



The Key to Igniting and Sustaining Revival

by Rob Winters

America has found herself in a spiritual wilderness. Over the past fifty years, our foundation of righteousness and justice has gradually eroded to the point of collapse. The Church has slumbered while our Supreme Court outlawed prayer in public schools, legalized abortion and sanctioned same-sex marriage. Though darkness and judgment loom over our nation, God hears the passionate appeals of a radically righteous remnant, who cry out to Him day and night for an unprecedented spiritual awakening. Nothing less will do, as the desperate times that America is facing require desperate measures. Those in search of heaven's secrets to spiritual awakening can find them throughout Scripture and the annals of revival. Interestingly enough, the key to igniting and sustaining a spiritual awakening is encapsulated in a passage that has been heralded over America for the past forty years.

II Chronicles 7:14 “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

Without a doubt, the commencement of our journey to the promised land of revival begins with humbling ourselves before the Lord. James' prescription for such humbling, consisting of a complete surrender to God, drawing near to Him, and genuine repentance, is ironically similar to the conditions for national restoration outlined in II Chronicles 7:14 (James 4:7-9).

Humbling Oneself Before the Lord

Humbling ourselves before the Lord is required for God to “lift us up” or exalt us. For years I saw divine exaltation only in earthly terms – equating it with a ministerial or business promotion, an unexpected financial blessing, or an honor bestowed by superiors, clients, family and friends. What I was missing were the heavenly aspects of exaltation associated with humility and contriteness before God (Proverbs 22:4, Matthew 23:12, James 4:10).

Isaiah 57:15 For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

Humbling oneself in the sight of the Lord grants one access to the high and holy place – the secret place of the Most High. For generations the Lord has presented His children with an open invitation to dwell in the secret place – a heavenly refuge of repentance, revelation, love, hope and healing. Moreover, the secret place is a holy habitation where saints are revived and transformed from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord into the image of Jesus (II Corinthians 3:18; 4:6, Revelation 4:1).

Unfortunately, many Christians can never ascend into the hill of the Lord or stand in His holy place because of unclean hands, impure hearts, a lying tongue and idolatrous living. Indeed, the disqualification of millions of would-be Christian disciples is largely due to a lack of holiness, without which no one will see the Lord. Regrettably, this disqualification has been perpetrated predominantly by a heretical doctrine regarding divine grace that has circulated throughout the Body of Christ over the past few years. While Christ made provision for the forgiveness of our past, present and future sins, “hyper-grace” advocates fail to realize that forgiveness must be appropriated through the confession of sin. Claiming to be under grace and not under the law, hyper-grace proponents embrace a counterfeit grace from a God who overlooks sin, instead of embracing a divine grace that empowers them to overcome sin. (Psalm 24:3-6, Hebrews 12:4, I John 1:9, Romans 6:1-2, 14-15).

Titus 2:11-12 “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.”

Moreover, many in the Body of Christ have reduced repentance to the mere confession of sin, when in reality genuine repentance entails the confession and forsaking of sin. Having been deceived regarding the necessity of self-examination and repentance, millions of Christians have disqualified themselves from fulfilling their high calling in Christ Jesus. Loving money, pleasure and themselves more than God, many believers have become apostate and are committing spiritual adultery. Having become friends with and conformed to this present evil world, these lukewarm Christians have unwittingly made themselves enemies of God (Proverbs 28:13, I Corinthians 9:27, Philippians 3:14, II Timothy 3:2-4, Revelation 3:15-16, James 4:4).

James 4:4 “Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

Nevertheless, a righteous remnant within the Church is arising. Having humbled themselves before the Lord and ascended His holy hill, they abide in the secret place to seek His face. Like Moses, this Jacob generation is determined to see His glory, be transformed by it, and become a carrier of it. However, like Isaiah, the remnant must first be consecrated before they can be commissioned. The sanctification process begins with an encounter with the holiness of God, through which the spirit of judgment produces heart-wrenching conviction of sin. Absolute brokenness over sin produces a confession of sin that enables the spirit of burning to thoroughly cleanse sin. Only then will the remnant hear the Lord say, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” In other words, through the Spirit of the fear of the Lord the remnant is cleansed of all filthiness of the spirit and flesh, perfected in holiness, and transformed into vessels for honor prepared for the Master’s use (Psalm 24:6, Exodus 33:18, Isaiah 6:1-8, II Corinthians 7:1, II Timothy 2:20-21).

As this Jacob generation humbly dwells in the secret place of the Most High, the Lord will begin to share His secrets with them. These secrets include His plans for the remnant, the Church, the nations, the harvest, as well as that which burdens His heart. Jesus' great love for His Bride moves Him to continually make intercession for Her. In like manner, the remnant must pursue the burden of the Lord, which fuels the intercession and soul travail necessary to birth a genuine spiritual awakening (Psalm 25:14, Hebrews 7:25, Romans 8:26-27).

Humbling Oneself Before Men

With few exceptions, most impactful spiritual movements and awakenings throughout American history have been short lived. Why? While the dampening of revival fires may be due to a myriad of contributing causes, the root cause most often is pride - the antithesis of humility. Pride is found at the root of selfish ambition, vanity, jealousy, and disunity, all of which quench, grieve and drive out the Holy Spirit - the author of revival. As mentioned previously, humility before God produces holiness, which makes us candidates for revival. However, humility before men produces unity, which keeps revival fires burning. In other words, the key to igniting revival is humbling oneself before God, whereas the key to sustaining revival is humbling oneself before men.

The Acts of the Apostles provides numerous accounts of supernatural signs, wonders, miracles, healings and salvations – all of which were the result of the spiritual unity demonstrated by the early Church. In the Apostle Paul's letter to the Philippian church, he clearly outlines the behaviors characterizing humility that produce genuine unity among Christians (Acts 2:46-47; 4:32-33; 5:12).

Acts 5:12 "And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch."

Philippians 2:2-4 "Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."

1. Repent of Selfish Ambition

Pride causes one to elevate the importance of one's own talents, agendas and divine destiny above those of others. When the Lord blesses the efforts or exalts the plans of others above our own, jealousy can arise, resulting in offense, strife and division. For example, even John the Baptist became subject to selfish ambition. After his imprisonment, John became disillusioned and offended with Jesus, hearing of all of the miracles He was performing. John felt abandoned by the Lord - as if his life and ministry had been cut off. Similarly, if a revival and miracles break out in church across town, other ministry leaders often become indignant and critical. Nevertheless, Paul identified these manifestations of jealousy and selfish ambition as works of the flesh that must be crucified. Therefore, when jealousy rises up in our hearts, we need to humble ourselves, repent, crucify our flesh, bless

those whom the Lord is blessing and participate in the successes of other ministries. If we obey the Lord in this, we will be pleasantly surprised how He blesses us for endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Matthew 11:2-6, Galatians 5:19-20, Ephesians 4:3).

2. Esteem Others Better Than Yourself

The proud esteem themselves better than others, whereas the humble esteem others better than themselves. Esteeming others translates into honoring and expressing interest in them, as well as spending the time necessary to acknowledge and encourage them in their gifts.

3. Look Out for the Interests of Others

The proud tend only to their own pursuits, ignoring the goals and interests of others. The humble participate in the pursuits of others, mentoring and reassuring those whose endeavors may seem insignificant or even trivial.

4. Make Yourself of No Reputation

Jesus made Himself of no reputation. As Jesus' disciples, so should we. Unfortunately, much of the church in America today has been built upon secular marketing and self-promotion. Instead, we need to exchange our earthly reputation for a heavenly one.

Philippians 2:5-7 "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant."

5. Become a Bondservant

A bondservant of Christ willingly serves the Master without expectation of payment or recognition. In other words, a Christian bondservant is a slave – surrendered and wholly devoted to Christ's purposes without regard to his or her own will or rights. A bondservant characterizes the spirit of humility through which unity presides and by which a genuine spiritual awakening can be sustained.

Father, I humble myself before You. Grant me repentance that I might acknowledge, confess and forsake my sins. Wash me in Your precious blood and allow me to ascend into Your holy hill, that I might dwell in the secret place to seek Your face. Revive me and send me to do your bidding. Allow me to partake of Your burden, that through intercession I might assist in birthing the spiritual awakening you desire to bring to America. I repent of selfish ambition and resolve to esteem others better than myself by looking out for the interest of others, making myself of no reputation and becoming Your bondservant, in Jesus' name, Amen.

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