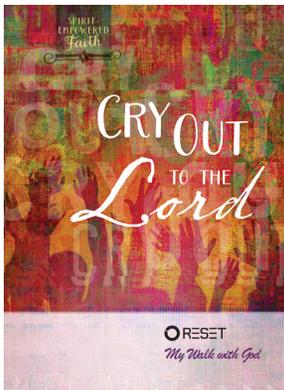




Revival Signs

This article is from *Cry Out to the Lord*. It is an excerpt from the book *Revival Signs* by **Tom Phillips** of the Billy Graham Evangelism Association.



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Cry Out to the Lord

Look at any spiritual awakening in history, including those that have occurred in our own country, and you'll discover an obvious, common thread: Revival is always preceded by spiritual deadness. In the dry seasons of the church, there may be outward signs of life, but the spiritual hearts of the people have stopped beating. This does not make the dry seasons any less a part of revival. God is still sovereign; He is still in charge. The dryness is just as much a part of the awakening as the prayers themselves. What other markers of revival can we trace? What other signs of revival mark our way? Here are just a few:

The Principle of Fullness of Time

As it continues in all its "fullness," dryness always leads to desperation. Out of a profound sense of dissatisfaction, often with a certain degree of gloom, people begin to cry out to God. Remember the story of the Hebrides Islands in the late 1940s? A small group of men meeting in a barn began to cry out, "Oh, God, move on Your people." Two women, down the road in a neighboring village, began to pray, "Oh, God, move." They cried out because there was nowhere else to turn. Their dryness led to desperation. The story of the Hebrides is the story of virtually every revival: Out of a remnant, a large-scale movement is born, a movement that encompasses a large area. Often, strangely enough, the spiritual phenomenon that unfolds is largely unknown! Regardless of how anonymous God's hand is, revival occurs in "the fullness of time." His people, in His time, live out a principle of patience and faith in which the longings of God's followers are fully expressed.





- L8. Disciplined, bold, and believing prayer



PRAY and Experience Scripture

"O Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see" (2 Kings 6:17, NASB).

Pause now and pray the powerful prayer of Elisha.

"Lord, I pray, open the eyes of Your servants that they may see that those who are with us are more than those who are with them. Lord, open my eyes to a remnant of people who are asking You for revival and awakening in spite of the "dryness" of our time. Lord, by Your Spirit, please give me the diligence to persevere in prayer. Encourage my hope for awakening through the prevailing prayers of others."

The Principle of Leadership

In any revival, at least one prophet always emerges. Though he or she may be a leader, the person does not "lead" revival in the classic sense of taking control and directing followers to do certain tasks. The prophet doesn't direct the movement, he or she embodies it.

Think of the most humble, dedicated follower of Jesus you know. Who do you know that exhibits a devotion to God, service to others, and obedience to the Word, prayer, and sacrifice? This is the kind of leader whose personality is consistent with the people God chooses to embody spiritual awakening.

Regardless of the leaders' unique personalities, revival is always directed by one person: the Lord Himself. In any spiritual awakening there is always one leader and one leader only—God. Through the Holy Spirit, chosen people embody or epitomize what He is doing for their time.



- L10. Practicing the presence of the Lord, yielding to the Spirit's work of Christ-likeness

LEARN to Encounter Jesus

"I am humble and gentle..." (Matthew 11:29).

Pause to meditate on the image of Jesus, who spoke these words. Imagine that Christ stands before you. He has heard your prayers for revival. He has seen your sadness and confusion over the desperate places of our world. Now imagine His response. The Savior doesn't offer you a lecture. He doesn't look at you sternly or with indifference. Instead, the one person who can bring revival and who can direct our steps forward awakening makes this declaration: *"Come to Me. I am here for you as your humble and gentle teacher."*

Spend a few moments now, asking for the Spirit's work of Christ-likeness in your own life—particularly for His work of humility. Ask the Lord to make this change so that you will be available for all He may desire.

Lord, deepen Your work of humility in me. Just like You, I want to be humble and gentle. I want to be teachable and available. Involve me in Your move of spiritual awakening in whatever ways You desire.





The Principle of Brokenness and Confession

Brokenness and confession is what the prophet discovers and what the participants in revival experience. When brokenness, confession, and repentance begin to occur among God's people, revival spreads with extraordinary swiftness. As every revival in history bears out, individuals and the church as a whole wake up to the seriousness of their own sin. At times, the remorse can be overwhelming. People become very concerned about the open sins of the flesh and the secret sins of the spirit.

The greatest brokenness occurs in the life of believers as they come to grips with their own lack of love and typically, the result is open and honest confession.

The principle of brokenness and confession yields to a wonderful outcome. As a result of confession and purification of the heart, people become so magnetically attracted to Christ that their dedication grows into a great enthusiasm to follow Him.

Naturally, the good news is too life-changing, too wonderful to contain. There's an enthusiasm to serve Jesus and a desire to bring others to Him. The person who experiences this new life in God wants everyone to know the One behind this new reality. This is evangelism in its most contagious form.

The Principle of Influence

A byproduct of evangelism supplies one more principle in the natural development of spiritual awakening. As revival progresses, as the movement of God crests, large numbers of people discover what only a remnant once knew: Jesus Christ is alive! The influence of revival, however, is not limited merely to a spiritual plane. Awakenings have always spilled over beyond the borders of the church into the life of their towns and cities.

From the time of Hezekiah to the time of John and Charles Wesley in England, revival's influence is always felt in the political and social structure. The church takes on a new role in society; clergy gain new respect. As revived Christians actually live like Christ, they reach out to their schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods in what some would label "social action." In short, full-fledged revival touches the heart of the whole community.



- M1. Imparting the gospel and one's very life in daily activities and relationships, vocation, and community

SHARE with Others in Community

"We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God's Good News but our own lives" (1 Thessalonians 2:8).

Consider praying this prayer with another follower of Jesus. Ask the Lord to empower you to share both your life and the good news with others.

Lord, I ask You to help me share my life with others. Help me convey both my love and Your love. Give us such a passion for sharing our lives and the gospel that a movement begins in our community.

