

Seeking a Life of Being Not Known

by Francis Chan

Francis Chan emphasizes the importance of living a quiet life focused on God, humility, and secret acts of service rather than seeking public recognition.

Duration: 34:57

Scripture: Matthew 6:1-4, Mark 1:35, Luke 16:10, 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12, Revelation 10:4

Topics: "Seeking Christ", "Humility in Service", "Living a Quiet Life"

Description

Francis Chan emphasizes the importance of living a quiet life focused on God rather than seeking public recognition or applause. He warns against the dangers of pride and the temptation to please people, urging believers to aspire to a life of humility and service, much like Jesus did. Chan highlights that true ambition should be about faithfulness in small things and maintaining a close relationship with God, rather than chasing crowds or fame. He encourages a generation to embrace the power of a quiet life, where secret prayers and good deeds can lead to profound spiritual rewards. Ultimately, he calls for repentance and a return to genuine faithfulness in our daily lives.

Transcript

Father, help me to say everything you want me to say. Guard my lips from saying anything that does not come from you. Please, God, take away my pride, any anxiety, any people-pleasing, any fear, in the name of Jesus.

Holy Spirit, speak, guide us, Lord. May everything I speak be said in love. God, give me a loving heart for every face I see.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen. This is such a dangerous place to be. Seriously, no, I'm talking about a stage.

It's almost like every time I step on a stage, it's like almost drinking a little bit of poison, where you can, to really be thinking about God right now, about him and his glory and his holiness and how everything needs to be given to him while there's flesh going on and fighting that and going, okay, well, the people like me, how are they gonna respond to this message? You know, the praise, the criticism, everything, it all, it can really mess up your walk with the Lord. It's almost like these lights are poisonous and you just have to go, God, help me get through this. Help me get through this with my eyes fixed on you.

Not preaching to get the praise of people or preaching in such a way that you don't get criticized, but just saying, God, I'll say whatever you want me to say and I want you lifted up at the end and to have no thought of yourself. It's a very dangerous place. But this morning, well, no, what is it, afternoon? I'm very excited to share what I'm about to share.

I'm very excited. I was excited last night hearing, not just because they were Chinese, but it's just, it was powerful. It was awesome.

Although that helped. But I'm excited about, I love what Michael was just sharing and it gets me excited to teach on the same topic. I taught from the other side against tongues for many years and I get excited to teach, just a clear exposition of scripture.

And so thank you for that. But one of the reasons I'm very excited about this is it's very rare, those who have heard me speak, it's very rare that I have notes and I stick to the notes and it's more common that I put notes together and then I show up and go, yeah, I'm gonna forget the notes. God's given me something different.

But as I was praying for this specific gathering this week, it was like, boom. And this doesn't happen normally. Just verse after verse, statement after statement, even a title.

I don't think I've ever gotten a title for a sermon, seriously, in my life. But this one's called The Power of a Quiet Life. And I'm gonna stick with this.

I believe the Lord has given this to me as I was praying about it this morning, I just felt like complete disobedience if I do not teach this. It's out of 1 Thessalonians 4, verses 11 and 12. 1 Thessalonians 4, 11 and 12.

It says, aspire to live quietly. Some of your Bibles say, some of your Bibles say make it your ambition to live a quiet life and to mind your own affairs and to work with your hands as we instructed you so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one. Aspire to live quietly.

Make it your ambition to live a quiet life. How many of you came into this day or you just think about life and you go, what my ambition is to live a quiet life? So I hear a lot of young people go, oh, I wanna speak to the crowds. I have a message to the world.

I have a voice. And then scripture says, make it your ambition to live a quiet life. What's he talking about here? Because we're living in a time when it's assumed that the virtuous thing to do is get a bigger and bigger crowd.

And so you're a successful believer. You're a great Christian because look at all these people you're leading. Look how loud your voice is.

And I'm not saying not to proclaim the gospel. And if you read 1 Thessalonians, actually in chapter one, Paul talks about how their faith is being proclaimed all around the world so that he doesn't even have to say anything about it. But then to the same group of people, he goes, I want you to make it your ambition.

Aspire to live a quiet life. But I've been caught up in something these last few years, maybe the last 10 years or so. There's just this assumption of I've gotta reach more people, more people, more people.

I need more people following bigger crowds. But let me ask you, did Jesus, can you show me any verse in scripture where Jesus pursued a crowd? Where he looked at his disciples and goes, let's get more of you, bring a friend. Like, do you see that? Because I see the opposite.

I see him running from crowds. I can tell you many verses where he ran from crowds and escaped the crowds. And so I just think it's unusual that we're all chasing crowds, more and more followers.

And yet we think that's the right thing, the best thing to do. I mean, we're at Jesus 23. Let me ask you a question.

What did Jesus do when he was 23? Does anyone know? I mean, we know he was a carpenter. What'd he do at 25? I mean, we know he was a carpenter. 28, probably a better carpenter.

I mean, we're talking about Jesus. How is it that we don't know what he was doing when he was 23? It's almost like he made it his ambition to live a quiet life and to work hard with his hands. You see, there's a principle in scripture.

In Luke 16, verse 10, it says that he who is faithful in little will be faithful in much. And I'm just, I get concerned. I love the passion that I see in young people today for Jesus.

That gets me so fired up. And it's out of my love for you that I'm saying, you gotta be faithful in the little before you can be a voice to the world. We have a lot of people clamoring to be voices.

We need fewer voices and more examples. In 1 Timothy 3, he says in verse 4, when he's talking about elders in the church, in 1 Timothy 3, he gives this principle again, verse 4, he must manage his own household well with all dignity, keeping his children submissive. For if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil.

Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil. Again, he's saying, look, if you can't manage your house, if you can't even, if your own kids don't respect you, if you don't even have a right relation with your wife, what are you doing leading the church? And then he says, be careful, like you don't wanna give too much to a young convert because it's gonna lead them into this trap, the condemnation of the devil. It's gonna lead to this pride.

You give a platform to a young man? You better be careful with that. Man, I became a believer when I was like 15 years old, and something in me was like, man, you, like I knew I had something in me like I'm supposed to be teaching. And I remember my youth pastor was so wise.

He never let me teach. He seriously didn't. I seriously, I would listen to him teach, and in my head, I'm going, I could say that better.

I really just sat there as a teenager thinking that, and I still believe it today. I probably could have. But in his wisdom, he says, no, go clean the bathrooms.

Go stack the chairs. You're not preaching, because he loved me. And he says, look, I don't want you falling into this.

There's something about these lights that aren't good for you. One of my mentors is this guy in India, and I remember him telling me this story. He goes, you know, everyone's chasing a bigger and bigger platform.

He goes, but if God wants to give it to you, he'll give it to you. And then he said, he goes, you know, I remember just, he goes, I remember my friend, Teresa. I'd visit her all the time.

We would just go serve the poor, do our thing, whatever. And then one day God decides, I want the whole world to know about you. So everyone knows about Mother Teresa.

And he goes, you know, never in her wildest dreams would she think to promote herself. Just quietly do her thing. And then God decided to make her a household name.

And I just always thought that. I'm like, wow, God, you, if you want to lift someone up, you can do that. But my wife asked me something the other day.

It was actually a couple months ago. She was reading in Matthew chapter six, where in verse one, it says, beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them. For then you will have no reward from your father who is in heaven.

Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing so that your giving may be in secret and your father who sees in secret will reward you.

And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, but they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your father who's in secret and your father who sees in secret will reward you.

My wife was reading that and she just asked me, she goes, does anyone do anything in secret anymore? We're so into posting things that even your quiet time is your Bible with a coffee and a little muffin, time with Jesus. And this passage, she goes, does anyone do anything in secret? Sadly, I go, yeah, sinful stuff. And I'm not judging and I understand forgiveness.

I'm just saying, God, could we have another generation rise up that has nothing to hide? Because we hide our sin and then we post our good works. The Bible tells us to confess our sins to one another and hide our righteous deeds. I mean, it's the exact opposite of what scripture tells us to do.

He says, man, we've got to tell each other, confess your sins to one another, make it known. Look, this is what's going on in my life. I need to walk away from this.

And then if you're praying, then just close the door, lock the door, pray in tongues, pray in English. I don't care, just pray. And then care for the poor, do these good deeds, but you don't have to tell everyone.

What if there was a generation where when you died, it's not like all this sin is uncovered, but people go, whoa, look at all the good she did that we never knew about. Look at all these things that she did in private. And now he was working hard with his hands to give it.

And all his money went to this. No one ever saw his bank account and all of that until he was gone. And it was all good works uncovered.

The Bible so that the outsiders would look upon it and have nothing bad to say about us. We need to confess our sins. We're doing it all backwards.

And we need to quietly do our works of righteousness where no one sees but the Father. What if you posted your sins? What if you posted your sins? We started sinstagram, you know, like just, here it is. Here's the worst of me.

Someone go ahead and start it. And we just go, look, here's the truth about me. Here's what God's saving me of here.

I need you guys prayers because here's my struggles. Here's where I'm messed up. Meanwhile, we just quietly do good works.

We kind of think, but if I do something good, I mean, shouldn't I make it known because then that makes Christianity look good? And wouldn't it be more effective? I mean, if there's a miracle that takes place, shouldn't I just post that? Because then more people will be impacted. Yeah, but what this passage is saying is it's saying that when we do things in secret, there's gonna be a reward. And maybe he's not doing that many miracles in your life because he knows your motive is just, I wanna post it.

I wanna do it. But what if we just quietly? It says, when you pray, go into your room, shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. In Mark 1 verse 35, I mean, again, we're talking about Jesus and it says in verse 35, rising very early in the morning while it was still dark, he departed and went to a desolate place and there he prayed.

And Simon and those were with him searched for him and they found him and said to him, everyone is looking for you. You guys, do you know it's okay to not answer texts? I haven't looked at my phone in a few hours. It's okay, they'll forgive me.

Here you have Jesus, he's off praying and everyone is looking for him. How come you haven't answered me? Everyone's looking for him and he's just like, that's what I do. I go out while it's still dark.

This is his example. This wasn't to be seen, he was trying to get away and just hide and pray and be with the Father. You know, there's certain passages in the Bible where just for years I'd go, gosh, that doesn't make sense.

Like I'd look at all the passages like in Luke 8 when he raises someone from the dead and then he tells everyone that saw it, he goes, don't tell anyone about this. Imagine how frustrating that would be to you. You have a prayer meeting in your house and you know, you raise someone from the dead.

And he goes, don't tell anyone. Are you kidding me? Over and over, you were healed of something and God says, I don't want you to tell anyone. One of the passages that always puzzled me was Revelation 10.

In Revelation 10, you know, John is getting this revelation from the Lord and then in chapter 10, it says the seven thunders spoke. And so John starts writing down what the seven thunders are screaming. And God stops and says, no, seal that up.

And so you just left going, well, what did they say? So you're telling me John was the only human being who knew what the seven thunders said. And for the last 2000 years, there's one person who got to hear it, just John. I go, that doesn't make sense.

John's like, I'm just getting ready to post it. Nope, it's just for you. You guys, here's why I wanna share this.

It's real simple. I'm just about done because Michael took all my time. But here's what I wanna say.

What if by you living a quiet life and you doing things in secret meant that God would show you miracles, more miracles than you've ever seen, but they were just for you. And what if by being quiet and seeking God, he starts thundering messages just for you. And he says, I've never told anyone this and I'm not telling anyone this.

This is just for you, Francis. You can't post it. I don't want you telling people that I told you something.

Have you ever had a friend go, look, I've never told anyone on earth this and I'm trusting you with this. Don't you tell anyone. You take this to your grave.

There's just this honor where you're going, oh my gosh, I can't believe you trust me. What if God almighty, because he sees you in your prayer room and no one knows about it. And he sees what you do with your time and your money that no one knows about.

And he just starts doing miracles and saying, that's just for you. Here's a message. I've never told anyone.

Would that be enough for you? Or would it drive you nuts? Because you go, wait, I can't post that. I can't gain followers through that. Would it frustrate you or would you go, oh my gosh, that'd be the greatest honor of my life.

There's power in a quiet life. Now I'm convinced God has some people that he wants to use as a voice and that's great. I'm just saying there needs to be a lot more of us that are ambitious about living a quiet life and excited to live a quiet life because we actually believe in eternal rewards.

And then the very thought of wow, God might say something to me. He might show me miracles. He might do so much more from my prayers because I get it.

I remember being a young man, sitting in a crowd like this and seeing a guy up front and going, I wanna go up there one day. I'd love to say it was all godly ambition, but the Bible tells us to be aware of selfish ambition. And he says, where selfish ambition and jealousy exists, so will every vile practice.

There's something about desiring this that is a selfish ambition, that is a jealousy and it will lead to every vile practice. And I believe we're seeing that in the church. And I'm just praying for a new generation that just says, you know what God, I just wanna go back to doing things in private.

Just wanna close my door. I just wonder God, would we see more miracles and hear more from you if we made it our ambition to live like Jesus did and just work hard with our hands, lead a quiet life, absolutely share the gospel with everyone we can, but we don't need to post it all. We don't need to just let everyone know.

I really believe that the next revival, if there is one here, it's gonna be people like you that are just secretly praying. And it's when we get away from posting all of our good deeds that we may see a movement of God, the power of God. So I wanna pray over you right now.

I hope to impart something to you because I get excited about this. This is not like a bumming me out or anything. I just go, wow, God, I wanna get away from this poison.

God, I wanna get back to where it all started. I wanna see another generation just really believe that much and just hunker for this, just you and me, Lord, you and me, just all this stuff is between you and me because I just love being so close to you. I'm praying to impart something like that today and put to death the plan of the enemy, which is to have more young people rise up to fame and fall into their sin, the same thing that happened to the enemy.

Father, I pray for repentance in this room right now. Repentance for those of us who can't think of one good deed we haven't talked about. Repentance for the sins that we've kept hidden and we won't talk about.

Holy Spirit, would you just put it in our hearts, this deep desire to be in this secret place with you, asking you to do greater works through us in secret, just for you. Give us new ambitions in this room, Lord. Help us to see the merit in working with our hands like Jesus did.

God, raise up this generation to not just aspire to start movements, but to work jobs, to do it faithfully, the menial, the hidden. And may we just desire you so much, Jesus, like John did, the beloved. God, may we not be like the world.

Keep us from doing things to be seen so that we can be seen by you, heard by you. And may that be enough for us. And God, for those whom you've entrusted with a larger voice, God, would you keep them humble, faithful, just close to you.

God, I pray for everyone who's gonna step on this stage, Lord, that you would protect them. Protect them from the plan of the evil one. Please, Lord, please, God, purify your bride so that we can see your actions here on earth.

In Jesus' precious name we pray, amen. Amen. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/32/SID32178.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/francis-chan/seeking-a-life-of-being-not-known/>

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