

# When Your Family Thinks You're Crazy After God Touches Your Life

What do you do when you have been radically touched by God, but your family hasn't? Maybe you have been to a few meetings at one of the revival fountainheads where God is manifesting His presence in mighty and supernatural ways. Maybe the glory cloud of God has fallen on your own church or prayer group. Or maybe you have just watched a video of a revival service and now the Holy Spirit is revealing Himself, working in you and moving you into dance and intercession.

Suddenly, you live for intimate moments with the Lord. Holiness is now the only air you want to breathe because you don't want to do anything that would offend the Holy Spirit.

You are bursting with exhilaration for the things of God, but your family just doesn't seem to get it. They say it's OK for you, but there's no need for it in their own lives.

Or perhaps they're claiming you've gone off the deep end and are determined to help you get a grip. Whatever their response, your heart is breaking because you are desperate to share this newfound splendor with those you love.

First of all, remember that God will not deny the sacrifice of a broken and contrite spirit (Ps. 51:17). You can find rest in the Lord in your place of brokenness, confident that God is at work. "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28, NKJV).

Knowing that you can't change your loved ones is the first step toward generating spiritual hunger in them. John Kilpatrick, the pastor who has led the Brownsville Revival in

Pensacola, Fla., for more than five years, gives a strong warning to wives who desire to see God radically impact their husbands: "If God has blessed you and touched you, wonderful. But don't go home and start making demands. Don't even start giving off unintentional signals of superiority or super spirituality because that is not the way your husband is going to be influenced to go after God!"

Kilpatrick says he would give the same counsel to a woman whose husband is not turned onto God that he would give to a church member who comes to the Brownsville Revival from somewhere else. A pastor or a husband who is not in the river of revival must see lasting change, he says.

"When your husband sees you are more in love with Jesus than ever before and that also translates into you loving your husband more than you have ever loved him before, then you are on [the] road to seeing spiritual hunger in him."

Because your husband may not be at the same level of hunger that led you to revival, you need to do what you can to make him more hungry, says Kilpatrick. "There has to be something there that will help to make him hungry for God to touch him. That's the only way he is going to be changed and powerfully impacted."

Kilpatrick's wife, Brenda, advises women to be like John the Baptist and decrease so that their families can see God. She says that just as Deborah saw Barak rise up when her spirit was awakened (see Judg. 5:12), women can have confidence that when God touches them, their husbands and other loved ones will be impacted, also.

**AWAKE, DEBORAH!** When all of Joann Lowell's business appointments in Mobile, Ala., were suddenly cancelled, she drove to the revival in Pensacola. She had been hearing about this move of God since it had broken out a few months earlier. She didn't go up to the altar to get saved because she was

already a Christian, but she did get prayed for by church leaders.

The next morning she wailed and cried as God ministered to her by His Spirit. She knew He was healing her.

For five weeks, Joann just wanted to be with the Lord. "I was trying to do this with the Lord without my husband knowing. I would get up early, play Brownsville tapes and just drink in the presence of God.

"I was afraid my husband would ridicule, judge and not accept that it was of God. I was afraid of rejection. Our marriage was already shaky, and I was afraid to be a turn-off and end up losing my marriage."

Joann made another business trip detour and headed to Pensacola. A couple of days later she called Robert. He was furious when he learned that instead of being at the Mary Kay conference she was registered for in San Antonio, Texas, she had been at the revival in Pensacola for two days.

Joann begged him to come down to the revival for the weekend, and he agreed. In fact, not even the huge snowstorm that hit their Blairsville, Georgia, hometown was able to stop him. He told three different state troopers who tried to prevent him from going further into the storm, "No, sir, I've got to go down to Pensacola and get my wife out of a situation."

Robert arrived at the church early and saw that his wife's pink Cadillac was the only car in the parking lot. She had found a seat for them right up front. Robert ridiculed Joann and was critical of the revival service, but he later testified that the praise and worship began to melt his heart.

He did not respond to the altar call, but when Kilpatrick asked all the couples to come forward for prayer, Robert turned to Joann and said sarcastically, "I suppose you think

we need to go up there.”

Kilpatrick prayed for him, and he felt a thousand pounds of nastiness come off his shoulders. He even added, “Bless her, Lord,” when Kilpatrick prayed for Joann.

As Robert headed for the exit door, evangelist Steve Hill put his hand on his shoulder. Robert immediately flew back 5-1/2 feet and was slammed against a wall. He sank to the floor, where he lay in a heap under the power of God for about two hours. During that time he was delivered from drugs, alcohol and cigarettes.

On their way home to Georgia, the couple stopped at the beach, and Robert suddenly dropped to his knees and began to repent. He cried all the way back to Georgia. For three days and nights he continued to weep and repent before God. He also approached his family—including his mother-in-law—and asked each one for forgiveness.

Within a short time, the Lowells moved to Pensacola. Now Robert travels with Awake America, serving as an armor-bearer for Steve Hill and working in the crusades. Joann is deeply committed to intercession, and they regularly minister together in churches.

GOD, CHANGE ME! Robert’s radical transformation is only one example of how God sets our loved ones on fire in response to our prayers. But it can serve as a model and an encouragement to all of us who are believing Him for a similar transformation in members of our own families.

One important point to note is that the transformation did not come about as quickly as it might have seemed from the account. Joann had been praying for Robert for many years. And in the process, God changed her.

In fact, she believes her own repentance was the key to the healing of her marriage and family. She says she became

desperate for truth when the Lord told her to stop focusing on her circumstances and family and start focusing on Him. "It was as though the Lord took my face and said, 'Look at Me!' God was trying to do something in me. I had to take my focus off changing my husband and allow God to deal with the sin and areas of compromise in my own life."

Joann says she sees many people whose loved ones are unsaved, controlling or fearful of a new move of God. She tells them three things:

\*\*Pursue holiness and say "no" to compromise in your own walk.

\*\*Realize that you are not responsible for your loved ones; God is. Become radical for Him and trust Him to work in them.

\*\*Be the godly woman you are called to be, but don't preach; your love and acceptance are all your family needs from you. Bless them and pray for them. Be your husband's friend, not his counselor.

In general, she says, "There is no easy road. Repentance are key." So is persistence. If you want to see your loved ones in revival, "never give up or stop praying, but rest in the Lord, knowing that He has a plan."

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## **Everybody Sing!**

My three sons predicted a worse end to those who oppose God

than the one David prayed for in Psalm 68:1. One Sunday they changed the wording in the chorus of “Let God Arise” to “Let His enemies be splattered” instead of “scattered.”

Our congregation heartily approved the change. In fact, we’ve sung it that way ever since.

–Elaine Bridge

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## When Transition Hurts

Nothing in life is certain except death, taxes—and change. God never changes, but we do. Through **sanctification** we are **transformed** from sinful, carnal creatures into the image of God’s Son.

Becoming like Jesus requires a lot of change—and often involves difficult periods of transition.

**Transition** can take many forms. It can be like the **transition** during labor that is –intense pain followed by a clear reward. Or it can be like the momentary transition that takes place when you switch gears in a car to face the challenge of the road ahead.

For an instant you are between gears. The engine is roaring, but you have no control. You may not know what the road ahead is like or whether you even want to move to a higher level. But when the **shift** occurs, you are connected once again with the power of the engine and are translated into a higher level of operation—the next gear.

**Transition** can also be a time that seems as if it will never end—a long, dark night of the soul when all around you seems dim and you lose sight of God’s promises to you. In this

season, you may lose your sense of God's presence and feel that He has abandoned you.

Don't give up! I have learned that no matter how uncomfortable the period of **transition** is, change is a good thing. It keeps us moving forward.

Forward motion starts with just one step, and we have the assurance that our steps "are ordered by the Lord" (Ps. 37:23, NKJV). This means that God has a plan for us. He knows what is needed to conform us to the image of Christ.

But taking that first step often requires the kind of faith Peter had when he stepped out of the boat and walked on water in response to Jesus' command to come (see Matt. 14:28-32). Faith allowed Peter to do something that was impossible in the natural, but the roar he heard in the natural—the wind—distracted his faith, and he began to sink.

Don't allow the storm of your **transition** to cause you to lose sight of God's promise to see you through. To the degree you see or hear the natural, you can't hear God.

Weathering transition successfully also requires trust. Suffering, Job said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him" (Job 13:15, NKJV). And David declared, "Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You." (Ps. 56:3). God rewarded David's trust with refuge and deliverance.

Bishop Jakes says, "You can trust Him even when you can't trace Him." Know that you serve One who is trustworthy.

Whether in birth or in the darkest night, each period of transition in your life will lead you to a glorious new place. Allow God to use each one to take you to a higher level spiritually, with the ultimate goal that you become like Him.

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# Patroness Of Revival

The First Great Awakening brought major social and religious changes to England that quickly spread to the colonies in America. At a time of great moral and spiritual darkness, evangelists began to preach that all must repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. But this far-reaching spiritual revival might never have been propagated except for the efforts of one woman—Lady Selina Shirley Huntingdon.

Lady Selina was born into an aristocratic family in England in 1707. As a child she was a quiet, religious girl who was often melancholy. During her adolescence however, she blossomed into a charming, outgoing young woman who was at home in high society.

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# How God Speaks While You Sleep

During times of discouragement, if answers to prayer are long in coming or not what we had expected, we can begin to lose hope and even doubt that God will answer our prayers. To help us through, God sometimes encourages us by dreams or visions.

He did this for me and my husband shortly after I gave birth to a son with a facial birth defect. A woman who lived 45 miles from our home had a vision of a baby with socks on his hands and feet. She began to pray for the baby even though she

did not understand the vision.

Later that week we were dedicating our son to the Lord during a Friday night service. Our son's birth defect was so sensitive that we had to keep socks on his hands to keep him from harming himself. When our son was held up during the dedication, the woman, who was visiting that night, recognized that he was the baby in her vision.

God used the vision to inspire this woman to organize prayer for my son during his early days of infancy and corrective surgery. The vision and prayers blessed us with fresh encouragement and hope during a very traumatic season in our lives.

However, our experience was not an unusual one. There are many examples in the Scriptures of God's bringing comfort and hope through visions and dreams.

### **Prophetic Promises**

Abraham was a wealthy man to whom God gave great promises. He owned cattle, silver and gold, but he had no son to inherit his wealth, for his wife was barren. The Lord appeared to Abraham in a vision and promised him an heir (Gen. 15:4).

God also said that his descendants would be as many as the stars in the sky. Abraham believed God, and the Lord credited it to him as righteousness (vv. 5-6).

After God spoke to him, Abraham fell into a deep sleep, and God gave him a prophetic promise through a dream. The Lord showed him his descendants would be enslaved in cruel bondage in Egypt for 400 years. Then the Lord would deliver them, and they would come out of Egypt with great possessions and return to the land He had promised to Abraham (vv. 12-16).

The birth and destiny of an entire nation was revealed in this dream. Abraham had longed for an heir, and God gave him a

promise far beyond his expectations.

Jacob, Abraham's grandson, received great promises from God, also, not only for himself but also for his descendants. When he was a young man, Jacob had stolen his elder brother Esau's birthright and obtained the blessings normally given to the firstborn. Esau sought to kill Jacob for his deceit, so Jacob's mother, Rebekah, sent him away to seek a wife in the land of her brother Laban (Gen. 28).

On the way, Jacob stopped for the night, and as he slept, he dreamed: "And behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

"And behold, the Lord stood above it and said: 'I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants'" (vv. 12-13).

The Lord assured Jacob that He would be with him wherever he went and that He would bring Jacob back to the land He had promised to him (v. 15).

Two wives and 11 sons later, God spoke to Jacob again in a dream (Gen.

31:10-13). Jacob had been working for his father-in-law, Laban, who continually cheated him. In the dream, God revealed a plan for dividing the cattle of Laban's flocks fairly and giving Jacob his rightful portion.

This is the first recorded instance of God's imparting sound business strategy through a dream. God also used this dream to tell Jacob to take his wives, his children and his flocks and return to the land of his father.

The Lord let Laban deal deceitfully with Jacob. God was purging Jacob. It was a long, arduous process, but through this process the promise was fulfilled and Jacob became

Israel, meaning “prince with God” (Gen. 32:28).

Dreams often challenge us to change just as Jacob was challenged to change. God had not addressed Jacob’s character flaws in his dreams, but that did not mean that God approved of all that happened in Jacob’s life.

Similarly, when we receive a word from the Lord, whether through a prophecy, a dream or a vision, we must know that the outcome will depend on our obedient cooperation with God’s maturing and purging work in our lives.

Joseph was a young man of 17 when he had two dreams that seemed to bring him nothing but trouble. He was Jacob’s favorite son, which made his 10 older brothers intensely jealous.

The strife in Jacob’s household was exacerbated when young Joseph had two dreams—one in which his brother’s sheaves bowed down to his sheaf, and the other in which the sun, the moon and 11 stars bowed down to him. Joseph shared these dreams with his brothers and, perhaps understandably, his brothers hated him all the more. Even his father rebuked him, although he also kept in mind what Joseph had said (Gen. 37:5-11).

Perhaps Joseph was unwise to share these dreams with his jealous siblings. I believe he shared them not because he was prideful but because he had more zeal than wisdom. Whatever the reason, the outcome was that his outraged brothers sold him into slavery.

Joseph’s story shows us the importance of praying carefully before we share our dreams. Much unnecessary turmoil can be avoided if we act wisely. Paul prayed that God would give the Christians at Ephesus wisdom in addition to revelation (Eph. 1:17). Revelation without wisdom can cause great heartache and pain; both must be utilized in proper balance to accomplish God’s ultimate purposes.

After many years in slavery and prison, Joseph became prime minister of Egypt and helped the country survive seven years of famine. When his brothers came to Egypt for provisions, they bowed before him just as the dreams had foretold.

The dreams gave Joseph hope, guidance and encouragement during difficult times and kept him from forsaking the God of his fathers. God had a destiny for Joseph that would be fulfilled only after many years of holding fast to Him in a strange land and under trying circumstances.

Joseph's faithfulness to God was the key to his success. God in turn remained faithful to Joseph and, in His time, fulfilled His word and brought these dreams to pass, saving not only Joseph and his family but the future nation of Israel as well.

Dreams and visions may reveal your future ministry and destiny, but they rarely reveal the process God will use to bring about their fulfillment.

### **Assurance and Healing**

We were building a new home, and anxiety about the cost of the tile roof was stretching my faith. Then one night I dreamed that we were putting a very strange roof on our house—a roof made from dried, preserved tarantula spiders!

In my dream, everyone was excited about our new roof, but I couldn't see what was so exciting about these strange tiles. Then I visited the homes of people I knew and found them raising baby tarantulas with great joy and excitement.

I awoke perplexed. I looked up *tarantula* in the encyclopedia. It said that in the Middle Ages people believed that anyone bitten by the tarantula spider became ill with tarantism—an imaginary disease that gave the victim a strong desire to dance! In reality, the bite of a tarantula is not harmful to humans.

The dance, the disease and the spider were named after a town in Italy called Taranto—which called to mind the Canadian city of Toronto, where there had been highly publicized outpourings of joy among God's people.

The Lord used my dream to tell me that He was going to cover our home with rejoicing—symbolized, strangely enough, by a tarantula. In the Middle Ages, people feared the spider's bite without cause in the same way I had feared not having the provision for the roof. God was assuring me that my worries were unfounded because He would provide joy and abundance.

The dream showed me that His joy would be poured out in every home in our congregation, producing a boldness to go forth in His name and destroy the strongholds of the enemy. I was overcome with joy and laughter and filled with faith. Who would guess that a tarantula could cause rejoicing?

Just as dreams can bring assurance, they can reveal unresolved matters in our hearts. When we dream about suppressed issues, we become aware of them so we can deal with them and be made whole. Often when we have built walls around areas of emotional pain to shield us from the hurt, God uses dreams to bypass those walls and go directly to the source of the pain.

On a conscious level, we may feel that we have dealt with those past wounds, but our subconscious minds recognize areas that still need healing. By bringing such matters to mind, God makes us aware and begins the healing process.

A man who had lost several family members in a short period of time came to me because he was troubled by dreams of his loved ones. Consciously, he felt that he had accepted their deaths, but still he dreamed about them.

I asked if he had grieved over his losses or if he felt that he had to be strong for others who were grieving. He replied that he had never let himself grieve. I prayed with him,

asking the Lord to help him process his grief. From that night forward the dreams ceased.

This man's conscious mind had not let him feel his grief, but his subconscious mind would not let him forget it. God spoke to his need through his dreams and prompted him to seek the Lord for emotional healing.

From these examples we see that God often identifies a need in our lives, then gives us a message related to that need. The need may not be met immediately; however, promises revealed in dreams and visions give us the determination we need to press through difficult circumstances until promises are fulfilled.

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## **An Ordinary Woman Doing Extraordinary Things**

*Once a high fashion designer, Elizabeth Copeland became a missionary when she stopped running from God's call.*

This year the Church of God in Christ's Women's Department is celebrating its 50th anniversary. Through the years one of its international evangelists, Dr. Elizabeth Copeland, has contributed invaluable service to women and children.

Copeland has undergirded her ministry with the firm belief that every person has the potential to become what God created him or her to be. She put her belief into practice by single-handedly developing a ministry that has touched the lives of

people around the world.

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## **Living Proof**

During my sophomore year of college, when I was 20 years old, my mother, Regina, was diagnosed with cancer and died three months later. I was very close to her, so her death was extremely painful. It was particularly hard because my father had died three years earlier.

My parents had worked very hard for my brother and me to attend college and “make something of ourselves.” Having lost them both, I felt alone but determined to finish school and see my dreams realized.

My mother’s death came in July, and I was scheduled to return to classes in September. I was concerned that I wasn’t prepared emotionally or financially to go back.

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## **Rattling Ears and Reaching Hearts**

Music, not message, reverberates through the Meow Meow in Portland, Ore., on Thursday through Saturday nights. The punk-rock club is the primary outreach of The Bridge, a church for the city’s street kids.

"This is an all ages music venue in the same building as the church, but separate from it," explains Angie Fadel, who runs the club with her husband, Todd. "Many of these people have been so burned by the traditional church, they wouldn't come if they knew we were connected to it."

The Fadels, members of The Bridge, are "trying to make a safe place for young people, especially those under 21, to hang out," they say.

"It's not a stealth evangelism type of thing," Todd Fadel says. "We're making a connection with the punk culture in Portland through arts and music. We found that people respond so much more to us because we're Christians, though. It breaks through their stereotypes."

The Fadels and other Bridge members who help out from time to time are "always ready to answer any God-questions or walk through difficult circumstances" with the people who attend, Todd emphasizes.

"We're a punk club that accepts people where they're at," he adds.

The only exception is that clubgoers must leave their cigarettes, drugs and alcohol at the door.

"But sometimes it gets pretty ugly," Todd says. "They bring their own stuff in."

One rock band that performed used profanity, singing such lyrics as "I wish I were dead," when about 20 Christians walked in. According to the Fadels, the band members were overwhelmed by the acceptance of their "enemies."

"This is becoming the best club in Portland," Todd says. "There's a legitimacy here. We don't patronize people by proselytizing. Our first step is to relate."

Todd believes a lot of mainline churches miss the boat by

preaching first and relating later. "People respond to what comes out of our hearts, not out of our mouths," he says. "Then they come to church, when they're ready."

Everyone longs for love, says Angie, mother of a 10-month-old named Zion, and a member of The Bridge—which like the Meow Meow caters to all ages.

"Even my mother attends," she says.