

# Maintain the Connection - Part 1

by Hans Peter Royer

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of maintaining a continuous connection with Christ by surrendering personal rights and living authentically as His disciple.*

**Duration:** 40:40

**Scripture:** Matthew 10:39, John 12:25, Romans 14:7

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "Eternal Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of maintaining a connection with God throughout our daily lives. He highlights the trap of separating our spiritual life from our normal life and reminds us that everything we have is a gift from God. The speaker also addresses the belief that we have a right to physical health and prosperity, cautioning against the health, wealth, and prosperity movement. He then focuses on the teachings of Jesus about losing our lives for His sake and finding eternal life. The sermon concludes with a mention of upcoming topics, including hearing the voice of God and praying without ceasing.

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## Transcript

The theme is for these few days, maintaining the connection. In other words, how do we live with our Lord 24 hours a day, 60 minutes the hour? How can I be, you know we have a word that we stress and overstress now, an authentic disciple of Jesus. I believe one of the greatest traps that we have fallen into in our Christian world, at least in the Western world, I can say so, that we have separated our spiritual life from our so called normal life.

In other words, you see, right at the moment, I mean we sing great songs and we listen to the word of God and so on, so we are spiritual. But on Monday morning, when I'm in my office, or on Saturday when I play hockey or go skiing, then I'm normal. And we kind of have separated those two things, and very often our everyday life, very little of the life of Christ is mirrored, because we have separated it.

One guest now is ski camp. We have ski camps in winter at our place. I have 10 ski instructor working, and they all know the Lord Jesus, and so we have Bible studies in the evening.

But during the day, they share Christ on the slope. Just tell people about Jesus while they ski together. And about two years ago, I was going up on a lift with a guest, and I told him about Jesus, what it means for me to live with him.

And he said to me, you have an interesting technique here at Townhof. You don't only present Jesus from the pulpit, you speak about Jesus on the slope. Now for this man, it was a technique to do that.

Well, I could tell him that my life is not a technique, but Jesus is simply my life. And whether I stand on the pulpit, or whether I ski, we have a freedom to speak about him. Now, if we want to maintain the connection, we need to learn to live with him throughout the day, throughout the month.

And this is what it will all be about. Now, I want to start this evening, which is a good thing, about what the Lord Jesus said, how to maintain the connection. In John 12, 25, Jesus says this.

He says, The man who loves his life, he will lose it. While the man who hates his life in this world, will keep it for eternal life. And in Matthew 10, 39, Jesus says, whoever finds his life, he will lose it.

And whoever loses his life for my sake, he will find it. Now, before we talk, these next days, the theme will be, how can we hear the voice of God? And how do I differentiate between God's voice and my subconscious? We will also speak about, how do I pray without ceasing? This will be the theme. But before we do so, I want to spend tonight on the question, have we lost our lives? Have we died to ourselves, or am I still in control of my own life? The Apostle Paul said this.

He said in Romans 6, 6, For we know that our old life is crucified. Now, I'm crucified. You see, we talk a lot about Christ crucified on the cross, and we should.

But sometimes we hear little about the fact that I'm crucified with Christ. It says in Colossians 3, For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ. So, I'm crucified, and I died.

In Romans 6, verse 4, he says, We are buried. We are crucified, we died, and we are buried. That's what the Apostle Paul says.

Now, theologically, we may all agree with these statements, but to be very honest, they were not helpful to me, because I didn't have a clue. What does that mean? How can I live a crucified, died, buried life? Now, this is why I want this hour, I want to be very practical, and I must say, I'm sorry about that, because it may be too practical for some of us, to see whether we have died and surrendered to Christ, or whether I still hold on to my old life. It's something that I try to remind myself daily.

There are certain types of rights that we Christians very often claim. Now, one right that we claim is, and this will show you whether you died to yourself or not. One right we claim is self-governance.

We believe, and I even heard messages in churches, that we have the right to live an autonomous life. Autonomous comes from the Greek word, which is auto. You know, we say auto to a car in Europe, and nomos is the law.

In other words, I am my own law. I have the right to live the way I want to live, to reach my personal goals. Well, the question is this, one question I have to ask, where does it state that we have such a right? Who gave us that right? And we'll find out, it's nowhere written.

We only take it, but nobody gave it to us. We also believe that we have a right for relationships. I have a right to have a husband.

I have a right for sexual fulfillment. I have a right to be liked, and to have relationships. Well, I want to say I have a great privilege to have a wife.

I have a great privilege to have relationships. But you see, if I come home now in a few days, and for some reason my wife, Hannelore, is killed in a car accident or whatever, it will be very hard. But you know what? God has not violated any rights.

It's a great privilege, but it's not a right to hold on to. We also believe that we have a right for freedom. We have a right to go where I want to go, to do what I want to do, and there you make me things do that I don't want to do.

I have a right to get angry, because you violated the right for me to be free. By the way, do you notice that relationships and freedoms are mutually exclusive? If you want to be free, don't enter into relationships, and if you want a relationship, forget freedom. That's true.

Once you're married, you can't just go where you want to go. But you see, the thing is, we believe that we can have both. We also believe we have a right for possessions.

I have a right for a 100 square meter apartment. I have a right for my house, for my car. You see, very often the material things are only an extension of ourselves.

Germans and Austrians are terrible, the men, when it comes to cars. You see, I don't know how it is here, but cars very often are nothing else but the extension of their own personality. You see, if your wife steps out the car and it's icy, and she steps out and breaks the leg, that's not bad, but while she falls down, she scratches your car, that's bad.

You see, and then you hear those things, you know, I have worked for this, I have earned every single dollar. Well, let me tell you, this is wrong. You and I, we have not earned one single dollar on our own.

It's an interesting verse in Deuteronomy chapter 8. It says this, it's in verse 17, you may say to yourself, my power and the strength of my hand have produced this wealth for me, but remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth. Who has made your hands? Yourself. Who has given you an eye? Who has given you a mind to think? It's all a gift of God.

We also believe that we have a right for physical health. I have a right to be energetic, beautiful, and dynamic. I have a right to have healthy children, and if I don't get healthy children, I have a right to be angry to God and bitter for the rest of my life.

Of course, out of this thinking comes the health, wealth, and prosperity movement, but I want you to know that God is far more concerned about our righteousness than He's about our wellness, but we believe we have a right for that. We also believe we have a right for mental and emotional health. That's a big one.

This is why the counseling rooms are full, because my upbringing hindered me to develop my gift to become the personality that I could be, but my parents, my friends, my sisters, my boss, they are guilty for what I am today, and this is why I have a right to be angry towards them. And then you hear, I was not loved, I was mistreated, I was misused. That's why I have a complex.

Now, of course, it is totally true that you and I are a result of our past. There's no question about that, but if we claim it as a right, the problem is we may never move on, and we will remain angry and bitter until we're in the grave. By the way, this is very subtle.

As soon as you and I, when we start mistrusting God--now, I want to be practical. I met lots of girls, women, 21 and still not married, and now they get really uptight, and I say, do you believe that God is able to bring you the right husband at the right time? Is He able to do that? They would say, yes, but then they have one friendship that doesn't work, and you know what they do? They start mistrusting God, and they take it into their own hands. And this is when we start living a life independent and separate from God.

We also believe that we have a right for comfort and convenience. We have a right for the right room temperature. Now, just look.

We have two secretaries at my place, but it's interesting. One opens the window, the next one closes it, you know, and then after the second time you can feel the tension, because we all believe we have a right for the right room temperature. If I don't get it, I have a right to be angry.

I have a right to worship the way I feel good about it, and if this church doesn't give me that, I start my own. Now, you see, it may be a great privilege if your needs are met, but I want to tell you something. If they are not met, as far as this is concerned, nobody has violated any rights.

We also believe that we have a right for recognition. That's a big one among Christians. This is the typical that you hear, nobody even thanked me.

You know, I work just as hard, and my name is not in the bulletin. You see, some Christians, when they do something good, even the trees are supposed to clap their hands, because we believe we have a right to be recognized. Now, again, it is a great privilege to be recognized, and brothers and sisters, we should always recognize other people, but if we don't get it, nobody violated any rights.

You can relax. We also believe that we have a right for understanding, and you know, among Christians, we believe we have a right to be understood without communicating our problem. I know some people that were at town hall, and I would not be surprised if this is in this church as well.

You meet them later, and they say, I was a week at town hall, but nobody understood me there. And I say, well, did you communicate what your problem is? No, but nobody understood me. You see, this is like you break your leg, and you wait in your room until the doctor shows up one day.

We don't do that, but you know, if you're a pastor, you're supposed to smell the problems, and if he doesn't, he's a bad pastor. You see, sometimes I come home from a long day, and you know, I expect my wife to recognize what I do. So, I come in tired, and I sit down, but you know what? She doesn't even ask me about anything, and I get angry, and I withdraw, because I have a right to be understood.

It comes all from that. We also believe that we have a right for justice. We think that we have a right to be treated just and fair all the time.

I want to say just one thing to that. If you believe that you must always be treated right and fair, you will live a miserable life for the rest of your days, because you will encounter things every single day that are not fair and are not right. But I want to tell you, relax, because nobody gave us a right to be always treated fair and justly.

Now, I say again, we should always treat people just. That should be our intention. But if we don't receive it for some time, it is okay.

We also believe we have a right for safety and security. We think, especially in our Western world, we have a right to be always safe and secure. And if I walk through the town, and I fall over the pedestrian thing, I sue the city council, because I shouldn't put it there.

And this is a problem. I heard something the other day, which was very eye-opening for me. The reason why we have stress today in our Western world is this.

We believe that everything... See, when I drove here, I expected that the plane is on time. I expected that somebody picks me up at the airport. I expected to have a bed and a warm shower.

And you know what? This is what we all expect. Everything should work 100%. And if it doesn't, we get angry and uptight.

But you know what? This is unhealthy. If you go to a third world country, I haven't been much. I've been a couple of times in Rio de Janeiro, where we support a work with street children in the favelas and the slums.

When I go there, I don't expect anything to work. And when 20% work, I'm very happy. If you come to a country like Canada or Austria, you expect everything to work.

And if 10% doesn't work, you and I are angry. You see, something is wrong. It's a wrong perfectionism that we have.

We also believe that we have a right for adventure. I have a right for an exciting life, for an adventurous life. That's why the 45-year-old man takes off with a 25-year-old girl, because he has a right to experience something.

By the way, do you notice again that safety and adventure don't go together? If you want an adventurous life, don't ask for safety. And if you want safety, don't ask for adventures. And at last, we also believe that we have a right for life itself.

We believe we have a right to have a spouse, that we get 80 years old, that we die together. We have a right that we see our children growing up and be at their wedding. Well, if that is so, it's a great privilege.

But again, if I come home, and one of my children that I love dearly, for some reason, went home to be with the Lord earlier than I expected, I have no right to be angry, because God gave them to me as a gift, but they are His. And He didn't violate any rights. I don't believe in untimely death, by the way.

Death is always timely. Now, having said this, what is the biblical view on our rights as Christians? The first thing, I'd like you to throw it up on the wall, if you have it, on the beamer, because I gave it to him 10 minutes before the sermon, because I believe I have a right that it works, you know. But the first thing is, all our rights have been bought out at the cross.

It says in Romans chapter 14, verse 7, I just read it to you. Romans chapter 14, and verse 7, Paul says this, For none of us lives to himself alone, and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord.

So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. Our rights have been bought, because we belong to Him. You don't belong to yourself, it says in 1 Corinthians 6, you are bought at a price.

Secondly, all our rights are abundant in discipleship. The Lord Jesus says in Matthew chapter 10, and verse 37, He says, Anyone who loves his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. Anyone who loves his son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

And anyone who does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake, he will find it. And in Luke 14, Jesus puts it even stronger when He says in Luke 14 and verse 26, If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.

By the way, when it says here that we're supposed to hate father, mother, wife, children, it's always important for the exegesis, never explain an easy passage with a difficult one. Always explain a difficult with an easy one. What is the general Bible teaching? It's always that we should love our parents, that we should honor father and mother.

Well, if this is so, what can this mean? What it simply means is this, that our love for the Lord should be so great that our love for our father and mother and wife and children compared seems like hate. That's all it means. That's what Jesus says, Your rights are abundant if you follow Me.

Now, you may say, until now, that doesn't look very good, does it? Well, let's come to point three. All our rights, once we yield them to God, will bring forth a blessing. Now, a great story for that is Abraham and Isaac.

Abraham, I think, was 75 years old when God told him, Abraham, you will have descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky, the sand and the seashore. Now, Abraham was 110 or whatever. He had one son from his own wife, Sarah, and now God told him, I want you to kill your only son.

Now, if one man in all history had a right to have one child, it was Abraham, because God promised him so. But you know what Abraham did? He took his right, he put it away, and he gave it to God. He went to Mount Moriah, and you know what the consequence was of that? God gave it back to him as a blessing, and you and I today, we are Abraham's children.

And he truly has descendants, millions and millions, because he gave up his right. Another beautiful example, of course, is the Apostle Paul. In Philippians 3, if you want to turn there, Paul points out all his rights that he has, and he had lots of them.

I don't have any of those that he had. This is why he said, in Philippians 3, he says, in verse 4, he says, I myself, I have reason for confidence. If anyone else thinks that he has reason to put confidence in himself, I have more.

And now Paul is telling us all the rights that he has. He says, I am circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, in regards to law, a Pharisee, as for persecuting the church, as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. You know what he says then? He says, you know what I do with all those rights? But whatever was to my prophet, I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

What is more, I consider everything a loss, compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things, and I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ. Paul gave up all his rights. He said, all my rights, they're all rubbish.

Here you have them all, God. And what did God do? You and I, we are blessed this evening, because of his letter that he wrote 2,000 years ago. I love Peter.

Peter, in Matthew 19, he came to the Lord Jesus and said, Jesus, we have given up everything. Now what do we get for that? I like that. You know, he's great.

And Jesus took it, as he said it. And he said, you know what, Peter? Everyone who leaves, who gives up all his rights, will receive a hundredfold in this life, an eternal life in addition to that. Now, how must you and I, how shall we deal with our rights? The first point I want to say, and this is very personal, can only be done between you and the Lord himself.

The first point is this, identify the rights that you have violated. I call this the inner turbulence. Just sit down and say, Lord Jesus, I want you to show me which rights I still claim to what I'm still holding on to.

And you don't need to exercise introspection. The Holy Spirit will take you by your word, and they will be right in front of your eyes, those areas that you still hold on to. And by the way, don't be surprised if that is painful.

It usually does not go without tears, because it's not a nice experience when God reveals all the things that we actually claim and cling on to. Be honest with yourself, don't kid yourself. And the Holy Spirit will show you clearly the rights that you violated.

I really encourage you, don't avoid the process of being wounded. It's a wound. It says in Hosea 6 verse 1, it says, come, let us return to the Lord.

He has torn us to pieces, but he will heal us. He has injured us, but he will bind up our wounds. So the first thing we need to do is identify those areas that we hold on to.

Write them down on a piece of paper. Second point, transfer all those rights over to God. I call it the prayer of surrender.

And that is a hard thing to do. You know, thinking about, I want to get married, but God, maybe he has something else. Well, God, here you have it.

I want to have this career, but maybe God, you have something totally different in mind. Here you have it. You know what that means? To let go of all the securities that we have, and then free fall into the hands of God.

And you have nothing left. Nothing. And that is very scary.

One thing we do in Upward Bound, we have a summer program at our place. It's a six-week Bible school, but we mainly do it up in the mountains. And one thing we do among many is rappelling, or up-sailing, as some call it.

And I explain to the students, this is a climbing rope, and this rope holds 2,500 kilograms. Do you believe that? They say, yes, we believe. And they really believe.

They don't pretend. They don't have little faith. They are real believers.

So the next day, I walk up the mountain with 60 believers, because they're all believers. You see, if you believe something, you're a believer. And then we stand on the mountaintop, and then, you know, there is a big hook and so on, and a wall, a steep wall, a vertical wall, or overhang, doesn't matter.

And it's maybe quite high, 40, 50 meters. Just make sure it's not higher than the rope is long, otherwise you have a problem. But otherwise, it doesn't matter.

And so they stand there, and I say, so you hook yourself in, jump down, and enjoy your ride. And it's very surprising, but they don't. They stand there, you know, with the rope and say, well, why don't you just fall down? I can't.

I say, how much does the rope hold? 2,500 kilograms. How many kilograms do you have? 60. Would it hold you? Yes.

Fall back? No. And it's interesting, they try to find things to hold on to, rocks and grass and my hair sometimes. And then, because I have a right that nobody touches my hair, I get angry, and I throw him down.

And then he's hanging there, and he says, it really holds. And he's totally surprised that he's not dead. He believed it holds 2,500 kilograms.

But you know what? He could not let go of his securities. Another thing is this. As long as you hold on to other things, and you don't fall in, you never enjoy rappelling.

It's the last thing you would do again. Once you really do it, it's so much fun. Then you really enjoy it.

And they come running up again, and want to do it again. But it's hard to give up all the grass, all the rocks that we hold on to, and just fall back. It's something I tell quite frequently, but it's really, I only experienced that once in my life, as I walked with my Lord.

I usually try to take a day or two out every year, which is not very, you know, great, just to walk with Jesus. I just take the Bible, and I walk through the woods, the mountains, whatever. I wasn't successful last year, by the way, so I try this year again.

But in 92, I wrote it down here, that's why I remember, but in 92, I had one of those prayer walks. And it was, I think, only two times I heard God that clearly in my whole life. And as I walked along, and prayed with God, He asked me a couple of questions.

And the first question He asked, He said, Hans Peter, I know you love your country, you love Austria, the mountains, but do you mind, I really want to use you tomorrow in Africa, or China, or wherever. Is that okay with you? And it was so real, I knew if I say yes, I'm in China tomorrow. And so, I kept on walking, and I thought about backing up all the stuff that we have, shipping it over.

But I came to the point where I said, Lord, if China is the only place you can use me, it's okay, let's go. He asked me a second question. He said, Hans Peter, I also know that you love your wife, Anne-Laure, and your children back then.

We had two children, Lucas and Lisa. He said, but you know what, Hans Peter, I would really like to use you as a single man from tomorrow on. Is it okay if your wife, your kids, have an accident tonight, and I take them home to be with me? Because I'd like you to serve me as a single man.

It was very hard, because I knew if I say yes, I come home and my house is empty. And it's under tears, I said, Lord, it's the last thing I want. It's the last thing that I would wish for my life.

But I came to the point where I said, Lord, if this is the only way you can use me, it's okay. He asked me a third question. He said, Hans Peter, I also know that you like sports.

You're thankful for your body that I've given you. But I really would love to use you in a wheelchair from tomorrow on. He said, okay, with you.

It was very hard, because I knew if I say yes, I'm in a wheelchair tomorrow. And I have a couple of friends, actually I talked with, I think Ingeborg it was this morning, sitting in a wheelchair since many years. And so I know a little bit what it involves.

And I said, God, it's the last thing that I would ever want, that I ever thought of my life. But I finally came to the point where I said, Lord, if there is no other way for me in your kingdom, it's okay. Then he asked me one last question.

He said, Hans Peter, what about, is it okay if I take myself, the Lord Jesus, out of your life? And I'll never forget it, because it was a physical pain, as if my heart is tearing apart. And I said, Lord, you can take away everything. But you cannot take away yourself, because you are my life.

It was the hardest prayer in my life. But you know what I experienced after that prayer? Total freedom, as I never did it before. Because after the prayer, I knew one thing, the world or God can take away from me my country, my career, my family, my health, even my physical life.

But they cannot take away my life. And for the first time in my life, I understood Philippians 1.21, where Paul said, My life, that is Christ, and to die is gain. And this is what it means transferring our rights over to God.

And then the third thing, first, identify your rights. Secondly, give them over to God. And thirdly, purpose to thank God, whatever the outcome of that decision will be.

So many people said to me, Hans Peter, I will try it. I said, Please don't try it. Why don't you do it? Because if people say, I tried, that means they will never do it.

The Lord Jesus, 2000 years ago, when he became a man, he gave up all his legitimate rights that he had as a son of God. He surrendered his will to the Father. He gave up his godly attributes.

He became the lowest of men. And by doing so, saved the world. That's why it says in Philippians 2.9, Therefore, because he gave up all his rights, God exalted him to the highest place.

And every knee should bow before him, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. And I want to tell you, if you and I, if we are willing to surrender our illegitimate rights, because there are no real rights, but if we surrender them to God, God will give you one right which you can truly claim. And that is this, John 1.12, To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

Children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision, nor of a husband's will, but born of God. And friends, this is a right we have been given. This is a right I can claim every day, because God gave it to me.

That's written. And God will never disown himself. He will remain faithful to his promises.

I want to encourage you and me. Why don't we pray and ask God to show us our hidden sins, as we read in Psalm 19. Show me my hidden faults.

And the Holy Spirit will show them. Write them down, the rights that we violated. Be prepared that it hurts.

And then take those rights and hand them over to God. And then thank him for being his child. And let's give him the right, whatever the outcome will be of that decision.

Before I stop in prayer, I want to say one last thing. Perhaps some of you in here say, well, I believe what we heard tonight is certainly true, but I'm not ready for it. I can't do that.

I'm not ready. I want to encourage you. God is patient.

He doesn't put anybody under pressure, because he's a gentleman. And God can wait. Don't feel like God is pressing you into something.

But I want to assure you, he will never misuse you. Actually, God is the only one who will never misuse anyone. Only people do that.

He never will. And please also remember, he is ready. Anytime.

Go to him and let him be your all in all, as we sing in a song.

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