

The Barrenness of Busyness

by Don Currin

The sermon warns against the barrenness of busyness, which can lead to apostasy and a lack of intimacy with God, and emphasizes the importance of prioritizing worship and communion with God in our busy lives.

Duration: 50:54

Scripture: 1 Kings 11:1

Topics: "Spiritual Decline", "Devotional Life"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the dangers of becoming too busy for God, leading to spiritual barrenness and potential apostasy. Using the example of King Solomon, it warns against neglecting personal communion with God, prioritizing material possessions over spiritual growth, and losing focus on eternal matters. The speaker highlights the importance of maintaining a vibrant devotional life, worshiping God daily, and seeking intimacy with Christ above all else to avoid spiritual decline.

Transcript

It's been wonderful to be with you in these days. So grateful for the tremendous opportunity once again. Tonight, I would like to maybe encourage you as a shepherd.

I have a lofty privilege of doing that in a very small faith family in Tusculumbia, Alabama. And on occasion, I'll speak as a shepherd, sometimes as the Lord leads, as a prophet. But tonight, I would like to encourage you in the faith.

And if you would, take your Bibles with me and turn to 1 Kings chapter 11. 1 Kings chapter 11. I've been immensely blessed by every message.

Every message, Mack and Nate's earlier in the day. And it's amazing how the Lord makes these things come together and they complement each other through the edification of His people. Tonight, if you would, I want to address a subject that seems to plague us all in this modern day era.

And that is the subject of the barrenness of busyness. I read Kevin DeYoung's book, Crazy Busy. In the opening chapters, he mentioned a lady, I believe she was from Asia.

She came to North America and she was very determined to connect with as many people as she could, to make as many friends as she could. And after she would introduce herself and find out the name of the other party, she would ask the people, well, how are you? And most of the time they would say, I'm

tremendously busy. And so as to enhance her social connection, she decided to call her name Busy.

So when people would ask her, what is your name? She would say Busy, thinking that they would readily connect with her in the relationship. It's a sad day in which we live. But what I want to do tonight is I want to give you a warning of how being too busy for God, overextending yourself, can lead to what we mentioned today during the question and answer, and that is apostasy from the Gospel.

We see a living example of this in King Solomon. If you would, let me direct your attention please to 1 Kings chapter 11 and verse 1. But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites, from the nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel, you shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.

Solomon clung to these in love. And he had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his hearts.

For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods. And his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Astaroth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites.

Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not fully follow the Lord, as did David his father. Now there are two accounts of Solomon's life and ministry in the Scriptures. One is found in 2 Chronicles, the other is in 1 Kings.

Tonight we'll be looking back in the early part of 1 Kings to see this fatal downward spiral in King Solomon's life. You see friend, the truth of the matter is, a person doesn't go from walking red hot with God in intimate fellowship with the Savior to a life of evil overnight. It's a slow downward process.

They begin to compromise the best thing for good things, and it's not long before they start compromising good things for that which is evil. It made for good preaching years ago to curse the charismatics. After all, some of their big name boys bit the dust to immorality.

But I tell you friend, we have just as many evangelicals, fundamentalists, and reformed people in the church that are falling. You mark my word tonight, it did not begin with them going from having a vital relationship with the Savior to total apostasy in one night. It was a slow process, as you'll see in the life of King Solomon.

This is a warning. It is a shepherd's warning. And I want to begin tonight by sharing with you a little satire that I trust will kind of settle things, that you might understand where we're going this evening.

It's called The Plan. Satan called a worldwide convention. In the opening address to his evil spirits he said, we can't keep true Christians from going to church.

We can't keep them from reading their Bibles and knowing the truth. We can't even keep them from having conservative values. But we can do something else.

We can keep them from forming an intimate, abiding experience with Christ. If they gain that connection with Jesus, our power over them is broken. So let them go to church, read their Bibles, and have their conservative lifestyles, but steal their time so that they do not have time to have an intimate fellowship with

Christ.

This is what I want you to do. Distract them from laying hold of Jesus Christ. And maintain that vital connection throughout their day.

How shall we do this? They ask. Keep them busy in the non-essentials of life. And invent innumerable schemes to occupy their minds.

Tempt them to spend and spend and borrow and borrow. Convince the young wives that they have to work, and the husbands that they must work six days a week for ten or twelve hours a day, so they can afford their lifestyles. Keep them from spending time with their children.

As their family fragments, soon their homes will offer no escape from the pressures of work. Overstimulate their minds so they cannot hear that still, small voice. Entice them to play the stereo whenever they drive.

Have them keep the TV, VCR, or their CDs going constantly in their homes. See to it that every restaurant and store in the world plays music constantly. This will jam their minds and break their union with Christ.

Pound their minds with news and weather 24 hours a day. Invade their time in the car with gaudy and glaring billboards. Flood their email and mailboxes with filth and junk mail to make them stumble.

Even on vacation, let them be excessive. Have them return from their time away exhausted, disquieted, and unprepared for the upcoming week. Don't let them go into nature.

Send them to amusement parks, sporting events, concerts, movies, and shopping malls instead. And when they meet for spiritual fellowship, don't let them talk about anything deep or where they're struggling. Discourage them from enjoying His presence when they're together.

Instead, make them fearful of opening up and fill their time with small talk, idle chatter, frivolous laughter, and gossip, so they will leave with troubled consciences and unsettled emotions. Let them be involved in soul winning. But ground their lives with so many good causes that they have no time to seek strength from Christ.

Soon they'll be working in their own strength, sacrificing their family and health for the sake of the vision. It was quite a convention. At the end, the demonic spirits went eagerly to their assignments, causing Christians everywhere to get busy with life and pull them away from the One who is life.

Have they been successful? You judge. It is interesting that Solomon would pin the words picturing the Shulamite woman in Song of Solomon 1 and verse 6. It says, They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard have I not kept. They made me the keeper of the vineyards, the works organized and arranged by man, but my own vineyard, my own worship, fellowship with God, have I not kept.

I ask you tonight, what are your vineyards that steal your time and cause you to focus on those things that are a substitute for beholding the beauty of Christ in daily communion and worship? Is it your job? Television? The computer? Relationships? Sports? Personal ambitions? Financial investing? Social media? Your children? Your grandchildren? Your ministry? What's so sad, friend, is when someone preaches a message of this nature, oftentimes people will react in pride by saying, that's legalistic. It is not. And you'll see why in a moment.

Clemson Taylor, speaking of the text that I just quoted in Song of Solomon 1 and verse 6, They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard have I not kept. He wrote a little devotional commentary called Union and Communion. And he speaks of this verse.

He says, Our attention is here drawn to a danger which is preeminently one of its day. The intense activity of our times may lead to zeal in service, to the neglect of personal communion. Such neglect will not only lessen the value of the service, but tend to incapacitate us for the higher service.

Now listen carefully. This is very sobering. Mr. Taylor goes on to say, Let us never forget that what we are is more important than what we do.

And that all fruit born when not abiding in Christ must be fruit of the flesh and not the spirits. As wounds, he says, when healed often leave a scar, so the sin of neglected communion may be forgiven, and yet the effect remain permanent. It's imperative, brethren, that we're alone with God each day.

I'm not going to impose a legalistic standard on you and say you've got to spend 30 minutes or an hour or two hours alone with God. Let the Spirit determine that. But what I am saying is, Jesus says one thing is needful, and Mary had chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.

It has eternal implications. It will not be taken away from her, not only in this life, but also the life to come. Worship affects everything.

Communion with Jesus each day affects everything. The one thing that is the priority that the Savior emphasized is not soul winning. It's not world missions.

It's not mortification. All those things are affected by this thing. It's our worship, our communion with the Lord Jesus.

I think one of the greatest books on worship in print was written by a man by the name of Joseph Carroll entitled How to Worship Jesus Christ. And he highlights the worship lives of A.W. Tozer and Hudson Taylor. Remarkable book.

Phenomenal. Extremely edifying. But we desperately need a baptism of passion to set as a priority in our life the worship of our God each day because it does have a vital influence upon every area of our life.

The story is told about a spring whose waters had certain municipal effects so that those who drank from it were helped in their various infirmities. In the course of time, homes sprung up about the spring. Later, a hotel was built and then stores of all kinds.

Eventually, a town grew into a city. Years passed. Then there came a day when visiting tourists would ask, by the way, where is the spring from which all this grew? The dwellers of the city would rub their hands in embarrassment and say, I'm sorry, I cannot tell you, but somehow in the midst of all the progress and improvement, we've lost the spring and no one knows where it is.

I fear today, friend, with all the activity going on in the church and everything's introduced as a new concept even in reformed circles to help the church grow as a substitute for worship, I fear that while we have excelled in these pragmatic devices, we are pauperous when it comes to worship. We have prospered in the temporal and become pauperous in the eternal. While the church has enjoyed the success of various contemporary methodologies, I fear that we've lost the spring, our fellowship with

Jesus Christ.

Oswald Chambers said, Worshiping is the great essential of fitness. If you've not been worshiping, when you get into the work, you will not only be useless yourself, but a tremendous hindrance to others. Now we look at the exposition.

If you would, take your Bibles and look with me in 1 Kings 2. 1 Kings 2. It is an alarming thing when you think about Solomon. Because, you remember, he's not in the hall of faith. And you remember Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 6, Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither adulterers shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Are you suggesting, brother Don, that Solomon was not a believer? I'm just providing you something to think about. I believe that God broke him and brought him back. He pens the words there at the end of Ecclesiastes to fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

It sounds like this man has been redeemed. But I'll tell you, friend, his life was wasted. Forty years as king in Jerusalem.

Before we read this, if you were to take those forty years and break them down into three distinct periods, you would find that the first four years are characterized by blessing. Solomon worshiped God. He walked with Jehovah.

He could identify with a psalmist who said, as the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. But then he moves into twenty years of building or business. Building the temple of the Lord.

Building his own house. Building Milo, a home of his Egyptian wife. Building barns for his horses and quarters for his soldiers.

And replenishing cities. And building the walls of Jerusalem. The man is obsessed with building or business.

And then the last sixteen years. The sad epitaph. Those sixteen years are characterized by spiritual barrenness.

He has become an idol worshiper. He has become an adulterer. An adulterer? Where do you find that? Friend, you don't have 700 wives and 300 concubines and not be an adulterer.

He multiplied his wives, which was forbidden by God. And they turned away his hearts after their gods. So look with me at these first four years of blessing.

As a result of him walking with God, fellowshiping with the Lord, you find first of all that God entrusted him with the kingship, the reign over the people of God in David's place. It says in 1 Kings 2, verse 12, Then Solomon sat on the throne of his father David, and his kingdom was, note, firmly established. Now why does the Holy Spirit tell us that his kingdom was firmly established? Well, first of all, with the exception of a jealous family member or two, everyone under David's regime saw the good hand of the Lord upon Solomon to rule in David's stead.

And therefore, the people gladly approved of David's endorsement. Which leads me to the second reason why his kingdom was established, and that was that David appointed him. And you better believe that

carried a great deal of weight.

I believe, friend, that the reason God could entrust him with such a responsibility is because he walked with his gods. Secondly, you'll notice something else in these years of blessing. He had incredible discernment.

Even prior to God giving him a supernatural gift of wisdom, the man was very perceptive. Now, we'll not read the whole passage here, but let me just elaborate on it. That's in 1 Kings 2 verses 13-25.

Solomon recognized the deceitful motive of his brother Ananias' heart, who sought the property of the king, namely the concubine Abishag for his wife. He comes before Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, and said, would you go before the king on my behalf, and would you ask him if he would give me this woman as the king's property to be my wife? Well, you see, Bathsheba saw no harm in that. But Solomon perceived the deceitful motive, the evil motive of his own brother's heart.

And he says at the end of this passage, ask for him the kingdom also. Don't you know he's my elder brother? For me to consent to this would be a sign of royalty before the people. And it would only be a matter of time before he would move in and undermine the throne for his own.

He was a man of incredible discernment. Furthermore, he was a man of peace. A man of peace.

Look at 1 Kings 3 verse 1. Now Solomon made a treaty with Pharaoh, king of Egypt. He established affinity. A working relationship.

And it's interesting that the kings and rulers who had formerly been the enemies of David his father were now becoming the comrades, the friends of Solomon. No wonder he would pin the words in Proverbs 16 and verse 7 that when a man's ways please the Lord, God will cause even his enemies to be at peace with him. He's walking with God.

Look at another blessing. And that is the supernatural gift of wisdom. In response to his petition, God gave him wisdom.

1 Kings 3 and verse 12. Lo, God says, I have given thee a wise and understanding heart. Why? Once again, friend, I really believe that it was contingent upon the fact that Solomon had a heart that was hungry for God.

And it reflected in his continual practice of worship and fellowship with Jehovah. Furthermore, you find he was blessed with much fame. 1 Kings 4 and verse 31.

And his fame was in all nations round about. He had earned the respect of his enemies. They were well acquainted with his God and Solomon's allegiance to Jehovah.

But also you notice another blessing in these years of blessing. His ability to compose. 1 Kings 4 and verse 32.

And he spake 3,000 Proverbs and his songs were 1,005. How he was inspired. How he was moved upon to speak and to write about his great God.

You see, friend, please don't miss the point. All these blessings physically and spiritually came, I believe, as a result of Solomon's love and worship of his God. But now if you would, take your Bibles and look with

me in 1 Kings 6. 1 Kings 6. I repeat once again that suddenly a man or a woman, when they get too busy for God, they begin to substitute good things for that which is best.

And it won't be long before they're so weakened morally and spiritually that they start substituting evil things for that which are good. Look, if you would, at 1 Kings 6. And before we read, let me mention something to you in verse 36 of the sixth chapter. Oftentimes, when we read the Scriptures, oftentimes, let's say, when we have a regular, systematic Bible reading daily, we come to the end of a chapter and the next day we resume where we left off.

We begin at the next chapter. And at times, in the way of confession, I really believe that I've missed the thrust of what God's saying at the end of one chapter and the beginning of the next. When I resume the next day, the following chapter, I forget perhaps just momentarily what preceded it.

And so in reading from one chapter to the next, we must be very careful that we don't miss a message that God has for us. You'll notice that here. If you would, follow with me as I begin reading in chapter 6, verse 37.

Read to the end of the chapter and continue immediately into chapter 7. I remind you that in the original manuscripts, they're not divided into chapters. You know that, don't you? It's just one continuous dialogue. It's just one continuous content.

Well, He says in verse 36, And He built the inner court with three rows of hewn stone and a row of cedar beams. In the fourth year, the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid in the month of Zioph. And in the eleventh year, in the month of Bul, which is the eighth month, the house was finished in all its details, according to all its plans.

So was He seven years in building it. But, Solomon took 13 years to build his own house. Here's what I want you to see.

When the temple is completed, this was the vision of David. He was not permitted, because he was a man of blood, to erect the temple. So it was entrusted to Solomon.

And Solomon builds the temple of the Lord. And after its completion, at the end of seven years, imagine with me for a moment, one day he stands on his porch and he looks at this beautiful picture of architecture. It's a masterpiece.

And suddenly in his mind, he starts thinking, if I can build that as a tribute to my gods, imagine what I can build for Solomon. And it's interesting, friend, it takes him almost twice as long to build his own house as it did the temple of the Lord. And it cost him.

It cost him. You find as you study and once again meditate upon 1 Kings 9, and this is the practical implication, brethren, it speaks to me continuously. It speaks to me continuously.

There are three things that you should expect to see when you get too busy for God. You see these things very clearly in the life of Solomon. First of all, in 1 Kings 9 verses 10-14, you find that a man or a woman who is too busy for their God their commitment to others grows cold and becomes meaningless.

Have you noticed in the Scripture that our real identity when it comes to our fellowship and walk with God oftentimes is reflected in our relationship with our brothers and sisters in Christ? Look at the text with me.

1 Kings 9 and verse number 10. Now it happened at the end of 20 years when Solomon had built the two houses.

The house of the Lord and the king's house. Hiram the king of Tyre had supplied Solomon with cedar trees and cypress and gold as much as he desired. That King Solomon then gave Hiram 20 cities in the land of Galilee.

You say, now wait a minute, Brother Don. You said that when a person is too busy for God, it's reflected in their relationship with others. But here he's given this man 20 cities.

But notice friend, the caliber, the quality of the cities. It goes on to say in verse 13, so he said, what kind of cities are these which you have given me, my brother? And he called them the land of Kabul. It's interesting, but the word Kabul here means rubbish, filthy, worthless.

It was nothing more than a rubbish heap. I see myself in that. If I'm too busy, victimized by ministerial duties, and I begin to neglect the Lord, and let's say in my case, I still do my systematic Bible reading and I pray, but the quality's not there.

The vigor is absence. I don't take the time to behold the beauty of the Lord. You know what happens? If I do anything for a brother or a sister at all, I do something for them that doesn't cost me anything.

Your commitment to others, friend, is a reflection of your relationship, your worship of Christ. John says in 1 John 3, verse 17, Whoso hath this world's good and seeth his brother in need, and yet deprives him of that need. The King James says, shuts up his bowels of compassion.

And then he says this, How dwelleth the love of God in him? He didn't say the Father did not dwell in you. He did not say that Christ did not dwell in you. He said the love of the Father doesn't dwell.

How dwelleth the love of the Father? Here's another thing I'd like for you to see tonight in 1 Kings 9, verses 15-19. You find here that Solomon becomes more occupied and obsessed with things. Things, materially.

Look with me if you would. 1 Kings 9, verse 15. And this is the reason for the labor force which King Solomon raised to build the house of the Lord.

His own house. The Milo. The wall of Jerusalem.

Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer. You go down to verse 17 and Solomon built Gezer, and lower, the Bethhorim, and Balath, and Tadmor in the wilderness in the land of Judah. All the stored cities that Solomon had.

Cities for his chariots and cities for his calvary and whatever Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem and in Lebanon and in all the land of his dominion. He's obsessed with building. Now I tell you friend, I've seen this in my own life.

First thing you know, you start unconsciously accumulating stuff. And things become more important than people or God. Once again, I cite our dear brother the Apostle John.

You remember what he said in 1 John 2, verse 15? Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father, once again, the love of the Father is not in him. You remember the little chorus we used to sing? Pregnated with truth and reality.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full into His wonderful face. And listen, friend, it's true.

A spiritual phenomenon occurs. The things of this earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace. But I'm afraid tonight, we're so focused on things enamored with trinkets and toys, it's His face that has grown strangely dim.

So you see something else. Look at number three. His personal devotional life diminishes.

Nothing short of radically decreasing. Look at 1 Kings 9 and verse 25. If you'd do me a favor, just hold your finger there at verse 25 and look back at the years of blessing when he walked with God and worshipped the Lord.

Turn back with me to 1 Kings 3 and verse 4. The Scripture says, And Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of his father David. Verse 4, Now the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place. Watch this now.

Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. By the way, brethren, he had only been king approximately a year up to this point in time. You know what that translates out to? One sacrifice of worship a day just in Gibeon alone.

Not to mention the other places that he trafficked. He would stop to take the time to commune with his gods. But now that he's too busy, look at how often he worships.

Chapter 9 and verse 25. Now three times a year, a year, Solomon offered burnt offerings and peace offerings on the altar which he had built for the Lord. Brethren, he has no excuse now not to worship.

Well, he's got an altar right off his back porch. But does he take advantage of it? Three times in a year now. From a thousand or more sacrifices of worship during a year of blessing, now it's three times in a year.

I've been quite appreciative of men and women that God has used in the history of the church. The balance is we should not deify these people. But we can learn from them and we can appreciate them.

And the Bible tells us that we are to be lovers of good men. But you know the missionary Hudson Taylor. Toward the end of his life, in spite of his age and the pain in his own body, he was constrained to follow up on the people that he had impacted with the Gospel across inland China.

He was accompanied by his son and daughter-in-law. The only means of transportation on those rugged roads was a springless cart. You can imagine how it took its toll upon a senior like Mr. Taylor.

But it was the love of Christ that constrained him to go back and see those that he had led to Christ and churches that had been planted. Hudson Taylor's daughter-in-law gave this report. She said as we would travel from village to village, and sometimes it was a long space, it would take a whole day's journey to get there.

And when we would come to a village, the only place of lodging was just one large room that all travelers stayed in, they all slept together in. We would try to get there early enough in the day to secure a corner in the room for my father-in-law's exercise of worship. And there in the corner, at 4 o'clock in the morning, and no later than 5 o'clock every morning, with an open Bible, you could hear the scratch of the match as he would light a lantern, and there with that open Bible, he would worship his gods.

And Joseph Carroll drew from that and he said, before the sun ever arose on China, Hudson Taylor was worshiping his gods. Oh, that it could be said of us, that before the sun ever arose on our locale, we would be worshiping our gods. So as we wrap things up here, you find that these last 16 years of his life, his ministry, was a miserable curse.

The years of barrenness. Here's a thought. Long before he ever compromised the commandments of the Lord, thou shalt have no other gods before Me.

Thou shalt not commit adultery. He compromised his communion with the Lord on the altar of busyness. Can I speak to you? I don't know what cistern you've been drinking out of.

What cistern that can hold no water? What have you been trying to suck satisfaction from? But friend, in the process of doing that, what happens is many times that it's an acknowledgment, and then it begins to continue to the point that it becomes a plaguing propensity in our life. And it begins to zap more and more of our time from Christ. The guilt is heaped upon.

And so what we do is when we begin to neglect Christ and we become victimized by the barrenness of busyness, it so weakens us spiritually and morally that suddenly we get sucked into looking at things, being entertained by things, and doing things that are nothing short of spiritually despicable. Go to the Internet. Define an image that you can hit on.

All of a sudden, it seems like your mind is just plagued. You're overwhelmed with these horrible thoughts that you so readily yield to. Why? Because there's no resistance.

The resistance, the fortress, friend, comes through communion with Christ. So it was with Solomon. George Mueller said this.

Let none expect to gain mastery over his inward corruption in any degree without going in his weakness again and again. Did you hear him? Without going in his weakness again and again to the Lord for strength. Nor will prayer with others or conversing with the brethren make up for secret prayer and communion.

I love to hang out. I love to hear the preaching, friend, but there's no substitute for your own personal devotion life with the Lord. Do you have one? And do you fight the good fight of faith in keeping it up? It's vital.

So, whatever happened to you? Well, look at one more reference in Ecclesiastes 2. If you would look at this, please don't miss it. Sometimes I wonder if I could not entitle the book of Ecclesiastes the diary of a burned out preacher. But you'll notice something very striking here in the way of Solomon's honesty.

Look at what he shares beginning in v. 4. Ecclesiastes 2 v. 4 I made my works great. I built myself houses and planted myself vineyards. I made myself gardens and orchards and I planted all kinds of fruit trees in them.

I made myself water pools. I acquired male and female servants. Yes, I had greater possessions of herds and flocks.

I gathered for myself silver and gold. Self-glory. So I became great and excelled more than all who were before me in Jerusalem.

Whatever my eyes desired, I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart rejoiced in all my labor and this was my reward from all my labor. Then I looked on all the works He evaluates now.

On all the works that my hands had done and on the labor in which I had toiled and indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind, vexation of spirit. And notice what he says. There was no prophet under the sun.

He's speaking of eternity. There was no eternal prophet under the sun. I like what one commentator said.

The reason there wasn't is because you'll notice where his focus was. It was under the sun, not above the sun, not on his God. I picked up a religious periodical.

A magazine. You don't have to be in the faith very long before you get on all kinds of mailing lists. And I picked up this magazine one day that came in my mailbox.

A lot of that stuff, I don't have time to read, but I always like to thumb to the back to the editorial. It was written by a pastor that had one of the largest churches in the United States. The thing I liked about it, he was always very biblical, and secondly, he was very transparently honest.

And so I always benefited. I was edified when I would read the content. And one day I picked it up.

And here's what he said. When I turned 30 years of age, the greatest desire in my life was to build a big church. And God somehow gave him that.

Once again, one of the largest churches in the United States in that day. Then he said when I turned 40 years of age, the greatest passion in my heart was to be a great preacher. I wanted to be able to expound the truth and preach and exhort.

And I'll tell you, he was a very popular speaker. I mean, he did not lack for outside ministry outside of his local church. Many people sought him to come and address the congregation in conferences.

But then he said this. He said, now that I'm 50 years of age, the greatest desire of my heart is to know God, to enjoy God, and to glorify Him forever. You know what's so sad? That was six months before his church caught him being involved with a woman in the church.

He lost his ministry. He lost his marriage. He began to drift spiritually.

He got harder and harder. And only a few years later, he killed himself. And when I heard that that had happened to him, I thought, what if in those early formative years when he went to Bible school, when he looked up to people to mentor him, what if they said to him, brother, building a big church, that should never be a priority.

Brother, being a great speaker and waxing eloquently and being in demand among so many congregations, that should not be what you aspire to. Dear brother, your number one objective should be to know and enjoy your God. You know what I'm convinced of? He'd still be alive and in the ministry today.

But what I leave you with tonight, friend, this is the beginning of apostasy in one's life. If you neglect your time with the Lord, secret prayer and worship through the Word of God, under the oversight of the Spirit, if you begin to neglect that, I tell you, you may find yourself on the high road to apostasy. Let's pray

together.

Father, would You encourage Your people with this? I pray that they would avail themselves to these means of grace. Devotional life, worship. What a Savior! What communion awaits us when we exercise faith? Even the good fight of faith in protecting, preserving that time daily and even throughout the day, worshipping our God.

Please, God, help us to ever be mindful that Your Son is such a worthy object of devotion. May we not neglect speaking often with Him. There is a place of quiet rest near to the heart of God.

A place where sin cannot molest near to the heart of God. Help us to see it, Father. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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