

How You Can Find Personal Revival When You're Dry and Weary

The Cross and the Switchblade by David Wilkerson has meant so much to me over the years as I have ministered to recovering addicts. And while I love the entire book and the story of his New York ministry, it's the description of when Pastor Wilkerson sold his TV that sticks.

Wilkerson had a successful family church in Pennsylvania. They were constructing a new building. He had a "swelling missionary budget," he said, and crowded pews, but something was off. Something was missing. Here is a bit of an excerpt from his book about the decision he made on Feb. 9, 1958, because he was feeling spiritually dry:

It was late, Gwen and the children were asleep, and I was sitting in front of the set watching the "Late Show." The story somehow involved a dance routine in which a lot of chorus girls marched across the set in just-visible costumes. I remember thinking suddenly how dull it all was.

"You're getting old, David," I warned myself ...

"How much time do I spend in front of that screen each night?" I wondered.

"A couple of hours, at least. What would happen, Lord, if I sold that TV set and spent that time—praying?" I was the only one in the family who ever watched TV anyway.

He then describes this decision and how he made a bargain with the Lord. "I'll advertise the TV for sale in the newspaper, and if I get a buyer in a half hour after the paper comes out, I'll know this idea is from you, Lord."

And so, Wilkerson advertised his TV for sale, and exactly 29 minutes after the newspaper arrived at the house, a buyer called and agreed to pay David's price for the TV—a sight unseen. The sale was made.

With the idol of the TV no longer standing between him and God, his prayer life and vital connection to God blossomed. He learned to mix prayer and Bible reading. It was in one of these midnight sessions of praying that he picked up a *Life* magazine and saw a picture of seven teenagers on trial for murder. In seeing them, Wilkerson wept, and he felt the Holy Spirit call him to go to New York City to help the kids lost on the street to drugs and crime.

We know Wilkerson had a powerful ministry and touched many lives.

But isn't it interesting? The precipitating event for hearing his call to New York City was getting rid of the television set that stood between him and God.

Wilkerson's spiritual dryness was not a sign that God had left or abandoned him. Rather, he had been investing himself in things that made him unable to hear the voice of the God who loved him, who was so willing to lead him and who was ever so near.

When we are spiritually dry and feel far from God, what exactly is going on and what will launch us into the personal revival that then leads to sparking revival in others?

The apostle Paul wrote Timothy that he could and should "fan into flame the gift of God which is in [him] through the laying on of [Paul's] hands" (2 Tim. 1:6b, ESV) In other words, Timothy simply needed to stir up again what he already possessed.

For more about how to recover a spiritually vibrant life and intimacy with the Holy Spirit, listen to this episode of

Rooted by the Stream.

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