

Torrey 1998 Four Traits of People God Uses

By Ron Mehl

We just right away just take your Bible and turn, if you would, to the book of Matthew, the book of Matthew, Chapter nine is where I'd like you to turn. And we're going to look at a section of scripture that I think gives us a real perspective, not only about God's heart, but I think really gives us a perspective on really God's desire and the traits I think that he sees as being essential in people that he uses. When I talk about perspective, I I can't read Matthew Chapter nine without gaining the real heart and perspective of God towards people.

And whenever I think of perspective, I always think of the Larry Walter story. I don't know if I maybe ever if you've read in the L.A. papers here, but Larry Walters is the guy and this is a true story. There is thirty three years old. He was a truck driver and very, very discouraged, very troubled. Things weren't going very, very well. Nothing was ideal. Deep in his heart. He always wanted to fly. He wanted to fly a plane, but he couldn't afford it is too expensive. There is no way you could do it. And so he thought, well, you know, life is terrible. My job's terrible. I don't get to do anything I really want to do. And you really wanted to fly. So you just kind of get up above and look down. He could see everything, you know, have a perspective about life in the world that I had never seen before.

But he just, you know, obviously didn't happen. And in the midst of his depression, he's sitting in his backyard and he's sitting there in his lawn chair and he has this brilliant idea. And so he gets up and he goes down to the Army surplus store and he buys forty five weather balloons and he

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thinks, well, you know, with this brilliant idea, what he's going to do now is he's going to buy forty five weather balloons. He buys a big thing of helium, he buys a B.B. gun, he buys a six pack of beer, he's got his CB radio and everything, but he buys a BB gun as well. He goes home, sits down. He's sitting in his lawn chair. And his idea is because he can't afford to fly everything, what he's going to do is fill these forty five weather balloons with helium. That's what he does. So he not only fills them all up now, he's sitting in his lawn chair in the backyard, but he's, of course, you know, got himself fixed in such a way that, you know, he's certainly not going to surface until he's ready, but he's not a mathematician.

And so while he fills up all the balloons, all forty five, he hooks them on to his lawn chair. And when he puts them on a lawn chair, finally he's got them all hooked. And so he reaches over and he cuts the rope that's hooked on to his chair and immediately he shoots up to 11000 feet. I mean, this is a true story. I mean, if you've not read it in L.A. time, maybe you ought to read it. He shoots up to eleven thousand feet. Now, here he is sitting there now with his B.B. gun. And his plan is, you know, because he didn't expect to go to eleven thousand.

But when he, you know, eleven thousand feet, he just figured, well, I could just shoot out a balloon every now and then. And when one goes out, maybe it would drop me down a little bit. And what he didn't know was that now he's up. He's at eleven thousand feet and he's he's floated into the LAX Flightplan, the corridor. And here he is. This true story, by the way, Larry, Walter just died, I think, about a year or two ago, and they ran an article again about this.

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So here he is now. Eleven thousand feet. He's sitting there and one of the United jetliners is coming in and the commercial pilot looks out and he sees this guy sitting in a lawn chair at eleven thousand feet. So he so he calls the tower and he says, you will not believe this, but I am presently staring at an armed man in a lawn chair drinking beer at eleven thousand feet. And I don't know how they ever got him down. I mean, I still have no idea. I know Larry got a pretty good perspective about about life in L.A. from the eleven thousand feet. But when I heard the story, I, I thought, you know, Lord, I suppose that's maybe one of the things that you're wanting us to always realize to that, that you want to give us a perspective about life, that we can't get any other place except from him and from you.

And so in Matthew, Chapter nine is where I'd like you to look. And we're going to look just beginning at verse thirty five. Would you do that? And let's follow along. And Jesus went about all the cities and villages teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion because they fainted and were scattered abroad as sheep. Having no shepherd then say at the end of his disciples, the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labors are.

Few pray, therefore, for the Lord of the Harvest that he would stand forth laborers into the harvest field. I suppose for me, one of the questions I'm often asked is why does God choose the people he chooses and why does he use the people that he uses? I think there's a couple of things in the book of Matthew that that are probably simple secrets for us. And I'm going to ask you just to jot down two or three things that may be helpful to you, because when it comes to God's working in this world today. He's committed himself to working through people who have

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several characteristics and traits about their life, and I think the first is found here in verse thirty six, and that is that, number one, that I would become the kind of person that sees, as God sees in verse thirty six, it says. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion. What's amazing about Jesus is that he always sees a lot more than most people see.

Now, of course, he he sees the crowd coming. He sees the multitude coming. And what does he see? Sure. He sees poor people. He sees blind people. He sees people that are hurting. He sees very wealthy people that are well dressed, that are well-to-do, that have everything you could ever want or imagine. He saw people that were hurting and struggling, but but Jesus saw a lot more. And when we look at people, we see, well, they're dressed like this and we make a quick evaluation and they're not our type and our kind. And they're different and they look different. They act different. But the Bible says and suggests that Jesus, when he saw them, it suggests that he saw a lot more than what they looked like. It wasn't just he looked at and say, oh, yeah, I. I see they're wealthy and well-to-do, happy or unhappy. The Bible suggests that the Lord is much, much deeper. He saw deep inside. He saw inside of their heart in their life.

And so last year it was my first experience to travel to Brazil. I had never been there before. And I didn't realize. I didn't know. You know, there are two hundred thousand homeless kids on the streets in Brazil. Two hundred thousand in Sao Paulo alone, which is the second largest city in the world, is 16 million people.

And I spoke several places and I remember one evening as we went out to eat, and they usually don't start eating dinner till 11, 12, one o'clock in the morning. And it's just bizarre. I mean, I

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couldn't believe it. And restaurants just begin to open that late. And we went to eat. And when we were done, it was one thirty in the morning and we walked out the door and we headed towards our car and there were three of us and the guys that were kind of caring for me. And one of the passengers was along. They had ordered so much food and there was just a big chunk of pizza left. And so they wrapped it all up and kind of a wide package.

We came out of this restaurant one thirty in the morning and typical in Sao Paulo, at least from my experience, almost all of these children, all of these kids, what they do is they don't have any possessions. All they have is a blanket. You'll see them walking around the city with nothing but a blanket around them. And that's all that they have. That's the way they live, the way they sleep. And when we came out, I still remember a little boy came out from out of nowhere. It was in the dark, of course, and we were getting ready to get in our car. And as we did, he came over and he just he just stood there and he stared at us. And now he's got his little blanket over him and he's very, very dirty and later discovered because I followed him, that he lived in a garbage can. And the reason he did is because of the warmth of the garbage. It was easier to sleep at night. And he looked at us and of course, he didn't say anything. He didn't bag it and say, I could have that. Could I have it? And just in a matter of moments, the pastor then he took the little package of pizza and he had a little boy.

Little boy didn't even say things. He just immediately he just ran as fast as he could down the block. And I followed him and he went back into a corner. And here he was back in behind by the garbage can, eating this little bit of pizza. And my second experience was in a service and

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serving communion, and there was a very, very attractive woman later found out that she was a model and they came to communion time and she didn't take communion.

And I said, I guess I don't understand why she didn't take communion. And they said, well, she's she's not a Christian. In fact, her life is is a long ways from God. When I looked at her, I mean, there's no question in my mind that she had it all together. I mean, I would say from my perspective, there's no question that this woman had everything you could ever imagine, ever want. But deep inside, there was something just something horribly, horribly wrong. I mean, what what makes a kid in Oregon, I mean, what makes a kid walk into a school and open fire and start shooting and then and then, hey, listen, and then we go and interview and we say, what did you think about Johnny? Oh, I know this is a shock to us. Johnny is just the nicest kid we've ever known. A nicer kid on the block. Nice kid. And there's no one even like him. He's everybody loves him in the neighborhood. There isn't anybody like him. Everybody likes him. But obviously, even though everybody liked him and everything looked right deep inside, deep down inside, there was something horribly wrong. And he was hurting. And nobody saw it. Nobody knew it.

And one of the real traits of people God uses is that we see people not for what we see, but what God sees the deep inside, deep within that God gives us a perspective about people and the needs that they really have. I can tell you in my life and my ministry changed, I was driving down Portland and downtown Portland. And as I'm driving, there's a drunk laying on the side of the road. He's drunk as can be. He's thrown up on the road. And the moment I looked at him, I my

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immediate reaction was, you know, why doesn't he moved by all or something or why isn't he moved to L.A. or when I moved to Seattle, I mean, why mess up our city?

I mean, this is a nice place. I mean, this is a wonderful place. I mean, why in the world you go someplace else, live someplace else and make a mess someplace else? And of course, it didn't take long for me to feel the great conviction of God that that if Jesus would have driven by and seen that man on the side of the road, I'd have broken down and cried. He would have wept for him because he was so burdened and concerned about his heart and about his soul.

The Bible says that Jesus was thirty six. He saw the multitudes. He saw them. He knew their greatest need. He was moved with compassion for them. I, I don't know if you're going to like this or not, but I have I have an unstable list. You guys have an unstable list. I literally I have a list that I keep of people that I know are never going to get saved. There are people that are so horrible, so bad, such a mess.

I mean, there isn't a chance in the world. And there on my own savable list and I've got about four or five people on the list right now that I think are so far gone so far out there that I think, Lord, there's no way in the world. I mean, when I look at them, I have to say there isn't a chance in the world until about seven or eight months ago, a young girl who's on my unsalable list, I was walking out to get in my car in the parking lot, and she came running over me to me and with tears in her eyes, she hugged me and and she said she said, Pastor, I snuck in here last Sunday and I heard you speak and I I gave my life to Jesus and I looked at her.

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And because my first reaction was, oh, that can be I mean, you got you're an unstable person. I mean, there's no hope for you. I mean, you're so far out there. Your life is such a mess. You're so screwed up. There's no chance in way in the world. But of course, when people begin to see people the way the law does, and that is not just the way they are and appear to me, but deep inside that the Lord says, I know there's something in them that moves me and I'm greatly concerned about it. And nothing is unsalable to him. There's nothing he can't do. There's no one he cannot touch. And probably what what helps me to keep all this in balance, do you think, boy, this can get pretty heavy, you know, boy? Well, you know, now I look at you and you look so sweet, but I don't know, deep inside me, there's something horribly wrong with you. You're looking good, but I don't really know.

And I think that's why I love anything that Tim Hanson writes. I love to read. And one of the reasons I do is because I think he's he says things. So, you know, I've asked the Lord to keep me very simple. I think he's overdone it a little bit. But but I really want to make sure that I don't get so carried away with the things of God that I miss what it is that is most important. And Tim Hanson writes about the fact that in his pocket, he keeps it.

Let's imagine this would every single day this grown man keeps a Snoopy, a King Kong and a kind of a squaddie little fat hippo in his pocket. And he said, I keep them in my pocket. If you ever read anything about Tim Hanson, he's written so many wonderful things. He said the people that know me know they're in there. If they're not in my pocket, they're in my coat pocket. But he said, I've got them all in. And he reminds me of two things. It reminds me of my children and how much I love them. But it reminds me, too, that I'm a child of God.

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And even though I see a world that desperately needs God's help, I have to be careful and remind myself God did not call me to win the world. God didn't call you to win the world. He may have called us to win some in the world, but the burden of feeling that I'm going to turn everybody to himself, I'm going to bring everybody to salvation is a burden none of us can carry. But we can do what we can say.

Lord, would you help me to see the way you see? And secondly, would you notice in verse thirty six that while we're called to see, as the Lord sees, to see deep in people's hearts, but secondly, then to feel as God feels, not just to see what he sees, but verse thirty six says what he saw, the multitude he was moved with compassion. He was, he was greatly, greatly moved. He was certainly moved that they were sick and he was moved, that they were hurting and and he saw them as people who didn't know where they were going.

Sheep without a shepherd. He looked over Jerusalem, he wept and cried. This Jesus was one of those weeping people. He was always moved with compassion. He was always deeply troubled at what he saw, greatly concerned about the people that he saw who needed his help so much. But I can tell you this, that when God uses people, he uses people who say, Lord, would you help me to really see this world the way you see it? And you'd also help me to feel for people, Lord, the way you feel for people. The problem with the disciples was, is and if you're making any mental notes now, we're getting to the place where it's probably going to be valuable to you and me. Here's a problem with the disciples.

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Jesus was never in a hurry. The disciples always were always in a hurry. It didn't didn't matter where they were going, whether they're always in a hurry. They didn't have a lord. You can't stop now. No, you can't talk to them at all. It's not help them now. We we've got to go there. We've got business to do. We're in a hurry.

And I don't know that happened here by all of it. I know a professor that was teaching a class. I don't know if his homiletics class speech class some kind, but everybody had to give a speech on the Good Samaritan and you would come in and you'd sit down. And of course, they'd call your name and you'd stand up to deliver your message, your sermon, your speech. And what the professor did was while he required everybody to speak about the Good Samaritan throughout the semester, he would place someone on campus under a tree by a bench that looked really like a vagrant, looked like someone that really needed help, somebody that was really a mess.

If you looked at him, you'd say this person doesn't belong here. And on three occasions when the student that was going to go and preach about the Good Samaritan came to the person that was laying there in such great need and asking for help in every situation, every case, not in one occasion did any one of those students stop to help the person. And they said the reason was is because they had to get to class to preach about the Good Samaritan. And I have I have to get to class to teach these people about what it means to stop and when somebody really does need help, that I not only see the things and needs that they have, but feel them so much that I'm willing to stop to stop alongside and to help.

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Would you jot down Mark, chapter six, verse 30 to 50, too, because it marked chapter six, verse 30 to 50 to let me give you an illustration of it. The disciples were in a hurry, but the Bible said that Jesus had great compassion. Jesus was wanting to get away away. He was wanting to take a rest. And and that was something he was always trying to do. He never hardly pulled it off, but he was wanting to just get some rest and it wasn't going to happen.

The five thousand came. And when they came, the Bible said the Lord was moved again and touched because he looked at them as, again, people that didn't have a shepherd and there was no hope. And he was moved with compassion. But Mark, chapter six, verse fifty two said, listen, here's what the Lord does, so the Lord feeds the five thousand when he's done feeding the five thousand. The Bible is very, very clearly says that the disciples really never really understood. They just never could grasp what it was that the Lord was trying to teach. They just they had missed it a mile.

In fact, in verse fifty two, it says if you look at it you'll see it says their hearts were hardened. So the Lord trying to rest, you got the picture trying to rest a multitude comes and say you need your rest, let's get away. You said no, let's feed them. He does when he's all done. The Bible says that the disciples had no idea what the Lord was up to because their hearts were hardened. And I think the point is that Jesus is saying that this is the miracle. Isn't the miracle of the feeding of the 5000 is not about the fact that Jesus can feed five thousand people?

That's not the point. The point is his compassion. It isn't that he's saying, hey, by the way, you know, in case you didn't know it, when when you see people that have needs, you know, I can

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feed him and care for them. This is not a message about I certainly he's the bread of life and there's great, great messages that come from it. But what he was trying to show them was to the disciples, what he was saying was this.

You're always in such a hurry. And I just if you don't write anything else now, would you jot this down? Because I think it's applicable to all of us. And that is if you hurry through your ministry, then you'll always develop a hard heart. If you hurry through it, if you're in a hurry, you've got to get this done. You'll always develop a heart and heart. You lose sight of the fact that people are hurting, that people have needs, and rather than seeing them as God sees them feeling really the way the Lord really feels for them, you and I will develop what the Lord said of the disciples. You didn't understand at all. This isn't that I'm I'm the God who can miraculously, supernaturally feed 5000.

The disciples, what he was saying was, you guys have become so busy, so concerned about where you're headed and what you're going to be in your future, you have lost sight of the fact that what this is all about is my great love and compassion for people that are hurting and lost.

I have a dear friend, Chuck Updyke, and his father was a missionary and in Panama and Guatemala for probably thirty five years, started over a thousand churches. Just a great, great man. He said they were at a convention in downtown Los Angeles and they said they were standing on a corner. Imagine this, would you? And there's about 200 pastors standing there on the corner and across the street. Chuck, now, who is the son of this dear old missionary man,

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little brother Claude Updyke. And and Chuck is a very he's a redhead, if that's enough said. But he's one of those really, really tough kind of guys.

And and he's his dad is very fragile. His dad's about eighty nine years old. So he's very protective of him. He's very concerned about anybody doing anything. And both of them are pastors, even though his father, of course, is retired now. Well, Chuck said, I looked across the street and I saw this guy that looked a bit delirious. He really looked confused. He looked like a mess. Elliptic is on drugs or something.

He said, I didn't know, but I said I watched him and he kind of was doing goofy, strange things. And he said and then I saw him start coming across the street and he said, the moment I saw him coming across the street, I got closer to my dad because I thought, you know, I'm I'll just make sure I'm here in case my dad needs me. And he said the moment the guy started coming, you could hear kind of the mumbling and excuse me for saying it, but you could hear the mumbling of pastors once he got into the crowd of basically, you know, it wasn't it wasn't like, get the guy out of here. It wasn't like, you know, we don't have time, you know, get away, forget it and don't mess with me. And but what's very interesting is that this guy from across the street, he walked across he walked through past all almost all 200 pastors and came right to Chuck's dad.

And when he got rights, Chuck, because Chuck tell a story he said, he said, I know he didn't come to me and he didn't come to anybody else. And the question was why? Because, you know, people tried shooin away an old old brother, Updyke, this dear old man of the cross. He said, no, no, no, no, leave him. And he stood there and he wept with him and he cried with them and

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he prayed for him and is very, very typical of this man. But what touched me was that, you know, and I don't want to get strange here, but what what do you think it was in that man that he could walk through a whole crowd of people and come to the one man who really would show love and affection to him?

And I'll tell you what I mean by that. I believe with all of my heart, the older I get more than ever before, that when the touch of God in the hand of God is on your life and you see and your burden for people as he is, you feel as he feels, there's something about people in the world who know it, and they will be the moment the Lord has lifted up. People are drawn. They're drawn to him and to his love and to his grace and to his mercy. I think that honestly, when it comes to the love of God for you and me, it leads me to the third thing here and the trade.

I think that maybe is as important as any is this, that not only do I need to see as the Lord sees and and feel as he feels, but would you notice verse thirty eight that I might learn to pray the way he prays, pray, therefore the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth laborers into the harvest field. Would you notice? Would you notice it. It says it's because I've always thought, you know. Oh you know. Well it doesn't say go it doesn't say give none of that.

What it says is what I'd like you to do is pray the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth labors into the harvest field. And of course, whenever we think about God doing something and moving and touching the world and the harvest coming in, we always feel like God's going to do this amazing, incredible thing. We we think he's going to move in and stop all the crime and stop all the prostitutes. And he's going to, you know, God's going to heal everything, fix everything

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and make everything right is going to feed the poor and take care of everything. And the Lord said, well, he's going to do a lot of things. What he calls people like you and me to do is to pray and to believe that when I pray and call on God, he's going to do something because it does say, pray the Lord that he'll send forth laborers in the harvest field. And so the Lord calls us to pray, it is not?

And I've passed Pastor long enough now to know as much as I highly regard ministry and preaching and everything else. I'll tell you this, the packaging of things in the world today and in the church as well. What people need today is not the nifty package that a pastor like me brings, but a burden of prayer that comes. And knowing that when I pray, it releases God to go and to speak and to touch and minister to people who it could never happen any other way.

And the Lord said, So I want you to pray and to learn to pray just as I pray. I don't know if you ever heard heard the story of Howard is dead, but it's got to be one of the most incredible stories in the whole wide world. Howard Hendricks, you know, is one of the professors at Dallas Seminary for many, many years. Just a just a great, great communicator. And Dr. Hendricks, they always would always pray for his dad.

And he said we would sit down with our kids and we'd sit down, we'd pray and we get the little kids together and he'd say, Now let's pray for Papa, let's pray for papa. And he said, when my dad would come over, he said he said, my little granddaughter, my his grandkids about my kids would come in the door, he'd sit down, they'd go right up and fly and jump right up in his lap, say, Papa, you saved yet, papa. You saved your save, don't you, Papa? And of course, Dr.

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Hendriks, dad would always say, well, no, I'm not. And his little grandkids would say, oh, you will be. You will be. We claim you every day. Pray for you every day. You will, Papa. You will.

Well, Dr. Hendrix was speaking in Dallas, Texas. And as he concluded his speech on this Sunday, a man came up and he said, Dr. Hendricks, I just I've always wanted to hear you preach. And and he said I was such a thrill for me today. And he said, Dr. Hendricks, I don't know why, but I just have to tell you that I've I've just really been praying for your father. And Dr. Henry said, well, my dad's not a Christian. And I really I really appreciate it. I really appreciate that. Dr. and his children every single day praying for papa, papa, you're going to get saved. We claimed you, Papa, you're going to receive Jesus. We know you will.

This dear old man comes and he says, Dr. Hendricks, I've never met you. I don't know you. I so appreciate your ministry. But I just want you to know that we're praying. Praying for your dad. I am. Doctor said thank you. The man goes all the way back. He drives all the way from Dallas, Texas, all the way back to Michigan. And in Michigan, he drives a Sunday school bus. Sunday morning, he's driving down the road, he comes to a corner. He stops his Sunday school bus. He looks out the window and there's a man standing on the corner that looks just like Dr. Hendricks.

He opens the door, he says, you look exactly like Howard Hendrix and the elder man said, Well, I, I guess I should he's it's my boy. Dr. Hendrix is my son. The man said, well, I just heard him preach. I have to tell you that he's just the greatest preacher and greatest communicator. I can't tell you what a blessing is to me. And this dear man now invited Dr. Hendrix over. And Dr. Hendrix is dead. Had been in the service. And have you if you if you know anybody have been

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in the service, then you're going to hear one one story after another. So is one more story. Every night it was five, six, seven, eight war stories and they did some. He'd go home next night, come back and tell another bunch of war stories. And this man is, of course, been praying for Dr. Hendrix. What a shock. It picks him up, sees him on the corner in his school bus, Sunday school bus. And then after all of these nights of great relationship, one night this man looked at Mr. Hendricks and he said he said, Mr. Henry, could I tell you a story? And this man stood there and he began to tell the story of Jesus that Dr. Hendrickx dad had heard a million times, a million times. And of course, they're sitting in that kitchen, he received Jesus and he gave his heart to the Lord.

It's just been recently now that I I have found myself discovering how absolutely essential prayer is in the life of of students and and people like you and me. I just have gone through a very difficult thing with a couple in our church. Their daughter is very rebellious and a runaway and she's had a baby and our life is a mess and. And I didn't know what to say to. And I was really moved and troubled, I have two boys and I love the mourning in the world.

I was really it's very difficult for me. And I thought, Lord, what can I do and this is what came to me. Why don't you pray, why don't you pray that the Lord might send someone out in the harvest? Why don't you pray? That's what this mean. Don't get so missions minded on me now that you and I only think about someone in Asia or South America, Central America and all. That's a very important and absolutely essential. But what the Lord is saying is what I'm asking you. If you'll pray, then I'm going to send somebody to the to the brother. You have the sister. You have that so far there on the unsalable list. There's not there's not a chance in the world they

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could get saved, except that in your prayer you realize that God is released to do something to bring about his blessing in their life, that when you and I pray the Lord is going to send somebody to the person that needs to hear. He's going to send someone to speak to them. And you know, what's really, really bad about it is the very, very person that you've talked to one hundred times told him the same thing. Now, some other idiot comes along and tells him one time as a boy, I never heard that before.

You've heard it a million times. Why? Because the Lord said there's going to be energized in their life, this work of the spirit of God, that it's going to cause the harvest to come in because somebody has prayed you if you if you want some bedtime reading, read Isaiah Chapter six, because you want to talk about a guy who is praying. And the Bible said that he saw the Lord high and lifted up. Isaiah is praying, praying and praying. His greatest concern is for people. His greatest concern is for the condition of the nation, what's happening in the world. And he's crying out to God. He's praying and he sees the Lord. He sees himself. And the Lord says, well, who should I send? And there's no one there. He's the only one. It's not like was in a crowd of people. Well, who should I send?

And I say, is the one. I mean, I guess I mean I guess I mean, I heard no one else here. And then the Lord said, well, Isaiah, you I think you should know this too. You're going to go and preach and no one's going to listen to you. I mean, no one's going to see it. And Isaiah says a smart thing. He said, well, how how long might that be said? You're going you're going to go now and preach and no one's going to respond. No one's going to respond to you. No one's going to listen. Anything you have to say. And Isaiah says, well, Lord, how long this is going to be, but typical

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of the Lord, even though he said they're certainly going to be people a period of time and you're going to do what you know is right. You're going to be concerned. You're going to feel as God feels, you're going to be greatly concerned about people that are in need and lost in the Lord. But there's always that remnant of people. Then when you preach, you speak, you pray that are going to turn their hearts and come to Jesus and respond to his love. Of course, the traits of walking with God are very, very simple, and I, I think for me, the the most encouraging thing of all is, is knowing that these priorities in our life are so essential.

I don't I don't know if you've heard about the professor that was teaching a class on time management. And of course, when I think about priorities, I think which is basically what he was doing, I think about in my own life the need to arrive at the place where where I change my heart about people.

I mean, there's a guy in our church that I said, I don't understand how this guy could come to our church for five years and never change. I mean, he's bad now, as he was when he came. And I said, Lord, this I don't this it makes sense. I mean, probably the finest pastor in the North American continent and the nicest person I know. And this guy comes week after week after week, month and year after year after year and never changes. He never changes. And the Lord graciously, and I never heard the Lord's voice, but I think the Lord spoke to me and said, you know, there's there's a reason why he never changes. And that is because you don't love him the way I love him. You love him for convenience. You want people to have no problems. So you don't have any problems. You want people to get healthy and whole. So you don't have to deal with those things.

You're not as moved and concerned about what's happening in their life as much as you want things to get over so you don't have to deal with the problems. And that is why I think the priorities in your life and mine are so important in this professor who is teaching this time management class is trying to drive a point home. And I think if there were a couple of priorities that I want to leave with, you would be some of these. But he said, I want to just you're going to get a pop quiz today. And he stood there, reached down underneath his desk and pulled out this one gallon wide mouthed Mason jar, and when he pulled it out, then he reached down and he got a dozen of fist sized rocks and he took them each one at a time and he placed them in the jar when he got them all in a jar, then looked at students. He said, is the jar full?

And they said, well, yes, of course it's full. He said, no, that's that's not right. And with that, he reached down underneath his desk and he grabbed this bucket of gravel and he took the gravel and he started to pour it in over the rocks and and he shook the jar and causing the piece of gravel to kind of filter down through. And when it was full up at the top, he said, is it full? And they said, now they're smart enough. Now I know it's not full. He said, very good. And then he reached down underneath this desk again and he pulled out a bucket of sand. And after shaking things again, he put the sand over the gravel and over the rocks and he filled it up to the top. And then he looked, this is it full. And they said no. And he said, good. He reached down on his desk again. He pulled out a pitcher of water and then he poured the water in and the water made its way around through the sand and the gravel in the rocks. And when it was all done, he said to the students, he said, well, he said, what's the lesson? What's the point? What's the point of the illustration?

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And one of these real eager beaver kind of guys hollers out and he said, oh, it's easy. I mean, I know what the point is. The point is, no matter how full your schedule is, if you really try, you can always fit a whole bunch more things in. And the professor said, no, no, no, no, no, no. That's a good answer. But that isn't it. He said the point of this illustration is, is that more than anything else, if you don't put the big rocks in first, then you'll never get them in at all. And I found myself thinking more and more about the priorities, especially for people like you who are in the process now of establishing the real priorities of my life.

I mean, how in the world how in the world can a pastor like me stand here and honestly admit to you that I'm driving down the street and I see a drunk and hope you'll get out of the way and get off the street and make things prettier for Portland. I mean, just imagine me saying that to you. It's true. I literally had to go and sit down on a park bench for two months in Portland every Tuesday with his all the clothes I could wear just sitting there on a bench and one drunk after another would come and offer me this and that, because I didn't look quite as bad as them.

But I just wanted to know their heart and how they felt and where they were and sitting there talking with them for one reason, because I found myself becoming and this is just hard to believe. So involved in the ministry, you don't have time to minister, so involved preparing my life for things that I really don't have enough time to be concerned for people that have needs constantly. That's the message Jesus was teaching disciples. So what was it teaching Jesus would say?

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Oh, well, you know, time management, maybe it's you know, it's full. You can always get more in your schedule. Know what he's teaching was that there are the big rocks in my life that I have to I got to make sure those things are in. First Lord, help me to see the way you see helped me to feel the way you feel. Lord, help me to believe that when I pray you'll do something. Help me believe, Lord, that when I pray, I'm going to release you to have a guy driving down a street in Michigan who doesn't have any idea who Howard Hendricks is.

And he stops in a school bus and picks him up, takes him home and leads him to Jesus Christ. Praying as God prays makes all the difference in the world with this, I'm done. I love the story of Angel. Ranja was a Baptist minister. And when I say for me, I am moved by this illustration, I am because I think it's so typical of what the Lord wants to do in all of our lives.

And Roy Angel, being a Baptist preacher, he he didn't have much money, but his brother, very wealthy, extremely wealthy oil rigs and everything in Texas. He was a millionaire by many, many times and he owned a penthouse in apartment building in New York City at Christmas time. Roy's brother invited him to come and visit him and his home, of course, his penthouse. And he arrived there at Christmas time. And when he did, Roy's brother gave him a gift for Christmas. They're standing now up in the top of the penthouse downtown New York City. And he looks down on the street and they're sitting right outside of his apartment building. Is this brand new car? It's red. It's beautiful. It's he's overwhelmed by it. And he goes down and the doorman is kind of keeping an eye on it. And when Roy came out, he said, I noticed the moment I came to the door, he said there was this little boy just kind of kneeling there, looking in the window, kind of a raggamuffin kind of kid, a little, you know, ghetto kind of guy who, you

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know, didn't have anything in the world. And he's staring. His nose is right up against the window. He's looking in and, you know, he's just impressed. And Roy can't get in the car and he gets to his car and and he kind of nudges the little boy.

And the little boy turns around and the little boy says to Roy, he said, Is this your car? And I said, well, yes, it is. And the little boy said, well, how much did it cost? He said, Well, I don't know. I mean, I don't have any ideas. It was given to me. My brother who lives up there, he he gave it to me and a little boy said, wow. He said, that's amazing. And then a little boy said this. He said to Roy, he looked at Roy and he said, I wish, I wish. And Roy was sure he was going to say, I wish. I wish I had.

A brother like that who could give me a car like this, but that's not what he said. The little boy looked at Roy and he said, I wish, I wish, I wish, I wish I could be a brother like that. I knew that this was this kid was like something he had never heard before. He was intrigued. And he said the little boy, because he knew he was loving, just looking at the car. And he said the boy said he said, son, would you like to go for a ride with the boys at all? Would I? I'd love to. They got in the car and they're starting to drive away. And as they drive away, the little boy looks over at Roy and he says he says, sir, could you could you run me by my house?

It's only a couple of minutes around here. Could you just take me by my house? And I thought, well, you know, he just wants to show off to the neighbors and he's coming in this big, impressive car. And and Roy figures, well, you know, why not? He pulls up to this little chanty,

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this broken down tenement building, and he stops and and the little boy says, could you could you just wait here just for a minute?

And he gets out of the car. He runs in and Ray waited there maybe five minutes or so. After about five minutes, he said he first thing he saw was now to this broken down tenement building. He said first thing you saw was two little pair of legs that showed up coming through the door. And next, of course, he saw his friend, who he had brought in his car carrying what probably was his little tiny brother, which it was. And now this young boy, this little boy comes walking out, holding his little brother in his hands, and he walks over and he sits down right, right by the curb, right next to the red car, the brand new car he's holding, his little brother, who is crippled and very sickly and not doing very, very well.

And this dear young boy looked and he said he said, look, see, I told you. I told you hit his brother, gave him this brand new car and and someday I'm going to buy you one just like it. And when it when I when I heard. I wish. I wish. I wish. I wish I had a brother like that. But I wish I wish I could be a brother like that. I wish I wish that I was the kind of person that when people when people are around me, that you were the kind of person that when people around you that people sense something, what do they sense? You're greatly concerned about me, really concerned about my life. You you see farther into my life concern for me and your love for me and feeling for me.

And it isn't just a casual how are you doing? But it's a commitment to really pray. It's those it's those big rocks of life that really make the difference. And if they really don't become an initial

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part of my life, then everything else starts to begin to cloud it up. And there's no way I can even begin to do and to be and become the things that I know are essential, essential traits in my life. All of that to say the Lord is so faithful to you and me and I want to ask you this afternoon as we conclude here that seeing as the Lord sees and feeling, as the Lord feels, and praying as he prays is for me one of the keys to God's blessing in his hand upon people like you and me. And before we leave today, I'm going to ask you just to set your Bible aside there. And like a sister, pray together for a moment, can we?

Lord, we thank you for the privilege to. To know you is our God and to know that we're loved by you. Thank you, Lord, that you saw us in our greatest need and you felt for us and you were moved with compassion for us. But, Lord, we know now that you're in the process of building something in our lives as well. Lord, I hope and I pray that will never become so busy that we miss the really essential points that you want us to see, and that is, Lord, it's not just that you're doing amazing things today, but that you're wanting people to see how much you love them, how much you care for them. May we be the kind of people as well that even when we have an unfavorable list and we think there's no hope for some people, Lord, there's never anyone that you can't save. There's never anyone that you can't touch. And Lord, I ask and I pray even now that you'll call us to pray as you pray and to believe that as we do, you'll send someone to minister to the person we're most concerned about. You'll send a harvester to the person that were most burdened about. You'll send someone, Lord, who we would never imagine to speak just the right word that they might respond to your love and grace. For that, we thank you today, Lord. We give you praise and we give you thanks. And Lord, I ask to that. While this is a concentrated time, concentrated season of study Lord during this whole conference. But the Lord

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again, I pray that your word would study us just as much as we study it. May the word of God search our hearts, Lord, may you use the word and to open up things in us and make revelations and areas Lord of vulnerability where Lord we never thought possible that you would teach us. Invest in us, deposit in us. Your love and your grace. We give you thanks and we give you praise the Lord in your name we pray. Amen. Amen.