

Committed Christian Life

Preparing for Revival



*But grow in the grace and knowledge
of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

2 Peter 3:18

13



CBLT

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Preparing for Revival

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There is much talk about revival, but little evidence of it. Take a look at the history of revivals and the principles we can use to bring revival now, here-- in our own lives, in our church, in Ukraine. This is actually the final lesson in the course *Committed Christian Life*. You may be interested in some of the other lessons. A list follows:

1) "The Goal and Process of the Christian Life"

Do you know what the goal is? Are you struggling to be a "good" Christian? Learn what God wants to do in and through you in this supernatural life we are called to.

2) "The Power for the Spiritual Life"

Learn about the ministry of the Holy Spirit to unbelievers and believers and the three commands God's Word gives us about the Holy Spirit.

3) "The War "

We are in a spiritual battle with a determined enemy. Learn about the evil one's tactics and how to be victorious.

4) "Prayer: Worship and Praise"

Prayer is an expression of our relationship to God. Learn a fresh focus as you seek His face before you seek His hand.

5) "Prayer: Petition and Intercession"

Now with Almighty God in focus learn the joys of intercession. Included are the basic principles of prayer, hindrances to prayer and the importance of corporate prayer.

6) "Alive and Powerful — The Word Of God"

The Bible is our main source of communication from our Heavenly Father and the food of our spiritual lives. Learn how to make the most of this living, powerful resource.

7) "Walking By Faith"

The foundational principle of Kingdom living is faith. Learn how to deal with the challenges to faith as well as steps to knowing God's will for your life.

8) "Spiritual Transformation"

What God has promised is that He will transform us by the power of His Holy Spirit so that we become like Him. This lesson will begin to answer the question: As a result of my walk with Christ, what changes in my character should take place?

9) “Understanding Suffering”

Learn the five purposes of suffering and how our response to suffering will make or break us. We alone decide whether suffering will drive us to bitterness, or to spiritual maturity.

10) “Fellowship in the Family”

Learn how to help build unity in the church, our “family”, how to deal with conflict and how to practice fellowship that honors Christ and brings joy to our hearts.

11) “Ministering To Your Fellowman”

This is a lesson which will challenge you to examine how you can serve others. It will open your eyes to why God has given you gifts from His Holy Spirit, and how important it is for you to minister to those around you.

12) “Redeeming The Time”

What does the Bible say about work and how we should use our time? Do you know what your priorities are and do you set goals that reflect that? This lesson will help you redeem the time.

Introduction

Spiritual growth is not meant to produce isolated holiness. Rather it should result in an outward flow of spreading influence. What better way to end a course on the Christian life than with a lesson on revival. We are on a spiritual journey and too often we lose heart or get distracted from our goal or let the enemy gain territory in our hearts and lives. We live in a fallen world and it challenges what we believe, tries to pull us down and smudges us with its dirt. Somehow from time to time spiritual renewal has to be part of the process. Perhaps you have gone through a time of personal revival as you have studied this course. It is through revival in the hearts of individuals that God brings revival to His whole church. In this final lesson we will look at some of the revivals throughout history and how principles gleaned from them apply to us today. If you have not done any of the other lessons please follow the instructions below to gain the most benefit.

As you do this lesson we recommend three things:

- 1) Keep a spiritual journal, at least while you work your way through this lesson. This should include people and needs you are praying for, answers God gives and where you are reading in your Bible and what God is teaching you.
- 2) Make a goal to have a daily quiet time with the Lord. If you are in a leadership position we would challenge you to set aside an hour a day for one month. However if you do not already have a regular quiet time, start with a daily goal that you are willing to practice for one month.
- 3) Memorize 4 Bible verses. We suggest you choose 4 verses from Hebrews 11—the famous chapter on faith.

Throughout this lesson there are various questions, exercises and assignments that will help you interact with the material and apply it to your own life situation. Note that at the end of this lesson there is an answer key so that you may check your understanding of the material covered.

Use a notebook to write out your answers to the exercises. This is your “thinking” notebook so that you can put down your own answers and thoughts on what you are learning. Our learning is reinforced by writing it down so this is an excellent tool as you pursue growth in your personal life.

LESSON OUTLINE

- I. What is Revival
 - A. Defining Revival
 - B. Biblical Examples
 - C. Examples from Church History
- II. How Revival Comes
 - A. The Need
 - B. Our Side
 - C. God’s Side
- III. Personal Preparation
 - A. Brokenness
 - B. Prayer
 - C. Seeking His Face
 - D. Repentance
 - E. Expectation
 - F. Satan’s Opposition

IV. The Effects of Revival

- A. Awareness of Sin
- B. A Passion for Christ
- C. Zeal for Evangelism
- D. Awakening of the Lost
- E. Hunger for God's Word
- F. Holiness
- G. Impact on Society

Conclusion

Course Conclusion

LESSON OBJECTIVES

At the end of this lesson you should be able to:

1. Define spiritual revival and spiritual awakening.
2. Give Biblical examples of revival.
3. Explain what is required to prepare for revival based on 2 Chronicles 7:14.
4. List the effects of revival.
5. Evaluate the spiritual state of your heart and your church in relation to revival.

LESSON ASSIGNMENTS

1. Review the Lesson Outline and study the objectives.
2. Read this lesson and do the questions and exercises, referring to the Bible as requested.
3. Spend an hour of quiet time with God every day. Take time to seek brokenness and repentance in preparation for revival.
4. Spend a half day in prayer following the points for personal preparation for revival.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Backsliding — To allow self to creep back into the heart slowly displacing God

Revival — A time when the Spirit of God brings renewed spiritual life after a period of decline, whether that be in an individual believer or the church as a community

Spiritual awakening — When the lost become aware of their need for God and begin to seek Him; usually spiritual awakening is linked to revival in the church

I. What is Revival?

Probably all of us have heard of revivals or heard people praying for revival. History is full of stories of revival, many of them on local levels, but some of them nation-wide and even world-wide.

A. Defining Revival

To strengthen our understanding and benefit from this lesson we will begin by defining “revival”. “To revive” in simplest terms means to bring back to life. If we think of it in physical terms, a person who has been pulled from the water because he was drowning, and then is resuscitated by someone applying mouth to mouth resuscitation, is revived. Life was still there but it was waning

and the breath of life was restored to him. So a broad definition would be: revival is the inflow of renewed life into something that had lost life. We then can define spiritual revival as: a time when the Spirit of God brings renewed spiritual life after a period of decline, whether that be in an individual believer or the church as a community.

We often see signs in the church that revival is needed. There is still life, but not “abundant life”. There is fire but it has become a feeble flame. Sin has been tolerated, meaning righteousness is lacking. Self is in control, not the Spirit of God. Apathy is present in people’s lives and in church gatherings. Another way to describe revival is as a return to our first love for Christ. Our love for Christ has been pushed aside, for whatever reasons, and needs to again become the priority and passion of our lives.

Sometimes when people speak or pray about revival they are talking about the lost turning to Christ. When the church experiences revival, there will be an impact on the community. There will be spiritual awakening. But the lost cannot be revived because they do not yet have life. They need to be “awakened”, to become aware of the fact that they are spiritually destitute, to be convicted of sin. Revival is the returning of God’s people to Him and His ways whole-heartedly and will be evidenced in every part of their lives. When the surrounding community sees this happen in a church suddenly they are aware of their spiritual need, and drawn to have this same kind of life.

B. Biblical Examples

Revival is a Biblical concept. Various forms of the word “revival” occur more than 250 times in the Old Testament and five times in the New Testament. God is continually calling to His people to come back to an intimate relationship with Him. There are a number of Biblical examples of revival that have occurred through the ages. Those in the Old Testament occurred in the kingdom of Israel, God’s chosen people. They carried His name, but often failed to act accordingly.

1. The Time of the Judges

Usually when we think of the book of Judges we are overwhelmed by the chaos and sin of people. But there is a definite cycle that happens over and over in this time of history.

1. God’s people turn from Him looking for substitutes for a holy God and His ways.
2. God brings discipline to them seeking to bring them back to him.
3. They become aware of their need and repent and cry out to God.
4. God comes and delivers them bringing them again to a right relationship with Himself.
5. A time of peace and spirituality follows.

We see this cycle in the following passages, including the man (or woman) God raised up at that time:

Judges 3:1-11	Othniel	Judges 6:1-8:35	Gideon
Judges 3:12-31	Ehud	Judges 10:6-12:7	Jephthah
Judges 4:1-5:31	Deborah	Judges 13:1-16:31	Samson

2. The Time of the Kings

Despite the desperate spiritual state of Israel after the reigns of David and Solomon, God did bring His people back to revival from time to time.

Read 2 Chronicles 15:1-15 and answer the following questions:



Question 1 What had the Israelites been lacking?



Question 2 What did the people do in their distress of those evil times and what was God's response?



Question 3 What was King Asa's immediate response after he listened to the prophet Azariah?



Question 4 What did the people do when they gathered together at Jerusalem?

The result was that all of Judah rejoiced because they had done this, and God gave them peace from their enemies.

In 2 Chronicles 29-31 we have the story of King Hezekiah. His reign followed that of wicked King Ahaz (2 Chronicles 28:1-2; 24-25) and the people's hearts had again grown cold towards the one true God (29:6). But it was in Hezekiah's heart to lead his people back to God so he immediately started by setting to rights the place of worship, cleaning it up and making a sin offering for the people (29:10-36). Then he sent a plea out across the land for the people to return to God, even inviting those in the northern kingdom (30:1-11). And the people came to a huge Passover celebration in Jerusalem (30:12-27). After worshipping God they went out and tore down the idols and altars to false gods (31:1). People's priorities changed and they began obeying God's law and giving to the Lord's work again and peace and prosperity came (31:4-21).

Time passed and again evil kings came into power. But God raised up another man, King Josiah, in 2 Chronicles 34.



Exercise 1

After reading through 2 Chronicles 34, make a list of the factors you observe that led up to revival in the land again. Write your observations of the similarities or differences in the times of revival we have already looked at.

3. After the Exile

Revival also took place in the land of Israel after the people had returned from exile. They had rebuilt the temple and then the city walls around Jerusalem. Read through Nehemiah 8-10 as you answer the questions:



Question 5 What took place in Nehemiah 8:1-8?



Question 6 What was the reaction of the people in 8:9? Why would there be this reaction?

The people turned whole-heartedly from sin and compromise to a new covenant before God to follow His ways, even signing a covenant together.

4. New Testament

In the Old Testament we see a direct relation to physical testing, physical punishment and physical blessing of God in His physical chosen nation. When we move to the New Testament and a new covenant the focus is on the spiritual. We have John the Baptist calling for the people to repent as he prepares the way for the Lord. Jesus ushers in His spiritual kingdom with preaching and teaching. And then we have the advent of the Holy Spirit with a rush of what we can only mark as revival in the Jewish nation followed by outreach and spiritual awakening in the then known world. When we look for revival today our heart's desire is to again experience the dynamics of the early church. Nothing quite like this had happened previously, but with the Holy Spirit coming to indwell all believers a new power became available to believers.

C. Examples from History

There are many examples from church history of revivals in different countries and the influence they had both on the church and on society. The cycle is always the same even though it has occurred in many different places and with differing degrees of impact, length, etc. The intent here is not to provide a history of revival but to state a few cases as a sample. The history of the church has always been one of ups and downs, and the upward surges are revivals, when a portion of the church has been awakened and revived and is again functioning as it was in the first century.

1. The First Great Awakening in Europe

There have been several massive moves of the Holy Spirit which have been called “great awakenings” because they started with revival, then moved into different levels of society calling the lost to repentance, and then spread to other parts of the world.

The first Great Awakening in Europe started among the Moravians in 1727 in Saxony which today is Germany.¹ The Moravians were spiritual descendants of John Huss, a martyr of the fifteenth century. They built a community on the estate of Count Zinzendorf and sought to live simply in holiness. Others joined this group but soon major disputes broke out. Zinzendorf was appalled by this. In 1727 he began to pray deep and long for these people. He drew up an agreement for the people to sign emphasizing the points on which they were all agreed, and dedicating themselves anew to serving Christ, as he had done himself. They signed this on May 12 and many of them decided to set aside specific times for prayer. On July 16 Zinzendorf prayed publicly with weeping and everyone began to seek times of prayer, showing an unprecedented love for each other. They formed small groups of three or four meeting frequently for spiritual growth and prayer. On August 10 the minister at the Sunday service suddenly knelt before God and the whole congregation joined him and continued singing, weeping, praying until midnight. “All hearts were united in love.”

A few days later revival broke out among the children at the boarding school and they spent a whole night in prayer. Their lives were visibly transformed by the Holy Spirit. On August 25 the Moravians began a 24-hour a day prayer meeting—that lasted over one hundred years! In January 1728 they had their first missionary meeting and in the next 25 years sent out 100 missionaries from their small community. Within 65 years they had sent out 300 missionaries and had 226 mission stations before William Carey, considered the “father of modern missions”, was even born. They sent missionaries to North America, South America, South Africa, Asia, Australia and many islands including Greenland.

This mighty revival and spiritual awakening was started by the broken heart of one man over the condition of his fellow believers, and was fueled by ongoing prayer.

¹ *Worldwide Christian Revival News Archive*, <http://www.inthenameofjesus.org/Revival>, Accessed May 20, 2009.

2. South African Revival

You have become acquainted with the author Andrew Murray through some of his writings. One of the reasons his classical writings were chosen is that he was a key figure in a South African revival in the mid-1800's. His father was a pastor and when Andrew was a boy, every Friday evening his father would read to the family about great revivals of the past. He would then go to his room and pray for revival in South Africa. Andrew Murray himself picked up that zeal and continued to pray for revival. He became a pastor in a Dutch Reformed church. There was a group of intercessors in his church who prayed regularly for revival, going to a hilltop outside their town to pray over the people. There had been little interest in the church in prayer, but in 1860 suddenly everyone began coming for prayer and prayer meetings were being held daily, even three times a day.

One night when Murray was preaching a prayer meeting was being held in another part of the church. This is an eyewitness report from J.C. deVries of what happened.

On a certain Sunday evening there were gathered in a little hall some sixty young people. I was leader of the meeting, which began with a hymn and a lesson from God's Word, after which I prayed. Three or four others gave out a verse of a hymn and prayed, as was the custom. Then a colored girl of about 15 years of age, in service with a nearby farmer, rose at the back of the hall and asked if she too might propose a hymn. At first I hesitated, not knowing what the meeting would think, but better thoughts prevailed, and I replied, "Yes." She gave out her hymn-verse and prayed in moving tones.

While she was praying, we heard, as it were, a sound in the distance, which came nearer and nearer, until the hall seemed to be shaken; with one or two exceptions, the whole meeting began to pray, the majority in audible voice, but some in whispers. Nevertheless, the noise made by the concourse was deafening.

A feeling which I cannot describe took possession of me. Even now, 43 years after these occurrences, the events of that never-to-be-forgotten night pass before my mind's eye like a soul-stirring panorama. I feel again as I then felt, and I cannot refrain from pushing my chair backwards, and thanking the Lord fervently for His mighty deeds.²

Andrew Murray was called to this meeting and began trying to quiet the people but to no avail. No one even heard him as they continued to call out to God in prayer. He tried to start a song, also without success, and finally left the room. This was a man who was well acquainted with reports of revival in other places. Even though he was of the Dutch Reformed Church which is of more sedate practices, he himself was a fiery, even passionate, preacher who was trying to break through the spiritual deadness. Nevertheless, he seemed unprepared for such a spontaneous outbreak of the Holy Spirit which began even without his presence. The same outbreak of uncontrollable prayer and repentance broke out in a later meeting which he was leading. He again tried to quiet the people, but a stranger came up to him and confirmed that this was the same kind of thing he had witnessed in revival in North America. After that Murray was convinced and this became a personal crisis which led him into the deep spiritual walk you have witnessed in his writings.

When revival comes it is an action on God's part not under the control of men. This revival continued for years and affected areas up to 200 miles away from its origin. Where once churches had struggled to find even one new leader, they began to spring up by the dozens! Prayer meetings multiplied, with Christians meeting during the week in groups of three or four for prayer. Some churches couldn't even hold all those who desired to worship!

² Leona Choy, "Out of the Box" *Pray!*, Issue #22, January/February 2001.

3. Welsh Revival

At the beginning of the 20th century revival broke out in Wales (1904-1905). As has been observed repeatedly in revivals throughout history, this was also preceded by intense prayer on behalf of many concerned Christians in many different churches. There was a desperation to see God move among their midst. In this case God raised up a young man by the name of Evan Roberts to be the human instrument. He was not trained in a seminary, had no special education. He was a coal miner who was praying for the people and seeking God with all of his heart. He asked to speak in a little chapel with about 17 people in attendance. He preached every night and in less than two weeks 800 people were crammed into the chapel and there was an overflow of prayer meetings in private homes. Then revival began to spread to other cities.

The results were both amazing and dramatic. In the first five weeks of revival it is estimated that some 20,000 people joined the churches all across Wales. In a year the number rose to 100,000. Many believers made public confessions of sin and asked forgiveness of believers and unbelievers alike. Crime dropped drastically. People returned stolen goods. Taverns closed for lack of business, as did film theaters. This revival lasted for less than two years but 152,000 people got saved and revival spread to other lands via visiting pastors.

4. Korean Revival

The following is a report of a Korean revival which began in 1907 and lasted for forty years.

A few missionaries decided to meet together to pray daily at noon. At the end of the month one brother proposed that, "as nothing had happened," the prayer-meeting should be discontinued. "Let us each pray at home as we find it convenient," said he. The others, however, protested that they ought rather to spend even more time in prayer each day. So they continued the daily prayer-meeting for four months. Then suddenly the blessing began to be poured out. Church services here and there were broken up by weeping and confessing of sins. At length a mighty revival broke out. At one place during a Sunday evening service the leading man in the church stood up and confessed that he had stolen one hundred dollars in administering a widow's legacy. Immediately conviction of sin swept the audience. That service did not end till 2 o'clock on Monday morning. God's wondrous power was felt as never before. And when the Church was purified, many sinners found salvation.

Multitudes flocked to the churches out of curiosity. Some came to mock, but fear laid hold of them, and they stayed to pray. Amongst the "curious" was a brigand chief, the leader of a robber band. He was convicted and converted. He went straight off to the magistrate and gave himself up. "You have no accuser," said the astonished official, "yet you accuse yourself! We have no law in Korea to meet your case." So he dismissed him.

One of the missionaries declared, "It paid well to have spent several months in prayer, for when God gave the Holy Spirit, He accomplished more in half a day than all the missionaries together could have accomplished in half a year." In less than two months, more than 2,000 heathen were converted. The burning zeal of those converts has become a byword. Some of them gave all they had to build a church, and wept because they could not give more. Needless to say, they realized the power of prayer. Those converts were themselves baptized with the "Spirit of supplication." In one church it was announced that a daily prayer-meeting would be held at 4:30 every morning. The very first day 400 people arrived long before the stated hour — eager to pray! The number rapidly increased to 600 as days went on. At Seoul, 1,100 is the average attendance at the weekly prayer-meeting.³

³ Unknown Christian, *The Kneeling Christian*, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/unknown/kneeling.vi.html>. Accessed Oct. 14, 2009.

This is just a sampling of revivals, a story that has been repeated over and over in history. All of them were preceded by prayer. All of them came in God's own time. The majority had at least one man who came to the foreground as the human instrument to lead the people. All of them were marked by an agonizing repentance on the part of God's people and a longing for more of Him. All of them drew unbelievers to what God was doing in His people. And society changed during these revivals.

II. How Revival Comes

A. The Need

Oftentimes the church is quite content. Membership has grown over a period of time, perhaps they were able to build a nice building, all of the programs are in place—life is good. And probably that is the time that the church most desperately needs revival and is least aware of it. Let us look in Revelation for Christ's evaluation of two of the churches of that day.

Read Revelation 2:1-4.



Question 7 For what was the church at Ephesus commended?

All of us would commend a group of people like that.



Question 8 What was Christ's complaint against them?

Now read Revelation 3:15-17.



Question 9 What was Christ's complaint against the church in Laodicea?

These were churches in the first century. There was already a need for revival among some of them. So, we need to be on the alert, rather than being satisfied with the way things are, resting on our hard work, or on physical blessings. Backsliding is always a danger and we are often warned in Scripture to keep watch, to stay awake, to be alert. Backsliding means that we have allowed self to creep back into our hearts and slowly displace God. You can actually use the principles in this course to examine the state of your own heart and your own church.

- 1) Is the power of the Holy Spirit evident? Is it sought for?
- 2) Is there an ongoing awareness that you are in a spiritual battle and that you need to resist Satan's dark kingdom as well as seek to claim his territory for Christ?
- 3) Do you worship privately and delight in it?
- 4) Is prayer a regular, vibrant part of your life?
- 5) Is the Bible an active daily part of your life?
- 6) Are you making decisions based on faith, or are you full of worries, fears or doubts?
- 7) Is aspiring to Christ-like holiness a dominant part of your life and thinking?
- 8) Has bitterness (from whatever kind of suffering) entered your life?
- 9) Are you unconcerned about dissension or conflict in your church?

- 10) Does any little excuse keep you from serving others, whether fellow believers or non-believers?
- 11) Are you full of what God has done in your life and sharing about it with others both Christian and non-Christian?

You can ask many more questions that will reflect the state of your own heart. This is just a sample.



Exercise 2

Using the above questions, write similar questions that would apply to the whole church body. Your questions should reflect what happens as people meet together as the body of Christ. After you have made a list of questions, write down what you feel Christ would be pleased with in your church and what He would be displeased with.

Unfortunately when we are in a backslidden state, however great or little, we usually are unaware of it. So how then can revival happen?

B. Our Side

Throughout Scripture we see how people sought God as well as how God told them to seek Him. Read Psalm 85:4-9; Isaiah 64:1-9; and Habakkuk 3:2.



Question 10 What were the people in each of these passages seeking, longing for?

If we have strayed or become lackadaisical in our spiritual life, God will bring trials, troubles, and even oppression so that we are forced to examine ourselves. Often people will seek God in a time of crisis. This is what we have seen in the Biblical examples of revival. People were oppressed or being attacked and they began looking to the Lord, praying to Him, asking Him for deliverance. Those people came to the place where they finally recognized that their difficulties were not just difficulties but purposefully God-induced signals indicating their backslidden state, and they knew it was only through God and a turning back to Him that life would come aright again and they could enjoy blessing (Hosea 5:15). They then did receive physical blessings of prosperity and peace as God's nation, as well as spiritual blessings. We belong to Christ's spiritual kingdom and during revival will be blessed with spiritual prosperity and peace with God and man.

Often as an awareness of crisis builds people are burdened to pray more and more fervently and in greater and greater numbers. Fasting was often a part of that praying for God's deliverance. It is a human indication of sincerity. Jonathan Edwards, who was the main human instrument of the Great Awakening in America from 1734-1750 wrote a work called "An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People, in Extraordinary Prayer, for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth".⁴ This is a rather long and unwieldy title as was customary at that time, but despite that it motivated people in churches everywhere to pray for revival and awakening. Throughout history prayer has been a forerunner to, and man's active part, in revival. As men have prayed for revival they have examined their own hearts to bring them into a right relationship with God.

⁴ Dale Schlafer, *Revival 101, Understanding How Christ Ignites His Church* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2003) 28.

C. God's Side

We have looked at man's side of revival, his seeking God and praying, but no man can manipulate God into bringing revival. **Revival must come from Him.** People can claim that a revival has happened when there are emotions or fervency or even dynamic preaching. But the Holy Spirit is the power in revival. He comes in His own time to do His own work in the hearts of His people. But it is only when the hearts of God's people are ready that He is free to move and do His work. So the question we must ask is, "Lord, is my heart ready?"

Read Malachi 3:1-4.



Question 11 How will the Lord come to His Temple?

God has His own timing, and while we must do the seeking, He will decide the timing. God wants to refine and purify His people, so when revival comes it is initiated by Him and His desire for a church that is pure and wholeheartedly seeking and serving Him. Therefore, God will begin by bringing the pain of purifying so that the ability to be wholehearted is there. This means that discomfort, distress, difficulties of all sorts are signs that God is trying to get our attention so he can bring revival.

"Revive us, and we will call upon Your name." Psalm 80:18

"Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity, And revive me in Your ways." Psalm 119:37

"I am exceedingly afflicted; Revive me, O LORD, according to Your word." Psalm 119:107

"Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me; You will stretch forth Your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and Your right hand will save me." Psalm 138:7

"For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, 'I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.'" Isaiah 57:15

"Come, let us return to the LORD. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us. He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, That we may live before Him." Hosea 6:1-2

God initiates revival usually by drastic means, things we do not like, things that disturb our complacency. This forces us to make drastic choices and new priorities.

III. Personal Preparation

Revival can happen anywhere there are those who desire it more than anything else. Not that we can control the when and where of revival because it is a movement of God. But we always have the opportunity and the responsibility to actively seek the desires of God's heart. What could be closer to the heart of God than seeing His church awake, alive, and pure?

So how can we prepare for revival? Second Chronicles 7:14 gives us the path to revival. God says:

[If] My people, who are called by My name, will
humble themselves and
pray and
seek My face and
turn from their wicked ways...

The context of this verse was a moment of glory in Israel as they dedicated the Temple that Solomon had built. But God could see into the future and knew that the hearts of the people would stray, so He laid out the path for revival. It ends with the promise:

I will hear from heaven
will forgive their sin and
will heal their land.

A. Brokenness

The first thing God requires is that we humble ourselves. This is an often repeated theme in Scripture. There is nowhere in Scripture that anyone was able to come before the Lord and get His attention if they came in pride. Pride creeps in when we are not looking. Comparing ourselves to others is often an act of pride. For some people it is feeling that we are better than others, but even feeling inferior to others is hurt pride. “I’m not good enough.” The focus is on self rather than our dependence on God. Often we refuse to do things, not on a proper assessment of our ability, but rather on the basis that we are afraid to fail. All of these are signs of pride. It is independence from God and His ways, even when we are claiming to serve Him.

James 4 gives us the problems of pride as well as God’s solutions. Read this chapter and then answer the questions:



Question 12 Who does God oppose (vs. 6)?



Question 13 What was the problem James addressed at the beginning?



Question 14 In verses 7-10 what is James’ solution to pride before God?



Question 15 What sins do you find listed in the rest of the passage that have their source in pride?

Often we show a corporate attitude of pride in our churches. We are proud of “our” church because we are holier, or have purer doctrines, or better buildings—or more humility! We look down on other churches and denominations as being “lesser” than us. It does not matter what the area of debate and contention is—it is the attitude of pride that kills.

The key to discovering where we stand on the issue of pride is our willingness to pray: “Lord, break me! Remove every bit of pride and self. Destroy it!” If you refuse to think of praying a prayer like that, then you are not broken, and not ready for revival, and not sincerely seeking it. Can you pray this prayer or not?



Question 16 What kind of people is God looking for according to Psalm 51:17; Isaiah 57:15, 66:2?



Question 17 What does the Lord require of us according to Micah 6:8?

What is your condition before the Lord? Are you judgmental, self-righteous, caught up in your own plans, and perhaps thinking when they do not happen that God was not doing His part in helping you, rather than that you were not trusting Him? What do you need to pray about? How do others perceive of you? Would they ask you to do a humble task, or think you would not be willing to do it anyway? As you examine yourself, remember, God says, “I live...with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite” (Isaiah 57:15). Do you think God likes “living” with you right now, just the way you are? There is no revival for the proud.

B. Prayer

Prayer is the next step mentioned in the path to revival. Prayer asserts our dependence on God. It is in prayer that we look to Him for deliverance, in our personal lives, in our churches, in our nation, in our world.

The African country of Uganda is mostly known for the oppressive rule of Idi Amin, a man responsible for plundering, terrorizing and the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people. He closed the churches and spiritual life came to a standstill, but there was still a remnant, and this remnant went out into the jungles and caves and cried out to God, not for a day, a week or a month. They cried out to God for years. They plead with God until they had an answer, until there was a breakthrough. Revival came, awakening came, people poured into churches seeking God, and now God is acknowledged in all levels of government from the president on down. Crime has dropped, AIDS has dropped from over 30% to 5%. But this was not a casual prayer of, “Lord, if You feel like it, it would be nice to have revival.” This was the result of intense, earnest, prolonged individual and corporate prayer.

There is a world-wide prayer movement today like has never occurred in history. It is estimated that there are about 170 million Christians committed to praying every day for revival and spiritual awakening, and at least 10 million prayer groups praying for world revival.⁵

Prayer Guidelines

You may not know how to start to pray for revival. Here is a list of points to guide you:⁶

1. **Ask God to bring deep conviction of sin, spiritual brokenness, a holy fear of God and genuine repentance among His people.** There will be no revival without these elements and only God can produce them in His people. After all we cannot program or work up genuine brokenness and repentance. (2 Corinthians 7:10)
2. **Pray for deep cleansing, genuine repentance, and spiritual power to engulf pastors and Christian leaders.** Revival and spiritual awakening are extremely unlikely without a mighty movement of God in pastors and Christian leaders. Renewed pastors are absolutely crucial to a move of God in our day! (Ephesians 6:14-20)
3. **Pray for God to bestow spiritual hunger in His people and draw them to fervent intercession.** God has to grant people the genuine faith and the fervent desire for prayer. With all our promotion and programming, we cannot “produce” a genuine prayer movement. (Philippians 2:13)

⁵ Schlafer, 30.

⁶ Adapted. Original source lost.

4. **Pray that God will bring loving unity within our churches and a deep harmony between our churches.** Many churches need healing among members (conflict resolution) and many churches need to stop competing jealously with other churches. (John 13:35)
5. **Pray for God to fill His people with a passion to see people saved.** Only God can give a genuine burden for souls. Until God's people intensely pray for the lost and do aggressive soul winning, awakening will tarry. Be sure you are constantly praying for many lost people by name. (Romans 9:1-3)
6. **Pray for God to give His people a passion for missions and starting churches.** Great revivals produce an explosion of mission projects, new ministries and new church plants. Only God can grant a genuine passion for missions. (Matthew 28:19)
7. **Pray that God will call thousands into ministry, missions and Christian service.** Many churches are dying for lack of soul winners, pastors and teachers. Furthermore, we can start only as many churches as we have church planters to start them. (Matthew 9:37)
8. **Pray that God will pour out His Spirit like a mighty purifying flood.** Ask God to purify our motives as we pray for revival. It is possible to pray for revival with selfish or ambitious reasons. Our motives must be solely for: (a) the glory of God, and (b) the increase of the kingdom of God. We must not pray for revival just to solve our own problems or make our church successful in the eyes of men. (James 4:2)

C. Seeking His Face

Seeking God has been a thread throughout this course. It encompasses seeking to know who He is, to become more intimate with Him, to understand and obey His ways, thereby seeking His favor. We may look to Him for deliverance from troubles, to answer our prayers, but that is not seeking His face and we need to keep the difference clearly before us. This actually is part of our ongoing journey for we will never know Him completely here on earth. We need to develop an insatiable hunger for God and His presence in our lives. What we actually seek in revival is a manifestation of His presence in and around us. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, a great British preacher of the 20th century, wrote in his book *Revival*:

The inevitable and constant preliminary to revival has always been a thirst for God, a thirst, a living thirst for a knowledge of the living God, and a longing and a burning desire to see Him acting, manifesting Himself and His power, rising, and scattering His enemies.⁷



Exercise 3

Read the following passages. These people were all “hungry” for more of God. What was each person longing for? Write down what you find. Do any of these reflect your hunger for God? Which one? Write a short prayer expressing what is in your heart.

Moses — Exodus 33:13-18

The psalmist — Psalm 42:1-2

David — Psalm 63:1-3

Paul — Philippians 3:10

D. Repentance

It is important to notice again as we did in Lesson 4, “Prayer: Worship and Praise”, that it is after we have been in the presence of the Lord that we can truly seek repentance. You can go through a list of sins, which is endless and hopeless, but when we are confronted with God's holiness which includes His mercy and compassion, it gives us the courage to face our sins, seek His forgiveness

⁷ As quoted in Schlafer, 33.

and make restitution. We need to expose our sin to the light, which often means confession to others, sometimes even to the whole body of Christ, especially if you are a church leader. We have examples of Biblical leaders who humbled themselves in confession and repentance. In 2 Samuel 24 is the story of David in a moment of pride taking a census of the people which was directly against God's command, and punishment fell. In verse 17 it is David who openly acknowledges his guilt and then follows up by making a sacrifice at great cost on behalf of his people. Daniel on the other hand interceded and confessed the sins of the people, even though we have no recorded sin from his own life. But as a leader he still came before God in humility asking on behalf of the people for forgiveness and mercy (Daniel 9:4-11). A leader carries a great responsibility to keep himself pure before God confessing and repenting of any sin so that he will not bring suffering on his people, as well as confessing and repenting on behalf of his people.

Our sincerity of repentance is usually shown by our willingness to make restitution. Sometimes that is making an apology; sometimes it may mean paying a debt or replacing something. If you feel unwilling to make restitution, you are not really repentant. Repentance is a desire to turn completely away from that sin, purge it from your life, make everything right, and move on with a clean conscience.



Question 18 Read Matthew 5:23-24. What is Jesus' admonition if someone has something against us?

If we regularly examine our hearts before God and are not seeking to hide sin from Him, He will show us where we still have fallen short. He never throws a whole list of sins at us. Instead, He shows us His holiness and reveals what He needs to deal with next in our lives. He does not desire us to wallow in our sorrow.



Question 19 Read Nehemiah 8:9-12. What were the people told to do?

We see as we read further in Nehemiah 9 that the people carried through with confession and repentance, which included worship. God knew their hearts were broken and He wanted them to understand the joy they had in Him (Nehemiah 8:10). These people had available to them through the Scriptures not only what their sin was but the knowledge that He wanted to forgive them and would forgive them.



Question 20 Read Psalm 130:3,4; Psalm 86:5; Micah 7:18,19. Summarize what is stated about the fullness of God's forgiveness.



Exercise 4

Let God search your heart. In earlier lessons we have talked about confession, repentance, purity before God. Take 20 minutes to review this section ask the Lord to show you if you need to be reconciled to someone or if you need to make restitution. Pride makes us think it is not important if we asked God to forgive us, but we must carry through in our actions with humility to make right what we can. Without that our repentance may be very shallow. In your notebook write down names that God brings to mind and what you need to do, whether that is making an apology, returning money, whatever lies within your power to make right. Clear your conscience, then, accept His forgiveness wholeheartedly—joyfully!

When we worship His holiness, confess our sinfulness, and offer Him our brokenness, this brings revival!

E. Expectation

If our heart's deep desire is for revival and awakening and we begin to see others seek and pray also, then we need to have an attitude of expectation that God is going to do something great, that whether sooner or later, He will allow His Holy Spirit to move and pour out His power in revival and awakening. Our expectation is based on His promises:

Read Deuteronomy 4:29-31 and Jeremiah 29:13-14.



Question 21 State the promise in each passage for those who seek the Lord.

If that is what we truly believe and expect and desire then we also need to be aware of what will happen in the church when revival comes. We want revived believers who are once again full of fervency and love for the Lord. How will we help them to grow in their spiritual lives and deepen this fresh relationship with the Lord? People are going to be awakened to their spiritual needs and get saved. How will we nurture these new believers into full maturity? If we have faith that God will do a mighty work, not just in our own hearts but in the whole church, we need to prepare ourselves and other leaders to disciple and nurture, not just one or two, but many. We need to prepare for the “consequences”.

F. Satan's Opposition

We must be aware of the fact that any seeking of revival will be in direct opposition to Satan and his kingdom and he will do all in his power to deceive and destroy. Satan will do all he can to prevent revival and awakening, but when it does come, he will not stop his activities. Temptations can come in various forms. It can be in the form of a focus on self and how God has used us rather than on God and what He has done; thinking that we have caused revival by our planning, praying, participation, “success”. This can lead to pride in how active and large our church is rather than joy in God's working. Satan will try to tempt some to seek ongoing emotional highs after the initial, and normal, emotions begin to wane. This can lead to the practice of artificially producing the emotions. True revival will produce emotions but it is not dependent on them in order to continue. Emotions are a by-product not the goal. As we prepare for revival we have to be aware that Satan still will use every opportunity to destroy, even in the midst of God's great moves.



Exercise 5

Answer the questions. How are you involved in preparing for revival? What steps do you (still) need to take? Is your church preparing for revival and awakening? If yes, list what steps they are taking to prepare. If not, what can you do to help them prepare?



Exercise 6

Spend a half day in prayer. Using the points from this section of “Personal Preparation” set aside a block of four hours to pray through each step personally. Search the Scriptures and your heart and look for personal and corporate revival.

This is what this whole lesson is about, your personal time seeking revival in your own heart, and then seeking God for revival in your church. There are six points to cover so you may want to spend about a half hour on each one giving time at the beginning for worship and at the end for evaluation.

IV. The Effects of Revival

When revival comes it will bring lasting results that will impact the church and community. This is a summary of what has been observed in the examples of revival in the Bible and in history.

A. Awareness of Sin

There will be an awareness of sin in the church and a longing to make everything right with God. This will lead to public confession and restitution and often begins with the confession of leaders (David, Nehemiah). Yes, this is part of the preparation for revival, but it will saturate the church. And this will move on the whole community as the Spirit of God is free to work His work of conviction because of the repentance of His own people.

B. A Passion for Christ

A zeal and love for the Lord will be the pervading atmosphere of the church. Praise will be freely given to God. There will be a spirit of liberty which overrules tradition and an expectancy to see God manifest Himself far beyond our usual experience in worship services.

C. Zeal for Evangelism

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Witnessing for Christ and sharing the Good News comes as an overflow from a renewed love for Christ. A passion to share what God is doing and the desires of His heart replaces the sense of obligation and guilt which too often is the motivation for witnessing. And when people see transformed lives overflowing with the fruit of the Spirit, they are drawn to listen and respond. Enthusiasm linked with evidence is a powerful tool. And people come to Christ.

D. Awakening of the Lost

It is inevitable that when people actively share their faith, many will get saved. A spiritual awakening will result as God’s people speak up on His behalf. We observed the impact on unbelievers in the Welsh revival. Always when there is revival unbelievers begin seeking after God. Revivals lead to renewed missionary efforts, or new missionary efforts. We have seen how missionary efforts extended around the world from the Moravian revival. The revival in England and America in the 1800’s started the modern missionary movement.

E. Hunger for God’s Word

The Bible suddenly becomes alive and dynamic in the lives of individuals and the church. There is a sense of urgency about spiritual things. There is a longing to know more of what God desires in our passion to seek Him in new and deeper ways. Reading is no longer a duty to be performed in order to show you are a good Christian. Instead it becomes a delight to hear God’s voice speaking in new ways. There is no longer an attitude of withholding from God and being afraid to look in the mirror of His Word. It is replaced by a desire to know everything possible about how you can please Him and show Him your love, how you can obey Him, how you can serve Him.

F. Holiness

When the Spirit is in control of our lives He will produce His fruit—Christ-likeness. Love and unity will be the rule rather than the exception in the life of the individual as well as in the life of the church. People will have a longing to spend time with God and prayer will become a privilege to be enjoyed rather than a duty to be endured. Compassion for the poor and needy will be evident.

G. Impact on Society

History proves that revivals have led to significant social change. When large numbers of converts are added to the church in a relatively short period of time there will be an impact on society. Historians state that it was the impact of the revival led by John Wesley that prevented England from a bloody revolution like was experienced in France. After the Welsh Revival of 1904-05 there was a dramatic decrease in crime and drunkenness. Pubs reported large losses in trade and bad language disappeared.



Exercise 7

Now it is time to examine the spiritual state of your local church. List each one of the results of revival mentioned above. Make a scale of 1-10 beside each one. Rate yourself and your church with #1 showing the least evidence and #10 in full evidence.

Conclusion

Revival isn't simply defined. We would like to use a few words or phrases to explain what revival is, but that is not possible. Revival is a work of God and because of that we can't always define it clearly. One person might say that revival happens when many people come to Christ, another would say it is when the church is renewed from within, a third would argue that revival starts in the heart of the Christian. We do know that revival is about turning our hearts to God and seeking Him with all of our hearts, souls and minds. And we know that the outcome is a church that looks much more like the "New Testament church": alive and active, vibrant.

Learning about revival and talking about revival may be interesting, or even challenging, but a time comes when each one must decide if they are going to be part of a revival. We know that revival comes only from the Spirit of God, and in His own way, but in many of the revivals we have mentioned God used one person as the main leader—one person who wanted a righteous life, who wanted to see the hand of God move in a mighty way, who prayed, who made the commitment.

Will you be God's man?

Course Conclusion

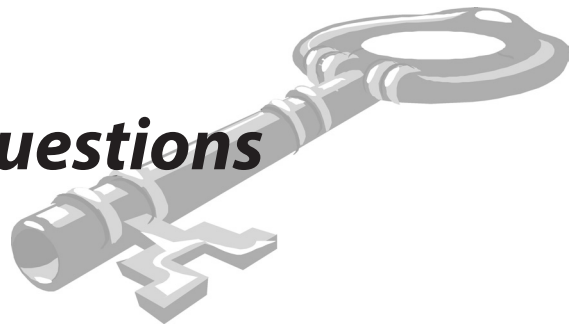
If you have been diligent and done all 13 lessons of Committed Christian Life, now it is time to take what you have learned and make it a part of your daily life. We discussed the purpose of the Christian life, the part of God the Holy Spirit, and Christ's enemy Satan. Our understanding of personal praise and worship in our prayer life, as well as petitions and intercessions, has grown. We have reinforced the fact that the Bible must always be a vibrant, active force in our lives. Transformation into Christ-likeness is a wonderful goal for our lives bringing beauty to us and to all of those around us as we pursue the Holy Spirit's ongoing work within us. We have learned that suffering is universal but that God wants to use it to mold us and draw us to Him. We have briefly examined our fellowship as believers and the responsibility to care for each other, even working through the difficulties of conflict for the health of the whole body of Christ. We have discussed the gifts of the Holy Spirit that He has endowed to the church and the individual believer for the good of all, giving us opportunities to minister both within and without the church. And in Lesson 12 on "Redeeming the Time" we worked at understanding how our spiritual goals need to become part of our lives on a regular basis so that we can tangibly see ourselves moving to our great-

est purpose in life—bringing glory to God. During this course you have had many opportunities for new commitments and deepening of your spiritual life, but taking a course on the committed Christian life does not make you a committed Christian. It only gives you the means to do so. This last lesson is the opportunity for commitment on behalf of the body of Christ and your community to do all you can to be a vehicle of revival. What lies in your heart? Perhaps the place to start is “search me, Oh God”.

If you have done all the lessons then you have studied well and accomplished much including practicing a regular prolonged quiet time with the Lord and memorizing Hebrews 11 where we have wonderful examples of faith to spur us on in our Christian lives. Decide right now that you will return to this course regularly, several times a year, to review one of the lessons and read again from the 3 books we used for the course: *The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life* by Hannah Whitall Smith; *Absolute Surrender* by Andrew Murray; and *Deeper Christian Life* by Andrew Murray. Chapters have been included in lessons as appendices throughout the course, but if you have not done so, you should get a copy of each one of these classics-- not to just sit on a shelf and gather dust, but an ongoing part of your Christian development. Be encouraged by those who have gone before us.

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus... ~Hebrews 12:1-2a

Answers to questions



Question 1

They had not had a teaching priest or the law.

Question 2

They turned to God and sought Him. He in turn allowed them to find Him.

Question 3

He purged the land from idols.

Question 4

They made sacrifices to God and then they made a covenant to seek the Lord with all their heart and soul, even pledging to kill anyone who did not do that.

Question 5

The people all assembled together and wanted Ezra to read the law to them, which he did from early in the morning until midday. Then some of the men explained to the people what the law meant.

Question 6

The people were weeping. Most likely they had not heard the law before, or not understood it, and they were sorrowful because of how they had broken it.

Question 7

They worked hard, did not quit, did not tolerate evil, could discern false apostles, persevered and had not grown weary.

Question 8

They had left their first love of Christ.

Question 9

They were lukewarm towards Him, trusting in riches and not realizing their spiritual poverty.

Question 10

Answer Psalm 85—restoration, revival, lovingkindness, salvation

Isaiah 64 — That God would come down i.e. show His Presence by His power. Forgive their iniquities.

Habakkuk — For God to revive His work

Question 11

He will come suddenly.

Question 12

He opposes the proud.

Question 13

A self-centeredness which caused their prayers not to be answered.

Question 14

Submit to God (7); draw near to God, purify your heart (8); mourn and weep (9); humble yourself in His presence (10).

Question 15

Speaking against each other and judging each other (11)

Having confidence in our future plans (13)

Being arrogant and boasting (16)

Question 16

A broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, a contrite and lowly spirit.

Question 17

Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God.

Question 18

Go and make it right with that person so that your offering will be pleasing to God.

Question 19

Stop their weeping and celebrate getting right with God.

Question 20

Your answer.

Question 21

Deuteronomy 4:29-31-They will find Him and return to Him.

Jeremiah 29:13-14—They will find Him and He will restore them to “their original estate”.

Answers to exercises



Exercise 1

Your answer. The following will probably be among your observations:

Factors leading to revival in 2 Chronicles 34:

King Josiah sought God

He tore down the idols and altars in the land.

He restored the House of the Lord.

They found the law and began to read and understand it.

Similarities/differences in these revivals:

They occurred in times of moral darkness, idolatry and sin.

They began in the heart of one man—a man committed to God.

Many of them were the result of making the Word of God known to the people.

All resulted in a return to the worship of God.

Idolatry was destroyed and people began to obey God “whole heartedly”.

Often (always) accompanied by joy and gladness.

Period of national prosperity and peace followed.

Exercise 2

Your answer.

Exercise 3

Your answer.

Exercise 4

Your answer. This is something that may take time. Often we have “hidden” these sins with the passage of time or excuses so make this a topic of prayer a few times before you are satisfied that you have been open before God.

Exercise 5

Your answer. This is a critical exercise if you are sincere about seeing revival come.

Exercise 6

Your answer.

Exercise 7

You may have nothing to report at this time. Everything may be on a #1 level—or below. Keep seeking God for revival and, when it comes, identify what results you see and how greatly God has moved in your midst. Keep “expecting” God to do great things!

