

A. What is revival?

> *“Revival is an extraordinary movement of the Spirit of God in the hearts of God’s people, producing extraordinary transformation.”*

To put it another way: Revival is nothing more than **experiencing God**. It is God having His **rightful place in your life**, your family, your ministry, etc. To experience revival is to experience God in His **fullness**.

In the final analysis of life, the only thing that will really matter is how much of God we experience and how much we lead others to experience Him. Everything else is comes in second place.

Here’s the most important question of life: *Are you experiencing God to the fullest?*

D. L. Moody is quoted as saying, “The door of [spiritual] life and growth is low and narrow. It seems to become slightly shorter than the one who wishes to enter it. And thus, only the one who bows in humility can cross its threshold.”

What is the key that will begin to open the door to God’s presence and power in your life? How can we experience the abundant life God has promised? We experience the presence of God in our spiritual life and growth when we bow low in humility.

B. participating in revival (Where do I begin?)

1. experiencing God to the fullest requires **humility** (Is. 6:5; 57:15; 66:2; Matt. 5:3; Ephesians 4:2; 1 Peter 3:8)

Theme verse: Isaiah 57:15 says, “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.’”

Isaiah 66:2, “This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word. “

In Philippians 3, Paul was very proud of his background, training, etc., until he encountered God. He then said he counted all of his human achievement as “rubbish” in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ.

The word for what Isaiah and Paul experienced is HUMILITY. God has to bring us to this point of humility, of understanding our desperate need of Him. If this never happens, we will continue to think we can live our lives without God, and we will never come to Him or depend on Him.

Humility = **seeing myself as God sees me** (Matthew 5:3, “*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*”)

This humility is *a proper view of myself that leads me to admit my sin and acknowledge my need.*

>>>illustration: *acknowledge my need: men asking for directions?*

Hudson Taylor was scheduled to speak at a large church in Melbourne, Australia. The moderator of the service introduced the missionary in eloquent and glowing terms. He told the large congregation all that Taylor had accomplished in China, and then presented him as “our illustrious guest.” Taylor stood quietly for a moment, and then opened his message by saying, “Dear friends, I am simply the servant of an illustrious Master.”

2. experiencing God to the fullest is stopped by **pride** (thwarted, hindered, impeded)

We can grasp the truth of humility by looking at its opposite (something we’re far more familiar with). The opposite of humility is PRIDE. Pride is . . .

- having a better impression of myself than is really true;;
- thinking I can live my life without God and others;
- depending on self;
- an unwillingness to admit my sin or acknowledge my need.

Pride is at the root of all sins. Pride (self-dependence) was the cause behind Adam and Eve’s choice to disobey God...they chose to follow their ideas instead of God’s. Every time I choose to handle life by myself, I am responding in pride. Pride produces fruit (on outline: “evidences”), including:

- Gossip: gossip is fueled when we feel better than someone else. Do you ever gossip?
- Contentious spirit: contention comes from feeling that I always know better, have a better plan, etc., so I argue with others. I want to prove I know better. Are you ever contentious?
- Self-sufficiency: this springs from the belief that I can handle life alone. It includes such things as pride in my appearance, abilities, reputation...Paul reminds us that our appearance, abilities...everything we possess are gifts from God (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:7). Unwillingness to let God have control . . . of my money, time, mouth, body, etc. Why? In my pride, I think I can do a better job with my life than God can.
- Unforgiveness and bitterness: When I am unwilling to forgive, it is because I think people owe me something. I deserve better. I believe they should pay. If unchecked and if I do not deal with forgiveness, bitterness that develops, particularly against God, is because I think He has not given me what I deserve. (I don’t think we really want to discuss with God what we deserve!)

Hebrews 12:15, “*See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.*”

Pride also produces:

- Judgmental spirit;
- Feelings of superiority over others;
- Fear of man: this comes from the pride that wants to maintain my reputation before others so they will think well of me (See Proverbs 29:25);
- Argumentative, headstrong, stubborn spirit;
- Unwillingness to be honest about my sin (blaming others, defending myself). Why? In my pride I want to give a better impression than is really true.

3. God's view

God has strong words regarding our pride because He knows that if we do not come to the posture of humility, we will never experience His best. God hates pride. He doesn't tolerate, overlook, excuse, or even dislike our pride—He loathes it!

> let's read Proverbs 3:34; 6:16-19; 16:5, 18; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5-6

This is a serious matter with God. God "opposes" the proud. What does this mean?

Iowa vs. Syracuse (defense)

Can you imagine lining up against a 300 lb. NFL offensive tackle? His whole job, all day long, is to oppose you! He will hit you, push you, and throw you on the ground, etc., to keep you away from your objective. What a way to spend an afternoon!

Now imagine getting up tomorrow morning and getting ready to face your day. As you approach the line of scrimmage, you look up, and standing across the line of scrimmage from you is . . . GOD! God says, "I'm sorry, I'm going to have to oppose you today."

"But, God," you cry, "I thought You were on my team? I thought we were together!"

"My child," God says, "I love you so much that I must oppose you when you walk in pride. I'm doing this because I have not given up on the possibility that you will learn that you cannot live life by yourself!"

C. Practical steps

1. Is there a test for pride?

Allow me to suggest that you and I can determine whether or not we struggle with pride. Struggling with pride can be determined by answering this one question:

Yes! Answer one question: How often do you PRAY?

I'm not referring to ritual prayers or prayers merely at mealtime. I'm asking how often you awaken in the morning and immediately turn to God and say, "Lord, I cannot live life without You today. I can't raise my kids, handle my finances; I cannot handle the pressures of the day; I cannot say or do the right things without depending on you!"

Do you find yourself praying during each day? Wouldn't you agree that if you can go a day, a week, a month, a year without ever really praying, it is a clear indication that you think you can live your life without God? Absence of prayer is evidence of self-sufficiency.

CONCLUSION

Jesus said that one day two men went up to the temple to pray (Luke 18:10-14). One was a Pharisee and one a tax-gatherer (a man who was despised by his people).

The Pharisee stood where all could see and said, "God, I thank you that I'm not like other men . . . unjust . . . like this tax collector. I pray in public for all to see; I fast twice a week; I give 1/10 of all I possess to the poor..."

The other man (the outcast tax collector) recognized his need so greatly that he couldn't even lift up his eyes before God. He kept beating his chest over and over and simply crying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!"

Then Jesus clearly stated which one of these men went down to his house right with God.

The question of revival begins with our answer to the question, "Am I humble?" Do I clearly, continually, daily recognize your absolute inability to live life without God? Am I learning to depend on God more and more each day? Take an inventory of all that you are experiencing: It is probable that God is teaching you to learn to depend on Him...He is redirecting your focus away from self and toward Him.

Humility . . . it's the beginning point of revival