

Learning From the Life of David Wilkerson

For reasons I don't entirely understand, the [recent passing](#) of [Pastor David Wilkerson](#) of [Times Square Church](#) in New York has consumed my thoughts. I've already posted several items on my [Facebook](#) page in regard to his passing and am now reading his autobiography (of sorts - it's more about those he ministered to) [The Cross and the Switchblade](#). It's sort of odd - up until now I would have said that I have been much more impacted by the man who succeeded him as Senior Pastor at Times Square Church, [Pastor Carter Conlon](#). I really didn't know that much about Pastor Wilkerson at all. What a deficit to have known so little about this man of God! He is now making a massive impact on my life even after he has gone to be with the Lord.

For many of you, David Wilkerson may not be your theological "cup of tea." I myself am not Pentecostal (but not entirely convinced by cessationist arguments, either) and might differ on some (possibly many) of the theological positions he took in life. You and I may prefer exegesis to experience and I am convinced that the former is much more reliable than the latter. But does that preclude the relevance of experience in the life of the Christian? Do we take seriously the role of the Holy Spirit in our own walk?

Allow me to recommend that you get more acquainted with the life and ministry of a man that did take (very) seriously the role of the Holy Spirit in his life. David Wilkerson believed in the power of God to answer prayer. He took seriously the idea that we have not because we ask not. He worked on a practical level, but expected God to be faithful on the spiritual level and provide for his every need. On nearly every page of his book, I have been amazed by the specific petitions made to God and the expectation of specific answers. From the meager funding of his first trips to New York to the purchasing of a building in Brooklyn for troubled youth, this man of God didn't have the proverbial two cents to accompany the lint in his pocket, but possessed the faith to move mountains. He wasn't always sure of where he was going, but he was sure he wouldn't be alone on the journey.

I believe God is using my recent encounter with Pastor Wilkerson and his ministry to temper my own walk and ministry. Theology and Bible teaching can become (if we allow it) such a heady pursuit that we lose the heart that initially motivated the head to get equipped in the first place! I don't want that for myself or for you. I want to find the proper balance between head knowledge and heart knowledge and to allow both of those to be directed by Holy Spirit sensitivity.

Would you know...in his [final blog post](#), Pastor Wilkerson touched on the inevitability of death and offered comforting words to those facing hard times:

Death seems inevitable. Hope is gone. The miracle prayed for is not happening...To those going through the valley and shadow of death, hear this word: Weeping will last through some dark, awful nights—and in that darkness you will soon hear the Father whisper, “I am with you. I cannot tell you why right now, but one day it will all make sense. You will see it was all part of my plan. It was no accident. It was no failure on your part. Hold fast. Let me embrace you in your hour of pain.”

Beloved, God has never failed to act but in goodness and love. When all means fail—his love prevails. Hold fast to your faith. Stand fast in his Word. There is no other hope in this world.

Even in his final words, the Holy Spirit was offering comfort for those who would be mourning his death....a race well run, even through the final lap. Thank God for his example. Now, let us go and do likewise.