

**Are We Preaching “Another” Gospel: A 31-Day Journey toward
Rediscovering the Gospel of the Grace of God**
by C. D. Hildebrand, 24-7-365 Version 2026

Day 2

ANSWERED PRAYER

It is difficult to perceive what is causing one’s problems and impossible to recover from them if one believes that what she’s doing to rid herself of her problems is actually the source of them. In my case, God lovingly removed these “good” things from my life so that I could return to the “one” thing that was needful.

It was not too long after I asked God to show me why He seemed far and why I couldn’t feel His love that our lives took an unexpected turn. I’m convinced now that these events were God’s answer to my heart’s cry. Our ministry as home missionaries ended, and even though we tried, we could not find a new full-time paid ministry. This was a curious reality for us as we had only ever seen ourselves continuing in ministry the rest of our lives. Needing to support three growing children, we made the difficult decision to get secular jobs and move to Southern California, where we’d heard for years of all the great churches in that area. Thankfully, I had all the educational requirements I needed to be employed as an emergency credentialed teacher in downtown Los Angeles, and my husband began to be trained as a financial planner.

My new life in L.A. was extremely demanding. I had to rise between 5:00 and 6:00 a.m. to get ready for work so I could hopefully beat the traffic and arrive in my classroom by 7:00. In order to work with an emergency credential, it was also required that I take classes toward a full credential after work. Each afternoon, I would come home, cook dinner, help the kids, and put them to bed, working often until 1:00 a.m., doing my own homework and preparing for the next school day. It didn’t take long for me to notice that I had no time to pray and no time to read the Bible, and that this situation was not going to change any time soon.

Though we tried each week, we were unable to find a church for several months. At first, we thought for sure that a church in our denomination would find out that we were ordained ministers and put us to work at least as volunteers, but no pastor took any interest in us at all, not even to befriend us; some even seemed to treat us with suspicion. It was our first time in

thirteen years that we were not actively involved in ministry, and we couldn't even find a church home.

Being a stay-at-home mom became impossible since my income became our mainstay. It seemed that each and every dollar we earned was needed for bills. It was the first time ever that we could not tithe, let alone give anything extra. Our marriage was stressed. *Everything* that ever defined me as a good Christian woman was gone and seemed completely unattainable!

All of those people with whom we'd worked for so many years, who we thought loved us and might care about how difficult our lives had become, seemed to distance themselves from us. None of them called to ask how it was going or to see if we needed help. It felt as if they were sitting back watching, expecting that we would fall from the Lord now that we'd left their protective covering. This was particularly painful for my husband, who had only ever desired to be an active minister, but who now couldn't even find fellowship. He felt that everyone, including God, was displeased and disappointed in him.

One morning, while feeling troubled about the fact that I was failing God in every way, I said a prayer while getting into my car to go to work. "Jesus, You understand that I don't have time to pray." Now, what was in the back of my mind was that God would grant me a temporary reprieve until I got my teaching credential and my life would settle down a bit, then I'd go back to my normal routine of spiritual disciplines. "So, Lord, I'm asking you to allow me to pray while driving to work."

You might consider this to be odd if you have never lived under this type of thinking, but my understanding of "prayer" was that daily devotions were to be at a time and place set apart while doing *nothing* else. In my thinking, praying in my car while precariously maneuvering through downtown L.A. traffic clearly would not count as a "quiet time".

However, as I put my car in drive, I unknowingly ventured to where I hadn't been in many years. God had me exactly where He wanted me. **Though I could not have put it into these words at the time, I once again came to God empty-handed with faith in His grace to hear me.** The second I opened my mouth to pray with this frame of mind, the presence of God seemed to flood my car and overwhelmed my heart with His love for me. I wept all the way to school in utter amazement and full of joy, along with feeling particularly baffled, thinking something along the lines of, "What just happened?" It was what I'd been missing, the sense of His presence and knowing He loved me, and I had no idea what was going on or why this was coming about because *I hadn't done anything* to merit this outpouring of His love upon me. I simply did not deserve it. While completely delighted by this moment, I worried that it might be a one-time event or that I was being led astray!

The next few weeks were like I'd been born again, again. I was clueless

as to why I was experiencing His precious love and presence because I wasn't *doing* anything. This caused me to reevaluate my concept of prayer and to reconsider the questions about which I'd mused nine years earlier—the questions I left unanswered out of fear.¹ The sense of His closeness never left me, and He began to answer all of my prayers, even the tiny, short ones that weren't supposed to “count.”

I tried to share what I was experiencing with my husband, but he would only look at me with a blank expression. All I could say to him, and I said it with considerable fear and trepidation, was that I was beginning to question what we'd been taught about prayer. Since I didn't really understand it, I was not very good at explaining myself, and he listened without hearing me. I was experiencing a very personal awakening, hoping with all my heart it would not disappear as suddenly as it came, but David seemed to be in a soundproof room. I was knocking on the window and shouting this good news, but he could not hear me. What I didn't understand was that David was living through the deepest anguish of his life.

About a year later, after having moved back to Northern California, my husband came to a point of total despair. It wasn't that he didn't love Jesus. He did, but he didn't want anything to do with the religion of Christianity. He admitted to me one day that he had fantasized about driving off one of the bridges in our area. The reason for this was that he perceived that God was disappointed and disgusted with him, and he had no idea how to do more than he'd already done in order to please Him. His best was clearly *not* good enough. Now, it was David who was exactly where God needed him to be.

Right around this time, he began to tune in to a daily live radio broadcast by Bob George called “People to People”. When at first he would listen, he knew Bob was saying something different from what he believed, but he couldn't figure it out. It was as if there was a thick wall between them, and he couldn't understand the words. For about two months, he listened every day, and gradually, he began to “get” it.

He prayed, “God! I wish that what Bob is saying were *true*! I wish that being a Christian could be as good as he says. I wish You were as good as he says You are.” As David continued to listen, what Bob was teaching came increasingly into focus for him until finally he just saw it. He ordered Bob's recently published book, Classic Christianity: Life is Too Short to Miss the Real Thing, which continued to convince him that God *is* as good as He says He is, and he was able to recapture that love he'd known when he first put His faith in Jesus.

After this, David and I began a journey to figure out how we got off track as our determination grew to ***never ever*** go back the way we had gone—wherever that was. It was as if we'd been awakened from a very long

¹ The question was, “Why do I feel justified when I pray and read the Bible, and when I don't, I don't?”

dream, not even knowing we'd fallen asleep. We were completely surprised. How did this happen to us—we who had so deeply loved God, so earnestly sought Him, so greatly longed to please Him, and who had given our all to follow Him? How did we get detoured?

At first, we thought it was just he and I who'd taken a wrong turn in our doctrine, but as time went by, we realized that we believed what we did because we received what we'd been taught. Thinking then that it was only our former church that was teaching error, we began to visit other churches in our denomination or churches with similar beliefs. To our great dismay, the same mixed messages were also being taught within other “full-gospel”² churches. Surmising that it was a tendency in Pentecostal churches to teach these things, we ventured out into non-Pentecostal churches. Amazingly, we kept hearing the same things there also. We weren't sure exactly what we were looking for, but we did know what we no longer believed, and it was being preached *everywhere*!

We didn't know how to effectively communicate what was happening to us because in those days, we could only express ourselves in these terms: **what we no longer believed**. We were beginning to realize again that being a Christian did not amount to a long list of things we needed to do, but a **living and loving relationship with Jesus**.

As we began to share our experience with our close friends, they thought we had lost our minds or were “backsliding” and gradually withdrew from us.³

The next twenty years were spent raising our children, allowing God to untie multiple knots of error that held us bound, and rediscovering that the gospel really is “*glad* tidings of *good* things”.

² If ever there was a misnomer, it would be “full-gospel”.

³ We are thrilled to report that those who misunderstood us have also had their own grace awakenings.