

Hindrances to Personal and Corporate Revival

by Ralph Sutura

The main hindrance to personal and corporate revival is our own self-centeredness and reliance on human resources instead of God, and we must let go of preconceived notions and trust in God's sovereignty to overcome these hindrances.

Duration: 1:28:01

Scripture: Leviticus 19:18, Isaiah 59:1, Micah 3:4, Galatians 5:1-13

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the shortcomings of the preaching and music during a crusade. He acknowledges that both the content and delivery were below par. However, despite these flaws, it is emphasized that God was still at work among his people. The preacher also mentions that the true nature of personal revival will be discussed in the next sermon, focusing on relationships and the influence of the world. The sermon concludes with a reminder that honesty with God is necessary for revival and that the paralysis of analysis can hinder spiritual growth.

Transcript

Tonight, Hindrances to Personal and Corporate Revival, Hindrances. Make sure you have a pen or a pencil because tonight will be altogether different from anything else that we have done. And also you need to make sure that tonight you pick up the issues that relate to the subject, The Heart God Revives, and A Heart of Revival, When Will Revival Come? Make sure you get it.

Look at this. We have confused evangelism with revival and added numbers to churches already loaded down with members that have been, what's this, starched and ironed but not washed. We have imagined that we had a revival every time a church paid out of debt.

That's a revival. But look, there's a statement, Vance Havner made, look at the statement, starched and ironed but not washed. People in our churches have been starched, ironed, we've got it starched, we've got it straight, but never been washed.

And tonight is a time when we're going to do a scriptural spiritual laundry list, take a look at that, to see what needs to be washed, to be cleansed. Now you'll want to make notes and take down the scriptures because I'm not going to quote them all, but I want you to make sure that you have them so that in the future, in the days ahead, you'll be able to use this and study it on your knees with your Bible open to be

able to reflect on what it is God is trying to say. So we are going to move rapidly through some of this and then get to the main part of it a little bit later, but I just want you to make sure we have it.

Very important that everybody has a sheet and you do your own work as far as making notes. Galatians chapter 5 is what we want to read. Galatians chapter 5, some verses.

It says, Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. Be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Verse 7. You did run well.

Who did hinder you that you should not obey the truth? Verse 9. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Verse 13. For brethren, you have been called unto liberty.

Only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the laws fulfilled in this word, even this, thou shalt tolerate thy neighbor as thyself. Does that make sense? No.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one another. You know what I call that verse? I call that verse Christian cannibalism.

Biting and devouring one another. That's what cannibals do. They bite and devour one another.

And you know what it says? Take heed that you be not consumed one another. You know what it's saying? Everybody gets consumed. No such winners.

Biting and devouring each other. This I say then, walk in the spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Why? Because the flesh lusts against the spirit, spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary to one another so that you cannot do the things that you would.

What it's really saying is that the flesh and the spirit are at war against each other. They do not coexist. They fight against each other.

And then verses 24, 26, and they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the spirit, we say we live in the spirit, let's also walk in the spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

While that whole chapter is a tremendous chapter between the walking in the flesh and walking in the spirit, I just use it as a frame of reference because tonight we're taking a good look at what needs to be cleansed. What needs to be cleansed? Dr. George Sweeting, the former president of Moody Bible Institute, made this statement. The greatest obstacle for the conversion to the conversion of Nineveh was not the sin and corruption of the Ninevites, though that was great, it was not the graph-ridden police force or the corrupt politicians.

It was not the false cults and religions. That wasn't the biggest problem. The biggest obstacle to the salvation of Nineveh was in the heart of a pious, prejudiced man named Jonah.

There was no deceitfulness in all of Nineveh like the deceitfulness in Jonah's heart. That's when God had a problem with a prophet trying to outdo what God wanted him to do. And so it's easy for us to be involved in religious activities and all kinds of profession and yet be the biggest ones, the most deceived and the biggest problems that God has as far as fulfilling his work is concerned.

So I want you to watch for numbers, the numbers 1 to 16 at the left top to keep up to where I am. You'll see the numbers and you'll know which number you're supposed to be on when we're writing. Hindrances to revival.

Number one, the motive for wanting revival. The motive for wanting revival. So what you need to do is write the statement down and then put the texts and any comments that you want to make as well, that is up to you as I relate to it.

The motives for wanting revival. What we want revival. We want revival because our church, we just need more people to help us pay the bills.

Is that a motive for revival? We want revival so we can straighten out some of the problems we have in our church. Is that a motive for revival? Is that the motive for revival? We want revival because it will help some of our families that are really struggling in emotionally and physically and financially and revival. God will meet their needs.

Is that the motive for it? Here's the motive. Whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do, we do all to the glory of God. You see? And Ephesians 3, 20 and 21, unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages.

Unto him be glory. That's the motive. The glory of God alone and that's a whole subject, takes a whole night to develop that.

Hindrance number two, self-satisfaction. Self-satisfaction. Revelation 3, 16, 17, self-satisfaction.

The Lord says you're lukewarm, you're neither cold nor hot, I'll spew you out of my mouth but you say, we talk back to God. God tells us what we're like and we talk back to him. We say we're rich, we're increased with goods and we have need of nothing.

And God answers, and you don't even know that there are five things wrong with you. You know not that you're wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. Now I've seen some wretched people who didn't know they were wretched when everybody else did know they were wretched.

Seen some miserable people that didn't know how miserable they were, most people know. I've never seen a poor man that didn't know he was not, that he was not poor. I've never seen a blind man with a seeing eye dog didn't know he was blind.

And I've never seen a person go through an International Falls winter naked and not knowing it. Now you put that all together and try to figure out what God is saying and we have the audacity to talk back to God with those maladies. We say we have need of nothing, need of nothing.

Well I don't want to take time to merely talk about I will spew you out of my mouth. You know that's interesting, in the Middle East, well yeah I'll do it. I can tell you that years ago Lou and I had occasion to be in the Middle East and on the desert in Jordan.

We were told that if you stop out on the desert and you ask for water, a glass of water, a cup of water, if they give you a lukewarm glass of water, as soon as you drink that it will immediately come back up. They say that the combination of the Middle Eastern sun, the chemical combination of all this, with the chemicals in the sand beneath, those two things with lukewarm water will not co-exist. That as soon as it

hits the bottom, boom, right back up.

Well for whatever that's worth, in the midst of everything else that portion of scripture means, you know what I'm saying? God says it nauseates me, I can't even hold it down. We say I have need of nothing, I'm satisfied just the way I am. God says I can't even hold it down.

Personal revival threatens the comfort and safety of what we have been doing without total commitment to Christ. A comfortable and safe life run without real commitment is a tragedy. Anything that shakes the comfort and safety of our lives is feared.

And we ought to be praying, God, help me, teach me to be earnest enough to face such a threat. Deliver me from that self-satisfaction. Well hindrance number three, self-centeredness.

Some of these are closely connected but a little bit different. Look at that. Look at this.

There's a man on his knees. I pray for me and mine, Lord. More money please, Lord.

And the truth is, what about praying for the lost? We're all wrapped up in ourselves. Romans 7, the apostle was, oh wretched man that I am, who's going to deliver me from this body of sin and death? And in chapter 6, he says, to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Chapter 8, verses 5 and 6, self-centeredness, well me, me, me, Lord, it's me, me, my need.

I call it Christian humanism. What's in it for me? And if the church can't benefit me, then I'll look for another church. If it doesn't suit me just right, I'll go someplace else.

If it doesn't meet what I think it ought to be primarily, what's in it for me? Oh, wretched man that I am. There's what the apostle Paul's saying, and there are the verses. To be carnally minded, they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, and they that are after the spirit mind the things of the spirit.

Literally he's saying, they that are after the flesh are fleshly minded, the mind of they that are after the spirit allow the spirit to control their minds. When we walk in the spirit, hindrance number four, self-sufficiency. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.

Self-sufficiency, well, I've got enough in myself to make it happen. I can tell you what it was like. Two pastors came to one of the sessions.

I was doing morning sessions during a crusade, and I was talking about the problems of the peculiar problems of the clergy relating to revival. And I mentioned the fact that some pastors said, we can make it happen. We can make it happen in ourselves.

We can make it happen. And two pastors came up to me and said, Ralph, do you realize what you said? Said, that's exactly what this man and I said. He's my associate.

And I said to him, and he said to me, I said, you and I in this church together, we can make it happen around here. And God broke their hearts about their self-sufficient attitude, a know-it-all attitude. We can make it happen.

Know-it-all attitude. He who knows not that he knows not is not only a fool, but he's dangerous to others. When you feel you know all the answers, you have yet to hear all the questions.

Somebody said, you might as well have a conversation with yourself. You have all the answers anyway. Know-it-all attitude, self-sufficient in ourselves.

Timothy Dwight said, self-confidence is a guide, eminently dangerous and deceitful. Safe as we may feel under its direction, our safety is imaginary. Our true wisdom lies in willingly feeling and cheerfully acknowledging our dependence on God.

That's the true wisdom. And committing ourselves with humble reliance to his care and direction. See, it's an imaginary, imaginary safety when we are sufficient within ourselves.

And that leads me to number five, reliance on human and natural resources. See, it all ties together, but a little difference. Our reliance on human and natural resources, I probably should have said, that's the place where I should have talked about the pastors who could make it happen.

But there's more than that. You see, the scripture, John 3.30, he must increase, but I must decrease. He must increase, I must decrease.

And that leads me right to John 5.30, I can of mine own self do nothing. That's Jesus talking. I can of mine own self do nothing.

And that leads me to John 6.63. It's the spirit that quickens, the flesh profits nothing. The spirit quickens, but the flesh profits nothing. Profits nothing.

Well, when I look at that, I like to call it this way. I call it the downward trail of self-centeredness or of depending on human resources. See, from decreasing to doing nothing to profiting nothing.

The downward trail to reliance on self-centeredness. See, you must know you cannot before you know you can, so that when you do, you know you didn't. How's that for a riddle? You must know you cannot before you know you can, so that when you do, you know it wasn't you that did it.

I like that. See? God needs to strip us of our reliance on human resources. And by the way, those of us in ministry, this is a real danger.

We can rely on our education, rely on the natural abilities and the spiritual gifts that God might have given us. Think that it comes through that. Instead of reliance on the power of God.

A pastor commented, he said, I was on fire for the Lord, but when I look back now, it was my own flesh that was burning. He said, I was a busy man with a dried up, lazy spiritual heart. And it doesn't have to be a pastor.

But you see, when we think we have enough resources, human resources, that we don't need God to come on the scene. What a danger that is in our Christian experience. Well, I can tell you what it was like when God allowed this ministry to be used in Canada in the early 70s.

What people said, you know, can any good thing come out of Nazareth? They said that of Jesus, didn't they? Well, well, I can tell you what it was like when the reporters came to try to figure out what was happening up there. One man wrote in the periodical, somebody gave us a copy of it. It said that the music was below par, trying to analyze it.

The music was below par. And it was. Dr. Virgil Brock was our song leader.

He was 83 years of age. He had a natural vibrato in his voice. You were never sure which note he was on. And he sang some of those old ancient songs that he had written 50 years earlier. And there he was, 83 years of age, with us. Totally opposite of what it should have been.

So they said the music was below par. And they were right. They went on to say the preaching was below par.

Hmm. And it went on to say, in both content and delivery. Now, what's left? In both content and delivery.

And I chided Lou, because at that time, during that crusade, he was doing most of the nighttime preaching, so I had to let him say, Lou, look at this, look what they said about your preaching, look. So, the music was below par. The preaching was below par in both content and delivery.

But you know what else it said? It said, but one could not escape the fact that God was at work among his people. And when I showed that to Lou, and I was trying to chide him about what it said about preaching, but he got that last part. But one could not escape that God was at work among his people.

I'll never forget what happened to him. His eyes began to sparkle and a great big smile, and he burst it out real loud. Praise the Lord! It's about time something happens.

Because that's it. And God needs to strip us of our reliance on human resources. And by the way, 1 Corinthians chapter 1 is that whole story.

Why does he do it? So that no flesh will glory in his presence. God uses the weak things so that no flesh will glory in his presence. Well, look at this.

You talk about human resources. Couldn't resist a revitalizer. Look how hard they're working to revive.

To revive. Revive, see? And he's saying to them, it wasn't supposed to be this hard. Sure, you try to do it in the energy of the flesh, it'll always be hard.

Try to depend on your own human resources to make things happen spiritually, it'll always be hard. Think it's easy? No, no. Always be hard.

Number six, hindrance to revival. Our preconceived mental framework as to how it comes. Tremendous hindrance to revival.

Preconceived mental framework as to how it comes. After praying and hearing revival sermons for years, some cannot accept it from God if it does not fit their mental mold. In other words, that can't be a revival.

After all, it didn't happen like it happened in Finney's day. In somebody else's day, that can't be a revival. You see, our historical concepts of revival, what we've read in the past, can sometimes box God into the framework of history.

As if we say, God, you have to do it that way because that's the way you did it in the past. And if it doesn't show up that way, then it must not be of God. Because it never happened like that before.

And so we shrivel God into a framework of the past history and do not allow God to be God, to do whatever he wants to do. Now, you know as well as I that if God is going to send a reviving and a revival to International Falls, you know as well as I that it has to come in the Evangelical Covenant Church, right?

And if God sees fit to start it in the Nazarene Church, you know their doctrine is not right. That can't be from God.

And if God wants to start in some Mennonite churches, oh no, never there. See? And we lose sight of the Kingdom of God. And it's got to fit.

And that's a sense of dishonesty when we think like that. We think our mind and our mental capacity is more important than what God says. And that's a tremendous hindrance to what God wants to do.

For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Who hath been his counselor? For of him and through him and to him are all things, to whom be glory forever. And of course, Isaiah 55, 7 and 8, he says, My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than yours, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

So let's let God be God. And if some of us are bound to think that it has to come a certain way, just the way it fits our mental capacity, our mold, then it's a tremendous hindrance to what God wants to do. Here's another one.

Praying for revival in unbelief. Praying for revival in unbelief. Now some of that unbelief is caused from our previous ill experiences.

From our previous ill experiences. I dare say there are people who you remember years gone by when they used to have special kind of meetings. They called them revival meetings.

And they used to twist people's arms to respond. They used to pull people out of an aisle and they'd drag them down. And then they would kneel and they would wrap their arms around them and they'd pray over them.

And they're praying over them and going like this over them. And they'd say, Do you feel it? Brother, do you feel it? Do you feel it? Do you feel it? And all wrapped up in feelings and emotion and it's no sooner over and they're, in quotes, reviving all over. And some people have never gotten over that.

And the word revival or reviving is an ill repute to some people because of the past failures and attempts. I get what it was like to be in a crusade in Ontario in eastern Canada and there was an associate pastor, minister of Christian education, who just came on the staff. And first ministry out of Bible college seminary.

And it was evident while we were there, he did everything to stay away from any of us. So for the first few days, I noticed how aloof he was. So after a few days of that, I said, How about if you and I go out and have lunch together? Well, we did.

And I didn't need to say a word. He brought it up. He said, You no doubt have noticed that I have been rather aloof.

I said, Yes, I guess that's probably the statement of the year. Very evident. Tell me why.

And he said, Because I graduated with 13 others in the seminary from our class and not a one of 13 fellows studying for the ministry and now in the ministry would have anything good to say about revival. I said, Why? He said, Because all of the human efforts and the human attempts of people who had come through to try to produce a revival and some of the students even try to manipulate things to bring about a revival. I said, I have nothing to do with it.

I said, Will you be honest enough to give God a chance? He was sitting in the back rows when we started. He said, All right. All right.

I'll be honest enough to give God a chance. And it was amazing to watch. We were there for three weeks.

It was amazing to watch that after that first week, every night he and his family were moving up one row. And by the time we got to the end of the crusade, he and his family were sitting on the front row. And he came up to me after and he gave me a great big hug.

He said, You know what? He said, I'm going to write. I'm going to contact every one of the graduates of our class and tell them that our concept of revival is absolutely wrong. What have I said? It's so easy.

Some of us, if we've had some ill experience in the past, to automatically write off what's real. And it becomes a tremendous hindrance to what it is God wants to do. Dr. G. Christian Weiss, who used to be the voice of missions for the Back to the Bible broadcast years ago.

One day, Lou and I were having lunch with him. He's now in heaven. And I said to him, Dr. Weiss, what is your thought, your concept of the idea of seeing revival in our day? The possibility of seeing God do something in revival in our day.

He said, Well, I guess I can answer that by merely saying to you that a man gave me a book that he had written. And he wanted me to critique it. I said, What was it? He said the book was, he wrote it.

This man wrote it. The book was titled Ten Reasons Why No Revival Before Jesus Comes. I said, Well, what did you think of the book? He said, I didn't even have to open it.

He said, I took one look at the cover and the title, and I turned to the man who wrote it and who gave it to me. I said, Sir, here's my evaluation of your book. Your book is reason number 11.

Your book is reason number 11. Romans 14:23b says, Whatsoever is not of faith is sin, and a spirit of unbelief is sin. Is it ever dispensationally wrong to pray, Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee? Dr. Dr. What was his name? I forgot.

Anyhow, the old pastor of Moody Church in Chicago, way back there, years ago, who remembers what his name was? Dr. Ironsides. H.I. Ironsides. See? My senior moment is over.

Even he came out with a clear-cut statement condemning those, or not condemning, but renouncing those who would dare say such a thing. That God cannot work in these days. The biggest problem with the sin of unbelief is that we don't believe we have it.

That's the biggest problem. See? We doubt our beliefs and we believe our doubts. That's our problem.

See? Unbelief turns into prayerlessness. We quit praying for people and situations if we don't believe it can happen. Why pray if we don't believe it happens? By the way, this is one of the reasons why some people do not come to prayer meetings.

And I need to qualify a statement I made. I understand there is a prayer meeting in this church. I was suggesting and I thought maybe that was not the case.

But it is the few, the handful, maybe on one hand. See? Why come to pray if we doubt whether or not anything can happen? Why pray? See? So unbelief turns into prayerlessness in our lives. Unbelief.

See? One pastor said, I can see how suddenly more and more we believe less and less. After we prayed and nothing happens, we believe less and less. Unbelief, the Bible says, is an evil heart and it's a heart that is departing from the living God.

Hebrews 3. It's a heart that is departing from the living God. And the writer says, take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Sin of unbelief. It's an evil heart. Now look at this.

Science class. November 18, 2052. I expect to be here.

The next converging of Venus, Jupiter, and the moon. That's what it says. Scientists say that's the date.

And July 28, 2061 will be the date of the return of Halley's Comet. Now just think of that. Who could ever put that all together? Just think of that.

Jeremiah 33, 25 and 26 says, God says, if my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and the earth, if I have not done it, then will I cast away the seed of Jacob and David my servant. You know what he's saying? He's saying, if you can believe that I am the one who has set that up, so November 18 and July 28 are in my design, if you can believe that, then you can believe that I will not cast away the seed of Jacob and David my servant. So what does it really say? God uses a scientific fact to assure us of the covenantal relationship between himself and his people.

His fixed universal laws, ordinances of heaven and earth, have the same certainty as his promises to his covenant people. So where should there be any spirit of unbelief in our lives? If God can do that, and set that in order, and he promises that if he puts that in order, he will keep his promises promised to his covenant people. So, then let's become believing believers.

It's one thing to read the word and even pray, we can do it in unbelief. Number eight, hindrance to revival. Structuring God and his program.

Structuring God and his program. We structure our lives, we structure other people's lives, we structure the church's ministry often, we attempt to organize and structure God instead of letting his spirit organize us in Christ's body. When revival broke out in Rives Junction, Michigan in 1970, this was even before what happened in Canada, there was a prelude to it, there was an evangelist who was having meetings 30 miles away, and he got on the radio each day in his regular broadcast, and he said to the people, I promise you that if you come to my meeting at 7 o'clock by 8.30 sharp, I will have you on your way home.

And you know what he did at 8.30? He jumped into his car, drove 30 miles, and he came to our meetings. And he got there about 9.15 or so, and we hadn't even started preaching yet. And it was wonderful how God used that and spoke to him through it all.

But my point is simple. What if God wanted to show up in a very special way at 8.31 in his meeting, and he promised the people that by 8.30 they'd be on their way home? What have I said to you? Structuring God. Structuring how it has to happen.

Telling God it has to happen this certain way, rather than letting the Holy Spirit organize us in Christ's body. Somebody said, you'll know you've been revived when the clock is crucified. Van Savner said, many of our services start at 11 o'clock sharp and end at 12 o'clock dull.

Now I'm not suggesting there is any merit primarily to long meetings just for the sake of having long meetings. But I'm suggesting that if we are bound by the clock, and we structure God in such a way that it has to happen in that certain hour, then no wonder God cannot bless. I'll tell you what it was like in our home church in Ohio a number of years ago.

The pastor, one Sunday morning at our home church, he preached a powerful sermon. There was such an anointing of God on it. But when it came to be a certain hour, he said, he was ready to give the invitation.

He said, all right, but before I give the invitation, I want all of the mothers who have children in the nursery, make sure you go now to get your children, because we don't want the nursery workers to stay any longer than they have to stay. So women got up, went to the nursery, and then the pastor tried to give an invitation after that. It was all over.

Do you know why he had to do that? Because some elders would jump on the pastor for making the people in the nursery stay a few moments longer. And you know what the people in the nursery said? Why did the pastor do that? We're not afraid to keep the children longer, especially when God's working. And if we think we're going to structure God as to how it happened and when it's going to happen and where and all the rest of it, we'll never see.

You know why? Because we're still in control. And God will not allow us to succeed until he's the one who's going to get the glory for doing it his way. See? Matthew 16, 18, Jesus said, I will build my church.

I'm going to build the church, not us. And when he builds the church and not us, then the gates of hell are not going to prevail against it. And you know what that is.

That's not just defensive. That's offensive. That means when he builds it his way, not our way, when that happens, there's going to be an offensive thrust against the gates of hell, and we're going to see victory when it's done his way.

And here's a hindrance number nine. I call it the paralysis of analysis. The paralysis being paralyzed by an analytical spirit.

Anyone merely an analyst of revival is not a true candidate to be revived. See? First Corinthians to the Apostle Paul says, Knowledge puffeth up. If any man think that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know it.

Knowledge puffs up. Pride. See? And in that light, Isaiah 55, 7, and 8, that we already quoted.

We already quoted Isaiah 55, 7, and 8. Knowledge puffs up. Look at this statement by Jonathan Edwards. There's a great danger in not recognizing God's work.

It was the problem in Jesus' day. When he came down from the mountain, they said, He can't be of God. We know his family.

They sent scholars to analyze. They took three years of analyzing and then crucified him. God came down to earth and ministered for three years, and the world could not recognize him.

The paralysis of analysis is a hindrance to revival. Sure, we ought to know what we believe, and we ought to know what the Scripture teaches, but maybe I can illustrate it this way. Here's a music pastor in a church in western Canada.

He said, You know what? We'd go to a musical concert someplace else, and we'd come home, and my wife in the car says, Oh, how I was so blessed by that musical concert. And I'm sitting there saying, Why couldn't I be blessed? Because all I was doing was analyzing the music, analyzing this, analyzing that, analyzing the other, and I couldn't be blessed. And you see, it's even possible.

You know, we get our eyes on people. I dare say that I've probably said some things already that some people didn't appreciate or didn't agree with, and all the rest of it. So maybe one statement I might have made could be enough for some people never to want to come back again, because after all, boom, didn't agree with it.

So they lose the baby with the bathwater. Hmm. I don't agree with everything my brother does.

You know, somebody said, Aren't you glad we're not all alike? If God made everybody just like I am, then everybody would want my wife. That makes sense. And another man said, Yes, I'm so glad we're not all alike, because if God made everybody just like I am, nobody would want your wife.

See, we're not going to agree on everything. God made us all different. I mentioned last night, I talked about our home church last night.

Didn't I say it's not perfect? Sure, it's not perfect. But I can tell you, when I see a spirit of love that flows, and when I see the outreach ministry, and when I see the anointing of God on the preaching, and all the rest of it, I can put up with some things about which I don't agree. And when we get to heaven, they'll find out I was right.

Just look at that. God came down to earth and ministered for three years, and they crucified him. Because they just said, We don't agree.

Amazing. A pastor said, when God dealt with him, he said, Lord, forgive me for standing over your word with a microscope rather than bowing down before it and before you. It's interesting.

Here's a pastor, he said, I would rather have a person who says, I seen, instead of I saw, than to have a person who says, I saw, who has never seen. Oh, and I can tell you that one. There was an independent Baptist in Washington State who was going to build the biggest church in western Washington that he thought, and God would not allow him.

And I can tell you, in the meetings, he saw God strip him of all of that. He'd be sitting on the front row, and every night, boom, boom. Next night, boom, boom.

And why did he say that? Because there was a lady who had come, who met the Lord in a previous crusade, and she'd come and say, Pastor, I'm praying for you. I'm praying for you. I'm praying for you.

And she maybe didn't use the right kind of English. But that pastor knew that that woman had reality in her life. See? And critical analysis was like, oh, any woman, any person who uses the wrong English like that.

And he said, I would rather have a person who says, I've seen, instead of I saw, than a person who says, I saw, and has never seen anything. What a disease. Paralysis of analysis.

Being paralyzed because something was said or done in a way in which you might have not done it. Crippled by it. Here's my definition of critical analysis.

It's in the form of a statement. When you put a firm conclusion on another man's action, you become a judge. See? And you may not have all the details, but you put a firm conclusion, and in the life of the church, this happens so often.

We become judges, and without having all the knowledge of what's behind the scene and what the circumstances are. When you put a firm conclusion on another man's action, you become a judge. What a disease.

Critical analysis. Number 10. Fear of exposure and the price of transparent honesty.

Fear of exposure and the price of transparent honesty. In other words, what areas and sins will the Lord put his finger on that I must confess and make right? Psalmist David, Psalm 139, 23 and 24. Search me, O God.

Oh, we say, search my brother, O God. Search my wife. Search me, O God.

And know my heart. Try me. And know my thoughts.

See if there be any wicked way in me. And lead me in the way everlasting. Search me.

Search me. Try me. Know my thoughts.

See if there's any wicked way, any wicked way in me. By the way, do we recognize that those words in Psalm 139, coming at the end of that psalm, do you know, do you realize how that psalm begins? Lord, thou hast known me. Lord, thou hast searched me.

Thou hast known me. Search me. Hasn't searched me.

Why would the psalmist David come to the end of the psalm and then say, search me, O God. He knew, he already said, Lord, you've known me. You've searched me.

And the point is, every single one of us knows that God knows every single thing about us already. Why would he pray this at the end of the psalm? I would love to believe it's this. The psalmist David is saying, God, I know that you know everything about me and you've known me and you understand me, all the rest of it.

Now, God, I'm willing to talk to you about what you already know about me. Now I'm ready to get honest about it and deal with it. I'm ready now for you to show me and let's put your finger on it so we can deal with it.

A lady said to her politician, I like your straightforward way of dodging issues. I said, well, that's a picture of most of us. We have a straightforward way of dodging issues.

Second Corinthians 4, 1 and 2, seeing we have this ministry. And of course, the chapter just before talks about seeing the glory of God from we grow into his image. Seeing we have this ministry, we've received mercy, we faint not.

But what have we done? We've renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness. You know what that is? Not dodging the issues, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience on the side of God. Almost it's something of what I was talking about Saturday night, be a follower of me as I follow the Lord.

That the Apostle Paul said, look on me, look at me, look at me, look at me. I'm commending myself to you in the sight of God because my conscience is clear. But as long as there's dodging the issues, we'll never be able to say that.

Hindrance number 11, the fear of man. Fear of man. What will people think? My religious reputation.

They know me to be a good person and one of the leaders of the church, one of the teachers of the church, whatever it might be. Fear of man. Proverbs 29, 25 says, the fear of man bringeth a snare.

Now look at this statement. When we are bound by the fear of man, we are limited to the sphere of man. We'll never go beyond what men think.

And I can tell you that this is problematic so often in church life when there are some loud voices that have a lot to say and then the leadership of a church seems to have to bow down to that, as it were, and be very sensitive to that. You know, it's interesting, too often in church life we see people, some of the loudest voices sometimes that give us the most problem are people that come to church and have never become a member of the church. They've always got something to say.

Interesting. For whatever that's worth, fear of man binds us. Now you've done it, Pastor.

You've offended our largest contributor. No one talks to me like that. See the money bag? See? See? Well, we're going to stop right there and then we'll get to the meat of the message a little bit later.

Stand and stretch and touch your toes or your stomach, whichever you can reach. How many are with us? This is your first night with us during these days. First night with us? Welcome to the United States.

Nice to have you here. Don't miss tomorrow night. Tomorrow night I'm going to discuss the true nature of personal revival.

What is the true heart of the message? And then Wednesday night, the results of revival. Yes. As I begin this section, let me say that I believe tonight God would have us pray over these issues.

So this is just not random teaching. We need to be asking ourselves, God, what are you saying to me in what I'm hearing tonight? What are those areas that you're speaking specifically to me? Well, number 12, worldly mindedness. Worldly mindedness.

And we could discuss a lot of things about loving not the world, neither the things that are in the world. The Scripture talks about 1 John 2 and Hosea 4, 7. Primarily I'm mentioning one of the biggest sins that we in North America face, greed. The sin we are afraid to mention.

Materialism. Greed. Wanting more.

And the Scripture in Hosea 4, 7, As they were increased, so they sinned against me. See, we really don't need God because we can make it with brains and brawn and financial well-being. Nest eggs.

Greed. Worldly mindedness. But that goes in a lot of ways.

Oh, there he is. There's the one. There it is.

See? Ephraim is joined to his idols. Let him alone. Hosea 4, 17.

Greed. Then, unconfessed sins. Unconfessed sins.

Unconfessed sins. Psalm 66, 18. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

Micah 3, 4. Then shall they cry unto the Lord, but he will not hear them. He will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings. God's saying they can pray.

I'm not going to hear them because of their doings. I'll hide my face from them. Micah 3, 4. It's interesting.

Isaiah 59, verses 1 and 2. Most of us know. But we don't recognize verses 12 to 14. We know the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save.

Neither is ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid God's face from you, that he will not hear. We understand that.

But look at this. The rest in that chapter. Our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us.

Our transgressions are with us. And as for our iniquities, we know them. And most of us here, if we get honest with ourselves in the sight of God, we know those areas of sin.

We know them. We know them. Watch how they dealt with it.

Watch how they dealt with it. Look at this. Naming them, transgressing, lying against the Lord, departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood, and judgment is turned away backward, justice stands afar off, truth is falling in the streets, and equity does not enter our lives.

They're naming their specific sins. We know them. We know them.

But they not only knew them, they named them. And you know how most of us pray? Now, Lord, tonight, if I have sinned, if I have sinned in thought, word, or deed in any way today, please forgive me. Good night.

That's not it. Lord, we know them. Get honest with God.

We know them. And we named them. Three pastors were confessing their sins.

The first pastor said, I need money, and I stole out of the offering plate. The second pastor said, I steal cars, fix them in my basement, and then I sell them. And the third pastor said, My sin is the sin of gossip, and I can hardly wait to get out of here.

Yeah? You know, it's amazing how easy it is for us to talk about other people's sin, right? Instead of being honest with God about our own. We're candidates for revival. There's a tremendous hindrance of not being specific with God about sin.

And we'll never be revived. There it is. I'm a child of the king.

Yes, I'm a child of the king. You need it. You need the Lord.

Yeah, yeah. Don't tell me. I've watched your life.

Sure, he sees the pride and the stealing, the hypocrisy and the hatred and the lies and the self-righteousness. Don't tell me. I've watched your life.

The world knows. Hmm. Lord, there are two sins I will not confess.

See? And we think God's going to bless us as long as we deal with certain issues, but let the rest stay. And we think God's going to bless us. I'll sue him for every dime he has.

Christian one against another. We wonder why the world does not want him. And then fussing.

So often pastors are called on to arbitrate between warring factions in the church and ending up jeopardizing their own ministry to the whole congregation. Fighting and fussing. Ah, this one I love.

Look at this. What a holy man. What a wonderful Bible man I am.

I love it with all of my heart. What day is that? What day is that? Sunday. Well, watch him the rest of the week.

Look at that. He tossed it. Tossed it.

Tossed it. Even Saturday. He had all day Saturday.

He didn't work. Still tossed. But it's amazing the difference what happens on next Sunday.

Does that look familiar to some of us? That's just hypocrisy. Make a big splash on Sunday and live for ourselves the rest of the week. We wonder why God can't answer our prayers.

We wonder why God can't bless the church when we come to church and we live that way and we deaden the spirit of the church by that kind of hypocrisy. When we get honest with God and begin to deal with some of these hindrances, watch the blessing begin to flow. Well, repetition aids learning.

There's that verse again. They shall cry unto the Lord. He'll not hear them.

He'll hide his face from them at that time. Why? Because they've behaved themselves ill in their doings. Hosea 5.14. Look what God says.

I will go and return to my place until they acknowledge their offense and seek my face. In their affliction, they will seek me early. You know what he's saying? He's saying, I'm going to go and depart into my place until they're willing to acknowledge their offense.

But you know what he's saying? In most cases, it's not until they really get in trouble will they then come running for help. That's the tragedy. Spirit of pride.

The spirit of pride. Unwilling to humble ourselves before others due to our religious reputation, our public prayers that we pray, our ego, the position we have in the community and in the church. And the scripture says, 1 Corinthians 10.12, Let him that thinketh he stand, take heed lest he fall.

In James 4.6, God resists the proud, but he gives grace to the humble. You know what he's saying? God declares war. The word resist means God puts up a battle against.

God stiff arms the proud, but he gives grace to the humble. That's what we need, God's grace. God giving us what we don't deserve.

Grace. Here's a man who said, I was supposed to be a beggar, a pastor, telling another beggar where to find bread. I found myself being the source of the bread instead of pointing people to see Christ, the real source.

The spirit of pride caused people to be drawn to me as a person instead of being led through me to the person of Christ. Spirit of pride. Strange how it happens.

We often transgress where we seem most secure and yield to temptations about which we seem to be best armed. See, we think we're best armed in certain areas and that's what pride will do. See, we're best armed in those things and those are the areas where we give in to the biggest temptation, where we think we're most armed in our pride.

Scripture, Galatians 6.3, For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. And the most deceived man in the world is the one who does it to himself. Self-deception.

Hindrance 15. Critical spirit. Critical spirit.

That's a little bit different from the paralysis of analysis. This is a spirit where we look for anything to criticize other people so that we can relieve God's pressure in our own lives. You see? When we point a finger at somebody else, and we point up something wrong with someone else, you know what that makes people think? That we don't have the same problem.

Because we talked about somebody else. But generally speaking, we probably have the same problem. That's why we noticed it in somebody else.

See, Jesus said, if you try to take away a splinter in your brother's eye, when you have a 2x4 in your own eye, it's not going to work. And Jesus said, about the moat and the beam, Jesus said, you make sure you take out the 2x4 out of your own eye, so that when you do surgery on your brother's eye to get that splinter, you'll be able to see clearly. But as long as you try to do surgery on your brother, when you have a 2x4 in your own eye, you're going to mess up his life.

You're going to mess up his eye. Because you can't see him clearly. Because of the 2x4 in your own eye.

You know what God's saying? I want you both to see clearly. Deal with the 2x4 in your eye first, so that you'll be able to minister to the one who has a splinter in such a way that if you've dealt with a 2x4 and you know what kind of surgery that was, you'll be very kind and gentle in dealing with somebody who just has a splinter. But if you try to deal with somebody who has a splinter with that 2x4 that you don't even see yourself, you will not deal with that person in the Spirit of Christ.

Making havoc in the process. Critical spirit. Seeing what's wrong with everybody else.

Trying to straighten out everybody else. Becoming a Protestant Pope to everybody else. That's judgmental of everybody else.

The final authority of what's right. And then the last one. The lack of unity in the body of Christ.

Now this goes two ways. It could be relating to individual churches filled with disunity. And I'll relate to that in a moment.

But even this. Each congregation builds its own kingdom, carefully guarding their own sheep, even if unable to help them. In other words, this is the kingdom of God right here in this church.

Instead of building the true kingdom. You know, the man in Dallas, Texas, the black pastor from Dallas, Texas, is on radio and TV. What's his name? Some of you know.

Tony Evans, yes. I heard him not too long ago at the Southern Baptist Convention. He spoke a message that night.

It was a masterpiece on the fact that many of our churches are doing their own, their church building, but not kingdom building. Church building, but not kingdom building. Not seeing the kingdom of God.

From that broad view of the church of God. But only what revolves around our church. One man said, you know, in my congregation, my people think that the axis of the earth is right underneath our church.

That everything evolves around us. See? Well, not willing to lose the church's identity in order to minister to the entire area. See, in 1 Corinthians 10, 24, it says, let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth.

Advantage to another. 1 Corinthians 10, 24. The early New Testament church was in one accord.

Literally meaning, one accord, meaning heart to heart when the Holy Spirit came. It was an organic unity produced by their obedience in the presence of God. Now, let me give you a vivid example of what we're talking about.

Disunity in the body of Christ. See this church? Now, this is not just a picture that's made up. This is a true picture.

Right on the North Carolina-Virginia border. See that church? You see that sign here? See this here? Okay, I'm going to let you see it close up. Notice the name of the church.

What is the name of that church? What is it? Old Saddle Mountain Baptist Church. Established 1895. That's this church, right? Okay, now look.

Oh, oh, hold on just a moment. Don't tell me. Don't tell me we missed something here.

Oh, don't tell me we missed something here. Oh, don't tell me. I've got to get the other one in here.

Okay, well, let's see. Let's just look at this. Let's see here.

Let's see. Oh, we've got something out of place here. Don't tell me.

Let's see. Okay, all right. Okay, let's go here.

Here it is. All right, there we go. There it is.

Look at that. Look at this. What's the name of this church? Old Saddle Mountain Baptist Church.

And it's a different church, isn't it? Yes? Oh. The white church is a part of what they call the regular Baptist church movement, and the other church, the brick church, is called the United Baptist, in the United Baptist churches of that area. And do you notice something here? There is a road between them.

See this? Do you know what it means? This church, the mother church right here, owned property on this side of the road and on this side of the road. And because they could not get along, this group says, We're not going to let you have all the property, after we have as much right to it as you do. So they go across the street, and they build Old Saddle Mountain Baptist Church.

So now, every unbeliever driving on that road between those two churches, says, Look at this! Wonderful love that flows between Christians. That is not fiction. And until God breaks our hearts about such things, we'll never see a revival.

And we come to the foot of the cross, and quit playing religious games with divine truth. Then we are candidates for God to work. Now, let me summarize, and then I want to get to a portion of Scripture that relates to this.

In summary, what have we said? Look here. Wrong motives. A hindrance is to revival.

Wrong motives. Self-sufficiency. Self-centeredness.

Self-satisfaction. Preconceived mental framework. Praying for a revival in unbelief.

Reliance on human resources. Structuring God. Paralysis of analysis.

Fear of exposure. Fear of man. Worldly mindedness.

Unconfessed sins. Spirit of pride. Critical spirit.

And lack of unity. Aren't you glad they're just 16? Let me just close this session by showing you what God's response is to where there is genuine spiritual unity. Turn.

Psalms 133. Psalm 133. Here's God's response.

Here it is. Behold how good and how pleasant it is for twin brothers to dwell together in unity. That's what it says.

Brethren. And then it describes it. It's like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon Aaron's beard, the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments.

And it's also like the dew of Mount Hermon, and as the dew that descends upon the mountains of Zion, for there the Lord commands blessing, even life forevermore. This is God's response to genuine unity. And I could take an hour with this three verses.

And aren't you glad I'm not going to do that? And everybody said? Amen. Okay? All right? Let me just show you something. Look at this.

What is here? Verse 1. The fact of unity. The fact of unity. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together.

We are brothers. If you have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, and I have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, we are brothers. And it matters not which church you're in.

If you've been genuinely washed in the blood of the Lamb, in repentance and forgiveness of your sin, and personal faith in Christ, and your life has been changed by God's power, we are brothers. We are brothers. It's a fact.

It's a fact. It is a fact. And it's about time we accept the fact.

We're brothers. Fact. And then I also see in that, also there's the fellowship of unity.

It says how good and how pleasant it is. That sounds like fellowship. That's brothers who've learned how to be brotherly.

In genuine fellowship. How good and pleasant it is. It's fellowship.

But then it also says in verse 2, the fragrance of unity. You know what that unity is like? It's just like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard that went down to the skirts of his garment. Do you know what that is? When they would take that precious ointment and pour it on top of the high priest's head, and it would go down from his head, down his beard, down his dressing, all the way to his feet, that precious ointment, the fragrance of unity.

Anyone who got near that priest catches the aroma. What kind of perfume is that? Chanel No. 5 for women.

Fragrance. You know as well as I, when you walk into a place where the love of God permeates and the unity of the body is so real, there's a fragrance about that kind of a group of people. There's a fragrance about that kind of a church.

That you cannot deny it, and it's contagious. But look what else. The fruitfulness of unity.

Fruitfulness of unity. Look at verse 3. That unity is just like the dew of Mount Hermon, and as the dew that descends upon the mountains of Zion. And you know what that is? I understand that in the Holy Land, at Mount Hermon, there's one side of the mountain that receives dew fresh every morning.

And that fresh dew that comes down from the top of the mountain, down to its slopes, when you get to the foot of that side of the mountain, you find vegetation, greenery, growth, life, flowers, fruit, all kinds of life. The other side of the mountain does not receive the dew every morning. And when you come to the foot of that slope of the mountain, nothing but dry, arid, parched desert.

No life. No vitality. And God is saying that where I find people who understand the unity of the body, it's just like that dew that comes fresh from the mountain.

And you can be sure that there's going to be fruit. There's going to be fruit. There's going to be fruit.

There's life. There's vitality there. Because of the unity of that body.

That's what God's saying. And I guess I can tie it all together by one more statement. It's what I call the fulfillment of unity.

It's the last statement of the psalm. For there, the Lord commands blessing, even life forevermore. Look at that.

You know what I've done in my Bible? I've taken a red pen and I've circled the word unity in the first verse. And I've drawn an arrow down to the last statement of the psalm. For there.

In other words, it's saying to me, unity, for there, the Lord commands blessing, even life forevermore. That is the essence of that psalm. Or can I say, that's the key truth.

Wherever there's unity, the Lord commands blessing, life forevermore. And what is between that is a descriptive of what the unity is like. The fulfillment of unity is that God Almighty looks down over the battlements of heaven and He looks at the Evangelical Covenant Church and He says to the angelic host, You see those people down there? You see them? You see how they love each other? You see how they're one in spirit? You see how they're not going to allow anything to divide them and to keep them from walking with God? And like the apostle Paul says, I beg of you, please, that you speak of the same mind one to another.

And you see those people, they're doing it there? You see them? Now, come on, angelic host, go down there, I command blessing on them. And when the God of the universe commands it, there are not enough imps in hell to stop what God commands. That's why the devil fights the unity of the body.

Because he doesn't want fruitfulness. He doesn't want results to take place. And by the way, I should have had it when we talked about the hindrance of pride.

You know what the scripture says? There's only one source of disunity. Here it is. Scripture says, only by pride cometh contention.

Only by pride. It's in an exclusive class. Wherever there's dissension in a body, there's pride.

Somebody's going to defend his rights. Only by pride. You know, there are very few things the Bible says God commands for his people.

And here's one of them. One of them. The fulfillment of unity.

That's God's response when we are one in Christ. My defenses were way down. I was a candidate for God's blessing, pastor said.

When I prayed, Lord, put self to death, I got a picture of Abraham and Isaac and the knife on the altar. He said, Revival is like lifting the lid off of a person's heart. Well, I'll show you the biggest problem in just a moment.

Well, do you remember that statement that Vance Havner made that I started with? Many of our people have been ironed and starched, but I've never been washed. Could this be washing time, cleansing time tonight? God is putting his finger on some of those things that hinder what he longs to do in your life, in your family. By the way, these principles relate to family as well as church.

Husband and wife relationships. Children with parents. Employee-employer relationships.

On and on it goes. And here's the biggest problem of it all. It's the world.

It's the world. Why didn't someone tell me what is there to life? Someone show me the way. Where are Christians? I'm sick of hypocrites.

Christians do the same things I do. I hate church. No one cares.

Help. But basically I should have said to you something here, but before you read that, let's go back here. Here, you know what? See? You know what that is? Sign of the sleeping church.

No dew fresh every morning. And the world cries. The world cries.

And there are more hungry-hearted people than we know, but how can they enter in till they begin to see that we get honest with God? Do you know many of us have seen that little booklet, The Four Spiritual Laws for witnessing? You've seen that? Campus Crusade put it out. If I had it, I would probably add a fifth one. Why? So there'd be that much more for you to learn.

No. And I would probably make it the first one. I'd probably make it number one.

You know what it'd be? Something like this. Dear friend and neighbor, will you please forgive me for being so cold and spiritually backslidden that it has taken me this long to come to share with you the most important thing in my life? And then, yes or no, make them fill in whether they're willing to forgive you. And don't go on to the next one, to the rest of it, until you get a yes.

I'll forgive you. See? That's when we get honest. Neighbor, forgive me.

Here I've been a Christian all these years. It's taken me this long to come to share with you the greatest thing that's happened in my life. Why? Because I've been all wrapped up in my own carnality and my own sin, all the things that hinder the Spirit of God from being free in my life.

And if we get honest with God about all that, then we'll say, All right, God, I'm a candidate to deal with the issues so I can be revived. Now, here's what I believe we ought to do. I'm finished, but I believe God would be pleased if we do something totally different.

For all of us, to take your list. You take your list. And we will go to our knees right where you are seated and pray over that list.

And let God search your heart and pinpoint what is there that He's speaking to you about. Now, if you can't get to your knees, that's fine. But I'd just love it if it's possible that we can do that.

In fact, it's even a physical sense of humility when we bow. And we pray through that. And we get honest about it.

And say, God, I want to be a candidate for reviving. And tomorrow night, when I hear the true nature of personal reviving, I want to make sure that tonight I've been willing to be honest to deal with some of these issues so that my heart will be open to the genuine truth of how I can enter in personally to a personal revival. Tonight, God, you put this on me, I want to confess it.

Boom. I want to deal with it. Confess it.

Forsake it. On your knees. Confess it and forsake it.

Let's do it. Let's go to our knees and then just stay on your knees for a period of time. And then I will close that in a time of prayer.

And then we'll see how the Lord will direct. Let's do it. Shall we do it? Everybody do it.

Just take the time. Let's let God speak to our hearts. If you need to stretch out a little bit, spread out a little bit, there's room you can spread out a little bit.

Be honest with God. Tell God the real things, not the nice things. Pinpoint the numbers on that sheet that God is speaking to us about.

While we are praying, how many can say, Ralph, there's no question about it, God by His Spirit has put His finger on some of these areas of my life. Maybe He's spoken to you about something that I did not even mention. And I know that there are hindrances to revival and by God's grace I'm dealing with them and I've dealt with them tonight.

I want to pray a prayer of thanksgiving on your behalf. If that's true in your life tonight, and you've dealt with issues between you and God, let me pray a prayer of thanksgiving on your behalf. Would you just quietly slip your hands up, place them down so I can see them? Yes.

All over this congregation. Dear Lord, I just want to thank you for a sense of transparent honesty that you're bringing back to your people. We thoroughly want to make sure that nothing will hinder the moving of the Spirit of God in our lives, in our families, in the church, in our community, and the world.

Spirit of the living God, I thank you for ministering to our understanding as well as to our spirits and giving us the desire to be honest about these issues. And I pray that you'll use all of this as preparation for us to be able to enter into what it really means to begin to walk that revived life for your honor and glory. Thank you, Lord, for helping us get rid of the garbage tonight so that you can fill us with a blessing.

And we're going to praise you and give you the glory for it. In Christ's name we ask it. For his sake, amen.

Amen.

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