

deeply changed. In times of revival, the Holy Spirit is the One who brings deep conviction of sin resulting in true repentance and fruit that remains. Rev. 3:2

The Hebrew word for “revival” is “chayah” (Strong’s #2420) which has three variations of meaning: 1) to keep alive, to sustain or preserve life; 2) to quicken, to impart new life, to make alive; 3) to restore to life, heal, recover, repair, to restore to health; to save, to be alive, to surely make whole. In its simplest form, revival means the reviving of that which is dead, dying or sick in our lives.

Revival starts in an individual’s heart when they make the choice to follow God and forsake all else. We often think of “revival” in terms of the great outpourings of God’s spirit on entire cities and nations. Thinking in such grand terms may actually hinder us from seeing revival because we don’t see the need for our personal involvement to bring revival or we wait for a move of God on the larger Body of Christ. God wants to begin His work of revival in each heart. As the individual prays faithfully, God will add to the numbers. Example: Daniel 9; Ezra 9; Neh. 9

While revival must begin in each individual’s heart, the explosive power of revival comes when revived pray corporately for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. See pattern of Pentecost as described in Acts: Acts 1:4, 8, 14; Acts 2:1-4

The greatest revivals have always been in times when Christians were intent on prayer and a return to God’s Word. Revival typically starts with a small number of individuals who are deeply dedicated to prayer, intercession and sharing God’s Word. No one knows when or how God will respond to those prayers, but as prayer begins to take root the numbers of those praying will increase and prayer becomes more important than preaching or evangelism.

Revival is not always welcome by God’s people, because the price is high. There is no cheap grace in revival. It entails repudiation of self-satisfied complacency. Revival turns careless living into vital concern. It exchanges self-indulgence for self-denial. Winkie Pratney in his book, *Revival*, states that “revival is not a miraculous visitation falling on an unprepared people like a bolt out of the blue. It comes when God’s people earnestly want revival and are willing to pay the price.” Revival comes when God’s people engage in personal repentance and obedience to the great commission.

In 1909, James Burns, in his book, *Revival, Their Laws and Leaders*, wrote, “to the church, a revival means humiliation, a bitter knowledge of the unworthiness and an open humiliating confession of sin on the part of her ministers and people. It is not an easy or glorious thing many think it to be, who imagine it filled the pews and reinstated the Church in power and authority. It comes to scorch before it heals, to comes to condemn ministers and people for their unfaithful witness, for their selfish living, for their neglect of the cross and to call them to daily renunciation, to an evangelical poverty and to a deep and daily consecration. That is why revival has ever been unpopular with large numbers in the Church. Because it says nothing to them of power such as they have learned to love, or of ease, or of success. It accuses them of sin and tells them they are dead, and calls them to awake, to renounce the world and follow Christ.”

Examples of historical revival:

Jonathan Edwards' son in law, David Brainard, began to pray for revival amongst the American Indians. It is said that he would pray for hours in the snow until it melted around him in blood as he coughed his life away with TB. In 1745, he describes in his journal how revival finally began: "The power of God seemed to descend upon the assembly 'like a rushing mighty wind' and with astonishing energy it bore all down before it. I stood amazed at the influence that seized the audience almost universally and could compare it to nothing more aptly than an irresistible force of a mighty torrent. Almost all persons of all ages were bowed down with concern together and scarce was one able to withstand the shock of the Spirit's astonishing operation.

In 1829, some lumbermen who came from a rough unsettled area without schools or churches, attended some Christian meetings and a number were converted. They went back into the wilderness to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. These uneducated men began to tell others what they had seen in Philadelphia and to exhort them to attend to their salvation. They were immediately blessed and revival began to take hold and spread amongst the lumbermen. It went on in a most powerful and remarkable manner. It spread to such an extent that in many cases, persons would be convicted and converted, who had not attended any meetings and who were as ignorant of God's ways as heathen. Men who were getting out lumber and living in little shanties, alone, were seized with such conviction of sin that it would lead them to go and inquire what they needed to do to be saved and through them the revival would continue to spread. Two or three years later men of the region said that not less than 5,000 people had been converted in the lumber region, and that the revival had extended itself for 80 miles and there was not one single minister of the Gospel there. The Gospel was spread in a clear, concise manner, those who were converted were free from fanaticism or wildness.

The "lay revival" of 1858, which affected the Western world for half a century began when businessman, Jeremiah Lanphier, became burdened to pray because of the state of the church. He and two other men who were like-minded began to pray for revival. They started a weekly prayer meeting with a handful of people. Initially, his prayer meeting was so poorly attended that there were times he was there alone. But then the group grew and the meetings increased from weekly to daily. Several churches followed the pattern and soon a public meeting places in the city were regularly packed. Within a few months, 10,000 people gathered daily at noon for open prayer meetings in New York City streets. Large crowds began to flock to the meetings and after a while prayer meetings were held every hour of the day and night in New York City. Not only were the churches filled with people praying, but so were public buildings, movie theaters and even bars were filled with prayer. In 2 years, two million converts had entered American churches. Like flood waters, the revival spread through the Hudson River Valley. The fire spread from New York to Philadelphia, to other cities and then swept over the entire country. It jumped the Atlantic and spread to Ireland, Scotland, England, Wales and then danced like fire across much of Europe, then South Africa and India. There was no evangelistic organization. The whole revival was based on prayer. Preaching was tried but of no effect, so believers went back to praying. Communication was slow, word spread from one prayer cell to the next, from church to church and city to city.

In Ireland, four men in a little town of Kells, banded together to meet every Saturday night to pray for revival. They spent the whole night in prayer. After these men had been praying for some time, they went out to try to preach, but their attempt was a failure, so they went back and kept on praying. God heard their prayer and the fire of God fell. The work went on in Ireland so that in some parts of the country courts adjourned because there were no cases to

try, jails were closed because there were no prisoners to incarcerate, and in some places even the grain stood ungarnered in the fields because men were so taken with the things of God and of eternity that they had no time to attend to the things ordinarily so necessary. Many of the most notorious and hardened and hopeless sinners in the land were converted and thoroughly transformed.

"Prayer prepares the land, but action possesses the land." At age 21, J.L. Frazier, went to China as a missionary. In 1907, he went to a territory never before explored by missionaries. He found a land of great darkness, full of cruelty, sacrifices to demons and demonology. He found 10,000 Lhasa and two other tribes of even greater number. He required converts to burn their idols and put away their old ways, including smoking of opium. He visited some of these villages for only three days and moved on, but when he returned, he found there were churches established after only 3 days of teaching. The Lhasa learned from him and went and taught someone else. Frazier himself was assailed by the most terrible attacks of Satan. The key to what the Lord was doing through Frazier was the fact that there were praying women behind him. His mother and friends prayed for him day and night. He sent them maps, and detailed information the people, about the work, and about the country. He said, "I will be an intelligence operative for you, but you do the work." He knew the difference of where the villages were prayed for because the work flourished, in areas where there was no prayer there was little or no fruit. He said the work could not have been done without the praying women. These were not large numbers of women praying, but nine to ten at most. They held onto God and would not let go. They prayed the Word and prayed every item he mentioned in his intelligence report. He said the work that was accomplished was completed on the far distant shores of Great Britain where those praying women took Satan's strongholds.

Leonard Ravenhill in his book "Revival Praying" quoted T.A. Hegre as saying, "If the Church would only awaken to her responsibility in intercession, we could well evangelize the world in a short time. It is not God's plan that the world merely be evangelized ultimately. It should be evangelized every generation. There should be a constant Gospel witness in every corner of the world so no sinner need close his eyes in death without hearing the Gospel, the good news of salvation through Christ."

To summarize what revival does:

1. Revival is always preceded by prayer. Revival wanes when prayer is reduced. Prayer may begin with only a few believers, but those who are deeply committed to prayer for revival.
2. Revival always starts with God's people. It does not start with 100,000 of conversions, it starts with a remnant of believers who are completely committed to do God's will.
3. Revival returns the Church back from lukewarmness, complacency or backsliding.
4. It results in the true conversion of men and women. Revival brings the unsaved to Christ.
5. It always includes the deep conviction of sin on the part of the Church. The conviction of sin and deep repentance is what produces such depth of quality in the life of the convert, causing him to go on for God.
6. God can accomplish more in days of true revival than can normally be accomplished in years.
7. The result of revival has such a deep impact upon the Church and society that the affects often continue for years, even centuries.

Digging Deeper in the Word

1. 2 Chronicles 7:14 has often been quoted as the clarion call to true revival. It contains not only the conditions for God's people, but also the promise of God fulfilling His part. Meditate on this verse and note the conditions for we are to meet in order to see God's hand moving to bring healing revival.

2. There are a number of examples of true revival in the Scripture. These examples can serve as models for us, and provide us with a place to begin to meditate and pray His Word for the work of revival to begin in our day. Examples include: Jacob's Household, Gen. 35:1-15; Asa 2 Chronicles 15:1-15; Jehoash 2 Kings 11:12, 2 Chronicles 23:24; Hezekiah 2 Kings 18:4-7; 2 Chronicles 29:31; Josiah 2 Kings 22:23, 2 Chronicles 29:31; Zerubbabel (Haggai and Zechariah play a prominent role), and Nehemiah and Ezra Nehemiah 9:9; 12:44-47.

3. Note the "Nine Characteristics of revivals in the Scriptures" and write how you think these same characteristics would look in the Church today. (Dr. Wilbur Smith summary in "Revivals" p. 63-64)

- They occurred in a time of deep moral darkness and national depression.
- They began in the heart of one consecrated servant of God, whose prayers became the energizing power behind the move. This person was the agent used by God to quicken and lead the nation back into faith and obedience to Him.
- Each revival rested in the Word of God and most were the result of proclaiming God's law with power.
- All resulted in a return to worship of Jehovah.
- Each witnessed the destruction of idols where they existed.
- In each revival there was a recorded separation from sin.
- Each revival led to a return of God's ways (restoration of blood sacrifice)
- Almost all recorded revivals show a restoration of great joy and gladness in the Lord.
- Each revival was followed by a time of great national prosperity and blessing.

4. The New Testament Church provides us with our best model of how the Church is meant to function. Read through the book of Acts with the purpose of seeing how the believers functioned together in the early church. Mark with a distinctive symbol every example of the Church at prayer in Acts. Note what you learn about prayer through these examples.

How to Pray for Revival:

1. Ask the LORD to begin in your own heart. Confess all sin and personally repent of falling short of God's glory. Ask Him to revive your heart and fill your spirit with His Holy Spirit, according to the conditions set forth in 2 Chr. 7:14; Ps. 119:2,10

2. Pray that the LORD will fill the Church with true brokenness that brings an awareness of our desperate need for God and to realize how far we have fallen. That the Church would cry out to God to come to our help! Rev. 3:17-18; Ps. 107; Ps. 51:17

3. Pray for restoration of the Word in our hearts and as a standard for righteousness in the church and in our nation. Ps. 119:72, Jer. 6:10,19; Isa. 59:14; Isa. 45:8; 61:11
4. Pray for Spiritual leaders to experience a deep revival in their hearts with a return to their first love for the LORD. Ps. 119:30, 130; Jer. 23:18, 21-23; Matt. 23:1-3; Ez. 7:10.
5. Pray the Church will overcome all discouragement, complacency and lukewarmness to have faith in God's great power to complete all of His plans and purposes, especially His plans for the Church. Rev. 3:14-22
6. Pray for revival within families, that God will restore spiritual leadership to husbands and fathers and that parents will teach their children to walk in the ways of the LORD. Deut. 6:5-9; Ps. 78:4-8
7. Pray for mercy to return this nation to its Christian roots, to obey God and walk in His ways. Ps. 119:15; 60; Ps. 119:32-37. 40; Hab. 3:2; John 8:32; Ps. 119:44-45.

Additional scriptures that may be meditated upon and prayed in relation to revival: Ps. 80, Isa. 63 and 64, Ps. 74:1-3; Ps. 85; Rev. 3:1-6; Rev. 3:14-22

What the Lord is speaking to my heart?

Do I want revival? If so, what changes might the LORD require in my life? Am I willing to pay the price to pray for revival to start with me? Write down what the LORD spoke to you as you read the notes on revival. What can you do to see the Church return to the ways of the early New Testament Church?

My Response to the Lord

Bring each and everything to the LORD!! Allow His peace to replace the anxiety and stress that this world tries to heap upon us!!