

# Why Sit Here Until We Die?

by Michael L. Brown

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of self-examination and spiritual growth, encouraging listeners to move forward in their relationship with God and become more like Jesus.*

**Duration:** 1:26:46

**Scripture:** Proverbs 16:9, Matthew 22:37, Matthew 28:19, 1 Corinthians 1:27, Ephesians 6:10, Revelation 3:1

**Topics:** "Faith And Courage", "Spiritual Growth"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on his experiences of preaching and teaching the word of God. He shares how he often feels inadequate and unsure of his knowledge, but is encouraged by the positive feedback he receives. The speaker then delves into the story of Joshua and Caleb from the book of Joshua, emphasizing their courage and faith in the face of giants. He also discusses the story of the Israelites escaping from the Egyptians, highlighting the importance of crying out to God in times of trouble. The sermon concludes with a reminder to continually seek wisdom and strive for spiritual growth, avoiding stagnation in our relationship with God.

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## Transcript

We pray for your grace and power to be in our midst this day as we open your word. Lord, you know those that are here. Lord, even in a small gathering this day, Lord, of hundreds and not of thousands, you know each life, you know the people from each nation, you know each situation, each need, and I pray you would speak with clarity that your word would come with power and leave a lasting deposit in our lives.

And Lord, for Ben and Vera who ministered to us and for the work of the Christian Embassy in Jerusalem and around the world, I ask you to pour out more grace in a more substantial and lasting and wonderful way that the name of Jesus would be powerfully glorified in them and through them. We bless your great name, God, in Jesus' name. Amen.

You can be seated. And I want you to turn with me to 2 Kings chapter 7. This morning as I drove to the car and had a worship tape on and was praising God and rejoicing in him, my throat's still a little scratchy so I couldn't sing the way I normally do, kind of the way Ben just sings. That's the way I normally sing in my car.

But God began to stir my heart with some other themes that I believe some of you need to hear today. So I'm going to start going in the way that I was planning on going and then see if we take some turns along

the way. 2 Kings chapter 7. The background really begins with the sixth chapter of 2 Kings.

The Aramaeans were harassing the Israelites and God would speak to Elisha and tell them, tell him to let the king know that the Aramaeans were about to set an ambush with their raiding troops. And each time they'd go and check it out and it was so and the king of Aram got frustrated. Who's telling secrets? You know, who is it? Somebody's betraying the confidence and they said, well, it's Elisha.

God tells them what you say in the bedroom. Well, they end up actually bringing in armies of Samaria. They end up bringing them in to the very city of Samaria, the armies of Aram.

How? Because God blinded them and Elisha led them right into the, here there's the enemy camp. They lead them right in to the Samaritans and instead of killing them, instead of the people of Samaria, the Israelites killing the Aramaeans, they say, no, we'll make a feast for them. They fed them.

They gave their own food. Think of this. Here you've got the Aramaeans, the enemy.

God blinds them, brings them right into the city of the Israelites and now they make a feast for them. Now they go out. So the raiding troops and that comes to an end.

But now the king says, we're just going to take the whole city of Samaria and they besiege the city and there's a terrible famine. And the king gets angry with the prophet Elisha when he hears that people are actually cooking their own children and eating them because people are starving to death in the city. He says, I want Elijah's head.

I want him dead. Now, why was he so upset with Elisha? It could be just because this guy was a prophet of God and when something goes wrong, you get mad at the prophet. If you're mad at God, you blame his representative.

But it could also be that sometime before this, God brought the Aramaeans right into the Israelites' hands and the prophet said, don't kill them, make a feast for them. And now those very people have us besieged all around and we're dying of famine just sometime before we fed their own troops. Now they're starving us out.

It's all Elisha's fault. And when they come to get him, the king's messenger Elisha has a word for the king that tomorrow about this time, there's going to be a feast in the land. We'll put it in today's terms.

Today, a loaf of bread costs \$100. Tomorrow it'll cost a quarter. Today, a head of lettuce costs \$30.

Tomorrow it'll cost five cents. And the attendant to the king said, even if the Lord opened up the heavens, it couldn't happen. And Elisha said, you'll see it with your eyes, but you won't partake.

By the way, that's what happens with skeptical unbelief. This is not what I'm talking about today, but that's what happens with a skeptical, unbelieving attitude. You see it with your eyes, but you don't partake.

Now here's where we pick this up in verse three of chapter seven. Now there were four men with leprosy at the entrance of the city gate. They said to each other, why stay here until we die? King James, why sit we here until we die? If we say we'll go into the city, the famine is there and we will die.

And if we stay here, we will die. So let's go over to the camp of the Arameans and surrender. If they spare us, we live.

If they kill us, then we die. They're basically looking at their lives and they're saying, you know, we're just sitting here. We're outside of the city because of our leprosy.

We just sit here. We're going to starve to death. If we go into the camp of the Arameans, the worst they can do is kill us.

We're going to die anyway. The worst they can do is kill us. It's like you're in a plane with a parachute.

You don't know if it works and the plane is going down and you know for sure if you stay in the plane, you're dead. That's certain. But maybe if you jump out, maybe that parachute will work.

Maybe you'll live. They said, what's the use of staying here in the plane? It's definitely going down. So they go out into the camp of the Arameans and figure, hey, if they kill us, we're dead.

But if they feed us, at least we live. We got nothing to lose. At dusk, they got up and went to the camp of the Arameans.

When they reached the edge of the camp, not a man was there, for the Lord had caused the Arameans to hear the sound of chariots and horses and a great army, so that they said one to another, look, the king of Israel has hired the Hittite and Egyptian kings to attack us. So they got up and fled in the dusk and abandoned their tents and their horses and donkeys. They left their camp as it was and ran for their lives.

The men who had leprosy reached the edge of the camp and entered one of the tents. They ate and drank and carried away silver, gold, and clothes and went off and hid them. They returned and entered another tent and took some things from it and hid them also.

Then they said to each other, we're not doing right. This is a day of good news and we're keeping it to ourselves. If we wait until daylight, punishment will overtake us.

Let's go at once and report this to the royal palace. So they went out and called out to the city gatekeepers and told them we went into the Aramean camp and not a man was there, not a sound of anyone, only tethered horses and donkeys and the tents left just as they were. The gatekeepers shouted the news and it was reported within the palace.

The king got up in the night and said to his officers, I will tell you what the Arameans have done to us. They know we are starving, so they have left the camp to hide in the countryside thinking they will surely come out and then we will take them alive and get into the city. One of his officers answered, have some men take five of the horses that are left in the city.

Their plight will be like that of all the other Israelites left here. Yes, they will only be like all these Israelites who are doomed. So let us send them to find out what happened.

So they selected two chariots with their horses and the king sent them after the Aramean army. He commanded the drivers go and find out what has happened. They followed them as far as the Jordan and they found the whole road strewn with the clothing and equipment the Arameans had thrown away in their headlong flight.

These guys were terrified. They didn't even go by horse, they ran. So the messengers returned and reported to the king and the people went out and plundered the camp of the Arameans.

So a seah of flour sold for a shekel and two seahs of barley sold for a shekel as the lord had said. Now the king had put the officer on whose arm he leaned in charge of the gate and the people trampled him in the gateway and he died. That's the guy that said it'll never happen and Elisha said you'll see it but you won't partake.

Now the king had put the officer on whose arm he leaned in charge of the gate and the people trampled him in the gateway and he died just as the man of God had foretold when the king came to his house. It happened as the man of God had said to the king about this time tomorrow a seah of flour will sell for a shekel and two seahs of barley for a shekel at the gate of Samaria. Why do we sit here until we die? There is a time in the life of every believer where you must come to grips with yourself honestly and see where you are going, see how you are living, see the state of your life spiritually.

Examine yourself and be ruthlessly honest with yourself and if you're on the wrong path, if you're stagnating, if the same habitual things keep getting you down, if you're never moving forward, if it's always tomorrow and tomorrow never comes, if all the dreams and all the visions and all the prophecies are still nowhere near being fulfilled, if you're in the same rut today that you were in a year ago or even deeper today, there's got to be that point where you come to grips with yourself and say something has to change and it's not changing. Something different has to happen or I'm going to end up in the same rut again. You may have done the same thing with dieting.

You may be one of those self-deceived people. I've often been one of them. I want to take some weight off, get in better shape.

My wife will say, well, what's your plan? Well, you know, I'm just working at it. Well, you're working at it a month ago, you're working at it six months ago, you're working at a year ago, you're working at it two years ago, you're working at five, you know, whatever it is, but always in my mind I've got this thought, well, no, it's going to be a little different because, you know, I've lost a couple pounds here. Of course, I found those couple pounds and lost them again, found them again.

Some of you can relate to that, but my wife is a realist and she'll bring to my attention when I'm in one of these self-deceived cycles. Again, I must say I don't always thank her for bringing these things to my attention. Years back when I was heading up a Bible college in graduate school of theology in Maryland, we were always under severe financial pressure.

The way the thing was set up, the way the thing was run, the size of the student body, and each semester I would think we'd have a breakthrough. In fact, I took very little income from the school most of the time. I got to the point where I pretty much supported myself out of outside ministry to relieve the school of paying most of my salary.

But each semester I'd say to myself, this next semester there's going to be a real increase and the financial pressure is going to lift that our whole office and our small staff is under. And I remember one time talking to my wife about finances because even though we lived in a nice home through money that had been put into real estate for us some years before that, it was always hand to mouth. I'd go overseas to minister and sometimes my wife would call the office to find out if we had a hundred dollar check because she needed grocery money.

We didn't have a hundred in the account. So I'm not saying that we were living in poverty, but I'm saying that the financial flow is often hand to mouth. Some of you live like that.

So we talk about things. What's going on with finances? What changes are coming? And I'd say, and I really meant it, and I really believed it. This next semester I really think there's going to be a break.

This next semester I really think the pressure is going to lift. This next semester this. This next semester that.

And I had good reason in my own mind for thinking that. We had another faculty member coming on. We're offering some additional courses.

We were doing this. We were praying more for God's blessing on the classes and so on. And one time she just said to me, that's what you say before every new semester.

Just like a light went on because I tell you honestly up to that point I didn't realize it. And it must have been a good three years into me heading up this school that we had raised up. I had to say to myself, what is going to change this time? What's really, honestly, tangibly, root level any different? You need to look at your life and ask yourself, are the same things that enslaved you or brought you down or chipped away at you in your walk with God, are they still strong in your life? The same things that were there five years ago, are they still there now? Or is there a clear growth in grace, growth in your relationship with God, growth in your discipline over the flesh, growth in your maturity in the Lord? Is there clear growth in your passion, your desire, your knowledge of the word, your outreach to the lost? If you're in ministry, if you have a church, is there growth in numbers, souls being saved? Is there growth in the health of the church, people growing and getting stronger in God? Is there growth in finances and your ability to bless others and help others? Someone said if it's alive, it grows.

There's got to be growth somewhere, somehow for the glory of God. Now, let me say that I fully understand that we being complex human beings and life being full of challenges and situations often changing, it's possible you may have grown in three or four major areas but fallen back in one. And that's going to be the course for the rest of our lives.

It may be that you just had twins and you just don't have as many hours alone with God every day that you did before the kids were born. But boy, the character of Jesus in you shines like never before. And the developing qualities in you of compassion and long suffering are tremendous.

And many other areas you may have grown in and reaching out to other young mothers and different things like that. And you're excelling in the Lord. And boy, I wish I had some more time to spend with God.

Some of those things are understandable. But overall, you should be able to look at your life and say, I'm moving forward. Overall, you should be able to look at your life and say, God can trust me with more today than he could a year ago.

Overall, you should look at your life and say, boy, if I had the wisdom I had today five years ago, I wouldn't have done that. I wouldn't have made that mistake. Overall, you should be able to say, God knows the secrets of my heart and he's pleased with my life.

Yes, sometimes I even surprised myself. I can't believe I got angry. I can't believe I allowed that thought into my life.

I can't. And those things will happen. But the pattern, the overall course of your life should be something that God looks at and says, you're moving forward.

I'm pleased. Now, what happens with many of us is we get into a place of spiritual stagnation. We get into the place of simply maintaining.

We get into the place of going around and around and around and around. We're active. We're moving.

See the children of Israel. First, God said to them, you've been sitting at this mountain too long. Get up and go.

So they, that's it. We're moving. Then what does he say to them later on? I'm going around this mountain too long.

They were moving, but they go around in circles. They were going nowhere. Some of us are active.

Some of us are busy. Some of us are doing, doing, doing, doing, doing. And we go around in circles.

Some of us have just leveled off. Man, we got saved. We were on fire.

We got turned around. We were going after God and we hit that plateau. We have just leveled off.

I believe we need to come to grips with our lives and ask some serious questions. And I'm going to give you some serious measures to take. Not so much a how to, as much as an attitude of heart and mind and will.

You need to ask yourself honestly, if you continue on the course that you've been on for the last six months, the last year, the last five years, however long it's been that steady course. If you continued on that for 50 more years, where would it end you up? Closer to Jesus or completely lost? More effective, more on fire, more used for the kingdom, more anointed, more empowered or backslidden or lethargic? Are you getting hotter? Are you getting colder? You say, I think I'm basically perfectly neutral. I'm not getting hotter.

I'm not getting colder. Friend, if you're stationary and God's kingdom is moving on, you're going backwards. I was sitting on an airplane the other day, ready to push out.

The plane was a little late and I thought, good, we're pushing out already from the gate. We're ready to go. Well, it wasn't us that was moving.

It was the vehicle next to us that was moving. That was going one way. I thought, good, that's pretty quick.

We're pulling out. No, we weren't going anywhere yet. Friend, if you're stationary and something else is moving, you're losing ground.

Your problem may be that you're measuring yourself by someone who's going backwards. Your problem may be that your church is so frostbitten that being cold looks hot. You understand that? The words I always quote from Watchman Nee, by the time the average Christian gets his temperature up to normal, everybody thinks he's got a fever.

How many of you know what pygmies are? How tall do you think you have to be to play center on the pygmy basketball team? Man, that guy might be giant. That guy might be huge. But if you put him in the National Basketball Association, they'd think he was a little kid coming to play.

Have some fun with the little kids before the game starts. You might be a giant of the faith because of all the pygmies around you. I'm talking about your own life between you and God.

Not compared to me. Not compared to the person next to you. Not compared to your family.

You and God. God knows what he gave you. God knows what he called you to do.

You know, if you take someone gifted musically, like the Carlsons, and they don't practice, they don't work at it, they just get up and sing, people will be dazzled by their ability, but they'll know, wow, we are way, way, way below our potential. We didn't really work at it, we haven't really been diligent. You can take a musician.

He doesn't practice, he doesn't work at it, but he's so gifted, man, he's way ahead of people. But if he only really worked at it, man, he knows where he could be. See, the race you're running is against yourself.

Paul tells each of us individually, in 1 Corinthians 9, to run our race so as to win. I've got to win my race. I'm not competing with you or anybody else.

God's given me a task. God's given me an assignment. God's called me to do things.

I've got to be responsible to do those. And you might be dazzled by me operating at 10% of my capability, or you might think I'm going nowhere if I'm operating at 100%. Either way, your evaluation is ultimately not what matters.

You know what God's given you to do. You know what God's gifted you with. You know what he's called you to do, who he's called you to be.

Which way are you going? Are you moving forward or backward? Are you growing? Are you becoming more like Jesus? Are the essential things in your life being worked out in greater and greater conformity to his will? Is his gifting and empowering in your life increasing? Again, I understand God may move in you in a certain way, and you may flow in gifts of healing for a period of time. And then it may seem that lets up, but every area of your life is growing with God and becoming more like Jesus, and you're being used more effectively. And why that particular flow of the Spirit doesn't seem to be as strong? That may be something only God knows at that time.

But you can see the overall course of my life is moving forward. What is going on with the overall course of your life? The time has to come where you speak to yourself, just like these men here and said, why do we sit here until we die? What are we waiting for? You know what hurts me when I think of this? I was doing this radio interview yesterday, and the interviewer said to me, well, why do people have to go to a place like Pensacola to be blessed? And I said, oh, you can meet with God anywhere at any time. If you know the Lord, you can seek him anywhere.

He can touch you anywhere. You don't need to go to a place to meet with God to receive from God. I said, but if God is moving in a particular place, and he is working specially, and he's chosen to do it, why not go and be blessed? Why not go and be encouraged? Why not see people waiting online to get into a building to hear a message of repentance? They may not have come to wait online to hear a message of repentance, but that's what they're going to hear.

Why not be encouraged by people that just want to worship and go on with God for hours? Why not be encouraged by an open heaven? And why not receive a fresh touch from God? Why not? Maybe it's pride or competition or envy or unbelief that stops someone from going. Well, somebody called me. I'm getting to the thing that hurts me in a minute.

Somebody called and he said, well, I really have a problem with this pride thing that everyone has to go to your place, and that's the only place that God is moving. I said, I guess you weren't listening earlier in the show. I said emphatically, you do not have to go to a place to receive from God, and I must have said five times what's happening here is just part of what God is doing all over the world.

I said it seems to be the hottest and most known spot in America right now in terms of a place of outpouring, but it's just part of what God's doing all over America and all over the world. There's an outpouring taking place all over. Well, I have a problem of going to a place.

Maybe the most spiritual thing anyone could do is go off to a monastery and be alone. Go for it, buddy, and save the whole world while you're at it. I didn't say that to him, but you know, he just couldn't see why.

You think, man, isn't there a body? Don't we need one another? You mean if Paul was teaching somewhere, you'd say, well, I've got my Bible. Who needs Paul? You wouldn't go to hear the man and hear what God had given him. If you heard that the Lord had come down in a certain city, the apostles were there and the Lord had come down, the sick were being healed.

You wouldn't bring your sick there. So I fully agree that although God's moving all over and you can meet with him anywhere and the most significant breakthroughs that have come in my life have been when I've gotten away with God, saw his face for three days, four days, five days, six days, just alone, seven days, just alone with God, prayer or prayer and fasting. Still, I know I wouldn't be where I am today without what God's doing in the corporate body and what he's done in me and the corporate body.

And I believe that God brought you here, that you're not just curiosity seekers, that you didn't just come for the latest spiritual high. You didn't fly from around the world to drive from around the country or take time out of a busy local schedule to be here just to get the latest spiritual high. You're serious about God.

That's why you're here. But here's what hurts me. Listen, some of you will come here, go through all the expense, all the effort of getting here, spend vacation money to get here, take a leave of absence from work to get here, make all types of difficult decisions in your schedule to get it, make arrangements for someone to watch the kids and do this and that.

You know, drive four states out of the way to drop the kids off with the in-laws to then come down here. And some of you did that. And yet you'll come and instead of saying, OK, listen, if something doesn't happen when I've gone through that kind of effort here, when is it going to happen? Some of you will leave and think as you're leaving, boy, next year, I think I'm going to go to this and such a place.

Oh, boy, I got to get back to Brownsville in six months. And not because God did so much in you, but because you missed the moment while you're here. What I'm trying to say is this.

If coming here and making the effort to be in meetings like this, it could be wherever it is that you went because God was moving in a special way. If that's not going to impact your life, what is going to impact your life? You've got to get serious to the point of holy desperation and think, all right, enough is enough already. I've been looking for this.

I've been waiting to break through here. I've been hoping next year will be different. Next year, we won't have strife on our church staff.

Next year, the leadership will be in harmony. Next year, my family will be on fire. Next year, I'll really be going after God.

Next year, we're going to have revival in our city. And you're no closer to it now than you were 20 years ago or two years ago or two months ago. You've got to say, God, whatever it's going to take, if my whole lifestyle has to change, whatever you have to do in me, even if it's just to speak the things to me here that I need to change, or if it's just to touch me once and for all, something's got to be different.

I cannot and I will not continue to live the way I'm living. You got to come to that point, friends. You know, I got home last night and it was, you know, Friday towards the end of the week.

Well, it's never towards the end of the week because life just keeps going around and around and around. I'll fly out of here tomorrow morning to minister in New Jersey for a few days. See, I have to get up there every so often to hear people that speak normal English, but I've got to be up there for a few days and I'll come back Tuesday night and then the schedule starts again Wednesday and, you know, just life continues.

But I got home tired like normal. Then my wife and I had to talk about some issues. I thought she was ready to sleep.

I saw her leave service a little early. She wasn't feeling that well. I figured she'd already be asleep.

No, she wanted to talk about some things and then some serious issues and so on. And well, then that, okay, we're done with that. Now it's like 1.30 and I said, listen, I am just frustrated because I had an exceptionally busy week.

Schedule is normally very busy, but because I had to compose this, I don't like 4,000 word factual rebuttal to scandalous errors that were circulated by local newspapers. We felt for the sake of the community to put truth out to help them. And God moved on me to do that.

So every, I mean, I'm telling you every waking minute was just, it was wildly busy. I'd be doing a radio interview and then they'd say, now we'll just take a break, you know, we'll be right back with our guests after these announcements. So they're going to take a two minute break for announcements and commercials.

And during that two minute break, I'm getting other calls with other information that I got to put in the computer, you know, for this thing I'm writing. And then someone else is faxing this out and then call this. And it was just, it was continual perpetual.

Okay. Got to stop. Got to go to school.

Got to teach. All right. Got to stop.

Got to get here to meet with the, okay. Got to finish this. Got to.

And it was, it was perpetual. And I had very little time to really get quiet and alone with God as much as I wanted to. And it was late.

And I just said, I am not going to sleep like this. I used to tell people when I'd minister overseas words, I learned to regret many times when they'd say, well, brother, how busy can you be while you're here? You'll only be here for a week. So, hey, you just, whatever meetings you want me to have, I'll have.

And I would say to them, listen, I can always sleep on the plane coming home. You don't know how many times I learned to regret those words. Going to Korea one time to minister.

My first trip over there. And they said, Reverend Brown, we have a special seminar planned. Wonderful.

So we have a leadership seminar all morning, all afternoon, every day. And then public meetings at night. I said, wonderful.

I said, so who will be speaking at the seminar? They said, you are speaking, Reverend Brown. I said, no, I know I'm speaking. I said, but who else is speaking at the seminar? It's all morning, all afternoon, every day.

And then meetings every night. I said, Reverend Brown, you are speaking at the seminar. Twenty-five meetings in a week.

That's what we do when we go to Korea. And the meetings are not what you call short meetings. I've been in that situation sometimes of pushed to the limit.

And I said to myself again, everything else is going to have to wait. I can always catch up on sleep somewhere somehow as my body needs it. But I must get with God.

I had to strike back, if you know what I mean. I had to. No, I can't go to sleep.

And my wife and I had a disagreement about something. I think the second time in 21 years of marriage, we had a disagreement. I think first or second, I'm not quite sure.

And that's why we ended up talking later. And then, OK, look, we're done talking about this. It's 1.30. I don't know when she's ever going to learn that I'm always right.

No, no, I want to be honest. I remember one time when I was right in 21 years, once or twice, I think. But I said, I'm getting in the word.

And then I decided to do some serious study of some issues. And then I decided to do some writing. I said, I'm not going to sleep.

And then when I was done, just talk to the Lord some and went to sleep feeling OK. I took something back. Listen, you've got to look at your whole life like that.

And sometimes you've got to get aggressive. All right, here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to start binding demons.

I'm going to start losing demons. I'm going to start doing spiritual. I'm going to start.

Well, you may need to do that. But first, you need to get aggressive with your own heart, mind and life and body and soul and spirit and attitude and so on and schedule. Know what I'm saying? You can yell and scream at the devil all you want.

He may not even be listening to you. He may not even be the problem. I've got a series of tapes on spiritual warfare.

I remember when I taught that. About nine years ago, it was the best teaching I did on the subject. So those are the tapes we still use.

I remember when I went to teach that, that one guy was expecting, you know, just some kind of out there stories about demons and deliverance and spiritual stuff and hardly using scripture. Man, everything I was hitting on was the personal life and bringing the life in line with God and living out things spiritually, spiritual warfare in those terms. And then as it expands into other realms.

And he came up all excited because it was such a word based challenge to live right before God. I'm telling you, look at your own life and get aggressive. Look at your own life and look in the mirror and talk to yourself.

You don't have to worry about hurting your own feelings. Okay, so it's all right to look in that mirror and say you're a slob. You're an undisciplined slob.

You're unclean. Talk to yourself like that. And it's all right to look in that mirror and say, what are you going to get serious with God and quit blaming everybody else? Here's something interesting about these four lepers.

They simply made an aggressive choice choice to save their own lives. They didn't blame anybody for this situation. I hit on this a little yesterday, but it's on my heart to hit on it again today.

If you're going to make any spiritual progress, if you're going to do anything for God, quit blaming everybody else for your problem and for your situation. I know some of you here have had difficult lives, and I know some of you have had what seems to be everything come against you. And I know some of you right here look at me and say, that's easy for you to say.

Well, number one, you don't know my life and you don't know what I've come up against, but it's utterly immaterial. All you need to know is, are you right with God or his promises for you? Is he for you? If so, how can you blame somebody? I'm not going to get into all types of economic stuff now, and I don't want to get political now, but please hear me. We have made welfare victims in America.

We must be compassionate to the poor. We must help those in need. We must do what we can to eliminate social injustice and economic injustice and racial injustice.

And our country is still filled with that junk. So please hear me. If I sided with anybody, it would be with the poor.

If I sided with anybody, it would be with those who've had very little in this world. If I sided with anybody, it would be those that I feel have been victimized by the system, okay? But what's happened is, those that have grown up in America on welfare, and that's the system that they grew up in, and that's the system that they knew, we're always looking to the government for a handout. We're looking for the government to meet their needs, to pay their bills.

I'm not saying that there is no place for governmental help, and until the people of God do everything that the people of God are called to do, the government's going to have to do other things. So please don't

misunderstand me or misquote me. But others have come in.

You might be a white American, a black American, Hispanic American, Indian American, Native American. You may be from any different background and be a victim of the welfare state, okay? But people have come in from other countries. Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia.

The late 1970s, the early 1980s, I was involved with a church that took in all these refugees. Vietnamese, Cambodian refugees, then Ethiopian refugees. We had them live in our homes.

We have as many as five or seven Vietnamese or Cambodians in our homes. And then there was a need to bring in Ethiopian refugees. We began to sponsor them.

Then there were so many, we had to get apartment complexes for them. And then working with the government, then have English as second language programs for people. I mean, we were throwing ourselves into that.

And I saw these people, especially from Vietnam and Cambodia, many of them lost half their families on the way over. It was estimated that both people, the exodus of those from Vietnam, about half of them died at sea, either through natural causes or through the pirates. These people would come over, they knew nothing.

They didn't know the language. You had to show them how to use a bathroom. They had everything against them.

They had been beaten down. And then you'll see some of them today and their children are graduating from these Ivy League universities, you know, and they're successful computer programmers or this or that. I'm not saying that the measure of success is an Ivy League education, but I'm saying they came in with nothing on their side and determined they're going to break out of that and get ahead and look at what they've done.

They could be yellow, white, black, red. That's totally immaterial. It's not a color.

It's a matter of attitude. If you make it a matter of color, it's because you got a chip on your shoulder. If anything, I have a bias in me towards those that some people would think I'm speaking against.

A poor person, an impoverished person, a needy person. But this attitude, everybody owes me something. I'm not doing well in school.

Some of you grew up like that. I'm not doing well in school. It's the system's fault.

It's the teacher's fault. It's that's fault. And then you have parents that coddle you because you can't do anything wrong.

You know, there's the joke about different ethnic parents. I've heard it with Jewish and Italian. These are exaggerated, so please don't get upset.

But, you know, an Italian family with their little boy, Antonio. Now, this is please don't. I've been in Italy 11 times, 11 times, and I'm Jewish.

Okay, so that's why I'm having fun with these two. Why don't you just agree because I've said enough things that sensitive skinned people could get upset with. Why don't you disagree that nobody's going to be upset with anything? Fair enough.

Because I'm just trying to make points here that are helpful. Remember, I said there's all types of racial, social, economic injustice that needs to be addressed. All types of sin.

Okay, the Republicans are not the good guys. The Democrats are not the good guys. But the only good guy that we look to is Jesus.

But the joke was told about attitude. In fact, it was an Italian that told it. Italian speaker.

You go to the Italian home and Antonio's got straight C's on his report card. His parents, he's never gonna do anything. He just gets C's.

Amazing he even gets a C. He's gonna be just like his father. He's never gonna do anything. You go to the Jewish home.

The kid's got straight C's. Where the parents say that school system is so terrible it doesn't recognize genius. Now there are caricatures and there are plenty of homes where it's the exact opposite.

But you've also been in plenty of homes where it's exactly the way it is. There's a whole lot to do with your attitude, friend. Everybody's got problems.

Face it. Everybody's got odds against them. Face it.

Everybody gets misunderstood. Face it. Everybody has setbacks.

Face it. The question is what are you going to do about it? How are you going to make sure that you're not always the poor victim? Some of you have been terribly victimized and terribly hurt and gone through things I can't imagine. I understand that.

But you can't live the rest of your life like that. And you can't live the rest of your life blaming others for the situation in which you find yourself. You gotta say, why do I sit here until I die? What's the purpose? There's gotta be a wake-up call.

You take a man like Jacob who had incredible ingenuity and was able to connive his way through life and every time it should have been the end he found an escape route. He found the back door. He found something or other.

Until he gets to the point in Genesis 32 where he realizes if God doesn't help him he's a dead man and his family is dead. And at that point he breaks through in prayer. At that point he says, I won't let you go until you bless me.

And that's when his name gets changed from Jacob to Israel. And that's when the whole course of the rest of his life changes. You gotta get to that point where you're not going to blame anybody anymore and you're not just going to rely on your own ingenuity to work the thing out.

Either too extreme. You're not going to do that. You're going to say, God something's got to change.

And it's not just going to change by having somebody lay hands on you. It's going to change by you addressing the deep. It's going to change by you being ruthlessly honest.

Do you keep messing up the same way over and over? I touched on this briefly yesterday. If you keep messing up the same way over and over you need to make some lifestyle changes. That lifestyle change may be I'm going to seek God in prayer and fasting until the breakthrough comes.

That lifestyle change may be I've got to change my environment or the circle of people I'm with. Don't deceive yourselves any longer. You can deceive yourself as easily as you can deceive somebody else.

Where are you going? Our school will finish its first year by God's grace in a few weeks. And then come January, the students that began with us in January will be going into their second year. And John Calva, the director of our missions program.

I was talking to him last night that from day one in the second year, our whole focus has to be just getting everything into those students. We know how to get into them, but preparing them for the next step. Whatever that next step is preparing them for life outside of this environment, preparing them for missions work, preparing them for leadership, preparing them to withstand the heat, preparing them for hard times, because we know what's coming.

And we know that all too many students and all too many schools have come in with great and lofty ideals. But a year later, five years later, 20 years later, they're nowhere close to fulfilling those ideals than when they started school. And we are determined by the grace of God to not let that happen.

You've got to be determined in your own life. You have got to be determined in your own life. I have a word of encouragement in a moment to give to you, but I want to give you one more challenge first.

A few years back, one of our trips over to India, been to India now 93, 94, 95, 96, 97. So five straight years working with precious brothers and sisters there. A couple years back, we went to a place called Tuni in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

The churches in that city were very much divided. They were not aware of a public Christian gathering where different believers came together that was over like 500 or 700 people or a thousand people. And the brother that we worked with, we worked with in India, brother Yesupatam, first really began village preaching in Tuni.

When he was working there years ago, he was in a good, healthy church back in his home city in Vishakhapatnam, now was working in Tuni. Went to talk to someone in a village and said, do you know Jesus? And they said, we've never heard of that village. Maybe if you go to the next village, they'll know where it is.

Didn't even know what the name meant, speaking to them in their native language. And he became so convicted. He said, I've got to come preach to these people.

And the Hindu elders of that village found out that he was going to preach and told them, do not come in here and preach or we will stone you. And he went in and preached and they stoned him. As he fell to the ground, bleeding from his head and still see the scar on his head and for the broken finger, he felt his blood dripping and he felt this great sense of privilege.

And he said, Jesus, you gave your blood for this village. Now I give my blood. He said, I claim this village for Jesus.

Let me say that the home that we ate at when we were there in Tunj is the home of the pastor of the local church in that village, who was one of the elders that stoned Jesus. 75% of that village turned to the Lord and the men who stoned him got saved. Amen.

And now we were going back to that place and we were going to hold rally with our team and we're there the first night. And just as they get to the end of the praise worship time, suddenly starts pouring rain and the biggest crowd of people they had ever had in that city for a Christian gathering. This is according to what the local people said.

I'll just come in and give all these glowing reports about how many were there. The locals told us, no, this is the biggest gathering they had. However many it was, if it was just a thousand, it was still a big first night gathering for them.

The rain starts. A lot of these people are wearing the only clothes that they own. Traveling conditions, walking back, carts back is miserable travel conditions.

Everybody scatters here already. I mean, first night, we're only going to be here for a few days. Everybody scatters.

And then the rain abated and I got up on the stage with the others. And I just said, I refuse to believe that the devil stopped this meeting. Because you don't always know with weather what's behind it and who's behind it.

I can give you plenty of scripture on different sides of the issue. I just said, I believe this is a sign from God that there's going to be an outpouring of the spirit here. We just stood together and prophesied, Lord, by your power, your spirit will fall here.

We believe you. Well, the next day it was too muddy. We couldn't have any day meetings.

So we're sitting on the platform. You've got to remember the way these things are put together last minute and the construction is, is very shoddy just because of the speed with which everything's put together is, you know, communication to organize these things. It's amazing.

They can even set them up. So we're there. We've got a few Americans on the team with us.

We're sitting on the platform during the worship service for the night. And all of a sudden the platform starts to collapse. There are the guys next to me.

They had, you know, a soda drink in their hands. Soda goes flying and chairs go flying once and then down again. And then it just freezes there.

That was interesting. Move over. Okay.

We go on with the meeting. I get up to preach and I'm preaching and see there's a lot of demonic resistance in this place. I'm telling you a lot of demonic resistance and terrible disunity.

As I said, between the churches, I get up and preach and I'm talking about God's kingdom coming with power. And for some reason I said the words and God says, let there be light. As I said the words, I thought, well, that's a strange sense.

You know, how does that fit? Boom. One minutes later, later, all lights are out, out. I mean, the power goes out this point.

You didn't feel the devil breathing down your neck. Oh yeah. And God says, let there be light.

Oh, you got a great big guy. Oh, he's a powerful God. Oh, big God.

Yeah. Yeah. Let me tell you something.

You go over to some of these areas. You may be some big shot American. You find out if your sword is sharp or not, buddy.

I have seen more people humbled overseas, especially in India than any other place I have ever been. A lot of flesh comes out when you're there. So my translator leads over to me and he says, when the lights come on, finish the message and the message, give it to me for the altar call.

I figured he must know something. There must be some reason. So a couple minutes later, lights come back on.

I'm just in the beginning of my message, but I end the message and I give it to him for an altar call and I sit down and he goes on and preaches in Telugu for like 45 minutes thinking what in the world I'm starting to get upset. Now I'm telling you, I mean, I love this man dearly. He's one of the Godliest men I know anywhere in the world.

I'm starting to get mad. What in the world does he need me to come all the way over from America for? He's a powerful preacher. But then we sit down here.

Oh, something the matter with my preaching. Is that it? Oh, I'm starting to get an attitude. Or is he just want a white face to draw the crowds? Come on.

What is it? He wants to preach. Let him preach. No, I'm not going to come all the way over from India.

I'm busy. All the way from America. Well, we finished the meeting.

We get back to the house and he says, brother, what's the matter? So what do you mean? What's the matter? He said, something's the matter. He said, maybe your wife's not here with you. Not praying for you or something or critiquing me would be the better word and praying.

Actually helped me keep my focus. He said, but something's different. I said, what do you mean? He said, why did you end the message? I said, what do you mean? Why did I end the message? So why did you end the message? So what do you mean? Why did you tell me to end the message? So why did you say to me when the message, when the lights come on, end the message and give it to me for the altar call? He said, no, brother.

I said, when the lights come on, when you end the message, give it to me for the altar call. I said, you didn't tell me to end the message. He said, you thought I told you that here the whole team, they're

concerned.

What's the matter with Mike? He just sat down in the middle of his message. I'm thinking, what's the matter with him? He brings me over from America to preach for him. You know, we come here at considerable expense and sacrifice and the whole bit, and I preach five minutes.

He wants me to end the message so he could preach. So I realized, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, here. Something's up here.

I mean, the stage collapsing, the lights going out, the miscommunication. I said, hey, I'm not eating tonight. I said, we're going to fast till we have a breakthrough.

I said to our team, we got to start fasting. He said, we're all fasting. We realized we're not fighting flesh and blood here.

We were in a battle, but let me tell you something. I don't know if you've ever been in that situation, but the devil faces you down. Whether it's some demon somewhere or some principality, Satan himself made me for one in 20 million people once in a lifetime.

But the devil, one of his agents faces you down and says, your God is not so big. He's not coming through for you, or you're not anointed. God's not with you, and he faces you down.

I've been in that situation so many times, and if you buckle, friend, you are in trouble. Trouble. Well, the story's not over yet.

We're talking as others are eating. We're talking. Some of the Americans were leaving.

There was a pastor from Vermont that helps work with the ministry here when they're in the States. The brother in his 50s, David. All of a sudden, we hear, oh, no, brother.

Oh, no, brother. Oh, no. You see, in all the areas where we are in India, there are no sewer systems.

There are only these gullies in the front of the houses or running through the villages, and there's not running water in most all the places where we are. So things are set up that you've got, you know, these holes in the ground. That's the toilet system, basically.

And then water can be poured down. You've got wells or something. Water's poured down, and it'll run it so that it goes into this gully.

And for example, in this particular house, you either had to step over or walk around like this to miss the stuff with all of the human waste. And he missed his step, fell in the sewer on his side. Oh, no, it's right.

Oh, no, it's right. Remember, there ain't no running water either. Oh, Jesus.

So they take this, you know, they get like these sheets and they stand around them so he can take his clothes off, and then they just keep coming with buckets of water just to pour over, to pour over, to pour over. Poor God. It's like we're in a little bit of a battle here, I think.

And man, I remember feeling like we were. I was being facedown by the enemy. He said, let's see what you're made of.

Let's see what your God is made of. How big are you? And the grounds were dry enough, of course, that next day we had a day session, and I got up, preached out of Joshua 13, the words of Joshua and Caleb. We can take this land.

We can take this land. Don't be intimidated by the giants. We can take this land.

Let me read you something from the end of It's Time to Rock the Boat. It's an awesome account. Children of Israel have their backs to the wall.

Exodus 14. The Egyptians chasing them from behind. The sea in front of them.

What do they do? They cry out to God. Wouldn't you cry out? Help! I mean, picture you're standing. There's a wall in front of you.

A thousand feet long, a hundred feet high. And you look back and there are a hundred hell's angels with knives and guns after you and your family. And you don't have any arms.

What would you do? Help! God says to Moses, why are you crying out to me? It's an amazing verse. You read it later. Exodus 14.

Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. What? Tell the Israelites to move on. The sea is in front of us, Lord.

That's a sea. That's called water. We're not fish.

We're humans. That's a sea. The Egyptians are behind us.

If we move on, we drown. Here's how the living Bible says it. Quit praying because God says to him, why are you crying out to me? I mean, the people cry out and God says to poor Moses, Moses, why are you crying out to me? That's how it says in the living Bible.

Quit praying and get the people moving. Forward march. That really gives you a sense of it.

Will you quit making excuses? Will you quit praying when the answer's already been given? Get up and go! Forward march. Imagine what Moses must have thought. Is God playing some kind of cruel joke? The Egyptian army with horses and chariots is about to slaughter us and you ask, why are you crying out to me? Our women and children will die by drowning or by the sword and you ask, why are you crying out to me? What does the Lord say? Forward march.

Now look at this. Look at this. And you, Exodus 14, 16.

And you, Moses, lift up your rod, hold out your arm over the sea and split it. God, I don't quite think I heard what you said. This is all imperative in Hebrew.

These are commands. You do this, you do this, you do this, you do this. It's like Jesus in Matthew 10, 7 and 8 saying to his disciples, as you go, okay, I can go.

As you go, preach this message. That's a command. Okay, I can preach.

As you go, preach this message. I can preach. The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Okay, I can go. As I go, you command me to preach. Preach.

I'm gonna preach. The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Okay, what else? Heal the sick.

Wait, wait, wait, wait. You tell me to preach, I can preach. You tell me to heal the sick.

Heal the sick, cleanse the leprous, raise the dead, drive out demons. You're commanding me to heal, to raise the dead. Yeah, free the imperceived, free the guilty.

Commands. And you lift up your rod and hold out your arm over the sea and split it. Split, split the sea with a rod.

I don't say, oh God, would it's thou splittest the seest. Moses, I gave you authority. Pick up the rod and split the sea, please.

Quit playing games, buddy. This is a crisis here. You understand that people are ready to kill you.

I got the cloud behind you. I'm just holding back a little bit longer, but you got to do something. Just split the sea.

I gave you the rod with authority. Split the sea and walk through the sea. So I'm putting an end to the story here.

Okay, buddy. Moses, don't wait for something new to happen. You already have the rod of God.

Now use it as I command, raise it and part the sea, make the dry land appear. There's something that God's saying to many of you, which is the same. I've given you authority.

I've given you victory. There's a time to pray. There's a time to cry out.

There's a time to seek God by the hour, by the day, by the year. We never outgrow that. Nobody ever graduates in this world from the school of prayer, but then there's a time to stand up and act.

God's saying to some of you, isn't it about time you stood up and acted? Isn't it about time you told the devil enough is enough? Enough is enough. If not now, when? Be realistic. Some of you were called by God.

Some of you were in the same ministry for years because you've refused God's call to march out. Some of you have disobeyed the call because you're waiting for the big thing and the whole reason you haven't gotten to the big thing is because you haven't done the little thing. Someone said, find out what God would have you do and do that little well for what is great and what is small, just only God can tell.

Lord, I want to have a ministry that will impact the world. I want you to influence this kid in your Sunday school class. Lord, I want to have a world ministry.

I want to touch the world. Pour your heart into that eight-year-old in that Sunday school class. Jesus, Lord, I can't worry about that eight-year-old because I want to have a ministry that will touch the whole world.

Maybe that eight-year-old is going to be the greatest evangelist the world ever saw but won't go anywhere unless you pour your life into it. Let me give you a couple of challenges and then a word of encouragement. I said I'm going to give you, well, this is all encouraging, isn't it? I'm not condemning

anybody, am I? If you're just some slovenly, slothful, slugger, slumbering and sleeping yourself to sedated stupor, stagnating and stinking, if that's you, do something about it.

Wake up. Sardis, you have a reputation for being alive, yet you're dead. Wake up.

That's what he says. I'm so weak. Be strong.

That's what the Bible says. How? In the power of the Lord. No, you're nothing, you're nobody, but he's everything.

He's every one you need to know is him. Be strong in him. Quit making excuses.

March forth for the glory of God like William C. Burns, a Scottish revivalist who gave his life for Chinese souls. When asked if he was going to that far-off land to convert the heathen, he replied, I'm going to China to glorify God. Go for it, man.

March forth and catch men like John Getty, the pioneer Presbyterian missionary to the South Seas. Get this. On a tablet in a large church seating 1,000 people, this inscription was placed in memory of John Getty.

When he landed in 1848, there were no Christians there. When he left in 1872, there were no heathen. I haven't read this in a while, man.

This stirs me reading some of these quotes. Not what I wrote, but the quotes I put in here. How many of you know who William Wilberforce is? William Wilberforce.

What's he known for? What country? England. What did he do? Borrowed slave trade. Listen to this.

You may not know this, and he was an aristocrat. He was a British nobleman. He fought against slavery and injustice.

His vision was impossible. Take hold of that. His vision was impossible.

Society was against him. History was against him. Common prejudices were against him, but God was for him.

I'll take those odds. I often say Jewish ministry, reaching Jewish people is some of the most challenging ministry in the world, but we got the best promises. I'd rather have challenging ministry with great promises than easy ministry with weak promises.

Amen? John Wesley, 88 years old. One of the last letters he wrote four days before his death. Perhaps it was the last letter he wrote.

Wilberforce is 31. Wesley dies 1791. Maybe you never heard this letter.

This is what Wesley wrote to Wilberforce. Unless the divine power has raised you up to be as Athanasius against the world. If you don't know what Athanasius, Athanasius stood his ground for doctrine and truth against a tidal wave of opposition.

Wesley said, I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise in opposing that execrable villainy, which is the scandal of religion of England and of human nature. Unless God raised you up for this very

thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But if God be for you, who can be against you? Are all of them together stronger than God? Oh, be not weary in well-doing.

Go on in the name of God and in the power of his might till even the American slavery, the vilest that ever saw the sun shall vanish away before it. And Wilberforce did it in his generation, in his nation. Why not? Why not? I plan on doing things for God that no human beings ever done before.

And I hope everybody in the room does the same because there are people to be reached that have never been reached before. And there are needs to be met that have never been met before. And each generation, each situation is unique.

And God is looking for a unique labor, unique people to go after God and do his will. Let me encourage you with this. If you will be aggressive, if you will go after God, if you will seek his face, if you'll make the efforts, look, go out of here.

And if you watch a lot of TV, even if it's not terribly polluting, why not just say, okay, God, it's like mid-November now, late November. I'm not going to put on the TV now till the end of the year. Or Lord, there are these special family things we do and we'll watch those together, but I'm not going to watch anything for the rest of the year and I'm going to go after you.

And by the way, the news will be just the same whether you watch it or not, just to save you time. And sports scores will end up the same whether you watch the game or not. Wow.

And rather than have the heartache of my team was doing great and they lost, why not just wait till the end of the year and find out how they did. And if they're doing good, then you can watch the playoffs unless of course, God convicts you that that's the time to turn the TV off. Whatever your time waster is, newspaper, computers, telephones, sewing, golf, hanging out with friends, whatever your big time waster is, why not cut that out or cut it way, way, way, way down.

If the thing itself is sinful, cut it out entirely. If in and of itself, it's not sinful, why not cut it out or cut it way down from now just to the end of the year and go after God and see what happens. I challenge the finished believers that I was with.

Why not make a concerted effort from now until the year 2000 as churches, as leaders to corporately go after God with heart and soul and fasting and prayer and holy desperation to go after God for revival from now to the year 2000 for national revival. And if it doesn't happen by the year 2000, you will be so much closer to God, so much more encouraged, so much more passionate, so much more serious, so much more effective. You'll just keep going to revival.

Why not? Why not for a few weeks, for a month to the end of the year, commit, okay, I'm going to fast one day a week, or I'm going to fast two days a week, or I'm going to fast two days a week to no breakfast, no lunch, just dinner, two days a week, you know, something that you may be able to handle. Cut back on this. Why not try to double your prayer life? No problem.

Brother, I can't make it to six hours a day. Hey, if you're praying three hours a day, I'm not talking to you. Okay.

But if you went from five minutes a day to 10 minutes a day of quality prayer, it's the first step in the right direction. So you want to determine you're going to do something different, especially when you're being

launched out after having been here in these meetings, encouraged, excited, or more hungry than ever. Let me encourage you with this.

If you are really going after God, and in the context of your present situation, you are doing what you know how to do. And you can honestly say, God, I am seeking you with my heart, my soul, my mind, my strength. I agree with every word my brother said in his message today.

And you know, Lord, by your grace, that's how I'm living it out. But I don't see this shit. And I don't see that yet.

And this doesn't happen yet. I'm frustrated here or there. Let me remind you that the steps of a good man, of a righteous man are ordered by the Lord.

The Lord delights in his way. Read some arguments for translating the Lord establishes his way. That's possible, but it's more likely it simply means he delights in his way.

The one in whom the Lord delights, he establishes his steps. By the way, the more you study the original languages, instead of everything becoming clearer, you just present it with more options of interpretation and clarity too. Here's what the Lord was reminding me of.

When I got saved, I was heavily into drugs. My main lifestyle was drugs and music and whatever gratification of the flesh could come. But we just lived.

We'd get high in the morning. We'd go through our few hours at school, very little requirements in high school, the setup we had, and go home, take a nap. And then other guys would come over from the band I was played with.

And we'd just get high some more and then play and then just listen to music at night and get high some more. Ego trip, listen to our own tapes. We just, maybe with a makeshift little, throw some microphones on the floor and tape the music.

And that's just how I lived. So my life was nothing, nowhere. You understand? Now I got saved and I got this, you know, what are you doing all the time now? So I started getting hungry for God.

I started praying, getting in the word. By the time I was saved a year, I'm telling you, I was disciplined. I was going after God and God gave me grace.

I was disciplined, friend. I spent on average, at least six hours alone with God every day. Plus went to church five nights a week.

I was engaged in Christian activity the other two nights. And I had a very light high school schedule, only a few hours a day. I used to read the word two hours a day without fail.

By the time I preached when I was saved, about a year and a half, I read through the Bible about five times cover to cover. I was disciplined. I used to memorize 20 verses every day.

And I could do it in one hour's time. I had a system down. I worked, you know, just got in this pattern, just kind of fell on it myself.

Memorize 20 verses a day, didn't miss a day for six months. We still play a game with friends. Sometimes we're on a ride or just, you know, a little bored with things.

We'll play a game called Bible pride, you know, where you have a reader and they open the Bible and they point and they read the verse and you have to say it's this book, this chapter, this verse, and each get points for it. You know, New Testament, Old Testament, different things. I'm good at that game.

Okay. And it goes back in particular to those early days. And I remember during that time, and I witnessed, I knocked on every door, 300 families in the community where I grew up.

I knocked on every single door and left a track and witnessed to people. And I witnessed to at least one new person every day. And I handed out tracks and street outreach twice a week.

But I remember saying to myself, man, I'm spending all this time reading the word, praying all these hours. I wonder if I should be out witnessing even more. And I felt, no, this is your time of preparation.

Just a kid, but I felt that like John the Baptist, he was in the wilderness. He wasn't doing public ministry. Just, this is your time of preparation.

I've never had that much time since then. Got out of high school, had a full-time job, then started college. And then before college was out, was married.

And then a year and a half after we were married, actually 15 months after we married, we had our first child. Then we had another child while I was in grad school. So we had two kids.

I was working a job, getting my master's, getting my PhD, and then, you know, teaching at Bible school, traveling, ministering. This year, I was just looking at my schedule. Let's say in revival services, I'll be in maybe 200 revival services, say five hours, at least a shot just to support the team and to support Steve.

So 200 of those meetings, then outside of that speaking, teaching, ministering, preaching, well over 200 times doing that, okay? So that's just over 400 public meetings, some of them averaging five hours. I was just looking at the schedule and then all these radio interviews, then a weekly internet chat, and then I, you know, written one book already in the year, and then, you know, I was just looking at the schedule, said it's pretty tight, pretty tight. I said that just so that if you say, well, you know, I've got four kids to take care of, you can't relate to that, or I've got a job where I work 70 hours a week, you can't relate to that, or I've got to oversee three churches, trust me, I can relate.

70, 80 hours a week is very normal schedule for all of us here. That's not, we're not martyrs, it's our privilege, it's our joy, okay? But I don't have the time that I had years ago. Then when I was doing my grad work, when I was, you know, getting my master's and PhD in Near Eastern Languages and Literature, language, language, when I was in college, I started to get more interested in languages.

One year, I just took languages. I took six languages one year in college. Took Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, Latin, Yiddish, and German, the same year.

Then I got bored with some of that, I didn't work hard on that, and I started to learn some other ancient languages. So by the time I was done with my doctorate, it was between 12 and 15 languages I had to work with. Some I knew really well, some very little.

You got to keep those things up. How do you keep them up all the time unless you just study all day, you know? I'm in ministry, I've got other responsibilities. And I look at these different, man, I wish I had more time to memorize scripture.

I wish I had more time to work on languages. I wish I had more time to study, I wish I had more time to write. I wish I had more time to be involved with our school of ministry.

I wish I had more time to give to the students. I wish I had more time to pour myself into revival. I wish I had more time to be on the road ministering in different nations and across America.

I wish I had more time for 1,001 things, just like many of you here. However, I am in the center of God's will. And when God wanted to put a time in my life where he injected me with 4,000 verses in a little over six months, he worked that out in my schedule.

And when God wanted the time in my life to earn my doctorate and to get the foundation for my studies for the rest of my year, for the rest of my life, he worked that out. And I look back at my life and I see from 89, since I had books in my heart, burdens and things, I was burning to write and to finish it together. I was burning to do it for years and years and years.

And God didn't release me to write until 1989. I mean, I wrote stuff before that, but the books that are out on our tables are 1989 and on. It's been eight books since then.

Some of them massive, some of them thinner and all kinds of articles and all this other stuff. And I look, it's like, I don't quite know how, but all this stuff got done. And then I'll go lecture at some seminary somewhere.

And I tell you, I feel like I know absolutely nothing. And by the time I'm done, the professors, man, this was awesome. We've got to come back and lecture again.

This was so stimulating. We've got to combine classes tomorrow to get everybody in. I'm thinking, I don't know anything.

You've got to look at your life and say, how does God get anything out of me? But he does because our steps are ordered because I'm doing what I'm supposed to do and go after him. And if he wants me to have a hundred books or no books, that's fine. And if he wants me to preach at a hundred nations or no nations, that's fine.

And if he wants me to spend my life with the same person, that's fine. Nurturing that one person and deciphering. I don't need my wife.

I plan on spending my life with that one person, but you're just pouring my life into making one disciple. That's whatever he wants. My steps are ordered by him.

And what has to fall into place falls into place. And when God says, okay, I want you to do a little more scholarly work zip. Next thing I'm getting asked to contribute to all these important theological encyclopedias and dictionaries and this and that.

And then I look back and I just wrote 30 articles. How'd that happen next? You just make yourself available to God. You just be obedient daily.

If he wants to open doors for you to preach to 20 million, that's fine. If he wants you to die in obscurity in a prison, that's fine. As long as he knows, as long as he's got his eye on you, your steps will be ordered by him.

Friend, commit yourself to the Lord. Proverbs 16, literally roll on the Lord. Your deeds and your plans, your thoughts will be established.

In other words, today is what you're responsible for. Give that completely over to God. When you leave here today, seek God, whatever you do, do with all your heart and soul today.

And your plans, they'll all come to pass. They'll be established as God's given them to you. They'll come to pass.

Would you stand to your feet with me, please? We're going to pray a simple prayer and then we're going to dismiss. If the Lord's really dealing with you about some things, we've often had altar calls after our meetings and sometimes the people just seeking God for a while with tears, crying out. I don't feel to do that today.

I feel to pray over you and say, go do what you need to do. If your resolve can't last until you get out of here, if your resolve can't last and you make a stop in the restroom, then you go grab a meal and get back to your hotel. If your resolve can't last till then, or if your resolve can't last to the restaurant, you say, I'm not eating today.

I'll go out with you folks, but I'm not eating. The Lord just spoke to me. If your resolve can't last that long, you know, responding right now, it's not going to change it.

So we're going to pray. We're going to dismiss you and believe this. God is for you.

He wants to use you and bless you more than you ever want to be used or blessed. If you will give yourself to him without reserve, when you slip and fall, get up and keep going. When you mess up, get up and keep going.

When you disappoint yourself, disappoint God, ask him for cleansing and keep going. The whole pattern of your life will change. He knows our frame.

He knows our weaknesses and he knows his ability in us can overcome all of that. Father.

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