

STUDY NOTES  
INCLUDED

# *The* **First Mile**

You can't 'go  
the extra mile'  
until you've  
gone the first.

DEREK PRINCE

*You can't "Go the extra mile"  
until you've gone...*

# ***The First Mile***

by DEREK PRINCE



## THE FIRST MILE

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*Going the “extra mile”  
is only possible after we have gone...*

# ***The First Mile***

*And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.*

MATTHEW 5:41

Jesus here depicts a situation in which law, or social custom, gives a man the right to compel another to walk a mile together with him. Speaking to His disciples, Jesus says, in effect: ‘If this should happen to you, do not merely walk one mile with such a man, walk two miles with him. Go twice as far as he has a right to demand of you.’ We may say that the first mile represents duty, the extra mile represents love. Love freely does twice as much as duty can demand.

These words of Jesus have given rise to the expression ‘going the extra mile.’ However, they carry with them a simple, logical implication which is often overlooked. Many Christians speak and act as though the exercise of love automatically releases them from normal personal and social duties. But the truth is just the opposite. You can only go the extra mile after you have gone the first. The expression of love can only begin after the demands of duty have first been met.

The same principle is expressed by Paul in ROMANS 13:8: “Owe no man anything except to love one another.” Here again, the order is important. The negative requirement comes first: “Owe no man anything.” This covers all our legal and ethical obligations. We must first fulfil all these, then we can move on to the positive requirement, to “love one another.” Christian love is inconsistent with the failure to fulfil our legal and ethical duties. We might paraphrase this by saying: Genuine love first makes sure that all its debts are paid.

## ***Sloppy Agape***

Many Christians have a wrong concept of biblical love. Love of this kind is not a sentimental attitude expressed in religious clichés or honey-sweet phrases. Someone has characterized this unscriptural counterfeit of love as ‘sloppy agape.’

The apostle John warns us against this: “*Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth*” 1 JOHN 3:18.

True biblical love is expressed primarily in acts, not in words.

In the book of Ruth we find a pointed contrast in the behaviour of Naomi’s two daughters-in-law: “*Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her*” RUTH 1:14. Orpah exhibited the outward expression of love—a kiss; but Ruth loved in deed—she stood by her mother-in-law in her need. In my hour of crisis I am not so much interested in who will kiss me. I want to know who will stand by me.

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The book of Proverbs also has a warning concerning this:

*“Open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful”*

PROVERBS 27:5–6. Counterfeit love will flatter us with sweet words when things are going well but betray us in the hour of need. Genuine love will tell us the truth and, if necessary, rebuke us, although at the time it may actually wound us. But love of this kind will not betray us later.

It is not without significance that Judas actually betrayed Jesus to His enemies by a kiss. Jesus Himself commented on this: *“Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”* LUKE 22:48. The outward expression of love, without the corresponding actions, is betrayal.

In EPHESIANS 4:15 Paul describes the only way that we can grow to Christian maturity: *“But, speaking the truth in love, [we] may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ.”* Any love that does not speak the truth is a counterfeit. Any fellowship of lasting value must be based on mutual honesty.

*“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another”* 1 JOHN 1:7. True fellowship is possible only in the light. We cannot have fellowship in the dark. The apostle John makes two simple, but profound, statements about the nature of God: *“God is light”* 1 JOHN 1:5; and *“God is love”* 1 JOHN 4:8, 16. God’s love can never be separated from God’s light. God’s love does not operate in the dark.

## ***Love “Covers,” Not ‘Covers Up’***

The apostle Peter tells us that *“love will cover a multitude of sins”* 1 PETER 4:8. Here again, there is much misunderstanding among Christians. Peter says *“cover,”* but he does not say *‘cover up.’* Peter is not talking about the custom prevalent in many Christian groups of sweeping sin under the rug and then pretending that it never happened and everything is all right.

Christian love covers sin in the same way that God covers sin. First, sin must be brought out into the light. It must be acknowledged, confessed, repented of. If necessary, restitution must be made. Only after that can sin be covered with true biblical forgiveness.

From time to time, we are brought into contact with Christian groups who have only one theme—love. Experience has convinced me that in such groups there is either doctrinal error or unconfessed sin—or both. Love is used as a *‘cover-up.’* If sin is the problem, it is usually found in the lives of the leaders of the group. If we begin to get below the surface and lay bare the problem, we are immediately headed off with the accusation, ‘Now, brother, you’re not being loving!’ Let it be emphasized once again: True biblical love is expressed primarily in acts, not in words.

Let us return to the parable of the first and second mile—the relationship between love and duty. We have seen that true love begins only after we have fulfilled our legal and ethical obligations. Conversely, love that does not fulfil these obligations is a counterfeit. There are innumerable ways in which this principle applies to daily Christian living. In what

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follows I will briefly point out some of the most common inconsistencies that I myself have observed among Christians.

## ***The Missions Idol***

At one time I was associated with a church that was extremely proud of its missions program. The congregation was fairly small, but it had a disproportionately large commitment for missions. A preacher who specialized in the promotion of

missions was invited to conduct a two-week campaign with

the understanding that his honorarium would be ten percent of all offerings that were pledged for missions.

In the course of two weeks, over \$93,640 was pledged.

Some of these pledges came in very tardily; others never came in at all. However, the preacher had no reason to complain about his honorarium of over \$9,364 for two weeks' ministry!

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At the time that these pledges were being paid to missions, the church was grievously in arrears with its own local obligations—its telephone bill, utility bills, etc. Eventually, I challenged the congregation about this way of doing things. ‘If we say that we are offering all this money to missions, we are deceiving ourselves,’ I told them. “The people from whom this money really comes are our creditors. We are taking the money due our creditors to support missions. But that is dishonest

and unfair. Our creditors may be Catholics and the missions we are supporting are Protestant. We have no right to take money belonging to our creditors to support something of which they themselves may not even approve.’



In reality, in that particular situation, missions was the church 'idol.' The members sacrificed to their idol, while blatantly failing to fulfil their own obligations at home. Sometimes it is much easier to be occupied with a 'missions field' than to demonstrate the validity of our faith among our neighbours.

*"The eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth"*

PROVERBS 17:24

## ***Alcoholics or Charismatics?***

I once found myself in the position of being landlord over a number of houses adjacent to each other. In one of these houses, I had as tenants a couple who made no profession of being Christians and who were, in fact, alcoholics. They paid their rent regularly and kept the property in good condition. During their tenancy, a lady in one of the adjacent houses was suddenly bereaved of her husband. The first person to show practical sympathy was the alcoholic lady. She came over the next morning with a cheque for \$375.

In due course, this alcoholic couple moved out and new tenants moved in—a family who was active in charismatic circles. This family made quite extensive purchases for themselves, but rarely paid their rent on time. They so failed to care for their children and the property that some of the neighbours complained to me and threatened to take the matter to the city authorities.

One day I found myself reflecting over this situation. Suppose I myself were not a Christian and someone were to ask

*"It's easier  
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me: 'Which kind of tenants do you prefer, alcoholics or charismatics?' There would be no doubt about my answer:

Give me alcoholics any day!

*"Give me  
alcoholics  
any day!"*

**'Just to Get the Word Out, Brother'**

Fairly early in my ministry, some fellow Christians duplicated and sold large numbers of messages that I had preached. This was done without information being given to me or permission requested from me. After a while I realized that there must be a very substantial margin of profit involved. I began to request some kind of accounting and to suggest that some royalty could reasonably be offered to me. I was met with protestations of love and the assurance that the whole thing was being done 'just to get the Word out, brother!' But I received no accounts and no royalty.

Later, the very people who were profiting from my ministry accused me of being 'mercenary' in my motives. Worse still, they did not make this accusation to my face, but circulated it behind my back. I asked myself: Can God really be satisfied that His Word is distributed on this basis?

***Efficiency is Christian***

In 2 PETER 1:5-7 we are given a list of seven stages of spiritual development that should follow our initial faith in Christ. To "*faith*" we are exhorted to add the following: virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, love. This brings us back to the parable of the first and second mile. Love must be built on a foundation of orderly

spiritual development. Where this foundation is not laid, true Christian love can never come into operation.

The first thing we must add to faith is virtue. This latter word could be translated ‘excellence’ or ‘efficiency.’ How few Christians seem to realize that efficiency is a necessary Christian virtue! On the other hand, the Bible has not one good word to say about laziness or foolishness. In fact, both are more severely condemned, and more deadly in their consequences, than drunkenness.

For five years in East Africa, I was in charge of a college for training teachers for African schools. During their training, many of our students came to know Christ and were also baptized in the Holy Spirit. I discovered that once they had become Christians, they expected me to show them special favour—to be less exacting in my judgment of their written tests or their practical teaching. I had to explain to them that it was just the other way round.

*“The first thing we must add to faith is [efficiency].”*

‘Now that you are a Christian,’ I would say, ‘you have all sorts of resources that you did not have before. You have God’s peace in your heart, and the power of prayer and of the Holy Spirit to call upon. If you could pass your tests or succeed in your teaching without these resources, you should be twice as successful now that you are a Christian. I do not expect less of you, but more. And God does the same!’

The same principle applies in every field of activity in which a Christian serves and earns his living. A Christian may serve as a teacher, a doctor, a nurse, a waitress, a technician, or a janitor. No matter what the field, a Christian should always

excel in his service. He should be more faithful, more reliable, more efficient than the non-Christian.

I have observed that the Lord never calls a person out of failure in a secular job or profession to ‘full time’ spiritual ministry. A person must always prove himself in his secular employment before God will ever commit enlarged spiritual responsibility to him. Faithfulness begins in the small and the secular; then it is more fully worked out in the great and the spiritual. Jesus very firmly establishes this principle in Luke:

*“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?”*

LUKE 16:10–11 [NIV]

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### **Family Obligations Come First**

In 1 TIMOTHY 5 Paul deals systematically with the obligations of Christians toward the members of their own families. In this connection he says,

*“But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever”*

1 TIMOTHY 5:8

In each family the primary obligation for provision normally rests upon the father. This includes much more than the mere provisions of food, clothing and money. In EPHESIANS 5:25–28

Paul compares the relationship between Christ and the church to that between husband and wife. As Christ sanctifies the church with the pure water of the Word, so the husband is responsible to minister the cleansing, sanctifying truth of God's Word to his wife and children. The father should be the source of spiritual truth to his family.

In EPHESIANS 6:4 Paul places the responsibility for the spiritual education of the children directly upon the fathers: *"And you fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition [education] of the Lord."*

We may sum this up by saying that in every home the father has two God-given ministries from which he cannot abdicate: he is both prophet and priest to his family. As prophet, he represents God to his family; as priest, he represents his family to God. The faithful discharge of these duties demands a certain minimum amount of time devoted to the family.

Among the many men who fail to devote sufficient time to these family obligations, professional ministers are probably the most common offenders. This applies both to resident and to itinerant ministries. The resident pastor is frequently so taken up with board meetings, committees and church-centered functions that he hardly has any time at home with his family. The itinerant minister traverses the world like a knight errant for Christ, but leaves behind him at home a wife and children torn apart by frustration, bitterness and rebellion—caused primarily by his neglect of them. I always remember a comment once made by a young person whose

*"Before  
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parents had served many years as missionaries in Africa: 'Our parents sure loved the Africans, but they didn't love us!'

The verdict of Scripture on a parent who fails in these primary obligations is that *"he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever"* 1 TIMOTHY 5:8.

Does a man who is "worse than an unbeliever" have any business preaching the Gospel?

*...let us  
first make  
sure all  
debts have  
been paid."*

Writing to (charismatic) Christians at Corinth, Paul says: *"Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Prove yourselves"* 2 CORINTHIANS 13:5. Many of us need to heed this warning today. Before we use religious clichés about 'going the extra mile,' let us make sure that we have really 'gone the first mile.' Before we make a large display of love, let us make sure that all our debts have been paid.

# STUDY NOTES

## OVERVIEW:

In this study we will do as Paul wrote in 2 CORINTHIANS 13:5 and attempt to *'examine ourselves'*. Derek Prince suggests: "before we use religious clichés about *'going the extra mile'*, let us make sure that we have really *'gone the first mile'*. Before we make a large display of love, let us make sure that all our debts have been paid."

## 1 *Duty & Integrity*

The first mile represents our duties—even the ones you would rather forget. These range anywhere from personal, physical and financial to legal, ethical, environmental and personal commitments. Choose one or more of these topics and write a list of all the basic duties in your life for this area. Prayerfully go through the list and ask God to show you if there are duties you don't fulfil. Be honest with yourself. Are you exercising 'sloppy agape' in any areas? Remember, "the outward expression of love, without the corresponding actions is betrayal."

## 2 *Into the Light*

Read the scripture 1 JOHN 1:7-9.

There may be a sin issue in your life that has been raised in this study, that you are beginning to resolve though the five

basic steps: Acknowledge; Confess; Repent/Turn Away; Make Restitution; and Receive Forgiveness. Write out 1 JOHN 1:9 on a small card and carry it around with you, to memorise and proclaim it.

*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

1 JOHN 1:7

### **3 What's Lurking in the Shadows?**

PSALMS 51:6 tells us that “Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.” What’s more important, to have God as the God of our lives, or to have Him God of just a portion?

Sometimes we’ve overlooked our duties simply through ignorance, sometimes knowingly. Whether they are minor things or not, they require the same life-changing decisions. From one of the topics mentioned in study point 1, and your knowledge of the Bible, prayerfully consider what needs to change, and ask for God’s help to do so. Remember this process is progressive and we need to be asking the Lord for revelation for all areas of our lives.

*The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.*

PROVERBS 4:18



## **4** *Orderly Spiritual Development*

In 2 PETER 1:5-7 the Bible lists seven steps for our spiritual development. Go through the following seven steps: virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, love, and gauge your personal growth.

I.e. Virtue - are you efficient?

Remember, "Faithfulness begins in the small and the secular; then it is more fully worked out in the great and the spiritual."

*"For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

2 PETER 1:8

### **PRAY**

Remember, God is always with us, in every situation and He helps us in our weakness. Pray for the ability to make the needed steps for change in your life of any areas that God is revealing enabling you to progress from the first mile of duty to the second mile of love.

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## ***About the Author***

Derek Prince (1915–2003) was born in India of British parents. He was educated as a scholar of Greek and Latin at Eton College and King's College, Cambridge, in England. Upon graduation, he held a fellowship (equivalent to a professorship) in Ancient and Modern Philosophy at King's College. Prince also studied Hebrew, Aramaic, and modern languages at Cambridge and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. As a student, he was a philosopher and self-proclaimed agnostic.

While in the British Medical Corps during World War II, Prince began to study the Bible as a philosophical work. Converted through a powerful encounter with Jesus Christ, he was baptized in the Holy Spirit a few days later. Out of this encounter, he formed two conclusions: first, that Jesus Christ is alive; second, that the Bible is a true, relevant, up-to-date book. These conclusions altered the whole course of his life, which he then devoted to studying and teaching the Bible as the Word of God.

Discharged from the army in Jerusalem in 1945, he married Lydia Christensen, founder of a children's home there. Upon their marriage, he immediately became father to Lydia's eight adopted daughters—six Jewish, one Palestinian Arab, and one English. Together, the family saw the rebirth of the state of Israel in 1948. In the late 1950s, they adopted another daughter while Prince was serving as principal of a teacher training college in Kenya.

In 1963, the Princes immigrated to the United States and pastored a church in Seattle. In 1973, Prince became one

of the founders of Intercessors for America. His book *Shaping History through Prayer and Fasting* has awakened Christians around the world to their responsibility to pray for their governments.

Many consider underground translations of the book as instrumental in the fall of communist regimes in the USSR, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia. Lydia Prince died in 1975, and Prince married Ruth Baker (a single mother to three adopted children) in 1978. He met his second wife, like his first wife, while she was serving the Lord in Jerusalem. Ruth died in December 1998 in Jerusalem, where they had lived since 1981.

Until a few years before his own death in 2003 at the age of eighty-eight, Prince persisted in the ministry God had called him to as he travelled the world, imparting God's revealed truth, praying for the sick and afflicted, and sharing his prophetic insights into world events in the light of Scripture. Internationally recognized as a Bible scholar and spiritual patriarch, Derek Prince established a teaching ministry that spanned six continents and more than sixty years. He is the author of more than fifty books, six hundred audio teachings, and one hundred video teachings, many of which have been translated and published in more than one hundred languages. He pioneered teaching on such ground-breaking themes as generational curses, the biblical significance of Israel, and demonology.

Prince's radio program, which began in 1979, has been translated into more than a dozen languages and continues to touch lives. Derek's main gift of explaining the Bible and its teaching in a clear and simple way has helped

build a foundation of faith in millions of lives. His nondenominational, nonsectarian approach has made his teaching equally relevant and helpful to people from all racial and religious backgrounds, and his teaching is estimated to have reached more than half the globe.

In 2002, he said, “It is my desire—and I believe the Lord’s desire—that this ministry continue the work, which God began through me over sixty years ago, until Jesus returns.” Derek Prince Ministries International continues to reach out to believers in over 140 countries with Derek’s teaching, fulfilling the mandate to keep on “until Jesus returns.” This is accomplished through the outreaches of more than thirty Derek Prince offices around the world, including primary work in Australia, Canada, China, France, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, South Africa, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. For current information about these and other worldwide locations, visit [www.dpmuk.org](http://www.dpmuk.org).

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***“And, whoever compels you to go  
one mile, go with him two.”***

MATT 5:41

In Jesus' day, a Roman soldier could compel you to carry his belongings one mile of his journey. That's a lot to ask. But Jesus took this one step further by telling His disciples that they should be willing to not only go the first mile, but to also go a second mile!

In this call to a higher standard of excellence, Derek Prince points out that:

- Love “covers,” not ‘covers up’
- Efficiency is a Christian virtue
- Family Obligations come first

In today's self-serving society, a willingness to ‘go the extra mile’ has never been more needed. Read *The First Mile* and commit yourself to a life of integrity.



DEREK PRINCE (1915-2003), was educated at Eton and Cambridge where he later held a fellowship in Philosophy. Whilst serving in the British Army during World War II, he experienced a life-changing encounter with Jesus Christ. He then devoted his life to the Bible and became internationally recognized

as a leading Bible teacher. Derek's main gift is explaining the Bible in a clear and simple way and his books include *Foundations for Christian Living*, *They Shall Expel Demons* and *Blessing or Curse: You Can Choose*.



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