

# The Morning Watch - Part 2

by Oswald J. Smith

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*The morning watch is a time of prayer and Bible study in the morning that sets the tone for the rest of the day and helps establish a strong and effective Christian life.*

**Duration:** 21:09

**Scripture:** Exodus 16:21-22, Deuteronomy 8:3, Joshua 1:8, Psalm 5:3, Psalm 119:105, Proverbs 8:17, Matthew 4:4, 1 Peter 2:2

**Topics:** "Morning Devotions"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of spending time in both reading the Word of God and praying. He encourages listeners to start their day by immersing themselves in the sacred pages of the Bible, just as the Israelites gathered manna daily. The speaker emphasizes that reading the Word of God daily is essential for spiritual growth and protection from sin. He also highlights the significance of morning prayer, using Psalm 5:3 as a reference. The speaker concludes by discussing the enemies of the prayer life, specifically interruptions that can hinder one's time with God.

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## Transcript

Now this morning, we're going to take the two points that we spoke about yesterday morning. First of all, the reading of the Word, and then prayer. In 1 Peter 2, in the 2nd verse, we have these words.

As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby. John Bunyan gives us a statement that has influenced my life tremendously. This is his statement.

This book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this book. How true. It's either one or the other.

It's either the book or sin. If you give attention to the book, you lose your desire for sin. If you neglect the book, then sin may overcome you and master you.

This book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this book. But you say it's not interesting. You tell me that you can read books written by men, but you cannot find any interest in the Word of God.

You remind me of a young woman who picked up a book of poems and tried to read them. She found them so uninteresting that she threw them down in despair. Some time later, she met the young man who had written the poems.

She fell in love with him, and she promised to marry him. Then one day, during the engagement, she picked up the book of poems again, read them once more. To her utter amazement and astonishment, she found them the most interesting poems she had ever read in all her life.

What made the difference? They were just as dry as ever, just as uninteresting as ever. The difference was not in the poems. The difference was in her.

She had fallen in love with the author. Therefore, everything that he had written was of interest to her. The same is true in regard to the Word of God.

Unless you fall in love with the Lord Jesus Christ, the author, you'll find the Word of God uninteresting. But once you fall in love with Him, once you are definitely saved, and once you are walking with Him in the fullness of the Spirit, you'll find everything, everything in the Word of God of unusual interest and delight. Everything has to do with your relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now let me ask you the question. How should you read the Word of God? Let me say three things. First of all, you should read it as the children of Israel gathered the manna.

Do you remember how they gathered the manna? They gathered it daily, morning by morning. Some of them, you'll remember, tried to go out and gather enough to do them for several days on the one morning. And to their amazement, they discovered that it went bad, and that they had to go out again and gather it once more.

It had to be gathered morning by morning. The same is true in regard to the Word of God. You cannot read sufficient in a single day to last you for an entire week.

You must read it day by day, morning by morning. I started reading God's Word after I was saved at sixteen years of age. With the exception of one single day, I cannot remember missing a solitary day in all the years that have passed and gone.

Day by day, morning by morning, I have read God's Word. I read sometimes two or three chapters, sometimes four or five chapters. But I make it a point to read it, to read it morning by morning, day by day.

I would rather go without my meal than go without reading the Word of God. I think if I owe anything to God's blessing upon my ministry, I owe it perhaps to the fact that morning by morning I have faithfully read His Word, been nourished by it, and morning by morning it has been my meat and my drink. Just as the children of Israel gathered manna morning by morning, so I gather manna as I pour over the sacred pages of God's Word.

Then in the second place, I read it as I eat fish. How do you eat fish? If you come across a bone, do you take up your platter of fish and throw it away? Do you say, I'll never eat fish again? No, no one ever eats fish like that. I take my platter of fish, I start eating it, I come across a bone.

I don't throw the platter of fish away just because I've run across a bone. I take the bone out, lay it on the side of my plate, and I go on eating fish. Then I come to another bone.

I take it out, too, and lay it on the side of my plate. But I go on eating fish. I'm not going to throw my fish away just because I've come across a bone.

I'm going to go on eating fish. And you'll discover, if you do that, that when you start reading the same verses again, as you go through the Word of God once more, that some of the passages that you thought were bones, you'll discover that you can digest them after all, you can understand them, and they become your meat and your drink. It's a case of reading the Word of God morning by morning.

I would never dream of going to my office or going to my work before turning first of all to God's Word and poring over its sacred pages. Only then do I have strength to do the work that God has for me to do. It may be that you are weak as a Christian because you have neglected God's Word.

I urge you to read it, and to read it morning by morning. Then in the third place, I read it as I read a letter. How do I read a letter? Do I turn over to the second page and read a paragraph from the second page? And then do I put the letter up in a pigeonhole and leave it for a week? And then do I take it down and turn to the end of the letter to see who wrote it, to read the signature, and then put it up in a pigeonhole again for another week? And then do I take it down once more and turn to the beginning to see how I'm addressed? No.

I start with the first word in the letter. I read through to the last word in the letter. Then I know the contents of the letter.

There is no other way to read the Word of God. Now, there are other ways to study God's Word. I'm not talking about the studying of the Word of God.

I'm talking about the reading of the Word of God. If you want to read the Word of God, the only way is to read it from beginning to end. To start with the first word in Genesis and go through to the last word in Revelation.

Then go back to the first word in Genesis again and go through to the last word once more in Revelation. That's the way I've read the Word of God ever since I was converted. I can't tell you how many times I've read it through, scores upon scores of times, because time after time I've gone through God's Word from beginning to end.

In that way, I never miss a passage. I read the entire Word. You know, there are a lot of people who depend on the Daily Light.

Now, the Daily Light is wonderful. I have a Daily Light. I use the Daily Light.

And I often read it for family worship. I believe in the Daily Light. But if I depend entirely upon the Daily Light for my spiritual nourishment, then I'm going to miss very, very important passages that are in God's Word but are not in the Daily Light.

Therefore, I do not depend upon the Daily Light for my private devotions. I turn to the Book of God, and I read His Word from beginning to end, right from Genesis to Revelation. In that way, I get to know the contents of the Word.

Now, after I've read the Word of God, then what do I do? Well, then, of course, after I've read perhaps three or four or five chapters from God's Word slowly, carefully, prayerfully, then I turn to prayer. And I spend the last half of the morning watch in prayer. Now, there are three things I'd like to say about prayer.

Let me first of all read Psalm, the fifth chapter, and the third verse. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord. In the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up.

This is the only verse in the Bible where the word morning occurs twice. But because it occurs twice, I'm interested in it. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord.

In the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up. And so morning by morning, I turn to the Word of God, and I turn to prayer. And I've done it now for over sixty years, and I'm going to do it as long as I have strength until I meet my Savior face to face.

Now, there are three things I want to say about the prayer life in connection with the morning watch. First of all, there are enemies to the prayer life. And the first enemy, interruptions.

Do you know what I mean? Just when you have settled down to pray, and you have been getting on splendidly, suddenly there's a knock on the door. A friend calls. There's an interruption of some kind.

The telephone rings. And you find that because of interruptions, your prayer life is interfered with. Now, how did I overcome interruptions? First, by having a place for prayer.

And second, by having a time for prayer. If you do not have a place for prayer, and also a time for prayer, you're going to face interruptions. My place for prayer when I'm at home is my study.

If I'm away at a Bible conference, sometimes I go out to the woods, and I pace back and forth under the trees. But I find a place to which I can go morning by morning. If I'm in a hotel room, I make the hotel room my place for prayer.

Wherever I am, I choose a place for prayer, and I go back to that same place morning by morning, and pour out my heart to God in prayer. Thus I have a place for prayer. Do you have a place for prayer? Then I have a time for prayer.

My time is in the morning. Now, you may find it better to pray in the afternoon or in the evening. I don't know.

But I like to pray before I go to my office, before I go to my work, before I commence my day's work. I like to put God first. And so, during all the days of my Christian life, from morning to morning, I have gotten alone with God, and I have had a time for prayer.

And my time, as I've stated, is in the morning. And I've kept that time for the last 60 years or more, and God has wonderfully blessed as a result. Do you have a time for prayer? If you want to avoid interruptions, then I suggest that you have a time for prayer and you have a place for prayer.

Now, in the second place, another enemy, another obstacle. What is it? Drowsiness. Do you know what I'm talking about? You've been praying for perhaps only 5 or 10 minutes.

Then you become drowsy. You get sleepy. Why? Because, perhaps, of your attitude when you pray.

What do you do when you pray? I suppose you kneel down at your bedside. I suppose you lay your hands upon your bed. Then you place your head down on your hands, and you close your eyes.

Wonderful position to go to sleep. Wonderful position to become drowsy. You couldn't assume a better position.

I never pray like that. I don't want to become drowsy. I want to be wide awake, and I want to keep wide awake when I'm talking to God.

What do I do? I never kneel when I pray. I'm talking now about the morning watch when I'm alone with God. I never stand when I pray.

I never sit when I pray. I walk when I pray. For over 60 years now, I have walked while I have prayed.

I clear away the furniture. I make sure that I can walk up and down the room, or back and forth under the trees, or wherever I am. I pace back, and I pace forth.

But I walk all the time I'm praying. Do you know? I've never once become drowsy. If I should become drowsy and fall asleep while I was walking, I'd crash to the floor, but I'd be awake and up again in a moment.

But that's never happened, and that never will happen. As long as I keep my eyes open, as I turn at either end of the room for just a fraction of a second so as to see where to turn, and then close them again, as long as I look up to God, as long as I keep exercising, keep walking, I never become sleepy. I never become drowsy.

I want to be my best for God, and I can be my best when I'm walking. And so I have walked back and forth for over 60 years now. I've walked hundreds upon hundreds of miles.

I cannot begin to tell you how far I have walked. And you know, I never have to take special exercise. I never have to play golf.

I never have to do anything in order to keep in shape. I find that I get all the exercise I need as I walk. And by walking back and forth, I can get sufficient exercise to do me for the entire day.

And so as I pray, I get exercise. I keep in shape. I keep fit.

I walk as I pray. Have you ever tried it? If you never have, I suggest that you try walking when you pray. And you'll discover to your amazement that whereas when you knelt to pray, ten minutes seemed a long time.

You'll find if you walk when you pray, half an hour will be gone before you realize it. Even an hour will pass. Just last night, I decided to spend special time in prayer in the evening.

And I started walking and praying. To my own amazement, when I looked at my watch at the end of my prayer hour, I found that I'd been praying for well over an hour, well over an hour, as I walked back and forth and it only seemed 15 or 20 minutes. And I suggest, therefore, that when you pray next time, you walk and you'll never be drowsy, I can assure you.

In the third place, the third enemy, wandering thoughts. You know what I mean when I talk about wandering thoughts? You've been praying for five minutes and then presently you're thinking about what you're going to do on the morrow or what you did yesterday. You're planning for the future and you discover that instead of praying, you're planning, you're thinking.

Thinking and planning instead of praying. Wandering thoughts. You'll never get anywhere as long as you allow wandering thoughts to fill your mind.

How did I overcome this third enemy to the prayer hour? I never pray silently when I'm alone with God. I never pray silently when I'm observing the morning watch. I always pray out loud.

I talk to God just as I'm talking to you now. As I walk back and forth up and down the room, I look up. I never look down because God is up.

God is above. And as I look up and walk, I open my mouth and I pray out loud when I'm alone with God. And by praying out loud, no wandering thoughts come to my mind.

I'm able to continue praying for an indefinite time as I talk aloud to the Lord Jesus Christ. I've done that for over 60 years now. And I suggest you try it.

You'll be amazed at how long you can pray and how long you can be alone with God if you'll only pray out loud. You'll be amazed at the difference in your prayer hour and in the keeping of the morning watch. So let me say that when I pray, I avoid interruptions by having a place for prayer and a time for prayer.

I avoid drowsiness by walking as I pray. I avoid wandering thoughts by praying out loud. I've done it for over 60 years, and I'm going to do it as long as God gives me strength.

Now let me say in closing, you and I have had many thrills in our lives. I could tell you of many thrills that I've had in my life. But I want to say without any fear of contradiction that there's one thrill that I've had that has been greater than any other.

And that is the thrill of the morning watch. I've never grown tired of it. I've never been weary of it.

Morning by morning, as I conclude the morning watch, during the rest of the day, I look forward to the coming morning when again I'll be able to find myself in the presence of God once more observing the morning watch. That's been the greatest thrill that I've ever known in my Christian life. And if you've never had it, if you've never experienced it, let me suggest to you that you observe the morning watch.

Spend the first half of it by pouring over the sacred pages of God's Word, or the first quarter of it. And then spend the last half of it, or the last three quarters of it, by pouring out your heart in prayer and supplication. If you will, you'll find that God will meet you in the most wonderful and glorious way.

Bible study and prayer will become a reality in your life, and you'll be a power for God. He'll use you as you never otherwise could possibly be used. I advise most strongly that you commence observing the morning watch.

Now let me close with the verse that I've already quoted. Here it is, the 5th Psalm, the 3rd verse. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord.

In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up. That's the verse that has meant so much to me, and that's the verse that will mean so much to you if you'll only start to observe it. Let me advise you, let me plead with you, let me urge you to keep the morning watch.

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