

5 Things That Hinder Presence of God

by Shane Idleman

The presence of God can be hindered by secret sin, being too full of the world, and a lack of fervent prayer, but desperation and moderation can lead to a deeper experience of God's presence.

Duration: 55:38

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 139:23-24, Isaiah 64:1, Jeremiah 6:16, Matthew 6:24, Matthew 11:28, Romans 1:28, 1 Corinthians 9:27, Hebrews 11:6, James 5:16

Topics: "Presence of God", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the five key hindrances to experiencing the tangible presence of God, which include secret sin, being too full of worldly distractions, a lack of desperation, a lack of fervency in prayer, and the failure to slow down and wait on God. He highlights that true communion with God requires deep repentance and a fervent pursuit of His presence, which can transform our lives and relationships. Idleman calls for a return to the old paths of prayer and worship, urging believers to seek God with urgency and sincerity, as desperation often leads to spiritual breakthroughs.

Transcript

I've said this before. I want to clarify this because it does get a little confusing. And I know it does because people ask me, well, isn't God everywhere? And He is.

But the tangible presence, like when you can literally get up from praying and know that Jesus heard your prayers. You can feel the atmosphere. You can feel the atmosphere.

And there's something where God is there, the presence of God. And you're being guided by the Holy Spirit. The fruit is there.

Love and joy and peace and longsuffering and gentleness. And the enemy wants to steal that fruit. Amen? Today was Monday, and I was not filled with fruit for a little bit.

But there's a presence there that you can have. And if you don't think atmosphere matters, just compare this to an Ozzy Osbourne concert. Just compare this to sitting down with some people in their home smoking dope.

And see with music on, it's not God. You tell me atmosphere doesn't matter. You tell me that you can't feel sometimes the tangible presence of God.

And that's what I want to talk about because we can hinder the presence of Christ. And the theme of Rendezvous in the Heavens is an atmosphere of prayer. Praying for His presence is the title I was going back and forth on, but I want to just stick here with what hinders the presence of Christ.

Because when His presence is tangible, it's real, it changes everything. It changes your desire for worship. I'm sure many of you were not in a hurry to leave during worship, I'm assuming.

It changes your marriage. It changes your parenting. There's the tangible presence of Christ makes a difference.

And what we did with Rendezvous in the Heavens, it began with a prayer of desperation. Did it not? Many of you remember that. It began with a prayer of desperation.

Oh God, that You would rend the heavens. That You would rip open the heavens and come down and the mountains might shake at Your presence. And He goes on to say that the enemies would know that You are the God of the Bible.

That as fire burns the brush and the wood and the trees, as fire makes water boil, oh God, would You make Your presence known again? And that's what our nation needs. That's what our state needs. And that's what's happening.

If you look around, they've drifted from the fear of the Lord. There is no God in their mind, so they become gods and all kinds of perversion results. Romans 1, they gave up the truth and God gave them over to a perverse and debased mind.

And if you're going, what is going on? That's what's going on. No God. No godliness.

And so I believe that's a prayer we can do. God, would You rend the heavens? And then I love what it says towards the end. Who acts for the One who waits for Him? Who acts for the One who waits for Him? And many of you have heard me say, especially on Sundays, I like reading about the Puritans.

I don't know why. The pilgrims of Puritans coming over the Mayflower Compact and to the glory of God, the advancement of the Christian faith. Strong Puritans like John Owen, William Brunel, of course, you've read Pilgrim's Progress, John Bunyan, William Bradford.

I mean, these guys, it's amazing how much they just love the Lord. And they got a little carried away in some things I think, but at least I'd rather get carried away on that side than loosey-goosey. But as I'm reading, it's always interesting in their journals, the Lord's Day.

Now we call it the Lord's Hour. Do you know most church services are about an hour total? And even when the story and things came out about what we're doing, why are you having church on Halloween? Why are you doing that all week? Well, why aren't you? Why aren't you pursuing more of God? And so that's what my heart is. Those who wait on the Lord, the Lord's Day, they would come in and not be in a hurry.

They would read some Scripture. They would worship. They would sing psalms.

They would have communion. They'd have fellowship afterwards and even eat a little bit and more worship. And it was the Lord's Day.

The day of the Lord. And I think, especially now, we know that phones can be a blessing and social media can be a blessing and the busyness can be okay, but if we're not careful, we can get too busy. And so what began in Isaiah here and also in our own church with this cry, this prayer, Lord, rend the heavens, and it begs the question tonight, what else can begin with a desperate prayer? And are you desperate for your kids to know the Lord? Are you desperate to be healed? Are you desperate to come back to the Lord and have the joy of the Lord in your heart again? Are you desperate to get rid of that critical spirit and that critical heart? And like Ronnie said yesterday, that unforgiveness that is eating you up, something special can happen if you pray, oh God, rend the heavens and clean me.

A book I was reading, it's called Fire Upon the Altar. He said this, the spiritual battle, the spiritual battle in which the Christian is engaged is fierce. Any amens on that one? Wow.

It is no game. Satan is intent upon destroying the presence of Christ from our lives. There are no vacations from spiritual warfare.

Actually, when I go on vacation, that's usually when I don't feel as good spiritually. That is why the fire must be kept burning. And Bible scholars, you know that when God came down and consumed the altar and brought His fire, they were called to maintain that fire and never let the fire on the altar go out.

What a great picture in our own hearts. Never let the fire go out. Whatever is distracting you or pulling you away from God, whatever is wanting to quench and put out that fire, that fire must keep going.

Every time the church is revived, she always goes back to the old paths. Did you know that? There's nothing new. There's not new methods or let's try this or let's try this potluck kind of survey and also do a giveaway and everyone who comes tonight gets a hundred dollar gas card.

And you probably have more people. But any time the church is revived or you personally, any time you're revived, when I was revived and renewed and restored and pretty much it felt like I was reborn again, any time that happens of the person or the church goes back to the old paths from Jeremiah, this is what the Lord says. Stand at the crossroads.

You have a crossroads. The road is turning. The broad road or the narrow road.

When you're at the crossroads, He said, look, ask for the ancient paths. Ask for the good old way. Ask where that good way is and walk in it and you will find rest for your souls.

But, they said we will not do that. So what do you say to that question tonight? Will you walk in that good way? That old path? The narrow road? Desperation is where salvation begins as well. And I know there's people watching even here tonight.

You don't have a genuine relationship with Jesus. Or you're being drawn to that, but you haven't yet fully surrendered and committed and it begins here. Desperation is where salvation begins as well.

See how important desperation is? A whole sermon on desperation would be pretty cool. The power of desperation. The cost of desperation.

Because desperate people do desperate things. Have you ever seen those videos now when those people are getting more brazen to try and just go grab a child in broad daylight? The mom goes mama bear on them. There's a desperation.

She's pulling their hair. She's kicking them. She's swinging her purse and hitting them.

Because there's desperation. And it goes back to that for believers and even unbelievers. You've got to get to a point you say, I'm not good with God.

I don't know where I'm going to go. I can't live my life with a question mark here. I'm desperate to hear from You, Lord.

I need to know You. And that desperation leads to repentance. Woe be to the person who is okay.

Unbelief not only hinders the presence of Christ, it prevents it. Unbelief. Unbelief won't hinder the presence of Christ.

There is no presence of Christ because deep repentance needs to take place. So I want to talk to you just about five hindrances to the presence of Christ. Number one, no secret here.

Secret sin. Secret sin always hinders secret prayer. It's hard to go deep in prayer when there's secret sin, isn't there? Jeremiah 8.12, the people no longer even blushed.

And in Ezekiel 9.4, God said, this is incredible, mark those who groan and sigh over the abominations of the land. It would be like God saying to the Spirit of God, Go and mark those in this service who are crying out to Me and are so broken over the condition of this nation. They're so broken over the sex trafficking.

We're going to vote that you can kill a baby up to birth. I mean, Lord, help us. Or even after.

They won't stop anywhere. You see, that's the thing people don't realize. You give an inch, and Lord, it breaks my heart what the LGBTQ and transgender agenda, not the people, what the agenda is trying to push and mutilization on children.

Lord, it breaks our heart, the abomination. And I want to love the sinner, but God, I've got to fight this agenda and just look at what is going on. And God says mark those.

Mark those who sigh and are broken over the same thing that breaks My heart. And that's the people I'm going to mark. That's the people I'm going to watch and raise up and listen to, because their heart is the heart of My heart.

The heart of the Father. Compassion and brokenness. James 5. 15-17.

Isn't this incredible? It doesn't say the prayer of a man avails much. I mean, that would be pretty cool, but he gets a little bit serious. I mean, he fine-tunes it for us.

The effective. Effective means pointed, targeted. It hits its mark.

The effective. Fervent. Fervent.

Anybody have any fervency? You've got some tonight, I hope. There's some fervency. Lord, I'm targeted and I'm positioning.

It was said that you could see where A.W. Tozer prayed in his office because the carpet was worn. It was said of John Hyde that he would stain the very breath of his walls with his prayers. It was said of another one of those Methodist circuit riders that after his death, the grooves in his hardwood floor were there

because there was fervent, effectual prayer calling down heaven.

Church, we need to get back to that. You might not rub things in your carpet, but you better pull down heaven at home. There is no other hope right now for us.

The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man, a man who is in right standing with God, avails much. It will prevail. Thank God the Bible paints an accurate picture.

Elijah was a man with a nature like ours. Wow, so he got upset. I won't go too deep there.

That could hurt. A nature like ours. Prone to wander.

Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love. Lord, here is my heart.

Take and seal it. Seal it in the courts above. Prone to wander.

He was a man like us. To me, there's no reason we can't pray like Elijah. There's no super-Christians in the Bible.

And he prayed, well, here's another word. He prayed quickly, earnestly. Earnestly.

You see, there's passion and fervency. And he prayed it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And it was, of course, to judge the wicked king and the land and things like that, but James is pointing out the context of James 5 is answered prayer.

So the effective fervent prayer. And again, the book Fire Upon the Altar. Where there's no communion with God, our lives are spent in darkness.

We see nothing. We hear nothing. We have no answers.

Spiritual death sets in. And can we agree that this is where most Christians live? Most Christians live. They see nothing.

They hear nothing. They have no answers. Spiritual death has set in because there's no communion, no fervency with God.

I just, oh, I'm going to step on toes tonight. Permission to step on toes? Okay. I would do it anyway, but that's okay.

It's good to have. But a friend of mine was so discouraged, saying, Shane, I can't believe how many people are saying things and mocking me because I'm not celebrating Halloween. I said, you know what? Don't worry about it.

That really is a gauge of their spiritual health. You just need to pray with them. And when people come against you... Now, if you have pumpkin seeds and your kid's dressed like a dinosaur, but you know what I'm saying, there shouldn't be a love for the darkness.

There shouldn't be a love. And I know people say, I can't go tonight because I'm trick-or-treating and they're dressing up as witches and warlocks. Yeah, I would be very careful there.

Your communion with God might be suffering because darkness should never entertain. There should be a desire for the things of God and a desire to not be dying spiritually. And I know it's difficult.

I mean, some people are opening their homes and passing out tracts, and there's flexibility. You know, let's not get legalistic, but there shouldn't be an excitement over darkness and wanting to dress up like witches and warlocks and put skeletons in graveyards in your front grass. Folks, a spirit-filled believer's not going to do that.

I'm just telling you. So you need the presence of God. You need the communion with God.

I even walk through Home Depot and see the decor and I'm like, oh gosh, man. And it's hard to explain. And see, you have to know a lot of people, if they're not where you're at, you just have to show grace.

Just show grace and love and understanding. And they're not, I wasn't there 25 years ago. 30 is my favorite holiday.

We'll leave that alone. So we see here, hindrance to His presence is secret sin, so deep repentance opens the door for His presence. The presence of Christ always starts for an unbeliever when they repent.

And it often is what draws the believer back to the heart of the Father when repentance takes place. Just read the letters that Jesus wrote. Jesus wrote the church letters.

Is that amazing or what? You should pour over those as often as possible. Two of the seven did pretty good. But five of them, He said, I have this against you.

Or this, or you've done this. You say you're full, in need of nothing. You've left your first love.

Oh, you have sound doctrine, but you don't have the fire of God and the brokenness and return. What is repentance? It's to turn and return to the right path. And folks, repentance opens the door to His presence of all the revivals I've ever read about, all the revivals I've studied about.

Repentance is the highest theme up there. The fear of God and repentance and confession of Christ and the blood of Christ and powerful prayer and heartfelt fasting and night seeking Him and waiting on Him. There's a repentance that takes place, a deep yearning for the presence of God.

And to even repent, Lord, I repent of my lukewarmness. I repent of drifting from You and putting other things before You. I've left my first love and I need to go back to that.

I repent. I change my mind from the bad direction I'm going and I refocus on the direction You've called me to. That will bring you back.

And number two, hindrance to His presence is when we're too full. Did you know you can get too full of the things of the world? We all know, we've reached our capacity many times. Anybody ever say, I'm about ready to have a nervous breakdown? I'm too busy.

I'm juggling too many plates. I can't get a grip around things. I'm falling behind.

And I'm convinced now more than ever before that busyness is one of the enemy's greatest tools. Because you can be busy and be drifting away from God. But I'm busy doing good things, but are they God things? Are they taking the place of Him? Matthew 6, 24, no one can serve two masters.

No one can serve two masters. In other words, the image there is this person wants you to do this. This master wants you to do this.

Okay, I want you to do this, God says. I want you to pursue Me. And the world says, I want you to do this.

Okay, well try serving both of those. Because as we know, one way or the other, as I pursue God, I give up these things. And as I pursue these things, unfortunately God goes on the back burner.

You cannot serve both of these. You'll either hate the one and love the other, or else you'll be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and ma'am in two full.

And while we're on the topic this month of fasting, don't worry, this is the last day of October fast, so here we go. One benefit of prayer and fasting is that it empties us. It empties us.

From the book, God's Chosen Fast, if you have been brought low through personal defeat, amen, if there is a call in your soul to a deeper purifying work, to a renewed consecration, if there is the challenge of some new task for which you are not equipped, then it's time to inquire of God whether He would not have you separate yourself unto Him in prayer and fasting. Here's why this is so important. I just, this is really hit a couple weeks ago.

I shared it, I think, with Morgan and Pastor Abram and wanted to get it to you tonight. We forget the power of moderation. The practice of moderation strengthens discipline.

Does it not? Here comes that, you know what? No. The second serving. How many of us have done that? Man, that's my downfall, I'll tell you.

If the first plate felt good, tasted good, and here we are in November. But in all things, moderation, that thing that we're addicted to or we have too much of, and we thought we could control it, but now it's controlling us. And once you give up an area of self-discipline and it begins to fade in one area, it affects other areas as well.

That's why the Bible would often tie in gluttony and alcoholism and different things and lust for food, lust for meat. It's because once that discipline of moderation begins to fade away, it's hard to walk that narrow path. And I want to encourage you, I'm not talking about perfection.

I'm not talking about perfect diets. I'm just talking about you telling the flesh to shut up. And you control the flesh versus it control you.

Andrew Murray said, only in a life of moderation and self-denial will there be sufficient heart and strength to pray much. And this word of self-denial, it kind of gets, if you think of, people probably think like monasteries and the monks, how they used to whip their back. Martin Luther did that too.

Self-denial is really denying self and you controlling it versus it controlling you. That's why fasting is so powerful. You're saying no bodily appetite.

No, I'm saying no, I'm moderating you. I'm denying you and then therefore your strength is minimized and I'm beginning to be more disciplined in my behavior, which follows into spiritual. Have you ever noticed when you get off with physical disciplines and things, your spiritual disciplines do not get very, they don't get very strong either.

They begin to fade away. Bible reading, not as much. Time with the Lord, not as much.

Church attendance, not as much. Worship, not as much. Because the spiritual and the physical are interwoven often.

1 Corinthians 9.27, but I discipline my body and bring it into subjection. I bring it into control and obedience. Now, it's a struggle.

It's not easy. Every day is kind of challenging with the flesh, is it not? I just, it's not on me today. It's every single day.

For the rest of my life, it wants to eat too much, drink too much, sleep too much, gossip too much. All kinds of just fleshly desires want to come out of it. And that's why Paul said I discipline, I bring it under, basically it's saying no.

No, I'm not going to go in that direction. And he says when I preach to others, I could become disqualified. Basically, I could be hindered in the work that God has called me to.

And Matthew Henry in his great commentary wrote about the danger of yielding to fleshly desires, pampering the body and its lust and its appetites. Isn't that so true? I mean, even when they wrote these things, they do not live where we, it's way, way more challenging for us today, I believe. You've got things on every corner.

You've got our favorite addiction is just a drive away, 24-7, seven days a week, open. And the fulfilling the desires of the flesh. But let me remind you that His presence is attracted to weakness.

His presence is attracted to weakness. And that's what happens when we say, you know what, I'm going to give up some of these things. I don't need to go on social media six hours a day.

I don't need to do all this. I don't need to consume so much. I'm going to, Lord, I need Your strength.

I am so weak in this area. We give it up and the presence of God begins to rest on that weakness as we empty ourselves. That's just a biblical truth.

The more you empty yourself, the more filled you can be with the Spirit. You don't believe me, try coming to a prayer meeting after Thanksgiving dinner. I'm going to try this.

Thursday, the 24th, about 6.30, let's have a prayer meeting. What, did I not just prove my point? What happens when you sleep too much? You don't want to get up. Now when you get up, you're running behind.

This area is so important. The practice of moderation strengthens discipline. And the more we moderate our flesh and deny it, as I'm denying it, and Lord, I'm suppressing it, and I'm weak, but when you're weak, you are strong, Paul said.

And so the presence of Christ becomes real and evident. And then number three, hindrance to the presence of Christ is a lack of desperation. A lack of desperation.

We see from the Ren of Heaven Scripture earlier, there can be a lack of desperation, meaning it's not important or urgent enough. Have you ever said, Lord, I need to know now. I need to know now.

Oh God, would You rend the heavens? Would You come down and rip open the heavens? I need You to move now. I don't know how much longer my kids are going to even live, or to be in my house, and things are getting more haywire. I don't know about my marriage.

I don't know about my physical state. Lord, I need to know now. I need to hear from the God of the Bible.

And I am so desperate. I'm going to come to this altar. I'm so desperate.

I'm going to go to the prayer room. I'm so desperate. I'm going to make major changes in my life to begin to seek You with all of my heart and all of my strength tonight and in tomorrow morning.

Lord, things have got to die in my life. There's a desperation. Remember I said it many times before, desperate people do desperate things.

They might cut off relationships that are pulling them down. They might get rid of the things that are distracting them. I am so desperate.

I am so angry and frustrated that I'm going to pray and I'm going to fast and I'm going to seek Your heart. Desperation. Why are we meeting all week? One word.

Desperation. You think we'd be as inclined or motivated to go if gas prices were back down to \$1.30 like many years ago? Our military's strong and China and Russia are bowing. And everyone's being converted.

There's no ulterior motives. There's no promoting of sexual perversion. The church is dominating and your favorite president is elected.

You know, everything's going great. Where's the desperation? And that's one thing the cancel culture is doing. It's waking people up.

Just ask Luke Bryan how he's doing this week. Don't you dare have DeSantis up on your stage during a country concert, God forbid. Instead, cancel, cancel, cancel, cancel.

We need to start waking up to the fact that evil is not going to like us when we live for Christ and when we stand for righteousness. That's what's going on. That's what's going on.

Desperate people do desperate things. They do good things. They do God things.

And the average Christian gets by with just enough to keep them lukewarm but not on fire. Isn't it true? We do just enough to keep that lukewarm fire going, that fire on the water there in the kitchen. It's just enough to keep a little temperature.

And we've got to get back to the heat of pursuing Christ. You need to ask the Lord to give you desperation tonight. Look into the eyes of our children and our grandchildren and where things are going.

There's a desperation. I mean, we've got to get desperate about the needs in our country. 4. The fourth hindrance to His presence.

We just read in James as well, a lack of fervency. Do you know what fervency is? Turn up the heat. Now you do.

Turn up the heat. There's a fervency. Turn up the heat.

William Gurnell, a Puritan, I believe he wrote Christian in the Complete Armor. Big volume. He said, cold praying is no more prayer than a painting of fire is fire.

Let that sink in. Many people are praying in the same way that they're looking at a picture of a fire. They see it, but they sure don't feel it.

You should have came in our prayer room this evening. That's fervency. That's seeking the heart of God.

Cold praying is no more prayer than a painting of fire is fire. How can prayers that do not even warm your heart move God's heart? But isn't that true? It hurts, but it's true. And I'm right there with you.

Sometimes prayer is cold and formal. And I know God still hears it. I mean, volume! He's not listening for volume.

He hears the weeping and the cries. The gentleness. But there's a fervency.

Why? Because fervency is usually passion. It's passion. Without desperation and fervency, prayer is like sitting in front of a picture of fire.

You see it, but you don't feel it. That's why I shared with you this Scripture before many times. He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

We're saying, Jesus, You're a priority, and I'm going to pursue You. I'm going to pursue You in prayer. That's why we want to create an atmosphere of prayer.

We want to encourage you to Sunday morning prayer. We want to encourage you to prayer before the service. We want to encourage you to prayer during this.

We want you to take this fire home and have a home of prayer. Now, don't start thinking, boy, I bet Pastor Shane has a wonderful prayer life at home with all his kids and family. No, it's very challenging.

It's embarrassing sometimes. But we're going to be fervent. We're going to pursue.

Pursuing His presence doesn't always mean filling His presence. I hope that helps someone tonight. When you pursue Him, sometimes you don't always fill it.

Have you ever said, I'm just not filling it tonight? Well, welcome to the club. That's why perseverance is so important. He's a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Basically, He rewards those who seek after Him despite how they feel. Because it genuinely reveals their heart. And you know there's a breakthrough about to happen, don't you? You know, pursuing God.

And Lord, I don't feel it, but I know because You're the God of the Bible. You're the God who answers prayer. This is what Your Word says.

Your Word says if I seek You, I will find You regardless of how I feel. Your Word says where two or three are gathered they're in Your name, therefore You are in their midst. If you say the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

If you say these things, I don't feel it. And that's why I believe Paul encouraged Timothy, Timothy, be ready in and out of season. You've got to be ready regardless of how you feel because the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.

So no matter how you feel, you get up Timothy and you preach the Word and you don't know it. But many times I come up here and I'd rather just go home. But I've got to be responsible to God and that fervency and pursuing and let the Word of God go forth and penetrate the heart regardless of my feelings.

And here's another key, the cost we pay reveals your desperation, your level of desperation. What you're willing to pay is a measure of your desperation. And I hate to keep bringing up prayer meetings and things like that, but that is the gauge of spiritual health often.

I'm desperate, so I don't care if I can't go to Cinemark because I don't have enough gas, I'd rather go to church. Right, the cost we're willing to pay. The cost reveals how desperate we are.

We can embarrass ourselves tonight to bring up statistics and not even that, but even the life of the underground church in Africa where there's Muslim persecution or in the Middle East or in China where they're walking, hello? Walking to church services with kids. Couple hours going to hear a speaker. They need to hear from God.

There's no other hope. There's no Blue Cross. There's no Medi-Cal, 401Ks.

They're just barely getting by that day. No shoes in the dirt going to church because they're desperate. They need to hear from God.

That's why I believe you'll see genuine healing taking place. Eyesights opening, kids being delivered, tumors shrinking because there's no other plan, God. This is You and You alone.

I can't, I'm so desperate. The cost I'm willing to pay. You know how many people, I believe their job is actually hindering their walk with the Lord.

Their fullness is actually hindering their walk with the Lord. Too many toys. The more you own, the more owns you.

The cost, I'm giving this up because I have to pursue you. Many of us, there's people who've given up careers to get involved in church. And there's a cost involved.

There's a cost involved to come here every day of the week and come to prayer first and stay for three hours for church and pray with people and pour into people as laundry backs up and responsibilities get thrown to the side and things that I want to do, I can't do. Same with you, there's a cost. Why? Because there's desperation.

So if there's no cost, there's no desperation. Think about it, I'll come to church if it's at a time I can make it, when it's convenient, if there's gas in the car, as long as it doesn't mess up my Netflix binge, and as long as this sport event isn't happening, whether it's the NBA Finals or the World Series or the Super Bowl, if all that still fits, then I'll make it. Am I just not saying the truth? The cost reveals the desperation.

The fifth hindrance to His presence. Failure to slow down. This is a little bit different than too busy.

Many Christians, especially in America, we've got to slow down because we're too busy to wait on God, too preoccupied to pursue Him, and too wrapped up to worship Him. Too busy to wait, too preoccupied to pursue, and too wrapped up to worship. Is that not hitting home? He acts for the one who waits for Him.

Remember what we talked about earlier. He acts for the one who waits for Him. And waiting also is a great gauge that measures importance.

And that's why sometimes people say, you guys, your services are too long. Okay, but you should see the fruit. I'm looking at the fruit.

I don't know about you, but I'm looking at the fruit. And because sometimes it takes a little time. I can't push three minutes on a microwave and have my relationship with God restored.

Sometimes, that first two worship songs, and your kind thing about the day, and now you're singing about His presence and how He breaks every chain, and now God's starting to work in your heart. Now you're starting to see a little bit of how He can change you. And then another song comes on, and you see how He is the great and powerful God, and you begin to even amazing grace might come on and how sweet the sound that saved a wretch.

And now God begins to do heart surgery, and any heart surgeon will tell you the surgery He does is not over in 15 minutes. They haven't even opened the stitch line yet. There's a waiting time of pressing in and drawing closer to God.

And that's what we're trying to foster here and teach our Ignite kids. Don't be in a hurry. You can't rush God.

It's often at critical and key moments through times of waiting on Him that He moves. You guys know the story in Acts? After what, about 20, 30 minutes, the Spirit of God fell? And then they changed the world? That's right, they had to stay the night there. Waited and waited.

And I picture myself sometimes, I'd be like, oh man, guys, five days. Now personally, I don't think they just stayed in there, locked the door, never came out. Maybe some of them went to work, had to get some food.

You know, bathrooms in the house are kind of a new thing. So you know, but there was a, the Bible doesn't give us a lot of, but there was a waiting. It could have been like this.

It could have been when the day was over. When they did their thing, they went and waited in the upper room. They waited in the upper room.

They waited in the upper room. And in that waiting time, it was not wasted time. And I just see so many people, they are so busy, especially men.

You know how we rate success? By how busy we are. I did for many years. Man, that guy's so busy.

And now I kind of cringe when people say that. Just say I'm full. I'm really full right now.

I'm not too busy. Full of the things of God. But busy doing what? Buying things we can't afford.

Pursuing things we really don't need. Lack of spending time with our family. Pursue, I'm too busy to pursue God.

And here's why it's so deceptive. It can make you think that you're doing something very effective, Martha. But Mary is the one waiting at His feet.

Oh Martha, Martha, you're worried about many things. She's not helping me cook. She's not helping me clean.

All good things. Praise God for cooking and cleaning. But see, she was worried about too many things.

But Mary has chosen, chosen. Mary has chosen what is best. Time and intimacy with me.

Some things have got to go. Have got to go. Some of you need to start getting to bed earlier.

And seek God early in the morning. Some of you guys need to reprioritize your evening. If you're evening people, I can't relate to the evening people.

My mind shuts off here in about an hour. I've got about an hour before, oh no, it's getting closer. Do what works for you.

Do what works for you, but you've got to prioritize to where Christ is first. Jesus often went to places of solitude. Jesus did.

Why? To hear from the Father. To connect. Andrew Murray said, once faith has taken, this is going to be so important for you and me.

I love this, when I came across it this week. Once faith has taken its stand on God's Word in your heart in the name of Jesus, and you have yielded yourself to the leading of the Spirit, to seek only God's will and honor Him in prayer, you need not be discouraged by delay. Anybody here discouraged by delay? I know this room is not being honest.

Balcony, you guys are all pretty spiritual. No, we know, delay every one of us. Why isn't such and such coming to the Lord yet? Why isn't this happening? What's happening with, where's my breakthrough? Where's my healing? Lord, why are You taking me through all this? But once your faith has taken a stand on God's Word in the name of Jesus Christ, and you yield to the leading of the Spirit, Lord, I just want to seek only Your will, and I'm going to honor You in prayer and petition You.

I'm not going to be discouraged by delay because delay is not deny, necessarily, and waiting time is not wasted time. It's actually in that time that was like a crushing, that God would begin to crush me. The more I waited, the more I worshiped, and the more I worshiped, the more I sought Him, and the more I sought Him, the more I loved Him, and the more I loved Him, the more I knew Him, and it's a process of persevering and pressing in.

That God who will never let you down, that God who knows, and it numbered the very hairs on your head. He's ordered the times and the seasons. And here's a closing thought.

Words that sparked the great Welsh revival that I shared with you earlier. These words, Evan Roberts, they're in a prayer meeting. Nobody was preaching.

Don't overlook the prayer meeting, folks. Jesus said, my house will be called the house of Jesus who would retreat in prayer. Lord, teach us to preach.

Doesn't, is that just me, or that would be my quote? Lord, teach me to preach. He said, teach us to pray. Abram's going to cover that tomorrow.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.

God, forgive us of our trespasses. Lead me not into the testing, the temptation. God, deliver me from evil.

Teach us how to pray. Oh, is that our cry today? Lord, teach, it's mine. Lord, teach me how to, I don't ask Him to teach me how to preach because if I'm filled with prayer and filled with the Spirit, the Spirit of God is going to say just like Jeremiah, open your mouth and I will fill you with my Spirit.

You will pull down and you will root down. You will upheave all the land. You will destroy it and you will build it.

You will encourage it. The Spirit of the living God can speak boldly through you when you're yielded to that influence by the power of prayer. Where all this comes from, where a lot of preaching comes from that moves the heart, it comes directly from the prayer closet.

As a person sits and asks God, Lord, I empty myself of me. Fill me of your Spirit and you open the Word of God, it comes alive and the principles come out and the dedication, the obedience, and the repentance and God says, here's what I want you. I'm gonna fill up your soul to above capacity.

That's why His Word is in my heart like a burning fire. It's shut up in my bones. I can't hold it back and then it comes out and it begins to devour.

It begins to encourage. It begins to uplift. It begins to shape.

It begins to revive. It begins to renew all from the prayer closet. So the words that sparked the great Welsh revival, oh God, bend me.

Oh God, break me. Like Romans 12, I beseech you. Paul's begging is basically begging.

And I feel like doing this a lot. I would beg those listening. Beg you by the mercies of God.

In other words, look how merciful God has been. Look at what He is offering. That you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

Basically saying, put your corpse on the altar and let the fire of God come down upon it and let that fire never go out. Keep that fire burning. Keep the presence of Christ burning.

Yes, it's a battle. Yes, it's difficult. I might feel great tonight, but tomorrow all hell could break loose.

But I know the God I serve and I will be here tomorrow seeking His face regardless of how I feel. I'll get on my knees and I'll call down heaven. I'll pray for my children, pray for my marriage, pray for our nation because I know He is a God who hears and He's attracted to weakness and brokenness.

God, I don't want to preach. I want lives changed. I don't want to fire up the cheerleaders.

I want us to come to repentance. And He also, in His journal, and this is all biblical, there's four things that preceded the revival. And actually, Evan Roberts, the pastor didn't want him to speak at the church.

So he said, well, just go preach to like 17 youth. And the youth caught on fire. The pastor said, you know what? Maybe you should speak.

And the fire from that service lasted the whole year. 25 years old, actually got caught up in some strange doctrines, wore himself out. Nervous breakdown and we didn't hear of Evan Roberts again.

You have to be careful. You have to steward the anointing. You have to rest, you have to worship.

But these things were prominent then and it's prominent now. It's improminent. And anytime God's going to move deeply and profoundly in your life, these things need to take place.

Number one, confess any known sin. Right now, if God's convicting you tonight, that confession needs to take place. Just between you and God if you need to, or between you and someone else.

You can't hold on to sin because it's like a cancer. There's a major sin destroying the church, that being pornography. A major sin destroying the church, that being disunity.

Bitterness. Reconcile immediately with others. Don't you feel good when you pursue peace? If there's people, even tonight, I forgive you, we need to move forward.

I can't hold this in. Confession of any known sin. And then number two, put away any doubtful habit.

I love the wording on that because if you're wondering, hmm, should I give that up? Well, hmm. It's called conviction. It's called conviction.

We just answered this question Tuesday at the men's study. This question came up as it always does on alcohol and should I drink and different things. And I said, you know, anytime I answer this over the last couple of decades, to my knowledge, it's always from someone who's struggling.

Looking for a loophole. Those who have no issue, they don't remember even when the last time was a six-pack can stay in the refrigerator for three months. They don't ask that question.

It's a doubtful habit because what it's doing, it's gnawing on you. The Holy Spirit's convicting. I don't know, should I give that up? Is that really God? I don't know.

We make excuses. Put away any doubtful habit. Why? Because that conviction is not being responded to.

And when you're convicted about something and you don't respond accordingly, you quench and grieve the Spirit of God. You can't be revived or experience revival if you're quenching. You're saying, I want the fire of God, but you're dumping water on it.

How's that working out? Oh, I want this fire. Well, I got five gallons of water. Oh, what happened? I want this fire.

Here's five gallons of water. I want this fire. Get rid of any doubtful habit that God is convicting you of.

Number three, obey the Spirit promptly. Amen? Obey the Spirit promptly because what happens with delay? Excuses. You know what? That wasn't God.

Now Shane was just getting loud and fired up. I was convicted then, but I'm not convicted anymore. I need that.

I need that. I need that to calm down. I need that.

That person did such and such to me. And the longer we delay, the harder it is to often break that habit or to sever it because we give sin a stronghold in our life. Isn't that true? The root of bitterness, we're supposed to pull it out.

James also talks about aborting sin. Right when it's conceived. Because as it grows, fully grown, it brings forth death.

And so this is key. Obey the Spirit promptly. God tells you to do something, do it.

Do it. Whether it's repentance or confession. And it's interesting today at the bank, I was pulling some money out because we told you we're going to help some families and different things.

And I'm there and this lady behind me, I can tell, I look. Like, oh man, I don't know, maybe she needs some help financially. I said, well, Lord, I don't know if it's You.

I feel it, kind of. I don't know if it's me. Like just, ah, Lord, show me.

I'll obey, but I need to know if it's You. And then let her just say something. Like, what are the chances of that, right? And so the bank teller goes, okay, Shane, thanks, we'll see you next thing.

And she goes, Shane, Pastor Shane, oh my goodness, I've been in your church eight years. I'm like, oh, there you go. That's my cue.

That's my cue. And so gave her some money. She starts crying in the Wells Fargo line.

I'm hugging her. And she's like, I'm here to get money for my sister to help her out. She's in a worse spot than me.

I go, here's some more. My goodness, you're breaking me down here. But see, promptly, promptly fix that relationship.

Fix that relationship promptly. Not later, not next week. Not if they call you.

Fix it now, deal with it now. Repent now. That's when you get, because when that takes place, that obedience brings joy.

I obeyed the Lord. I'm so full of joy. That's why many of you are like a refrigerator.

You're sitting on an ice cube, even though we're singing about the fire of God, because you're not obeying the Spirit of God. And there's no spiritual life when we're quenching and grieving the Spirit. Spiritual life is a direct reflection.

If somebody fully surrendered to God, yes, they still deal with junk, of course, but they deal with it. They confess it. They get rid of it.

That's what I always want to do. I always want to pursue unity. And I often do it to a fault sometimes.

Is everything okay? I ask people, are you okay? Is there any issue? Is there any offense? I want to err on the side of grace. And always pursuing that. And then fourth, confess Christ publicly.

Confess Christ publicly. Salvation begins with a desperate prayer to be renewed, to be revived, to be restored, to be refocused, to profess Christ publicly. So many of you, I'm sure, if you're Christians, of course you're here tonight, but even outside, I wasn't going to tell that.

I know she was a pastor. If God showed me to help her, I was going to just bring her the Gospel. And not being embarrassed of Jesus, that will always fuel the flames of fire.

Not being embarrassed. So maybe when you go out this week, confess Him publicly. You don't have to hold up a sign or anything, but say, here's how Jesus changed my life.

Can I pray for you? Be open to what the Spirit of God is doing. That's revival. That's renewal.

Can you imagine if this entire group would just go out and minister to a few people this week? It would be life changing. But the truth is, most people don't talk about Jesus because it's too uncomfortable. I don't want to go there.

I just want to get into Kohl's and do my thing. I just want to get into the mall and do my thing. I just want to get here.

I got busy, busy, busy. Confess.

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