important enough, and I've got to push myself a little bit more to exercise more and get in better shape. I need to, and when it becomes more important to me, I will.

The evidence of what's important is what you do and how you live. Are souls important to Steve Hill? Yes, they are. How do I know it? Because basically for the life of the revival, he doesn't eat all day.

Every night that he preaches, he doesn't eat. He may have just like a health shake or a cup of coffee or something during the day, but he basically doesn't eat all day because that's how he can be in a better frame to preach and minister at night. He's lived like that four days a week, five days a week, sometimes six days a week, not eating until having a small meal after the meeting at night or a regular meal after the meeting at night.

He's saying souls are important to me. You might have come last night and said, boy, it was such a simple message and such a basic message and so many people responded to the altar call. That's because his roots are deep.

And in a few simple words, he can bring more life to more people than a lot of other people in ten years of effort. I just use Steve as an example because we know each other's lifestyle. And he is who you think he is.

What you see is what you get with him, with all the guys here. The point I'm making is simple. You're going to have to choose what kind of life you're going to live.

You're going to have to choose what kind of man of God or woman of God you're going to be or if you're going to be a man of God or a woman of God. You're going to have to quit making excuses. It's nobody's fault.

If your prayer life stinks, it's nobody's fault. If you have no intimacy with God, it's nobody's fault except yours. If my schedule is too intense and I can't get more time with God, it's my fault and nobody else's fault.

Come to grips with it, be real about it, and know that this is the place of delight and this is the place of joy and this is the place of fulfillment and this is the place of grace and this is the place of changing the world, the secret place, that hiding place, that place alone. This is the place in which every minute is worth more than hours and hours outside. This is the place we were made for.

In your presence is fullness of joy. At your right hand, pleasures forevermore. It's not just the rigor of prayer.

Be disciplined and pray. Be an army. Yeah, there's discipline involved, but it's the delight, the wonder, the joy.

And even in those dry times, you can pray for hours and go through three hours of dry prayer and not feeling you're breaking through and no sense of communion. But stay there. You're meeting with God and the breakthrough will come to you.

Let's just read through this psalm and then we're done because there's some wonderful promises and this is talking about the life lived, Yoshe V'setra El Yom, the one who dwells, who lives in that place, the hiding place, the secret place of the Most High. I'm telling you it's going to flow out of the times alone in that hiding place out of which the life is lived, hidden in God. Amal Adonai Mach Siu Metzudati I will save the Lord, my refuge, my fortress, Elohai Ef Takbo, my God, in Him will I trust.

Tihu Yatzil Kami Pach YaKush for He will deliver you from the snare of the fowler. There are people out there to get you, friend. There are demon powers out there to get you.

He'll deliver you. Migdever Havot from the destructive plague. He'll deliver you.

Be'Evratot Yasech Lach He'll cover you with His pinyin. Atachat Kanafav Techseh Under His wings you'll take refuge. What a picture.

Sinav Socherah Mito His truth is a shield and buckler, big shield, small shield, protected in every way. His truth. Lo Tihra Mi Pachad Lala You will not fear the terror of night.

See, there are terrors out there. There are not only terrifying things. The Bible talks about fear.

It can mean the fear or the object of the thing feared. There are fearful, terrifying things out there meant to destroy, meant to harass. You don't have to fear them.

You don't have to fear them. Mecheitz Ya'uf Yaman From the arrow that flies by day. They're out there.

Our eyes could be open to the spiritual warfare around us. It's unbelievable. But you're armed.

You're shielded. You're guarded. You're protected.

You're kept. Migdever Ba'ofel Yahloch From the plague that walks, stalks in darkness. Meketev Ya'shud Sahara The destructive plague that destroys noontime.

Pol Mitzit Ka'elef A thousand will fall at your side. U'lefavah Mi Minecha Ten thousand at your right hand. Eylecha Lo Yigash It will not come near you.

The psalm has been taken hold of by people in battle. Miraculously, their only explanation is God preserved them. Spurgeon talks about during the plague.

I believe it was Asian flu. I'm not sure. But a plague struck severely.

Last century in England, Spurgeon spoke of workers going out to the hospitals completely infected. And the people were untouched that went in to minister to them. They held to the psalm.

Spurgeon was not what you'd call a practitioner of divine healing, but he saw this as a promise to take hold of. T'vach be'einecha tabit Y'shidu matrishayim t'yareh Only with your eyes will you see, behold, the recompense of the wicked. You'll see people being judged and they'll drop around you.

And God will keep you because you live in that place. Oh, there are hardships and trials and difficulties for the righteous and there are obstacles, and yet these awesome promises of what can be lived and what can happen for the people of God. Yes, there's persecution.

We're promised that. There's suffering for Jesus. We're promised that.

And yet there are other attacks that we are promised protection from. And even with persecution and martyrdom, the sense that if it's not my time, God will keep me, even if I'm ready to lay my life down. Lo t'u'ne'elecha ra'ah No evil, no disaster will befall you.

Ve'nega lo yikrav ve'aholecha No plague will draw near your tent, meaning your family. Several different Hebrew words used here for plague. Destructive attack through this psalm.

Ki malachav yitzavelach For he will give his angels charge over you. Nishmorchar b'chol d'rachecha To keep you in all your ways. Same promise God gave Israel in Exodus 23.

Akapayim yisotuncha Literally, on their palms, on their hands, they will carry you. Pentigof ba'evin raglecha Lest you smash your foot against a stone. I don't know about you, but I've been carried many times.

I don't know about you, but I've blown it many times. I don't know about you, but I've fallen short many times. And yet, deep down, there's that heart that wants to do the will of God, that heart that seeks to be obedient, and that heart that's not going to play with sin.

And that heart that realizes, I'm nobody and nothing, just like you realize you're nobody and nothing, and he's the source of everything, and you're just dependent on him. I'm here because he's carried me. He said to the children of Israel, You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt and how I carried you on eagle's wings and brought you to myself.

He'll carry you, friend. In the time of crisis and difficulty, instead of smashing your foot on a stone, he'll carry you. And those that have gone through calamity and they don't understand why, they read the psalm and they say, I can't understand why this has happened.

Somehow in the midst of it, they'll tell you, we don't have all the answers, but God carried us through. We can't explain why everything happened the way it did. All we know is he carried us through and his grace was sufficient.

Maybe we'll have more answers later. Maybe God can't give us all the details now. Maybe we couldn't handle it.

All we know is even when it didn't pan out the way we expected, we were surrounded by grace and covered. And others would stand up and say, and in that time of attack, he rescued my loved one from death. And in that time of disaster, when everyone was falling all around us, he kept us safe.

And I, for one, believe that we can just be simple and say, I don't know why this happened to this person. And I don't know why this happened to that one. They were godly.

They loved the Lord. I don't know, but I won't base my theology on what happened to them. I'm going to believe God.

I'm going to bless them, pray with them, stand with them, encourage them, and not think a negative thought about them. I don't understand everything that happens and how and why. That's why you have books like Job in the Bible.

All I know is there's some promises here that God gave. Maybe my problem is I'm not living in that hiding place. Maybe that's the problem.

Al shakal, afeten, tigrok, the tread, some would make these two different kinds of snakes, serpent and adder, others lion and adder you'll tread on. Tirmos, kfir, v'tanim, trample down two different kinds of lions, serpents. Kivih ashak, afaltehu.

Me, he's cleaved and delighted. I'll deliver him. Asagvehu, I'll exalt him.

For he knows my name. That means he knows me. He's intimate with me.

He'll call to me and I'll answer him. I'm with him in trouble. The Hebrew puts with him first.

With him am I in trouble. Hard times. Achatsehu, I'll deliver him.

Achabdehu, and I will honor him. Think of God saying I will honor him. You could translate I would glorify him if you didn't take that in the wrong sense.

I'll honor him. I'll give that person exaltation. Orech yamim asbiehu, I'll satisfy him with length of days that are ehu bishuati.

And I will show him my salvation. I don't know that in all the teaching here I've ever just taken a psalm like this in Hebrew and read it through and translate it and expand it. It's just the way I always read it in Hebrew and the way I wanted to read it here.

Whatever language your Bible's in, the promises are clear. The promises are the same. You may not agree on the translation of every word about what kind of serpent we're trampling underfoot.

Every kind of plague, it's clear. They're ugly, they're destructive. You don't want them in your home.

And this is just what happens when we hide ourselves in him. Can you stand to your feet with me please?

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