

God's Grade School

by Otto Koning

The sermon teaches that true joy and spiritual growth come from surrendering our possessions and time to God while serving others selflessly.

Duration: 1:12:22

Scripture: Matthew 6:19

Topics: "Christian Life", "Joy in Service", "Surrender"

Description

Otto Koning shares his journey of surrendering his possessions, time, and reputation to God while serving as a missionary. He recounts the struggles he faced with stinginess and the pressure to fix the natives' broken items, which led him to realize the importance of giving everything to God. Through his experiences, he learned that true joy comes from surrendering control and allowing God to work through him, ultimately leading to spiritual growth and the ability to connect with the people he served. Koning emphasizes that God desires to mold us into Christ-like individuals, and that surrendering is essential for spiritual progress.

Transcript

After I gave my possessions to God in the pineapple story, I had real joy because, man, I'm free. When you don't own anything, you don't have to worry about anything. You can sleep at night.

My nervous system restored. What a neat thing. It's not worth it.

It's not worth it, folks. And so I'm having this joy. And then these natives got on me again.

Well, my wife had this broken saucepan, and she says, can you fix it? I said, I haven't got time. Throw it out. She had a new one in her missionary barrel.

So she did. And next day, the native at my office door, and he got my attention. He said, go on, fix my pot for me.

He found the broken pot that my wife had thrown out. I said, look, I didn't fix it for my wife. I'm not fixing it for you.

He said, you don't love us. You always fix your own stuff. You don't.

That's the problem with you. You're, you're long-nosed. You're always so stingy.

Now, I'd overcome stinginess. As a matter of fact, I was giving testimony of how I'd overcome stinginess. Don't start these testimonies too quick.

Wait about 15 years, you know, until, until that thing is seasoned. Hey, I'm, I see, I, for Dutchman to overcome stinginess is a big, big thing. Now, and now this guy has a nerve to say you're stingy, and he meant stingy with your time.

You, you fix all your own stuff. You want to fix my stuff. You use all your time for yourself, but you won't use it for me.

And, and I didn't know you could be stingy more than one way. He says, you're long-nosed. I said, look, man, don't say that.

I'm not stingy. I'm, I just, hey, I've got translation to do. I've got to, well, he didn't know what that meant.

And, uh, I've got, I've got the language to learn. He said, I said, there's only, I can't start this kind of thing, fixing your junk, because I mean, there's so many of you, and only one of me. Just, hey, just say this after me.

The missionary, well, he said this. He says, you don't love me. You only love yourself.

Probably more truth in that, and I'd hate to, I want to admit, but he says, I said, no, look, I love you. What do you think I came to this jungle for? Just for the good of my health. Look, I'm here because I love you.

He says, you don't. I said, no, say this after me. Say it all the way home.

The missionary loves me. He just hasn't got time. He wouldn't say it, and he went to the village, turned the whole village against me.

He did me so much damage, folks. He says, that guy is no good. He fixes his own stuff.

He loves himself. Why, why do we let him live here? I mean, he turned a whole business against me. I felt so bad.

I wish I'd fixed that pot so bad. I could hardly sleep that night, and trying to sleep, I thought, man, how am I going to win this guy? Hey, how are you going to win a guy that you've turned off? And that's just about, I thought, this guy is doomed forever. He's lost.

And, and God gets in on this, you know. You know how God gets on your conscience. Hey, how are you going to win him to Christ, you know? I mean, oh brother, hey, I'm miserable.

I can't sleep. I can, God shows me his face. I can still see his face.

There he stood, you know, angry at me. You won't fix my stuff. And man, and I can, I literally see this guy lost forever in a fire.

And oh man, am I in trouble. And I said, God, if I don't get some sleep tonight, I'll waste all tomorrow. I, you know, because of tropical heat there.

And I said, God, please let me sleep. I promise you, I'll fix the pot in the morning. So that's, and God, that's all God wanted to hear, me make it right.

And so I fell asleep. And the first thing he reminded me in the morning, I called for the man. He's all confused.

You know, yesterday I scolded him, told him to get going. Now I beg him to bring the pot back. Unpredictable white man.

They judged the whole race on my behavior. I'm sorry about that. What I'm missing.

And, and now we're standing, make him stand to hold it and try to get the bracket somehow, get that handle back. And my wife came by. Now I've got a bigger problem.

Yeah, you'll do it for you. You'll do it for them. You won't do it for me.

I said, honey, hold everything. You slept last night. This thing has ruined half of my day and the whole night already.

And I said, Hey, the Lord's on me for this thing. Well, she understood and she went away saying, well, I'm glad you're listening to the, to the Lord. The native was happy now.

And he had a spot fixed and I put his name on my prayer list. I thought I'm one up on him. Now I can win him because I'd said to him, no, I did this for you.

You do something for me. And he said, he said, Oh, what do I do for you? I said, you come to church. You bring your whole family.

You sit still and listen. And I thought I might as well get some mileage spiritually out of this miserable situation. Uh, I put his name on my prayer list.

I thought I'm one up on him. Maybe now, you know, I can win him. He owes me something interesting way of winning souls is, is getting people in debt to you.

Anyway, next morning there, there stood a whole line of people, broken shovels. You won't believe this broken machete handles. One guy had a broken pots.

One guy with a little harmonica, man, fix my Toto for me. He says, Toto. I says, your Toto is so rusted.

It won't even play. Go work in my pineapple garden, weed it for the next month. And I'll buy you a new one that will really play.

He says, this one will really play to him. I said, no, it won't play. It's no way that thing.

I don't know what he hadn't stolen from me. I don't know where they got this junk and he shovels and all. And I looked at it then I said, no, that's no, he blew with all his might and God rigged that thing.

So one note would squeal. He said he didn't even, and it played. And, and he says to him, I don't want to work in your garden.

That'd be so much sweat. He said, just fix the one I got. The cover, the cover had come off.

Okay. So I've got to, now I thought about the night before and I'm going through another night like that. And I thought, oh man, this junk, these shovels.

Oh, I didn't even know they'd ever had them. They were, they were, the blades were real short. They were worn back.

They were curled on the end. They were so thin. Some of them split.

They couldn't get the rivets out. You know, they could burn the stick out, the broken handle out. So I am here.

I'm sitting there with my hacksaw. Can you see it now sitting there cutting old rivets out of junk shovels that weren't worth a thing, not worth anybody's time. And I'm thinking, but I'm afraid not to do it because I don't want, I mean, I don't want to have another night like that and see these guys.

So I'm saying, God, I don't understand, but I don't want another, if you want me to fix their junk, I'm going to fix their junk. But, and, oh man, I'm saying, you guys want to fix your own junk, you know, we don't have any tools. Yeah.

Give us the tools. I said, no way will I give you, see, I'd loaned them a file before. I said, no, I'd give them 24 hours for a file.

And I said, no using it on ax heads, just machetes and knives. And, uh, uh, they used it on ax heads. Uh, they, that file, you won't believe this.

They take turns sleeping, you know, and they use that file all. It never, I'm sure the whole night, that thing never got cold and that thing. And, uh, and the next day that thing was smoother than, than that ballpoint pen.

You won't believe this. I can't in 24 hours. And he's complaining.

He's saying this thing doesn't work. I said, Hey, you can have it now. And I said, I, he says, I don't want it now.

Oh brother. So no, no more learning learning tools. So I'm sitting there, fixing the junk next day.

They came back. Some others came back. There was pots.

There was more junk. I can't believe this. Does God want me to fix? I've got translation to do.

I can't, don't even know the language. I've got to report to the mission how much language study I accomplish each week, you know, and how much, how I do them. And a man, I'm all these people with their junk and it's so hot.

So you wear yourself out and I'm doing this grudgingly and saying, you guys quit wasting my time. Fix your own junk too on. We can't get those rivets out.

And finally, Oh, I try to teach them. These guys just didn't, they broke my tools. What a mess they made out of it.

And so I'm sitting there fussing at him and the language reports, the plane comes every three weeks and not many language hours getting done. I was supposed to do 20 hours a week at that time. And, and that was a rule.

If you don't do that, then you can't be a missionary. If you can't learn the language, it's no use living back with a tribe. And so that was a rule that if you don't do it, you know, you're, you're gone.

I mean, you, you can't stay. And so I was in trouble. I was hurting and, and they're wasting all my time.

And we go to annual conference and this had gone on many months now, this fixing this junk. I didn't dare not to do it. Finally, I did give him my tool to ice.

And I said, okay, you, you, you learn to do this now. And I showed him how to run the hacksaw. And I showed him how they, they use these drill that, you know, that little drill that, you know, how they, the bits break on them.

If you tip them well, I taught them, they were bringing hardwood sticks, put in them so they wouldn't break so quick. So they used to give us that drill thing. And so I taught a few guys how to do it and they could do it.

I said, now teach the other guys. They didn't teach the other guys. That was a problem.

You know, they got their stuff fixed off. They go to the jungle and let the other guys break all the tools. See, and that's what happened.

The only thing they taught them, sometimes they carried that hacksaw all the way to the jungle so they could put a new blade in there. And then they break that one too. Well, they didn't, they broke them.

They never wore them out. They were twisted. They were beat up.

Oh, terrible what they did to those tools. And after several weeks, they came and says to him, have you got any more of these? I said, well, they're in the box. And they had messed up all the hacksaw blades and all the drill bits.

And they'd broken the handles off the hammers. And I don't know what all they did with it. And I could, I saw that mess.

And I said, you guys, what did you do? Oh, John, they don't work anymore. Have you, have you got any, have you got any more of these? I said, yeah, I got one more, but you're not getting it. I said, that's mine.

You know, kept, kept one hacksaw blade and drill bit, at least for myself. And I see, I forgot that I'd given all my possessions to God and I had not included these things. You know, you know how it, how it goes.

And so I kept that. And I said, God, can't I, they say to him, give us that, that tool. And I said, no way.

They said, you're so stingy. I thought I've given him everything but one and they call me stingy yet. And, and finally, oh man, I said, God, do you want me to, can't I own one measly little drill bit myself? Do you want me to give that to him? Well, the Lord didn't even answer.

He knew I knew the answer. And so he, well, I didn't exactly give it to him. I threw it at him.

And I said, why don't you just break it and we'll be all done with this business. You don't have any tools. You don't, I mean, you get frustrated.

Well, I wasn't having my devotions. Don't look at me like that. I, I, they're wasting all my time.

See what I mean? And the mission is down on me. So now I think back, I think back of after I gave my possessions to God, after the pineapple story and the joy I had when I gave it all away. And I, I was off to tranquilizers, you know what I mean? And, and I'm, I'm, my health is restored.

Hey, and I'm, I really believe now I can win this tribe to Christ. Now God can use me. I've, I'm not only given my life to be a missionary, I've given all my, all my things to God.

I didn't know there was anything else. And so can you imagine God looking down and seeing this missionary and saying, wow, look at that. Look how happy this guy is.

He's finally able to sleep at night without tranquilizers. He's, he's, he's had such joy. He's, he's got confidence.

He believes now that he can reach the tribe. The Lord says, you know, I hate to do this to him, but you know, you know, he took eight years in first grade and he's already 39 years old. And if he takes that long in all the other grades, he'll never graduate from my school.

So I hate to do this to him, but I'm going to have now that, see God knows how I work. He knows when I hit the end of my rope, I'll surrender. Maybe some of you are like me.

Some people seem to never surrender. It seems that most of us do. When the pressure gets high enough, he sends enough people to steal our stuff.

We finally give our stuff away. I mean, he's no fool that gives what he can't keep. And so, and so now God says, no, he's, he's, he is a fool that hangs on to the stuff he can't, he can't keep anyway.

But you know, now God wants, wants me to, see God wants to control my possessions. He wants to control my time. So now God says, I've got another mammoth problem, which is area of time.

I'm fussing, but I, and so God says, if I send enough natives to take his time, he'll surrender that too. And that's what God wants. He wants to control me.

He wants to control all areas of my life. And God says, the only way I'm going to get any headway with this, this Dutchman is to get numbers, you know, get, so he sends all the natives and I, and I think back, I'm, I'm frustrated. I'm, I'm trying to study language at night and I'm trying to, you know, do, trying to please the mission and trying to please the Lord and wearing out.

And I'm on tranquilize again. I think back to joy I had after that pineapple story. And I thought I'm so backslidden.

What a, you know, I was so happy back then. Can you think of a time in your life and you were happier than you are now when you had more joy, maybe before you were married or something? And, and now, and now added complications have come into your life and you look back, wish it was like that again. I could have my devotions every morning back then, but then when the kids start screaming, Oh brother, you know, and, and I thought back, you know, really the truth of the matter is I'm not backslidden.

I'm in second grade. Okay. I'm struggling on a higher level.

So don't get down on yourself. Hey, you're, you're making progress. Soon as you lay it down, you'll be in third grade.

You didn't know that, but we struggle. All right. So I did, I didn't know that.

And I think back, Oh man, I'm messed up. And I'm crying out to God and say, God, get these guys out of my hair, you know, get these guys, you know, you know, intercept them on the way so I can do my missionary work. You know what I mean? And so then God helped me.

They're wasting all my time. God helped me. And I'm crying out to God, God, you gotta help me.

I, there's too many of them. I'm all alone here. I'm trying to do the work.

I'm, Oh man, I think God isn't helping me at all. He's, I don't know what he's even listening to me. I'm not getting an answer.

I mean, he's sending more junk to fix. I think that's what he's doing because the crowds getting other villages come now. Oh man, who told you this? I mean, fix our things.

I mean, the workload increases. And I'm, the more I cry out to God for help and relief from this thing, the worse it gets. Have you ever been, have you ever had something like that? And, and so now comes annual conference and we have to give language study report.

There's there, we have spiritual meetings, but we have reported on how the ministry. And so we sit in a circle and this, this guy that's real good linguist, he loves language study, man. That's all he does, you know? And so he, he stands up there and he's got his paper and, and, uh, and we're all, there was about 40 of us and we were sitting in this meeting with our wives and, uh, he's got this paper, all the tabulations of the reports we send in.

And he asks every man, you know, how are you doing on language study? And, you know, and all these glowing reports. And my wife looks at me and says, you know what? And she whispers at me, what are you going to say? See, I mean, she's hurting. She's married to a dummy.

You know, this, this should have been a one-on-one, one-on-one thing, but it was a public meeting. And he, some of these guys love language. They've got degrees in linguistics and degrees in anthropology.

I mean, they, you know, and, and I, I, I barely made it through school. And, uh, and, and, and I thought if it takes all that, how in the world am I going to win my tribe? One guy had so many degrees, we called him Fahrenheit. I mean, now, so he goes around this circle and he, and, and then he comes to me and he says, brother, have you done any better since your last report? And I said, no, and it was terribly embarrassing.

And he says, well, to save me embarrassment, he, next question, have you started translating the gospel of Mark? And I said, no, I don't know language well enough. And he says to me, what are you doing back there? And that's one thing I was never going to tell. I had, I had for, I told my wife, don't you ever tell them I fixed junk.

That's something they're not going to know. If they're, if they're going to know, let me tell him myself. And I wasn't going to, I, but I said, if they're going to, you, you see, he promised he would never tell.

I told my natives, I said, don't ever tell people when, when there's a stranger comes in here, when another two-on comes in here, when a pilot is here, when a, when a government official, anybody for anybody wears clothes, if any, don't, don't bring any junk to fix. That's what I told him. I said, because I don't want anybody that's a secret between you and me.

We're the only ones to know that. And you know how they reacted to this. They said, two-on, you mean, you mean nobody knows what we do here, but just, and one guy says, you mean, two-on, we're the only smart ones.

I said, that's right. That's right. We know things here that nobody else knows.

That's what I said. They said, you mean, two-on, the whole world is dumb and we're the only smart ones in the world. And I said, yeah, that's right.

We know things, don't we? Yeah, man, they're dancing up and down. They really like this. You know, we, we know things.

And so I said, but now if any of you bring junk to fix when, when somebody's here, then they will get smart too. Yeah. And hey, no way, two-on.

I mean, we're going to be just, and they really believe that they're the smartest people in the world. And that was a good self-image builder for them, I guess. And it was enjoyable for me.

And so I, they weren't going to tell. They chase you. I said, if you violate that rule and bring something anyway, then I will never fix anything for your whole clan.

Put the group pressure on the individual. That's what they do. So I use it too.

So, so now this missionary says, what are you doing back there at Albany? My wife isn't going to tell. My natives will never tell. They'll never find out because I'm not.

And so he says, what are you doing back there? And I thought quick. And I said, well, a little bit of everything. And I meant, you know, a few pots, a few harmonicas, you know, I mean, it's the truth.

And he says, well, brother, you ought to be making a list of priorities. You ought to be, and language study ought to be on the top of the list. And you don't leave the first one until, and you don't do anything.

You know, you had this whole thing of prayer. I have heard that before. You've heard that before.

But I acted as if I'd never heard it. And, and that translated into a good attitude because, you know, I said, yeah, yeah, yeah. And because I had such a good attitude, he let me off and they didn't, they gave me another year, they gave me another chance.

And he says, well, we'll be praying for your brother, Connie. And I said, I really appreciate that. I do need prayer.

I need prayer bad. And so I went along with the other and, and my wife was happy that things went so well. And we got back from conference and the Kohler generator had arrived.

And now I had three hours of light at night. We'd run the thing three hours and we had some lights, but I'd also charged the batteries and now I got power tools. I had a power drill.

I could shoot those things. I mean, I'm saving time, big time. And, and I got a sander and I mean, I can get this job done, you know, so I can study language and do both.

Okay. So I can satisfy the mission and satisfy the Lord both. And so I'm, so I'm, I'm, I'm going at this, you know, and all the batteries are full every night and I'm working on my work.

And then I prayed for a rainy day so they wouldn't come. And, and I fixed the workbench. I mean, I, and then it was a nice workshop.

I was right proud of it. And, and then another missionary went home and he was a builder and I got all his tools. Wow.

And I hung those tools up, you know, how your real guy does it. And then, I mean, I had, had all this stuff, man, and I'm in business and you know, I'm solving this problem. It was just like that German shepherd dog in the pineapple remember how I solved the problem with that dog and it got worse.

Remember that everything I'd tried in that story got worse and here it's all, but I never connected it and here. And, and now can you imagine God looking down from heaven and said, what's he doing now? Well, he got himself, look, he got himself power tools. Oh man.

Hey, we're going to compensate more, more junk. All right. So now the, the, the Kigar people and other tribe, can you believe it Southeast? And they were a little shorter fellas.

And, and, and they, I couldn't even talk to them when I'm fixing their junk. They came in and the, all your people would hide. I mean, they take over the village.

My poor wife at the clinic at all these Kigar and, and the Kigar came with their junk. And I said, who told you? I see. I couldn't understand their language, but a few, a couple of them could say a little bit of Indonesian.

And I knew a little. And so we communicated a little bit. I said, Ward, I said, take your junk.

You know, the Catholic priest, he's down on the other end of your territory. Take your junk to him. And he says to one, he doesn't have any tools.

Smart guy. I mean, have you ever owned things? Oh man. And I, oh brother enough.

So I'm fixing junk for two tribes and I'm doing it faster. I got my tools, but it's taken more time. The workload increases and I say, God, I I'm trying to solve the problem.

I want to obey you. I want to obey. Isn't that sound good.

I want to obey the mission, the language committee. I want to obey you. I'm trying to put this thing together.

I got this Kohler generator. You provided it. I've got the tools and now there's more people.

God, you got to help me. God says more, more, more, more junk, you know, you know, I'm not at the end of my, I'm still trying to solve my own life's problems. And God is, God wants me, he wants me in control.

He wants me Christ-like. And I don't know anything about this. So the Yahi people, the other tribe from the Southwest come along, tall guys.

Now they had so much junk to fix because they lived near the government post. They had access to stuff. Oh man, I'm fixing junk for three tribes.

And I knew the Sigiri people probably be next. And I didn't know what to do. And I said, God, I don't understand.

And, and, but now what I'm doing is fixing junk all day long now because the workload was so big. And I'm studying language at night. I keep the generator running lights on and I'm studying at night.

My wife's worried about me. She says, you're going to break down to this kind of hours. I was so glad I'd kept some tranquilizers from Pineapple Story Days.

You know, I was going to throw them away, but I'm so glad I kept them because I sure needed them now. And so I'm back on the tranquilizers. And you know how the people said after the Pineapple Story, you know, you've become a Christian.

You know what they're saying now? You're not a Christian anymore. Oh, that hurt. I'm trying to please God so bad and working so hard.

And, but, but I'm grouchy. You know what I mean with them? I mean, I'm telling them, okay, leave me alone. I mean, get out of here.

I'm getting grouchy with my children and my wife, and I'm kicking the cat and, and I'm different things. And, and I'm struggling and, and man, I'm so miserable and convicted and I don't get time to pray. I haven't got time to do the work for the word of God much.

And, and I'm in a mess. And then it came to a place where I just had to quit. My health was breaking, just like after Pineapple Story.

And I got on my knees and, and, and I'm saying, God, I don't know what I'm supposed to be doing. I think you're telling me to fix the junk. They want me to do something else.

I can't do both. I'm not big enough. And I'm praying and pleading with God and begging him and, and all this stuff and no answer.

And finally I'm exhausted. Do you ever get exhausted when you're praying and pleading? And finally you're quiet. And that's when God can get a word in edgewise and can say something to you.

And, and, and the question came, what happened when you gave your possessions to me? I said, God, you blessed everything I ever gave to you. I can't get away from pineapples now. I've lived a number of years.

You know, I can't get away from all this stuff. And now I said, God, you blessed everything I ever gave you. And then I saw it.

All of a sudden the light came on. God, I'm giving you my time too. I'm in big trouble with time.

I'm giving it to you. If you want me to fix junk the rest of my life, all right. The, the mission's going to send me home.

I might have to fix junk at home, you know. And, but God, I want to do what you want me to do. And I finally surrendered my time.

And I said, God, I promise I'll go out there tomorrow with a happy heart and do it with joy and do it as unto you. And, and if that's what you want, fine. And so I surrendered my time.

I said, God, it doesn't matter what you want me to do the rest of my life. My time is yours, just like the possessions. And I fell asleep.

I got up the next morning and there was people with the junk. And I stood there and smiled at them and they couldn't believe it. And they just stared.

And I said, man, what do you got? Let's go to work. Let's get this done. And they just looked at me as if something gone, you know.

And after about two or three days like this, they said, John, you've become a Christian again. That was hard on me because I happen to be on and, you know, we differ in theology. I happen to be one that believes you can't lose your salvation.

And I'm every grade I'm in, I'm losing it. I'm gaining it again. So I mean, my life ministry, I mean, what? Oh, it was a mess.

Anyway, I'm fixing junk with a happy heart. All things were going good. Now I'm teaching them as I fix it.

I'm not grouching at them. I'm teaching them. And I would always say now, I want you to do something for me.

Come to church, sit still, you know, be still, bring your family, listen. I thought, I've got to get some mileage out of this because I'm about to be sent home. If I can only get some churches going, then maybe I could, you know, stay because I don't want to go home, you see, because my father's still alive.

Now, there was a problem between me and my father. See, my father, I'm a second born and compared me to my old brother who was real fast and I'm real slow. He could drive a truck and I couldn't even ride a bicycle.

In Holland, all the families ride bicycles, you know, that's our transportation. So we, we lived there in the early years during the war and so on. And, and he says, you're messing up the whole family.

See, he had bought me this bicycle. Now for a stingy man, that was a great sacrifice. He bought me a nice bicycle, but I crashed that thing because I couldn't, I would see, they didn't have children's bicycles.

They put the big wooden blocks on the pedals. Have you ever seen that? So I could reach them. It was an adult bicycle and I'm scared.

He'd get me on the bicycle, give me a shove and I was off. As long as I kept pumping, I'd go fine. But as soon as I stopped pumping, I fall over.

I mean, I crash and I'm afraid to crash because I skin myself up every time. And so, and I couldn't balance. I just haven't got that.

And so he says, look at your brother, Jim, look at he's, he's, he's riding that bicycle. And man, and he says, you're messing up the family because he could take my two younger brothers, one on the front of his bike and one on the back. And my mother had a basketball, my little sister, but I, the two big boys had to ride their own bicycles so we could be mobile as a family.

He says, you're messing up everything. We'd go to church on bicycles. He says, you've got to ride it.

Now learn, man. And I, the more he threatened me, that what I, I'd go out and he'd get me going. I run forever until I was dead tired because I couldn't get off it.

I'd crash and I'd hit whatever was in front of me. I couldn't turn. When I turn, I fall over.

And so I always go straight, you know, whatever was in the way I'd crash, man. I blew up, blew up. I hit a bus.

Oh, I nearly killed myself. I, I hand landed under these, oh, these, these carts and, and I'd hit curbs and I blew out the tire. Tires were hard to get during the war.

And he'd get so mad. He'd have to buy a new tire. I'd bust them all up.

And he says, you'll never amount to anything. So now that I lived with that, you'll never amount to anything. So I set out to prove that I was worth something.

That's why I was the only one of the four boys that finished high school. See, I, I'm no, no smarter than the rest of them, but I just was going to prove to my father. I finished college, university.

I got to the mission field. I thought I've got to succeed. And I'm still trying to prove that I'm worth something.

So I can't be sent home because he's still alive. Now, if he died, then, you know, I could go home and he wouldn't say, I told you so. So I'm, I'm hurting folks.

So I'm, I, I don't want, I don't want to be sent home. So I'm trying to get something going, get these churches started to convince the mission. I'm a good missionary.

Okay. So I'm trying, but the thing was now that I fixed their junk and I fixed junk for every, I had shovels come through the second time. I had stuff.

And I, so I, we started using wooden pegs instead of rivets. Hey man, that worked a whole lot better. They could burn them out along with the stick.

That's saved time. Anyway, I said, now I want you to come to church. All of them came to church.

When I went to all the villages, I'd fix their junk. They came to church too. Wherever I went, they came to church.

And because I say now, you know, I may not want to fix anything for you again, if you don't do something for me, you know, now that's not God's way of evangelism. That's not God's way of, you know, but I, I'm

desperate to get something going. Now, one day I was fixing a rocking chair for my wife and the man at the window, they're always looking in the window.

He said, why don't you let me come in and help you help you fix your chair? I said, please do. So he came in and we're trying to glue these sticks back. And I had to put wire around and hold the thing together.

And this guy helped me real nice. And I said, what do you want for your pay? He says, I don't want anything. I said, you, I mean, I nearly fell over.

You don't want anything for your work. No, John, you fix my shovel. I fix your chair.

Something was happening in their hearts. Love is reciprocal. You know, love demands a response.

And, and so they were coming to church and I was leading people to Christ now. I wasn't getting anywhere in language study. Hadn't even been at my desk.

Didn't have any, even have John 3.16 translated. I had, and, and these people, I'm leading them to Christ. And all the men I put in class, I didn't even bother with the women and children.

I just, the men I put in class, I said, you're going to have to teach your wives and children. And, and I taught him how to pray, taught him how to pray in public, taught him how to pray in private and so on. So, so things were going good as far as, but I'm still in big trouble.

My wife says to me, what are you going to tell him next summer? You know, it's four months now. I said, I don't know. I said, they're probably pinned me down.

I can't lie about it. I said, we might be heading home. She says, no, try to get out of it.

Quit fixing the junk. I said, God won't let me. I want to sleep at night.

And she just shakes, you know how a wife can walk away just shaking their head, you know. And, and then when it was just about two months before conference, they send out a missionary checkup on me. He's a big guy.

He was on the field council. He had a gift of mercy. He hated to come down on me.

You know, put yourself in his position. He's assigned to come to check me out and to chew me out or whatever, you know, to tell me to get on the ball. But he's in a foreign tribe that he doesn't know the language of.

Right. He's totally dependent upon me. You see what I mean? Could you chew me out very much? If you saw all these guys with the spears and you, you're suspicious.

I mean, you want to get along in a situation like that. But, and so he had a tough assignment and that Saturday morning, he was supposed to come in Saturday noon. I had class with the preacher boys.

I have 10 guys. I was preparing for ministry now. And, uh, and I said to them, look, I said, there's going to be a guy.

He's going to come and check up, check up on us. Now I included them. He was really to check up on me to see what I was doing, but I included them because we got the secret.

We were in this thing together. Uh, so now I said, he's going to check up on us. Now we want to put on a real good show.

I mean, that church has got, uh, that avoid church. I, we had three places. We were at churches, rough, very rough churches started a couple of other preaching points.

I had 10 guys sent them out by twos. I said, no, I picked my best guy. I said, I want you to preach in the Albuquerque church tomorrow.

And I want you to preach it hard. And I want you to put on a good show for this, because this big Tuon, the chief of the Tuons is going to sit there and he's going to watch to see what we're doing. He says, if he's going to watch, I'll never remember anything.

See, they can't reach it. So they, they, that's why we have class on Saturday. So we remember a little bit of it Sunday morning, the lesson, you know, and, and when they forget, then, then they lapse into their favorite parable or Bible story.

Don't ever complain about your pastor repeating himself. I mean, every, I mean, can you imagine that they, they go five minutes on the new lesson and back to go to the story that they never forget because they preach it every week. And so, and he says to him, I won't forget.

And I won't remember. I said, all right. All right.

For one time, because this chief of the Tuons is going to hear, I want you can preach your favorite story. And I named it. I knew which each one's favorite story was because I'd hear them.

And, and I said, you can preach it, but preach it loud and preach it hard. And just, I mean, preach it twice. If you have to, he won't know the difference.

And, and so, and I said, now look, and I got the best song leader. Well, most of them can sing, they moan and groan, but the one guy was a little better. I said, I want you to lead the thing.

Ah, Tuon. I said, look, I'll sit on the men's side on the front row. I will tell you the next song.

And I picked the songs that they did best on the few courses they caught onto. I said, I will start them. You just, you know, wave your arm and, and, and he, and every so many beats, he would be right on, you know.

And, and I said, I'll, I'll, and you, okay. So we had this thing all ready. And now I said, no, I will hold when, when, when time for church, when the bamboo, when you hit the bamboo, I said, I will not come right away.

I'll keep the big Tuon away until you can talk to all your people. I said, tell those people to react, tell them what's up. And I said, when you're preaching, tell them all to shake their heads and say, it is true, it is true.

And, you know, and, and said, tell them to respond, tell them to talk back to you. I said, I mean, that'll impress them. And so he, and the song leader told them all to sing loud.

Yeah. So, uh, we went out of class and, and the plane came and the people ran down the airstrip behind the plane and the big Tuon comes out and, and he shakes my hand. He, he's a friend and he shakes my

hand and, and, uh, he's asking us how we're doing.

And then he asked me that question. He says, you're doing better, aren't you? You're doing better in language than he shook his head. Yes.

Encouraging me, wanting me to say yes so badly. And I messed it up for him. I said, no, you should have seen his face, the poor guy.

He had a, you know, a tough assignment and I felt sorry for him. And he, and he says, well, I have you start translating the Bible. I said, no, man, I don't know the language well enough.

And he looks at me, he says, Otto, what are you doing back here? And I thought to myself, you're not going to find that out. You make, you could stay here all week. My wife is not going to tell.

And the natives, they're not going to tell. You're going to fail in your mission. That's what I was thinking.

Now, he says, what are you doing back here? I said, well, a little bit of everything, you know. He says, uh, and he pinned me down, you know, he says, now exactly, uh, tell me, you know, and he, and I can't get out of it now, but when he asked me these questions that are going to get me in trouble, it was so neat. The Auyu are very rude.

They, uh, they break into your conversation. They, they always interrupt, you know, and you have to tell them, hey, be quiet, you guys, I'm talking to this man. But now I've heard whenever he pinned me down, I conveniently, uh, accepted an interruption, you know, and this guy was at my elbow and he says, what are you doing here? And I said, and I said, just a minute, this guy's got something important.

Let me, let me talk to him a minute. What do you want, man? He says, look in his eyes, look in his eyes. Look how dumb he is.

He doesn't know anything. He's, he's one of those. He may have clothes, but he doesn't know anything.

He says, look at him. He isn't smart. We're the only smart ones.

Are we doing? I said, yeah, that's right. And the whole crowd laughed and they just, and they held their bellies, you know, and they just laughed and I couldn't help but laugh. And, and he stands there looking at me and he says, what's funny? He says, I said, well, this is kind of a tribal joke.

It was strictly within our tribe. Uh, I said, it's kind of hard to translate. Um, uh, it was, it was hard, not, not, not, not language wise, but reputation wise.

And so I, I got him off this, never answered, never answered his question. And, and I, I got him in the house and, and he met, you know, and looked around and he saw my house. He saw that workshop.

He'd never seen a workshop like this before. He couldn't believe it. He could have used this.

He knows how to work with his hands. And, uh, he says, I can't believe this. Where'd you get this? I explained from the Jack, the guy that lived.

He says, wow. He says, what do you do here? I said, well, that was a crazy question. What do you do in a workshop? You fix the stuff that's broken.

But there was nothing in the process. I mean, the tools were hanging up and I'd cleaned the place and look good. And he says, he says, yeah.

He says, do you spend a lot of time here? Whoa. I didn't need that question, but the natives were at the window yelling something. I said, Hey, there's something going on outside.

Let's go see. And my son, he came after me and said, Hey, what are you guys in a thorn? They were excited. And, uh, nothing go.

That's the way the whole weekend went. The natives bailed me out. So beautiful.

And then he, while we went back in the house and got to my office, I had laid all my language papers, all my word lists, all out there. I had dusted the desk. I dusted the place and I, and I laid them out and, and I, and he picks up the pages.

Wow. It sounds like it looks like you hadn't been there, but it's just, it looks like you're doing all right. I thanked him for the compliment and, and, uh, he laid down and we got somehow got through that Saturday night.

And, uh, morning, Sunday morning came and the show began. Oh, what's this? The neatest thing. Uh, this, the, the, the thing bell rang and, and he says, well, are we going to church? I said, no, we wait a minute.

We walk in last, you know, culture, culture things, you know what I mean? Uh, different cultures. I didn't say that, that this was the met, but, you know, and I said, no, let them gather first. We're not going to waste our time as long as they're dragging in.

And when they're all get there, we'll go home. Okay. So we came in, my wife sits on the woman's side with the children.

He and I sat on them inside and this guy preached his heart out. Oh, he did a job for me. He preached it.

He preached it right. And the people were saying, that's right. It is true.

And they were reacting and he's looking around and he can't believe this church. The church was packed. Everybody came.

Some from the other village came. So now, and then, and then the song leader, oh, he went at this song leading and they, oh, it was one joy. I hope it was joyful to the Lord, but it was sound.

All right. It was, they sang and I'd call out the next song and they'd launch into that one. And he said, let's sing it.

Everybody sing it loud. And he couldn't believe what was going on. And after the service, he says, I can't believe this.

My, my Asmodeus, they won't even, they won't even sing. They just moan and groan. He says, your people.

He says, I can't believe this preacher. He says, did you teach these guys like this? That was a crazy question. There was nobody else doing any teaching there, but I said, yeah, man, there's no, and he says,

I, he says, how many churches you got? I said, three.

No, I didn't tell him this was the best one. He didn't ask me that. The whole weekend, I didn't offer more information than what he asked me.

I was truthful with him. So he says, how many churches you have? I said, three. He says, I can't believe it.

He says, how long you've been here? I told him about eight, nine years. He says, I, I've never seen a church like this anywhere on the swamplands. I said, you're, he says, you're way ahead of all the rest and you haven't been here that long.

How have you done this so fast? I mean, he's amazed. How have you done it so fast? He says, you're five years. No, he says, you're 10 years ahead of everybody.

You know, he says, what do you do around here? I said, well, I spend a lot of time with the people. He says, well, it's obvious. And he says, one thing bothered me.

You're praying. Now, see, we ran into problems. The people, they're proud people and they want to show off how well they can pray.

And I'm teaching these men how to pray. And now, and I call on a guy to pray, will you lead him prayer? And one guy jumps to his feet. He says, Tuan, he's got to pray three times since I've prayed once.

He says, isn't it about my turn? You're, you're preferring, and man, they're, they're, they're all fussing about, they want to have their chance to pray. Show, show off how well they can pray. And I said, oh, I'm sorry.

Yeah, well, you can pray too. So we had two prayers that morning. Well, the following church service next week, we had three and then we had five and 10 prayers.

And I'm working on trying to keep all these guys happy. And I'm working in the prayers between all the songs and between all the testimonies. I mean, everybody's getting a chance to pray and show off.

I mean, it got longer and longer. We even got between the stanzas of the songs, we were working, got, got out of control. So one day I said to them, this was before this missionary ever came, I said to them, we're going to change things around here.

We're, we're, I said, all of you men are going to get a chance to pray. Now get ready to pray. And I said, all you women, and I looked at the way, all you women are going to get a chance to pray.

I said, all right, everybody get on your knees. When I say one, two, three, go, all of you pray. I thought, let's get the whole thing out of the way and over with in one shot.

And so that's, it sounded like a, you know, real lively, you know what I mean? A real lively church, you know what I mean? And, oh, this one, two, three business went so funny. They, now every time they pray, they say, satu dua tiga. I argue it's very cumbersome, but they do it in Indonesian.

That's very easy. And so they, even the preacher, before he preached, they say, satu dua tiga. The song leaders, satu dua, everything they do in church is satu dua tiga.

And when visitors come, they say, what is this going on? What is this satu dua tiga business? You know, the one, they call it a one, two, three church. And, and it was funny, you know, but I never taught him any different. I thought God probably enjoyed, you know, he has so many boring services here to put up with, and maybe to have some change, he would, he would delight in that.

So he probably enjoyed it. There's nothing wrong with it. And so, but, but I said, satu dua tiga, and they all start praying.

Now we've been doing this for a couple of months, and all of a sudden I realized why this fellow has trouble. He's a, he's a fundamental Baptist. He's a fundamentalist with a big F fundamental, you know what I mean? And this thing sounded, you know, I'm out of Bob Jones University myself, and, and I know what he's going through when he hears all this commotion.

As a matter of fact, oh man, he says, I, I don't like what I hear. Oh, and I thought this is about to ruin my whole show. I mean, my whole church service.

And, and I said, I said, brother, I, let me explain this. I mean, I'm, he says, he says to me, aren't you a Baptist? I said, well, I'm Dutch Reformed. Yeah, I'm a Baptist by marriage.

I said, but I said, he says, aren't you making a Baptist church out of this? I said, I never really gave it any thought. I said, yeah, yeah, this is going to be the first Baptist church of Amboy. That's what I told him.

And he says, didn't it sound like a Baptist church to me? And I said, well, look, they all want to pray. This is the only way to solve the problem. He says, you mean your people want to pray? I said, yeah.

He says, mine don't. I can't get anybody to pray. They're just, and when they do, they mumble a little bit and nobody can hear it.

He says, I can't believe it. Your people want to sing. Your people want to, they preach, they want to pray.

He says, I can't believe this church. You're 10 years ahead of the other churches. Now, when he said that, I did not associate it with the fact that I'd given my time to God several months before.

And I'd give my time to God. Now he says, you're 10 years ahead. And I never thought of that.

And he says, Otto, you're doing a terrific job. Keep doing what you're doing. Now he's giving me permission to fix junk.

He didn't know that. He did see, but he never did find out. So I wish I had that in writing, because I'm going to have to face the language committee soon.

But anyway, he said, keep doing what you're doing. He says, God bless you. You're doing a good job.

That's the way he went. On Monday morning he left. So we go on and conference comes up.

I tried to get out of going. I tried to arrange some evangelistic meetings on the coast, but they made me face the music. I have to come.

And we got to conference and the agenda was there. And my wife on the first day sees, look at that, language reports, Tuesday morning. I'd already seen it.

Oh, I couldn't sleep Monday night. Tomorrow morning, could you sleep tonight if tomorrow morning everybody finds out what you do when you're alone? And man, I'm hurt and I can't sleep tomorrow. Man, they're going to send me home.

Could you sleep? I mean, I'm struggling. Tomorrow morning, I'm going to lose my reputation that that was grade three in God's school. So yeah, I'd give my time to God.

I graduated from grade two. And really after I give my time to God, I had the joy back. I got off the tranquilizers again.

I didn't have to worry. I'd give my possessions to God, give my time to God, give my life to God. I thought, now God can use me to reach this tribe.

I really believe this. And God again looks down and said, look how happy he is. He made it through second grade.

I know it works. That's the way it is. All I have to do is put enough pressure on this guy and he'll surrender.

He's going to be Christ-like someday. I want him conformed to the image of Christ, right? That's what he wants. That's what he wants for you too.

And you're probably in school too. Any of you hurting like I'm hurting? See, God wants all of us Christ-like. And if you don't want it, then he'll put you in school.

Well, he'll put you in school anyway. If there's anybody unsaved here, I doubt if there would be. But if there's anybody unsaved here, I want to give you a fair warning and be right up front with you.

As soon as you join us, you're going to be in school. Okay, be assured of that. Okay, now I give my time and got the joy back.

God enjoys seeing us happy. God enjoys seeing us surrender. And then he says, oh, I got to put him in the next grade.

I wonder how many grades he's got to go through before he catches on what's going on, you know, because I'm still praying God help me when I'm in trouble and I'm still trying to fix my own Dutch swing. Did you see this? Did you see that video, the Dutch swing on the snake video? And when is he going to really surrender the whole thing willingly before I have to put the pressure on? Don't you think God would rather have us conform to his will without us being under such pressure and without suffering? What about you and your children as you discipline them? Don't you rather have them obey without you having to beat them or spank them or discipline them? Sure, God loves us more than we love our children. And so now here I'm in third grade, reputation hurting.

Tomorrow they're going to find out. I mean, I can't. They're going to pin me down.

I can't lie about it. I can't sleep that night. And I said, oh God, I don't know what I'm supposed to do.

I'm trying to do the best I can. I'm trying to fix their things and the churches are starting, but they don't count that. The language committee, that's all they care about is language.

And I said, God, they're going to send me home and they don't know. And I can't even, I'm not a good language person anyway. I hate sitting behind a desk.

So I really welcome all the interruptions, you know. And so I said, God, what am I supposed to do? And I'm pleading and finally I'm exhausted and I'm quiet again. And he gets a word in.

What happened when you gave your possessions? I said, same question. It's amazing how many times God answers your question with a question. Check that out in the Bible.

It's a very interesting study. And then came the thing that floored me. What happened when you gave your time? And I said, God, the missionary said I'm 10 years ahead.

And the people want to come to church because I fixed their junk. And I can't believe it. And they're getting converted.

And I said, God, I was just amazed. And then what followed? It seems like the Lord was just letting me wait. And all of a sudden I thought of it.

I'm losing my reputation in the morning. I said, God, I'm giving you my reputation. I'm going to lose it in the morning anyway.

So really you don't lose a whole lot. But I give it away before I lose it. That's what you should do.

Put it on the altar. Give it to God while you still have it to give. Don't wait until you have no choice, because it'll come to that.

All right. So I gave my reputation. I said, God, it doesn't matter what they do tomorrow.

If they send me home and my father is still alive, I'll tell him the same. And if he says I'll never be worth anything, I'll just smile at him too. And it doesn't matter.

And whatever, if you want me to fix junk, it doesn't matter. I give my reputation. But this whole deal with my father is my reputation.

And so if I give my reputation away, I have no more problem with people. And so I had joy when I gave my reputation to God. I said, God, it doesn't matter what people think.

I'll tell them the truth. And so I went to sleep. And my wife was on breakfast duty and she got up early.

And I never had a chance to tell her about this time thing that God had multiplied my time like the possessions when we gave to him. And so I wanted to really tell it to her, but I never had a chance to talk to her. And she didn't join me in the meeting until the language meeting.

There she's sitting beside me. She's already turning red. She's embarrassed.

I mean, how would you like to be married to a dummy, you know? And she was hurting. Now I'm smiling. I'd given it away.

I had nothing left to lose, right? And so I'm smiling. I'm content. And she looks at me.

She says, what are you smiling for? I mean, this is showdown time. We're about to send home. And she says, are you feeling okay? You know how a nurse does.

She grabs my pulse. She says, are you okay? See, she knew that I'd been under a lot of pressure a long time and that someday she expected something was going to snap. And she thought it had happened.

I'm sitting there smiling on showdown day, you know what I mean? And, but he was already there and he's starting around the circle and all these reports. And he says, she says, what are you going to say? I said, no. She says, don't tell him if you don't have to.

I said, I won't, but I'm not going to lie. And I'm smiling. And she can't understand it all.

And then when the man came to me, you know, to my turn on the circle, he looks and I'm sitting there smiling. That made it very hard for him. And, and he, he asked this question, brother Koenig, have you done better since your last report came in? And I sat there and just smiled.

I said, no. And man, he didn't know, he didn't know how to react. And so he quick went to the next question, language study.

I said, no, I don't know it. And I smiled again. And this guy was speechless.

Interesting. I've never seen it. And he, he hung his head and I'm sitting there smiling.

And first thing I know, all the other missionaries hung their head. Now my wife had her head hung for another reason, but, but, you know, if you ever want to have an interesting situation, you, you confess, you take a serious meeting and you confess that you blew it. And then you smile and people won't be able to handle that combination.

It's, it's unnatural. See, now you can't do it unless you first put your reputation on the altar. Otherwise you can never smile and confess that you blew anything in a serious meeting.

And that's where most, most Christians in the States are. All right. Now I sat there looking at the tops of their heads and I said to him, I, I, I'm amazed.

I'm the only guy that's free. I'm smiling. I have nothing to lose.

I don't know what they're, you know, they can't handle the combination. And all of a sudden, this, this missionary jumps up, the guy that checked up on me. He jumps up.

He says, just a minute, just a minute, folks. This isn't right. Before we say anything more to the Konings, you ought to see those churches he's got there.

I was there. I was in the meeting. I felt like saying, give it to him, you know, I need all the help I can get.

And I, he says, you ought to hear his preachers preached. You ought to hear the singing. They want to pray.

He says, we've got a lot to learn from this brother. Oh yeah. They all looked up and the chairman says, Brother Koning, that's a good report he has brought.

He says, Brother Koning, what do you do back there? But now I'm getting some confidence. Things were swinging my way. So I said, well, I, I, you know, spend, I spend a lot of time with people.

That's true. And I said, then I, I do a little bit of everything. I said, I mean, I do all kinds of things.

Too much, too much to mention. Well, he didn't know what to answer. He says, well, and one man stood up and he said, Mr. Chairman, tomorrow afternoon is our session on methods of missions.

Why don't we let Brother Koning teach us? I thought, yeah, I could just see some of those scholars fixing junk. I mean, they just, it just wouldn't fit. I mean, God's made us all different.

He's given us different abilities and different gifts. We can't put everybody in one class just because a guy can't do it the way you can do it. Don't condemn him.

Hey, and so I stood up and I said, I appreciate that honor to be your teacher, but really, I don't, I don't have anything to say. I don't read those books, you know? Well, he said, then he asked me, he says, Brother Koning, what is your method of missions? And I said, I'm not even a Methodist. I don't have any methods.

I don't, I'm not a very organized person. I don't even read those books. That's why you want me to teach you tomorrow afternoon.

I don't, I know I should read those books on methods and on missions, but I'm not a very fast reader and I never get to that. I said, so if you make me teach you that hour, you'd just embarrass me because I'd be standing in front of you not knowing what to say. So please save me that embarrassment.

And, and one of you teach that because I just, I just, I told you everything I can tell you. Well, I told him everything I wanted to tell him. I said, I just spent a lot of time with the people and they're responding and they're turning to the Lord.

Praise the Lord. And they accepted that. They said, God bless you, Brother Koning.

Keep doing what you're doing. Now the whole conference gives him permission to fix John. How nice.

Now I'm not in that struggle anymore. Do I obey God or do I obey man? God fixed it for me. So he had man obey, you know, agree with him.

Now they didn't know it, but they, and they said, God bless you. And they went on and the others, and we walked home from that meeting. My wife says, how'd you pull that off? And I says, Carol, I did the very opposite.

I didn't pull it off. I gave it away. Pulling it off is us trying to fight our own way through life and struggle our own way through and trying to make it happen.

That's, that's pulling it off. No, no. It's giving it away.

Pulling it off is getting your Kohler generator and try to fix your time or getting your shepherd dog and so on. Friends, we've got to give it up. We've got to lay it down.

And I'm come here tonight to tell you, lay it down, quit fighting, quit struggling. And my, my poor father, he never got through first grade in God's school. You see, God doesn't skip grades or you know how to teach you this.

Johnny's having a real problem with his spelling. Well, let's, let's leave the spelling. Let's go to math for a while.

That's not God. God will just send more natives or neighbors, whatever, you know. He'll send more and get the pressure on, you see.

He doesn't say, oh, let's leave that. No, no. God doesn't.

He sticks with you. My father, a tight Dutchman, always hung on so tight. During the war, he buried his silver so the Germans wouldn't get it.

After the war, he couldn't find it. Oh, he was frantic. He never spent money on himself.

He worked hard, hard worker. He owned several businesses at one time and houses, but somehow he would lose them again. Many times, not his own fault.

And it seemed like God controlled these things and, and was trying to get to him. And he worked hard. He always gave a lot of money to the church.

He, he really believed that if he gave money to God, that he'd get it back somehow. A lot of Christians believe that. So he gave to the church and he hoarded it.

He hung on and he never spent it. And at the end of his life, after he was 77, he died. He finally ended up in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Most Dutchmen do. And, and, and, and, and he died there, had a stroke. And, and he had, he left my mother with a little house.

That's all he had. And it was only half paid for. And this is a guy that, that worked so hard and that gave to God and had always hoarded his money, tried to save it.

And that's what he had on the end. It doesn't work, folks. And my dear father never got out of first grade.

Isn't that sad? I had the joy when I surrendered my possessions and I had the joy of seeing what God, I had the joy when I surrendered my time and then my reputation and so on. But my dear father never had that joy. And we were there, my son Otto, who's named after me, and I stood by his bedside.

The last day he was coherent, we happened to come into town. And from then on, he went into a coma and died within a week. And, and we, and you know what my father said? He laid there and he grabbed my son.

He said, Sonny, he says, I want to tell you something. Don't ever try to save things for yourself. Don't have a goal to be rich.

He says, just serve Jesus Christ. Just serve God. Don't worry about anything else because nothing else is important, Sonny.

Only God is important. That impressed my son, who is now a missionary. And you know, you know what happened on his deathbed the last day? He surrendered.

I believe he graduated from the first grade when he said, nothing is important, only God. Isn't that something? But he had no time to enjoy his graduation from first grade. Isn't that sad? And, but you know, on the mission field there, I'd give my reputation to God and, and my wife couldn't understand what I'd done.

I said, Carol, you'll never be able to live with me unless you give your reputation to God because we're in this thing together. And she marveled. And you know, that year I was elected to the field council.

I had been nine years on the field. I'd been wanting to be elected. I politicked, you know, Christian politicking to get the votes.

I wanted to be a counselor. I wanted to change some of the rules like language study and things I couldn't live with. And, and I, and I wanted to so bad.

I always voted for myself, but many times I only got one vote. That tells you something about my wife. You know, I, yeah, she's, she's never admitted that, admitted that.

But anyway, I tried so hard. I passed out the papers. I was the servant, you know, I'd sit on the front.

I'd sing loud. I combed my hair nice. I've kept the nicest clothes for conference, impressed.

I mean, I even gave my wife a permanent. Oh, I hated the smell of that stuff. And to make her look nice, we looked like, I told my kids I'd spank them twice as hard if I, if they cut up during conference and they were like, we were like a model little family.

I mean, I know that this, I mean, I'm going to get in this year and get voted in onto the leadership. And those dummies never voted as if I didn't even exist. I'm the only one voting for myself.

And I, I, I can't believe this. And I'm passing out the papers and I sing loud and I do. I had the best prayer prayers.

I mean, I'd work on my prayers. I prepare my prayers ahead of time. I would catch all their burdens around the table and their heartbeat and their needs.

And I memorized them and I'd write them down. And when my turn came to pray, I would pray for their most pressing needs. Just one after the other, just a clockwork.

Those are some of the best prayers you've ever, you know, ever prayed in New Guinea. And, and, and, and they still didn't vote for me. Now I would think they'd want to have a spiritual man leading them, a guy that's praying all the time, has all the prayer requests on top of his head.

I mean, maybe they didn't believe, I don't know what happened. Now I'd give my reputation to God. Two days later on the Thursday was field council elections.

I didn't care anymore. It was so neat. That wasn't the most important meeting of the conference anymore.

I sat at the back, didn't even comb my hair, didn't even sound, I, it doesn't matter if I'm here or not. I mean, I, I've given my reputation away. I don't need to be in leadership.

And guess who was elected first? This guy right here. I mean, I was hiding, okay? And I'm elected and I, it was so, oh, everybody voted for me. No, it was almost unanimous, lacked one vote, and I think it was my

wife again.

I don't, I see as, I don't know for sure. I know I voted for me, but she's never, I hope someday she'll confess that. I don't know, maybe.

But you know, amazing. You know what Jesus said? He that humbles himself shall be exalted. Isn't that right? Now that's, that isn't an option.

That's a statement of truth from the word of God. If you humble yourself, you will be exalted. The opposite is true.

He that exalts himself shall be abased, shall be humbled. And see, if, if you try to impress people by what you are in your true, hey, God's going to low you low, and you've seen it in churches where all of a sudden a family that you thought was so solid in America, and all of a sudden the thing, oh, you couldn't believe it. Hey, humble yourself, therefore, under the mighty hand of God.

Hasn't he got a mighty hand? Sure, he can send more thieves, anytime. He can send more people to waste your time. He's got a mighty hand.

Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, and he will exalt you in due time. And I wondered how long due time was. In my case, it was eight hours from the time I gave my reputation away to the time that I became their teacher, and I didn't even want to be their teacher.

And friends, God has ways, hasn't he? Now there's more, there's more grades in God's school. We've covered three. I don't know how long you can stay.

Oh, goodness, it's late. But there's five more grades. But after the fifth grade, I caught on, and I said, what else is God saying to me? I gave it to him quick.

I mean, you know, you finally get smart. Some of us, but the fourth grade was my children. I had to lay them on the altar.

You know, when you almost lose your kids. Oh, brother, the fifth grade was I almost lost my wife. So I gave them to God when I was losing them.

And I see today in a church people hurting. I don't know if you see people hurting. And I wonder why do Christians hurt? I see a lady on a bed of cancer hurting in pain, and this lady had given her tithe and her money to the church and sacrificially given all her life, never missed a church service.

And I said, God, what in the world is going on? This lady is a godly lady. She's always been faithful. And why does she have to suffer like this at the end of her life? And I see other Christians suffering.

And I see unsaved. I see sometimes Christians hurting more than the unsaved around them. Don't you? And you say, what is going on? God, what are you? Hey, they're in school, folks.

They're in school. The unsaved aren't in God's school. See, he wants us Christ-like.

And he's putting pressure on. And when we don't respond to the pressure, he puts on more pressure. And if it takes getting you on a sickbed flat on your back, what do you do when you're flat on your back? Well, somebody says you look up.

Yes, you cry out to God. Okay. But see, God will increase the pressure when you don't surrender.

And that dear old lady may have just had one area left that she's hanging on to. I don't know. And God's got the pressure on her.

And they're all praying, God, heal her. And you might as well quit praying. God's got her in school.

And as soon as he surrenders her right, soon as he puts it on the altar, wow, it'll be just that quick that God can just take her off that bed of sickness. And I've seen, oh, that's so true in people. Don't anoint people with oil and pray over them to heal them when they haven't surrendered their right to be healthy.

Say, God, if they surrender that right and say, God, I'll serve your sick and all, like the Apostle Paul with his thorn in the flesh, then all right, when they've surrendered, then they'll probably get healthy before you can anoint them with oil. But you see what I'm saying? Surrender all these areas to God, your future and your time and so on, your reputation, your children, your wife and your talents and whatever you got. But friends, I see so many people suffering so much and it's not necessary.

Now, there are other reasons for suffering. I must say that. But by far the greatest reason for suffering in the Christian church, among Christians, is this thing when God, see God wants to purify us like pure gold, doesn't he? And he sends us through the fire in order that we might come out like pure gold so that we will love him more and serve him better.

And that's why he gets the pressure on them. And friends, so many people suffer so hard and they don't need to. And if they just surrender.

So here's a ministry for you when you see suffering people, you know, saying, hey, are you willing to give it to God? Surrender and surrender your rights and God will be able to meet you. Then God has a choice. Okay, remember that not everything you give to God turns to gold.

God's got a choice and he will do what is best. You give it to God and God will decide what's best for you. But he wants us Christ-like.

And so that's the way it is. So let's all bow our heads now and pray.

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