

# Recipe for Personal Revival

by Bill McLeod

---

*Bill McLeod's sermon emphasizes the importance of humility, acknowledging sin, and drawing near to God as essential steps in experiencing personal revival.*

**Duration:** 33:04

**Scripture:** Psalm 51:5, Hosea 1:2, Hosea 14:7, Romans 3:10-12, Romans 5:20, James 4:4

**Topics:** "Personal Revival"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of personal revival and its connection to Christian growth. He emphasizes that genuine revival leads to real growth, using Hosea 14:7 as a reference. The preacher highlights the sinful nature of humanity, stating that even though we may acknowledge the sinfulness of the world, we often fail to recognize our own sinful hearts. He quotes Isaiah 40 and Psalm 14 to emphasize the emptiness and vanity of mankind. The sermon concludes by emphasizing the need for personal revival and the recognition of our sinful nature.

---

## Transcript

James chapter 4, and we're going to begin at verse 4. I want to speak on the subject of God's recipe for personal revival. Remember, if you were here last night, I said that growth, Christian growth really follows revival, and we took that from Hosea 14 and verse 7, which says, they that dwell under his shadow shall return, they shall revive as the corn and grow as the vine, the center of shall be as the wine of Lebanon. So tonight, because real growth follows genuine revival, I want to speak on the subject of God's recipe for personal revival, and I don't know of any place in scripture where it's made plainer than it is here.

James 4, 4 to 10. It doesn't seem as if he begins with this theme, but he does. He says, you adulterers and adulteresses, don't you know that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

He is obviously not talking about the act of adultery in the flesh, but adultery in the spirit, which is dealt with in many places in the word of God. The book of Revelation, for example, in the Old Testament, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Hosea 1, verse 2, the land has committed great whoredom, departing from the Lord. Jeremiah, God accused the nation of Israel of committing adultery with stocks and stones, with idols.

And if you love anything, anyone more than God, that is spiritual harlotry, that is whoredom, that is adultery. The friendship of the world, that's adultery. That's why 1 John 2, it says, love not the world,

neither the things that are in the world.

If any man loved the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world is passing away.

It's on the way out. And the lust thereof, that he that does the will of God abides forever. Jesus Christ said to his disciples, if you were of the world, the world would love us all, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world.

Therefore, the world hates you. For believers, to love the world, then, is a form of spiritual harlotry, whoredom. And that's what he's talking about here, you adulterers and adulteresses.

Don't you know, don't you understand that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God. Then he says, do you think that the Scripture says in vain, the spirit that dwells in us lusts enviously? One translation says, what kind of spirit do we have? You know, in the Old Testament it talks about the stars not being clean, not being pure, the heavens not pure. He charged the angels with folly.

Then it says, how much more abominable and filthy is man who drinks iniquity like water, as if God was saying that man is worse than the fallen angels. That's strong language. But then, Jeremiah 17, the heart, your heart, my heart, is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.

Who can know it? I the Lord search the heart. I try the reins. Only God knows the human heart.

In the Psalms, and Paul quotes from this in Romans chapter 3, the word none four times, the word all four times. There's none that does good, no not one, not one. There is none that seeks after God.

They are all gone out of the way. They are together become unprofitable. There is none that does good, no not one.

The wicked are estranged, that is estranged from God, from the womb. They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies. You know that if you're a parent.

You don't have to teach your child how to lie. They know how to lie. You have to teach them to tell the truth.

You don't have to teach them how to steal. They know how to do that. You have to teach them not to steal.

The evil is so built into us from the time we're born. Like one of my daughters, we were at Pine Falls, Manitoba, where my in-laws lived. And it was Christmas time, the snow banks were high.

I just happened to look out the window to see what the girls were doing. My two oldest girls, they were then quite young. Judy was probably eight and Lois was three years younger.

And I just happened to see Judy take Lois and spin her around and push her head first into a snow bank. I saw it. And Lois came running in the house and Judy came in.

And I said, Judy, why did you do that? She said, Daddy, I never did it. And I stared at her. And I said, Judith Lynn McLeod, don't you lie to me.

I saw you do it out the window. You know what she said? Daddy, I didn't do it. This little hand did it.

Where do they learn that? Where do they learn to throw sand in the other kid's face when they're sitting in a sandbox? Where do they learn? I've seen them do it. Drag a kid off a tricycle and knock them over for no reason at all. On the larger scale, Lois' feelings erupt into wars, terrorism, and so on.

Do you need to be persuaded that you have a sinful heart? What we usually say is that if the world has a sinful heart, we're all sinners. But when it comes down to the individual, we don't really recognize that. We think we're pretty good.

The Bible says man in his best state is altogether vanity. You know what vanity is? That's emptiness. That's nothingness.

The Bible says in Isaiah chapter 40, dear people, that we are a mathematical impossibility. We are less than nothing. I can understand nothing, but what is less than nothing? All the nations of the world, if you put them all together, from Adam to the last person ever born on earth, put them all together, they're like one drop in a bucket, God said.

Surely men of high degree are vanity and men of low degree are a lie. To be laid in the balance, they're all together lighter than the wind, lighter than vanity. There's nothing there.

Dear people, we need to understand that. If we don't understand that, then the scripture is speaking in vain. Have we forgotten what it says? Do you remember the man that prayed thus with himself in the Gospel of Luke? He was a good moral man, a Pharisee.

Lord, he said, I thank God I'm not like other men. I fast twice in the week. I give tithes of all that I possess.

I'm not an adulterer, an extortioner. I'm not like this publican. Is that how you feel? Maybe in God's eyes you're worse.

Is there anything worse than self-righteous pride? All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. It's much stronger in the Hebrew language. The translators toned it down for polite ears.

It actually says all our righteousnesses are as a menstruous cloth. That's what it says. That's the kind of heart we have.

That's why we love the world. That's why we don't get concerned about the lost. That's why we don't give to the work of God.

That's why we take all the benefits of Christianity and add nothing to it, give nothing back in return. Sometimes we think we do God a favor by attending two services on Sunday. Do you think that the scripture says in vain? Yes, it does speak in vain.

If I don't read it, if I read it and don't believe it, if I read it and believe it but don't do it, it's speaking in vain. So we have this problem of a nature that's fallen, it's sinful, born in sin, shaped in iniquity, like it says in Psalm 51. That's true for all of us, whoever we are.

Then it says, but God, he gives more grace. And going to Romans 5, Paul said, where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. That as sin has reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

What then? Shall we sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? Why, he says, don't you know that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Are you? Will you? God expects it.

He gives more grace. Wherefore, he says, God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble. Many of us are too proud to ever experience the grace of God in any appreciable degree in our life because of our pride.

Surely he scorns the scorers but gives grace to the lowly. You and I don't get grace from God until we're humbled in the dust. Humble yourselves, therefore, Peter says, under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time.

Dear people, if you once get a glimpse of your own heart and look at it and see it from the biblical viewpoint from the way God sees it, you'll be crushed in the dust. You'll weep before God for hours perhaps when you see the wickedness of your own heart. You may not commit adultery.

You may give a tithe of your income. But Jesus Christ said, you pay tithe but you have omitted the weightier matters of the law. Judgment, mercy, faith, the love of God.

These are weightier than tithing. And among God's people we've created the impression somehow that if you tithe you're a red-hot Christian. You may be as cold as an iceberg and tithe.

That may be just a gimmick we're using to kind of keep God off, keep Him from bothering us in our sin. Your heart, my heart, deceitful, desperately wicked. And if it wasn't for the grace of God we would go as far into sin as anybody's ever gone.

It's just the grace of God. A missionary in Africa was visited by a preacher from England. And this preacher was preaching to the nationals there.

And the interpreter, this Christian from England said he'd never seen a person that seemed to shine for God the way that interpreter did. He said you could just see the Lord Jesus Christ in his face. And he enjoyed working with him so much.

After the initial meeting he was walking with his missionary friend through the village and he was talking about this interpreter. Oh yes, the missionary said he's a godly person. He's filled with the Spirit of God.

And they were walking through the village and there were three men sitting under a tree. And just the way they were going they walked close by and the visitor from England noticed these three men. How evil they seemed to be.

And one of them especially. He said just to look at his face, he said he seemed to be the incarnation of Satan. And his spirit recoiled from what he saw.

And he said to the missionary, those are evil men. The missionary said indeed they are. They're the worst men in the whole area.

And then the speaker said, the man in the middle, he seems to be worse than the other two. He looks like the incarnation of Satan. And the missionary said he seems to be.

He said your interpreter is his brother. And your interpreter used to be as evil as that man. But the grace of God, he humbled himself and experienced the grace of God.

If you're having victory over sin, be very humble. You're getting it from God. It does not come from yourself.

You have no interest in taking drugs, you know, smoking pot, no interest in that, no interest in drinking liquor. Don't take any credit for that. God said I withheld you from sinning against me.

God withheld you from that by his grace. So he says, submit yourselves, therefore, which takes you back into what we've been looking at already, therefore submit yourselves to God. Humble yourselves under God's hand.

Submit yourselves to God. And then he says, resist the devil and he will flee from you. Are you struggling with sin? Satan tempting you? Are you falling? In some areas of your life you have no victory over.

You ask God to nail your tongue to the cross. You think that does it. And then the next time you blow your cool again and do it all over again.

How do we handle these problems? Like people tell me, sure, I say, get me behind me, Satan, when I'm facing temptation and he gets behind me and pushes me right into it. I mean, people have actually told me that. Just what is wrong here? Why doesn't it work? Some people have told me, don't tell me to resist the devil.

That doesn't work. And I say, it doesn't work. Because that's not what the Bible says.

The Bible says, submit yourselves, therefore, to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. In Hosea 5, verse 6, it says, they shall go, that is Israel, they shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the Lord, but they shall not find him.

He has withdrawn himself from them. Now why in the world would God turn his back on people that were earnestly seeking him, even going with their flocks and herds to seek the Lord? It would be a mystery, but the 15th verse of the same chapter gives us the answer. Here's what he said, I will go and return to my place until they acknowledge their offense and seek my face.

They were seeking the face of God, but they were not admitting their sin. And that's the basic problem and the reason why many times we try to seek God, but we don't find him, because we don't admit our sin. I will go and return to my place until they acknowledge their offense and seek my face.

And when a person comes saying, God, I sinned, God be merciful to me, the sinner, God will be there. Jeremiah 3.13, only acknowledge your transgressions. Only acknowledge your iniquities that you've transgressed against the Lord, your God.

Only acknowledge it, it says. Oh, it's hard to do that. In Hosea 5.15, actually the Hebrew there says, only be guilty.

Be guilty. Admit it. God, I did it.

I saw a cartoon at the time of the Watergate scandal. And here was all these fellas, Nixon and Vice President Spiro Agnew and Haldeman and Ehrlichman and Dean and all these guys standing on a carpet.

They're all looking in the same direction and all of them are smiling.

All of them had a halo around their head. If you remember at the time, everybody claimed they were innocent. You remember that? They're all smiling with this beautiful look on their face.

Nobody's guilty. But you know what? Everybody had their finger pointed at someone else. You know, it started in the Garden of Eden and it still goes on today.

If I'd married a different woman, if I'd married a different man, I could be a stronger Christian. If I had different parents, if I lived in a different community, if I had a different job, I could be different. No, these are not the problems at all.

The problem is, dear people, we will not humble ourselves under God's mighty hand. And consequently, God will not give us victory over sin. So he says, draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

Well, people often say, you know, God seems to be a thousand miles away. You know something? That's impossible. God can never be a foot away, because in Him we live and move and have our being.

Just as fish in the ocean, they can't get out of the ocean. They can say what they want to say. The ocean seems far away.

Well, how can the ocean be far away when they're swimming in it? How can God be far away when we're living in an ocean called God? He fills the Bible, says the heavens and the earth. He's present everywhere. You cannot hide yourself in any secret place where God will not see you.

He's not far, as Paul said in Acts 17, from every one of us. So draw near to God. Seek you the Lord while He may be found.

Call you upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake His way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. What does it say? Seek the Lord while He may be found.

Call upon Him while He's near. He's not far from every person in this room tonight. So it says, draw near to God.

It's written of that great civilization, the city of Nineveh. Nineveh drew not near to her God. But Jeremiah said in Lamentations chapter 3, Oh God, he said, drew near in the day that I called upon you.

You said, Fear not, fear not. God draws near. When we call upon Him, a song leader and I once counseled with a man who was a full-time Christian worker, and he thought he had demons.

He was so lustful. When his wife and the kids were not in the home, he used to flip the old dial around until he found some dirty programs, and he'd sit there and soak up these programs. He had pornographic literature hidden in the house.

Nobody knew it was there. He used to devour this stuff sometimes by the hour. A Christian worker, he thought he had demons.

He never had demons. I'll tell you what it was. It was the demon called self.

That's what it was. Let no man say when he's tempted, I'm tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil. Neither does he tempt any man, but every man is tempted when he's drawn away of his own lust.

And we read those verses to him from the book of James, and I said, My brother, are you willing to accept the fact that it's yourself, it's your own lust, it's a self problem, it's not a demon problem? And he humbled himself under God's hand and said, Yes, I accept that. It's me. So we went to prayer.

And oh people, how he prayed. How he stormed heaven. How he wept before God.

I thought his body would break in two. And you know what happened? In the middle of his prayer, he laughed. He just laughed out loud.

You know why? Because the burden was gone, he was free from the lust, and he knew it. You could almost hear those chains hit the floor. And he was free.

Because he humbled himself. But as long as you blame it on something else, on somebody else, you'll never meet God. You'll struggle in it the rest of your life.

It's so easy for God with the power God has, infinite power, infinite wisdom, infinite grace, infinite mercy. Any of the attributes of God are infinite. A million times, a trillion times, a million times more than you'll ever need to set you free.

If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed. Free indeed it says. Submit yourselves therefore to God.

Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and he will draw near to you. And what's the other half of that verse? Oh, it says, cleanse your hands, you sinners.

Oh, someone says he's not talking to Christians, he's talking to sinners. There's two kinds of sinners, saved ones and lost ones. In the context, he's talking to Christians.

Cleanse your hands, you sinners. Second Corinthians 7.1 says, having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. He's talking to Christians.

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Cleanse your hands, you sinners.

Purify your hearts, you double-minded. James 1.8 says a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. James 4.8 gives a remedy for the double-minded man.

Purify your hearts, you double-minded. I'm double-minded because I'm impure. That's what God says.

And God's a lot smarter than any psychiatrist. By the way, I read something interesting, some tests they ran in the States a while ago, fully documented. They took people with emotional problems and people, well, they divided them into two groups and the one group they gave to professional counselors and they had a 64% recovery rate.

The other group, they didn't give to counselors at all. They just left them in their problems and they had a 74% recovery rate. Isn't that interesting? The wonderful counselor is Jesus Christ.

And if I get honest, he'll be honest. Remember, he shows them their work and their transgressions that they have exceeded. He'll put his finger on everything that's wrong, anything that's wrong and evil in your life, he'll put his finger on it, he'll show you.

But I have to be honest and humble myself under God's mighty hand. Cleanse your hands, purify your hearts. You know, in the Hebrides, there was a great revival there in 1952, I think it was, about that time.

And there were a number of reasons why it started. Of course, the major reason was God himself. But in one area, there were three men.

They were praying for revival. They met in a barn on the hillside. Every Thursday night, they prayed the whole night through.

They had done this for eight months and nothing had happened. One night, about two o'clock, while they were praying together up in the loft of the barn, God spoke powerfully to one of these men from Psalm 24. And I'm sure Peter had that in mind when he said what I just quoted a moment ago about clean hands and a pure heart.

He said, brethren, listen to this. God just spoke to my heart. And he read the verses.

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Who shall stand in his holy place? He that has clean hands and a pure heart. And he stopped and said, brethren, do we have clean hands? Do we have pure hearts? If we don't have, our praying is hypocrisy. And those men got down on their faces in the hay and asked God to search their hearts.

They weren't praying for revival anymore. They were praying for themselves. Oh, search me, O God.

And God did. And God began showing them sin. They began confessing sin.

And while they were doing this, the revival began in the valley below. Up and down the valley as far as the eye could see. Lights were flicking on in the houses on both sides of the valley as far as the eye could see.

The Spirit of God wakened the whole community at the same time. And people were tumbling out of bed, getting their Bibles, reading their Bibles, praying, calling on God. And the revival was on.

Powerful. There was 80 young people at a dance one night. No preacher there.

The band wasn't playing for a few moments. So the guys were on one side drinking and the girls on the other side talking and drinking. And suddenly one of the men said, he said, men, we had a bottle in his hand, a bottle of whiskey.

He said, you know, I think we should drink all we have because I have the strangest feeling that after tonight we'll never be drinking again. A few moments later his bottle fell out of his hand and hit the floor and he fell on his knees and he began to pray. And in five minutes there were 80, all of them were on their knees calling on God.

That's how powerful the revival was. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Be afflicted and mourn and weep. Some of us would like to go to the Purim, but we're afraid we might cry. That's a pride thing.

It says, be afflicted and mourn and weep. In Isaiah, God was angry with Israel because He said, I call off in ashes, and behold, joy and gladness, killing and eating. God said, this iniquity shall not be cleansed from you until you die.

He's calling us, dear people, He's calling us to weep and mourn over our sins. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He shall lift you up.

So we give God a part of our heart because we don't want to go to heaven or to hell, rather, when we die. We want to make sure we get to heaven. So we go through the motions and do what we can and give God so little in return.

There was a great revival at Shantung, China back in 1932. The cry of the revival was, are you born again? And there were tens of thousands of church members in China who discovered they'd never been born again. It was the most remarkable and powerful work of God.

Evangelists and missionaries and Christian workers and church members, hundreds of them, and the aggregate total, thousands of them discovered they'd never been born again. They'd been going through the motions. There was no life, no heart there.

A lot of us sit, you know, like a frozen frog on a frosty stone. There's neither motion or movement or life. We don't croak once a year for God.

We're as silent as a tombstone. My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine. For Thee all the follies of sin I resign.

We sing it, but we don't really mean it, because we have our pet sins that we're still involved in. And we're praying for revival. Oh, let it begin in me.

Search me, O God. I'm sure there are many of us need to go to the prayer room and pray that very prayer. God, search my heart.

Show me my sin. Ask God to be faithful to you. He will be.

If you ask him to search your heart, he'll do that gladly. And he'll give you more grace. He'll give you victory over sin.

Are you like many Christians waiting for deep conviction? You're saying, I'm waiting to be convicted. What do you think conviction really is? Conviction is knowledge. That's really all it is.

The Spirit of God comes and shows me my sin, shows me some problems. And it may not be an earth-shaking experience at all, but if I know that my life is not holy God's, and I don't have victory over sin, and I'm not sharing Jesus Christ, that's conviction, that's knowledge. That should be enough to move any of us to the prayer room, to take care by the grace of God of these problems while we can, for his glory.

So don't wait for anybody else, and don't bargain with God. If my wife goes, I'll go. Don't bargain with God.

You go if God is speaking to your heart. And some of us are saying, I'd like to go, but I'm afraid. Sometimes people say, it was just like my shoes were nailed to the floor.

Well, that's Satan's work and power, of course, trying to oppose us from seeking the face of God. He's always there to throw up the roadblocks. We read of one case in the Bible, a certain person was coming to Jesus, and it says, and as he was coming, the devil threw him down.

He'll throw you down when you're trying to come to God, too. In the balcony, to my right, to my left, who is God calling? Will you come as we sing now the last verse? But come with the intention of heart, of meeting the Lord, on his terms. He'll be honest and faithful, and he'll meet your need.

The trees of the Lord are full. The river of God is full of water. And God wants to siphon some of that off into your life and mine.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/18/SID18455.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/bill-mcleod/recipe-for-personal-revival/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**