

## DAVID WILKERSON: POWER AND PRAYER - ([Print](#))

"The whole strange adventure got its start one night as I sat in my study reading *Life* magazine. I merely turned a page, and at first glance it seemed there was nothing to interest me. The page showed a pen drawing of a trial taking place in New York City, 350 miles away from my home in rural Pennsylvania. I'd never been to New York, and I'd never wanted to go, except perhaps to see the Statue of Liberty.

"I started to flip the page over. But as I did, something caught my eye. It was the eyes of a figure in the drawing - a boy. He was one of seven boys on trial for murder. I held the magazine closer to get a better look. The artist had captured a look of bewilderment, hatred and despair in the young boy's features. Suddenly, I began to cry." - David Wilkerson in "How It All Began"

In 1958, David Wilkerson saw a *Life* magazine picture of seven New York City teenagers charged with murder, and the Holy Spirit moved him to drive the hundreds of miles from his home in Pennsylvania to New York. He had very little idea about what he would do when he got there, but it didn't take long for him to meet angry, violent kids on the streets of the city – kids that God loved. Soon Wilkerson moved permanently to New York City, and he began a ministry to teens that eventually blossomed and planted new tap roots around the world.

Wilkerson soon founded Teen Challenge, a ministry for teenagers that included a Bible-based recovery program for drug abusers. By 1963, Teen Challenge started spreading to other cities. Wilkerson's book *The Cross And The Switchblade*, about his early years in New York, became a best seller with 15 million copies distributed in over 30 languages.

"The church has failed," Wilkerson said in a 1963 interview with *The LA Times*. "And young people are tired of its social club image. They want some real and vital answers to give them courage to resist urban pressures and temptations."

In 1971, Wilkerson founded World Challenge, which "serves as a corporate umbrella for Reverend Wilkerson's crusades, minister conferences, book and tract publishing, video production, street evangelism, literature distribution, feeding programs, drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers and other charitable outreaches." Since reading that *Life* article in 1958, Wilkerson's ministries have spread around the globe.

It all started, though, with prayer. As a young pastor, Wilkerson watched television in the evenings in order to know what the kids were watching. One day he was led by the Holy Spirit to stop watching television and instead dedicate his two hours of TV time to prayer. Little did he realize that that prayer time would result in God's leading him to minister to violent, hurting kids in the inner city, and eventually ministering to countless millions of teenagers over five decades of ministry.

On April 27, 2011, 79-year-old Wilkerson crossed over the center line and collided head-on with a tractor trailer while driving east on US Route 175 in Texas. He was pronounced dead on the scene.

Rev. Wilkerson's last blog post stated the following: "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.'"

Our hearts and prayers go out for the family and friends of David Wilkerson. We are grateful for his life of love and his example of the work God can do in any one of us when we dedicate ourselves to Him.

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