

# Questions & Answers

by Warren Wiersbe

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*The speaker emphasizes the importance of humility, balance, and self-care in ministry, and encourages listeners to focus on Jesus as the model for ministry.*

**Duration:** 59:18

**Scripture:** Proverbs 4:23, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 11:28, Luke 24:32, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 10:5, Revelation 21:17

**Topics:** "Creative Preaching", "Renewing Mind"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of creativity in preaching the word of God. He shares a humorous anecdote about two farmers discussing their church service, highlighting the need for sermons to be creative and engaging. The preacher also talks about the importance of renewing the mind and guarding against negative influences that can affect our thoughts. He encourages listeners to focus on doing what is right and not worry about what others say. Additionally, he mentions his plans to write a book on the Old Testament and the blessings that come from living a life of faith.

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## Transcript

You heard about the preacher who dreamed he was preaching and woke up and found out that he was. Well, that's what happens. That's what happens.

Thank you for handing in the questions. There may be some more back there that we didn't get. We won't get to all of these.

It gives me a chance to pick and choose. And that's nice. To be able to pick and choose.

Let's pray. Father in heaven, thank you for this day and for these friends and for the ministries that you have given to each of us. And we ask, oh God, that you'll guide us during this hour.

Give wisdom. And we pray, Father, that Jesus will be glorified and your church will be edified as we share together in Jesus' name. Amen.

Now, before I start answering some of these questions, there are several things that you need to know. One of them is that nobody is omniscient. And because I believe a certain way or I express it a certain way, it doesn't mean you have to.

I am no man's disciple. And I don't want anybody to be my disciple. When I look back to the Bible, I get mail from people saying, you are my pastor.

I'd write back and say, no, I'm not. If you die, don't call me. People would send checks and say, here is my tithe.

And we'd send it back. I'd say, no, this is not your church. So, just because Wiersbe writes it or says it doesn't mean you have to go along with it.

I've learned that God blesses people I disagree with. I don't know how he can do it. So, this is not the law of the Swedes and the Persians.

This is the law of the Lord. Just love one another and dare to disagree. So, this session is not an exercise in omniscience.

Rather, I'm just going to share from my heart and take what you can and use it. And what you can't use, maybe somebody else can. How did you juggle during your years of ministry the matter of your family? The question seems to be, you've got the church, you've got the family, and there can be tensions there.

The best thing that I can do for the church I'm pastoring is to build a godly home. It's one of the requirements for ministry, isn't it? Having his children under subjection, etc., etc. It's amazing how many of the list in Titus and in Timothy has to do with the home.

So, the best thing I can do for the church that I'm pastoring is to build a godly home. The best thing I can do for my family is to build a good church for them to go to. So, number one, there is no competition.

If I am spending time with my family, I'm helping the church. If I'm ministering to the church, I'm helping the family. That's point one.

Point two, what is it that makes a godly family? Love, truth, and discipline. That's how you raise a godly family. Love, truth, and discipline.

How does God raise His kids? Love, truth, and discipline. What's the best way to have a godly church? Love, truth, and discipline. So that if, when I'm at the church and I'm ministering to God's people, I love them, I give them the truth in love, and we exercise personal and church discipline, and then at home I do the same thing, there's no inconsistency.

There's no competition. Now, there are times when we have to say to our children, our wives already understand this, but we have to say to our children, kids, I know we had this planned, but there's an emergency, and dad has to go take care of this, so would you pray for me while I'm gone taking care of this, because you're a part of the ministry. I remember once we had a birthday party planned, and there was an awful auto accident or something happened, and I had to get to the hospital right away.

Children understood. Some years later, now that our children are all grown up and we have grandchildren, I made mention at some family gathering that I was sorry I was gone so much. The kids said, no, we didn't feel that way at all.

I could be taken two ways, I suppose. I was very fortunate that Betty was a strong force at home, so that when I did have to be away or there was an emergency, she was there to guide the children, and we always tried to teach the children that they were a part of the ministry, but we did not say to them, you

better be good. You're a preacher's kid.

Worst thing you can do. Never give up on anybody in your family. Many a pastor's family has had the stress and strain of a daughter or a son who has become independent.

Some people use the word rebellious. Never, never give up. Pray and wait and keep the doors open because God is going to work.

I don't know that we had those kinds of strains. We may have and didn't see it, but if we did, the Lord overruled our stupidity and helped us, and our children are now doing well, we praise the Lord. I pray every day for our eight grandchildren that God will call them into a service.

Sometimes we preachers do get too busy. For example, suppose you went to the doctor. The doctor gave you an examination.

He said, you know, Reverend, you're going to have to come and see me once a week for three hours for therapy, or within one year you'll be dead. You go to your church board and say, man, here's the situation. They'd say, go and we'll be praying for you.

Now, if you can take three hours once a week for therapy at the doctor's office and they love you for doing it, why can't you take three hours to spend time with your wife or your children? Because that's just as important. Are you following my logic here? Don't feel guilty. When you're ministering to your family, you're ministering to the church.

When you're ministering to the church, you're ministering to your family. Don't feel guilty either way. We were taking off on vacation.

We were getting ready for a building program, or maybe we were already in it, and I think we were getting ready for it. And I was worn out. I mean, people don't know what it means to pass for a church.

They just don't know. Bless their hearts. And we were going to leave on vacation, and one of the ladies in the church, who had just as well been a man but happened to be a lady, there's one in every church, she came up and she said, they're going on vacation.

I said, yeah. She said, the devil doesn't take a vacation. Now, I have to watch my sarcasm.

My sense of humor is lethal, and I've got to watch. I almost said, well, if he could go with you, he would. But I didn't.

I said, well, the devil hasn't got a body. He's a spirit, so he doesn't need a vacation. I said, furthermore, he's not my example.

And I didn't apologize for taking a vacation. And I probably should have taken more than I did. But don't feel guilty.

A hundred years from now, it's not going to make a bit of difference what somebody said because you did this or this or this. Anybody can preach in the pulpit as preachers they can get. Only I can be the father in that home.

Only Betty can be the mother in that home. Nobody can take our place. Not even a babysitter.

Not even grandma and grandpa. And therefore, we jealously have to guard that and do what we're supposed to do regardless of what people say. You worry about what people say, you go nuts.

So don't worry about it. Just do what is right. Do what is right.

And keep it balanced. Long sermon on a short death. Are you planning on finishing the Old Testament commentary before you die? Well, if I do it after I die, it'll have to be ghost written.

We're hoping to do the Old Testament. We have a schedule. Victor Books has been purchased and is now owned by David C. Cook.

And so it's going to become Chariot slash Victor Books. Next week we'll find out more about it at CBH.org. With Victor, I haven't signed the contract, but we have a schedule whereby we will do the Old Testament, but not every verse of every book. Some of it's going to be put together.

The next one that's coming out, there are ten out in the Old Testament now. The next one that's coming out is called Be Concerned. It's Volume 2 on the Minor Prophets.

Volume 1 on the Minor Prophets has come out. Be Excited. I think that was called Be Excited? Be Amazed.

I forget what my children's names are all the time. Be Amazed, thank you. The third one is Be Heroic, and that'll finish the Minor Prophets.

Then we're going to go back and finish Genesis, Lord willing, do Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, put the historical books together so that we travel with Saul and David and so forth, and then pick up what's left over. If we get the Song of Solomon, I don't know what I'm going to do. I was over at Canadian, over at the British Keswick some years back, and they were interviewing me in front of this tent full of people.

I don't know, 5,000 or 6,000 people. And Billy Strachan was sitting behind me. I don't know if you know Billy.

He teaches with a radio Bible class occasionally, and he's a great evangelist, an Irishman. And the interviewer said to me, do you intend to do Song of Solomon when you do the Old Testament? I think he was joking. I hope he was.

I said, well, if I do, I don't know what I'll call it. And from behind me, Billy hollers, call it, be careful. How would you select an assistant pastor? Is that a problem? Number one, I would question the resume.

Have you ever noticed that when you send out for recommendations, you rarely get negative ones? I was on the board of the Evangelical Alliance Mission for 10 years. One of my assignments was to be on the committee that read all of the applications for people who wanted to be missionaries and look at their pictures and so forth, read their resumes and everything. Rarely did I find a friend or a pastor who was ever negative.

All of their geese were swans. When I interview somebody for staff position, this is going to sound strange, but it's the truth. I go more by my gut level feeling about this person as I talk with him or her than I do anything else.

Now, obviously, if I read in his resume that he had done some wild, crazy thing, that would apply, but I go mostly by my gut level feeling. Ted Angstrom, who's one of the great leaders in Christian management, dear friend of mine, I asked Ted one day, I said, Ted, you've interviewed all kinds of people. What is your final decision made based on? He said, my gut level feeling.

So that's where I'd start. How do I vibe with this person? Do I sense that we're together on this? Now, I'd want to know their spiritual life. I notice this with churches when they interview candidates.

They rarely say, tell us about your devotional life. That's the first question I'd ask. Do you spend time every day in your Bible? How do you read your Bible? Do you just read any place? Tell me about your personal devotional life.

Tell me about your devotional pattern with your family. That's far more important than how many A's did you get in Bible school. Now, I'm not against Bible school or A's.

I rarely give them. So I go by gut level feeling as I talk about their spiritual life. Then I ask them what kind of management style they are accustomed to.

Because my management style may not be what they want. There are some assistants who want to be told what to do, when to do it. They want to come in on Monday and you hand them a sheet and say, I want you to report on this on Friday.

I'm not made that way. I mean, you know, my management style has always been, look, you are a part of this team. Here are your parameters.

Go to it. Just go to it. Use your gifts the way God wants you to use them.

You get in trouble, we'll help you. You do the same thing twice, we'll think about it. Now, if they want to have a more rigid style, then we aren't going to work well together.

So it has to be your management style as it relates to their approach to management. And then are they good team people? And you can't get everything. You will not get assistants or associates who can do everything, because you can't do everything.

So I just say, look, these are your gifts. God's trained you this way. Here is your area.

Here's your parameters. Go to it. I tried when I was pastoring to meet regularly with staff people individually.

I think pastoring the staff is as much important as pastoring the church, because leadership filters down. I don't like the word down, as though the members are there and we're up here, but you know what I'm talking about. So I'd spend time with them.

I'm a walk-around kind of a person. When I was at Back to the Bible, I'd leave my office, just walk around the building, talk to people. How's the baby doing, you know, and so forth.

I found I learned more that way than any other way. Because people come to official meetings, here's got an agenda, you know. You find things out at the water cooler, you know.

Now, I did this at church. When I was pastoring, I would arrive at church early, walk around, talk to people, like I did here. Shake hands, talk to them, meet the visitors, just walk around.

I've learned more about the church in a half an hour of just walking around the auditorium, chatting with people, than I would if I had an official meeting sometimes. Of course, behind it must be prayer. One of the big problems today is the law tells us what we can ask people we're hiring.

That's one big problem. And you ask somebody, is there any skeleton in your closet? I mean, when you were over here, did you do anything that would embarrass us here or could erupt again? And you know what I'm talking about. That's the difficult part.

That's where the Holy Spirit has to lead us. I thank God for the staff people he gave us. I can't think of one who was ever really a problem.

I may have been a problem to them. But I learned a lot from my staff people. I really did.

And thank God for them. Our staff meetings at Moody Church were hilarious. We'd meet at 10 o'clock on Monday morning and spend the first half hour laughing.

You'd say, that's not very spiritual. Oh yes, it is. Oh yes, it is.

Because at Moody Church, if you couldn't laugh, you'd weep. And then after we got it all out of our system, we'd pray. I learned this in Youth for Christ.

Yeah, and you'd pray. And then we'd talk about our problems. Do you have a favorite Puritan writer? Well, I may make some enemies when I say this, but I'm not a great Devil Kay of the Puritans.

I'm not against them. I have them in my library. But I find some of them are very boring.

I know there's a lot of groceries in there, a lot of good food in there, but you've got to plow and you've got to dig so much. That may be good for me. I was preaching through the book of James and I was using Thomas Manton on James and I almost resigned from the ministry.

Man, if we preached today the style the Puritans had, we'd empty our churches. If anybody comes along and says the Puritans are the model, nobody is the model. Jesus is the model.

The Puritans had as many problems as we had. They had just as much sin as we've got. And don't let anybody tell you we have to go back to the age of the Puritans.

We don't. Or anybody else. If you're going to go back, go back farther than that.

Go back to Pentecost. That would be a good place to go back to. I don't have a favorite Puritan writer unless Alexander White would be considered a Puritan.

In that case, he is a favorite of mine. Do not become a system disciple. Whether it's Arminianism, Calvinism, Dispensationalism, whatever, Puritanism.

Don't become a system disciple because we know in part. Nobody knows enough to be able to say, here's God, this is it. I read Calvin.

I read Finney, who disagreed with Calvin. I read Presbyterians. I read Assembly of God.

In fact, most of my reading is of people I disagree with, including secular folks. I do a lot of secular reading. Don't become a devotee of a system.

We may get to heaven and discover the system wasn't God's system. Could you share a personal failure you learned the most from? Lucy said to Charlie Brown, we learn more from our failures than from our successes. And Charlie Brown said, that makes me the smartest man in the world.

I've made a lot of mistakes. I'm glad our God is a God. You know, the victorious Christian life is a series of new beginnings.

A series of new beginnings. And I'm just so glad our God is a God who forgives and said, let's get going again. Come on.

The Lord helped us build a new auditorium at Calvary Baptist in Covington. It seated, I think, 1,800 people, something like that. It was a big undertaking for us.

And then we had to remodel the old building for educational purposes. And you know what that's like? It's like repairing a car while you're going 80 miles an hour down the highway. That's what it's like.

And we had some adult classes that had to be relocated and so forth. And you know, that's difficult. Because adult classes, this is our room.

We paid for the carpeting and we put the paint on the wall, you know. And I got myself in more hot water. I learned a good lesson.

The adult superintendent who was a middle management fellow at Lieber Brothers, sharp guy, came to me one day. And I love people who don't put you up on a pedestal but who love you. He came to me one day.

He said, how long is it going to be before you quit making a mess out of my department? And I said, naively, but what do you mean you don't? That gives you a chance to think up an excuse. Well, he said, if you'd let me handle this, it'd be done better. I said, it's all yours.

And within one week's time, that man had the whole thing taken care of. I had no right to meddle in that. It was like unscrambling an egg.

That's not my job. And he just stepped in, made it work, and I learned a good lesson there. There are people, many people, in our churches who can do many things better than we can.

I had somewhat of a messianic complex. I just had to do everything. I was glad for that lesson.

And I hope I've been following it ever since. Do you ever feel stagnant when you're tired? Especially when I'm tired. I'm diabetic.

It's like an organ recital. I'm diabetic, and when my energy level gets low, I start biting people. Anybody here know what I'm talking about? Yeah, you know.

Okay. I carry my medication with me and so forth, but when I'm tired, I'm very vulnerable. So I've learned that I've got to take care of my body.

I'm only 67, which is not an ancient age. Somebody wrote me a question about dinosaurs. I don't know how old they think I am.

Yeah, everybody goes through dry periods because we're human. Now, sometimes the dry period comes simply because we've been overdoing it. Psalm 23 says, He makes me to lie down.

Sometimes God has to make us lie down. So when I find myself getting tired, regardless of what I have to do, or who's on the phone, the most spiritual thing I can do is go take a nap. Some of you are doing that now, in fact.

I've heard people say, you know, I went through sickness. I had a real, very sick, and I came out so spiritual. I'm just the opposite.

I'm not too spiritual when I'm sick. They used to bother me until I heard A.W. Toetzer say the same thing. He said, When I am not well, I am not easy to be with.

So when I feel sick, you know what I do? I go to bed, close the door, go to bed, just stay there. Then he leaves me alone. Just let me go.

So you've got to know your own cycle, your own body cycle. Everybody is different. I'm an early riser.

I'm up at five o'clock in the morning. I get more work done between five o'clock in the morning and noon than I could get done any other way. But other people aren't like that.

I had a secretary once. She said to me, I wish you'd quit talking about people getting up early and having their devotion. She said, If I got up at five o'clock to read my Bible, I wouldn't be able to find it.

But she was a godly woman. So I said, Hey, you just got different makeup from me. Everybody has to know his own.

Yes, there are periods when you're stagnant. There are periods when you've got to stop giving out and start taking in. For example, when you find yourself hitting a stagnant period, call your pastor friend in the nearest church and say, How about switching pulpits a couple of Sundays from now? We can each dig out an old sermon.

Don't have to prepare. That'll give me a week to kind of catch up with myself. Nothing wrong with that.

Jesus said, Not him. You've got to watch out for him. Jesus said, Come apart and rest.

Vance Havner used to say, If you don't come apart and rest, you'll come apart. So you have to know your own. Yes, we all have stagnant periods.

If you read my books, you'll know where they are. And the thing to do is just be honest. Be honest.

I remember once going to the Board of Elders at Moody Church saying, Men, I don't know what to preach next fall. Now, we had to plan our preaching because of the music, the radio, and so forth and so on. I said, I don't know.

I've run out of ideas. One of them spoke up and said, Have you ever thought of doing a series of messages on suffering? Some of our people are really hurting. I said, Yeah, you're right.

He said, Pray about that. I did. And God just opened up to me.

Well, the book came from Why Us? When Bad Things Happen to God's People. That came out of that series. So just be honest.

Go to your elders or whatever and say, Look, I'm in a dry period. Pray with me. Pray for me.

Our pastor's son, when he hits one of these periods, goes off to a monastery, an Anglican monastery in Michigan. You can rent a room or a cell or whatever they call it. And they'll feed you.

They'll feed you. And if you want to, you can go to the prayers. But he just wants some place where the radio's not blaring, television's not on, telephone's not going to ring.

Takes his books there and in two days, God begins to do things in his heart. My experience has been, often when I get in a plane to fly someplace, I'm up there about 20 minutes and all of a sudden, all kinds of ideas hit me. It's a whole new atmosphere.

And the seed that's been planted, I start to get ideas. And, well, so much for that. You will have periods that are stagnant.

Recognize them and do something with them. Are you a Calvinist or an Arminian or a Kalminian? None of the above. I am no man's disciple and I ask nobody to pray to be my disciple.

We know in part. And because we know in part, I'm very much afraid of a system. Now, I have read in Calvin's institutes, I've not read them straight through, and I've read Finney and I read a lot of people.

I could take the book of Hebrews and I could go through it and teach it from the Calvinistic point of view. I'd go right back and teach it from the Arminian point of view. I don't find either terms in the Bible extreme Arminianism robs God of glory.

Extreme Calvinism robs man of responsibility. Watch out for both. As far as God the Father is concerned, I was saved when he chose me in Christ before the foundation of the world and I knew nothing about that.

As far as God the Son is concerned, I was saved when he died for me on the cross. That I heard about. As far as the Holy Spirit is concerned, I was saved in May of 1945 when I trusted Jesus as my Savior.

It takes all three. That's Ephesians 1. Blessed be the God and Father who has chosen us. Blessed be the Son who redeemed us.

Blessed be the Holy Spirit who has sealed us. It takes all three. Now, an extreme Calvinist will so magnify sovereignty, he'll emphasize sovereignty and minimize Calvary.

An extreme Arminian will so emphasize responsibility he may deny sovereignty. Balance. Blessed are the balanced.

The most balanced Calvinist you will ever read is Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Charles Spurgeon was a five point Calvinist but not a radical. He believed in exhorting people to be saved.

He wept over sinners. Now, he did not give a public invitation. But that's not the test of anything.

That's not the test of anything. Not every baby is born in public. You make the invitation a test of spirituality and you're moving beyond Scripture.

Our Lord did say, Come to Me. In fact, in the last part of Revelation chapter 21, the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. The word does mean come forward.

Even Barclay says, This would go right with the practice of giving an invitation. But don't make these things a test of fellowship. Please.

The text of Bible study is not a big head. It's a burning heart. Did not our heart burn within us as He opened to us the Scriptures? So preach Jesus.

Don't bring your theological squabbles into the pulpit. That's like bringing Grey's Anatomy into the emergency ward. These people don't need a book.

They need a doctor. And our saints come together and they've been out in the trenches. They hurt.

They bleed. They're hungry. And they don't want to hear controversy.

Give them food. And God never called me to feed the giraffes. He called me to feed the sheep.

Harold Linzell said to me one day, He said, You know, I'm praying that God will give me the backbone of a Calvinist and the heart of a Calvinist. Now, generally speaking, I know what he says and I agree with it. Don't become a systems defender.

Just preach the Word of God. Just preach the Word of God. Love people.

Now, know what you believe. There is in America today a quiet move toward reformed theology. Isn't that so quiet? There's a noisy trend.

Martin Lloyd-Jones was our friend. Betty and I, every time we were in Britain, almost every time we were in Britain, we'd talk to him. This was Lloyd-Jones.

He preached for us. I got to preach one day at Calvary in Covington. I looked out and there sat Martin Lloyd-Jones.

And I was preaching from Romans. You talk about homiletical horror. There it is.

And I've read every volume of his exposition of Romans. Some things I don't agree with. But I love him anyway.

We loved each other and we appreciated each other. Don't make these things a test of fellowship or spirituality because we know in part. We know in part.

So if you want to ask me which am I, I'm none really. I suppose maybe I'm four-fifths of a Calvinist. I don't know.

But I don't worry about those things. I just preach the word and try to be true to what I think God is saying to me. Can Satan speak to our minds and what are the fiery darts in Ephesians 6? There have been times I have been sitting on the platform of a church waiting to preach and such horrible thoughts have come to my mind.

But I knew they weren't mine. Luther said, I can't stop the birds from flying around my head but I can stop them from making a nest in my hair. My hair, they might have a bit of a problem.

I know what he's talking about. The thing that Paul wants us to do in Romans 12 after we present our bodies is to let God renew our minds. This is where the Christian life is lived.

The heart and the mind. You can't divide people up. My body affects my mind.

My mind can affect my body. I can think myself into high blood pressure. In fact, the doctor tells me that stress will increase my blood sugar.

So the body affects the mind, the mind affects the emotions, the heart. You can't parcel yourself up into little categories. Here's the conscience.

God wants to renew my mind. That's why we have our daily quiet time with God. I pray each morning when I get up, I say, Lord, here's my body and I give it to you.

It's not doing too good, but it's yours. Here's my mind. I want you to renew my mind.

Then I get specific. I say, Lord, cleanse my imagination. That's your creative part.

Your imagination is the gift of creativity. Some people, their imagination is a glacier. Never moves.

Cold. They aren't creative. Their preaching sounds like Jameson Fawcett Brown commentary.

No warmth, no heart, no creativity. Other people, their imagination is a sewer. They're preachers.

Their imagination is a sewer. It can lead to trouble. God wants my imagination to be a clear, beautiful stream.

Wherever it goes, there's life. Creativity. Preaching is a marvelously creative opportunity.

It can be same, same, same every Sunday. Two farmers met down at the market and one said, How was your church service yesterday? The other one said, Well, same old thing. Ding, dong, ding, dong, ding, dong.

The first farmer said, Boy, you're lucky. All we get is ding, ding, ding, ding, ding. You pick up Roget's Thesaurus and look up Dahl and it'll say, Dahl is a sermon.

Why would the world think a sermon is dull? It should be creative. It's the most creative book in the world. That's another subject.

So, I say, God, cleanse my imagination. I've got to write a book today. I've got to do this.

Cleanse my imagination. Renewal of the mind. Now, Satan attacks the mind.

There's some things I won't read. There's some things I won't watch. Some things I won't listen to because they affect my mind.

I just say, No. Just like there's some things I can't eat. They're not good for me.

So, I've got to discipline my mind. And if I find that my imagination is moving someplace it shouldn't, I've got to bring it back by the Holy Spirit. It's a battle.

You'll never win that battle completely until you get the glory. But don't give up. So, the renewing of the mind is important and Satan does throw fiery darts at us.

What are they? Well, when you're discouraged. The Holy Spirit doesn't discourage anybody. His name means the encourager.

Now, the saints will discourage you. The average church needs no fire extinguishers. Enough wet blankets are walking around to be able to put out the Chicago fire.

Well, if you find yourself discouraged, that's not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit doesn't discourage anybody. He's the encourager.

The Paraclete. So, if I get discouraged, that's a fiery dart. If I find myself accusing somebody, that's a fiery dart.

And if I don't put that out with the shield of faith, faith in what? Faith in the Word of God. Say, Lord, you've said it's wrong to do this and therefore by faith I conquer this. It's a battle.

But I've found that the more the Word of God gets into my mind, the Spirit of God can work. The Spirit of God does not work in a vacuum. The Spirit of God uses the Word of God.

It doesn't work in a vacuum. I've read these books where they say, empty your mind of everything. Now, for some folks that wouldn't be too hard.

But it's not biblical. You don't empty your mind of everything. You have your mind renewed.

And the Holy Spirit can do that. It's a battle. But so is the whole Christian life.

What does Paul mean when he talks about living by faith? Well, I think he's referring to where we walk by faith not by sight. Let me give you four tests of faith. How can I tell when what I'm going to do is by faith? I have a friend who about wrecked his life because God led him by faith to do this and this and this and boy, he went bankrupt.

Now, I'm not saying everybody goes bankrupt. That's what happened. That's because of unbelief.

No, no, no. All I'm saying is we Christians, especially preachers, can cover up a lot of our own ideas saying we're going to do it by faith. I was in a Back to the Bible board meeting many years ago when both Mr. and Mrs. Epps, the founders, were alive and they were there.

One of the board members gave a passionate plea to do such and such. He said, we must do this by faith. Quietly, Mrs. Epps said, who's faith? That quieted the meeting down.

Who's faith? Test number one, can I back it up with Scripture? Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Anything I'm going to do that I can't back up from Scripture, the principle of it, I can't do it by faith. Test number two, is it for God's glory? Am I doing this because I want it? Or is this really for God's glory? Test number three, am I willing to wait? Faith means patience.

Through faith and patience they inherited the promises. Hebrews chapter 6. He who believes shall not make haste. When I find myself getting nervous and impetuous, this has got to be done, got to be done now.

I know I'm heading for an accident. Because when God works and it's His way to do it, then we do it by faith and we're willing to wait. If it's a real thing, folks, it'll wait.

When I was in seminary, I was pastoring a church. That's a good way to go to school. It keeps your time filled up and you can practice in your church what you're learning and find out what really works.

I enjoyed that. It was hard work. But our church was being blessed and God was doing some things and I thought maybe I should just leave school and just focus on the church.

So I went and talked to the registrar and he looked at me and said he had a strange way of talking. He said, he always preface everything with, Brother, where is he? He said, the Lord has waited a long time for you to come along. He can wait a few more years.

And he was right. The fourth test comes from Romans where Paul says there's joy and peace in believing. If I'm really doing something by faith, even though there are obstacles and problems, there's a joy and a peace down inside.

You can't explain it. You can't explain it. So those are the four tests of faith.

So when we're going to step out to do something, whether it's relocate or whatever, did we get a promise from the Word of God? Betty and I could write a book on the scriptures God has given us in our marriage 43 years now. Every time we have needed something to nail it down. Whether it was a move or a house or what it was.

It's just incredible how God gave to us. Now we don't do like this. We don't play Baptist roulette.

We just open at any place. That's not faith. That's superstition.

But in the course of our regular reading of the Word of God, the Lord has every single time given us just what we need. If we didn't have it, we didn't move. We didn't take the step.

We waited until He gave us a warning or a promise or a principle and it's just... We're getting to the point now it's incredible that we're starting to think more and more after 43 years it's kind of a merger here. Our last anniversary we bought each other identical anniversary cards. Now we could have saved money and bought one.

I said to her the other day did you ever think about she said I've already done it. I mean and this is the way it is with you and God. As you walk with God and you live with God before long you think God's thought.

It doesn't mean you're infallible. You're not. But through the word of God.

It's a great experience. And if you don't know what to do don't do anything. Just wait.

I would like to write. I would like to think that God would want me to write. How would you suggest that I get started? Everybody's different.

Some people they've never written a thing in their lives they'll sit down like Margaret Mitchell and write a bestseller *Gone with the Wind*. That's all she ever wrote. Other people write and they go to 55 publishers and nobody buys it and then finally somebody gets it and it becomes a bestseller.

It's all different. The publishing ministry is weird. There's no explanation for it.

I can only tell you what I did. When I started writing I started with magazine articles. Just publishing small magazine articles.

Today there are not many magazines you can write for. They've either died or merged. If you find you have something you want to put together as a book there's a market for it.

There are so many publishers today if they do not have new authors they go broke. They've got to have new books and new authors. So if you feel you have something to say and you know how to say it so that people want to read it the thing to do is query a publisher.

Write to Zondervan or Baker or whatever publishers you may know and say I'm interested in doing a book on this and this and here's a sample of what I've written. What do you think? They may write back and say great idea but we've already got Charles Ryrie doing that. And that happens.

Or they may write back and say this is good send us more. And you go from there as the Lord leads you. Just don't transcribe your sermons and send the transcriptions in because reading vocabulary is not the same as speaking vocabulary.

You can see my face my gestures you can hear the intonation of my voice. Do you ever read a transcription of one of your sermons? You say did I preach that? I had to do this regularly back in the Bible. I'd do a radio message they'd put it on a disc and I would put it in my computer and I'd say oh look at that because the intonation is not there.

So how do you make up for the intonation? You've got to write it so that they know how you're saying it. That's tough. Writing is tough.

But if God's called you to write He'll open the door for you. I started small and just let the Lord build more and more. When we started the B series we had no intention of doing the whole New Testament.

I was to do one book and they said we'll do another one. So I did another book and did another before long. We'd done the whole New Testament.

The Daily Study Bible by Barclay same way. Now we're doing the Old Testament. How far we'll go I don't know.

But if you've got to get we need writers. We need writers. But don't think well I'll send it to Where's B and he can get me a publisher.

No. Every manuscript has to stand on its own two feet. And query the publishers.

Don't send the manuscript to anybody. When I was at *Back to the Bible* I'd get these manuscripts from people and they thought well I could find them a publisher. Well how could they? The manuscript has to find the publisher.

So if you have an idea send a letter to the publishers and say I have this idea I've been studying this material I'd like to write this. They'll write back and let you know pro or con or maybe take it from there. And we need new writers.

What is your opinion concerning the recent evangelical and Roman Catholic agreement promoted by Chuck Colson and others? I'm a little concerned. We must always separate my personal fellowship from my official position. As an individual I fellowship with all kinds of people.

I won't even go into detail but I have a broad outreach. It just bothers some of my friends they think that I should be in this little box here you know. But God's never done that for me.

It's always been a very broad fellowship. When I meet a new Christian I don't ask how we disagree. I major on how we agree.

And there are many Roman Catholics who are studying the Bible and many who are born again. I used to receive mail on the broadcast from nuns sisters and priests and I corresponded with them. And I was always kind.

No need to bash people over the head. We were careful in our magazine not to have negative things. Here's a saved woman whose husband suppose maybe he's a Roman Catholic.

And so our magazine comes there and he picks up look at these people with a loved one. Look what they said here. Don't give anybody ammunition.

There's a place for that but not in our magazine. But I'm concerned officially. I'm concerned because the Roman Catholic approach to justification is different from ours.

And while we love individual Roman Catholics and we pray for them and we witness to them the system has not changed. But I don't go around with a hatchet. I try to speak the truth in love but I doubt that I could sign that agreement.

You have to do what God wants you to do. Let everyone be fully persuaded in their own mind. Some of my best friends have signed that agreement.

I'm not going to make it a test of anything but I'm concerned because I don't want anybody to say who I can witness to and who I can't witness to. It's one of those things we have to pray about and be very loving. This would take all week.

I could write a book on some of these. Wow. If I do this long enough the time will be up.

How do you know when you come to a fork in the road that the desires you're having are godly ones and not your own worldly desires? That's a good question. I've been at that fork. That's when you have to examine your own heart and counsel with other people.

Betty and I today are having, that is in our present existence, are having an interesting ministry of younger preachers and their wives in prayer and in counsel and they come to our front door. We just recently chatted with a couple, they're precious and he admitted, he said, I made a mistake. I think from my point of view I made a mistake when I resigned the church.

He said I was tired, I was weary and I just said if I had taken a month off, I would have seen the whole picture differently. So when you come to a fork in the road, whoever is close to you and who loves you and tells you the truth, talk to them. Never make a decision when you're discouraged and weary, you'll make the wrong decision.

You will come to many forks in the road and just wait on the Lord. He always shows you. Those that wait upon the Lord.

I can't tell you how He's going to do it. God has led in my life and our lives in so many strange ways. One of the most important decisions I ever made, I made because I went to a birthday party.

Did God ever talk to you at a birthday party? He did there and as a result. So when you come to the fork in the road, don't be afraid of risk. My experience has been if I'm at the fork in the road and I start taking the wrong fork, God stops me.

I've had this experience. He just stops me. And I've got to back up and wait and I'll go this way.

He might stop me again. He loves me too much to harm me. And He's too wise to make a mistake.

So He is going to guide me. I just wait. That's a hard thing to do.

Now, especially if you have a church breathing down your neck. Younger men have a tendency not to stay long enough. Older men have a tendency to stay too long.

Each one is different. Some men can stay for 50 years. My longest has been 10 years.

I've always been a bridge builder. I build the bridge to the next person. My successor at Moody Church has been there now 14 years.

He's going on his 15th and doing a marvelous job. I fought the battles. He came in and claimed the spoils.

It's great. It's great. As we get older, some of you young men won't think about this right now, but as we get older we have to think more about these things because more people are involved.

You have family. And then after about the age of 56, 57, many churches don't want you. They look at you as a fossil of some kind.

They don't realize that you've got experience and wealth behind you and you could do a good job. But churches are churches and we just have to learn to live with that. One thing is for sure, God never forsakes his servants.

Never. So don't be afraid to take some risks and don't be afraid to make some mistakes. The only people who don't make mistakes don't make anything.

So don't be like them. Take the step. I gave you the four tests of faith.

Take the step. See what God's doing. But be in contact with people.

Don't be a loner. I meet regularly with our former pastor. He's now, he's still on the staff but he's retired from being senior minister.

We're dear friends and I meet with him. We have lunch together and I tell him what we're doing, where we're going. He's been good counsel.

I remember one, let me take an extra minute. Betty and I were in the deepest valley we've ever been in in our lives. I will not give you the details.

It was deep. And I was scheduled to go to Word of Life, Schroon Lake, and then from there to British Keswick to speak. I didn't feel like speaking to my wife, let alone speaking to British Keswick.

And so I called my pastor. I said, Kurt, here's the situation. What would you do? He said, I'm just ready to cancel everything.

He said, don't do it. Don't do it. You need to get out of here.

You get away, you'll get a new perspective on things. I said, we're deep in the valley. He said, I know.

I know. He knew all about it. He said, go.

So we went. We had a great time at Word of Life. I preached to myself.

I preached the Psalms and I preached to myself. We had a great time. Got on the plane at Kennedy and went off to Britain.

Two of our dearest friends that we had in this world met us. We hadn't been there in an hour before the phone rang. It was bad news from home.

We were on our knees, all four of us, praying. I would have quit. I would have sent a telegram to the Keswick people and said, I'm not coming.

But our friend said, no, you're going to go. We had a great week at Keswick. When we came home, God began to work and the whole problem got solved.

Now we're many years down the road from that, but oh, we went through it. I was so glad for my pastor. Every pastor needs a pastor.

And for my Christian friends who had more sense than I did, and they gave me guidance. So don't be a loner. Find somebody you can pray with and talk with.

Lots of questions I didn't answer. Let's pray. Now, Lord, guide us throughout this day, the meeting tonight and tomorrow's meetings.

Speak to us, Lord. Say things to us that we may not far beyond anything the preacher says. And give us the encouragement and strength we need to keep on going for Jesus sake.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/warren-wiersbe/questions-answers/>

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