

You Can Live Sin Free

by Gloria Copeland

The only real freedom is in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you've been born again, the old man inside you, the one that had been held captive by the devil and made a slave to sin, has died. The power of sin over you has been broken forever! "[Your] old man is crucified with [Christ]," Romans 6:6 says, "that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth [you] should not serve sin" (KJV). And not only are you free from sin, but if you'll walk in the righteousness Jesus has given you, you'll rule over it.

In the kingdom of God, righteousness is the scepter (see Heb. 1:8). It's what gives you authority. It is imputed to you the moment you're born again, and it makes you victorious over the world, the flesh, the devil and every enemy that comes against you.

That's why the devil will do anything to get you to lay righteousness down. He'll do anything to convince you that you're still under the bondage of sin.

He'll tell you that it's just not normal for a human being to live above sin. "Oh, everybody sins," he'll whisper. "After all, you're only human."

No, you're not! You're a reborn child of almighty God. You have
God Himself inside you. Even though it's normal for natural
men to sin,
it's not normal for you.

I'll tell you why the devil tries so hard to convince you that
you're still subject to sin. It's the only way he can keep you
under
his control.

He's not afraid of people (even believers) who are living in
sin. But he shudders when a man or woman starts living day by
day in
obedient union with the Lord. When that kind of person speaks
to the
devil, he runs (see James 4:7).

Freedom from sin is the whole basis of the great salvation God
has given us. "Salvation" is a very big word. It includes much
more
than going to heaven and missing hell. What it actually means
is
"health, wholeness, deliverance, well-being, safety and
soundness."

But without freedom from sin, we wouldn't have any of those
things. Sickness, poverty, death—all the curses of sin—would
still be
in force. It's only because God has broken the power of sin
over us
that we can walk free.

If you're shaking your head thinking: I don't feel very free.
It seems as if the devil still has his hooks in me and I don't
know how
to get loose, listen to me. You are loose.

The Word says: "Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we

shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:8-11, NKJV).

When this Scripture comes alive in you, you can lay down any sin and never go back to it again. Let the truth of it sink into your heart. Sin has lost its grip on you. It can't come back unless you decide to let it come back.

Look at what Ephesians 2:5 says about you: "Even when we were dead (slain) by [our own] shortcomings and trespasses, He made us alive together in fellowship and in union with Christ; [He gave us the very life of Christ Himself, the same new life with which He quickened Him]" (The Amplified Bible).

You've already experienced the greatest resurrection of all. You experienced it the day you were born again. That's when you passed from death to life. That's when sin and death lost their hold over you—the day the old man died and the new man came to life.

So if you've been living beneath your privileges, it's time to pick up your scepter of righteousness and shake it in the devil's face.

It's time to kick sin out of your life and start living free.

Gloria Copeland is co-founder and vice president of Kenneth Copeland Ministries in Fort Worth, TX. She and her husband, Kenneth, are known for their teachings on faith, healing and victorious Christian living.

Survey: Christianity No Longer America's Religion

A Barna study released this week found that half of all Americans say that Christianity is not America's religion but one of numerous options.



[] The most recent Barna study found that half of all Americans believe Christianity isn't the country's default religion, but is instead one of many options of faith.

A recent Gallup poll showed that two-thirds of Americans believe religion is losing ground in this nation. Yet Barna's new report indicates just how far Christianity has fallen in comparison to other religions. Most convinced of this shift are evangelicals—64 percent of whom believe Christianity is no longer the religion Americans automatically accept as their personal faith—and Hispanics (60 percent).

This comes at a time when a greater number of Americans (74 percent) believe spirituality is more important to them than it used to be. That may explain why Americans—by a whopping three-to-one margin—are more likely to develop their own personal set of beliefs than accept those taught by a church or denomination. Even among born-again Christians polled, 61 percent adopt an a la carte approach to their faith. Not

surprisingly, Barna reports, the group most likely to customize their faith is those under age 25 (82 percent).
–**Ministry Today**

Four Ways Our Culture Is Brainwashing Us

Forces in our culture want to rip the foundations of Christian faith right out from under America. Here are four lies we must challenge.

This past week I spent four days preaching at Emmanuel College, a Christian liberal arts school in northeast Georgia. I love speaking to college students because they are spiritually hungry, they love passionate worship and I don't have to wear a tie.

Women on the Rise

by Maureen D. Eha

Even critics of women in ministry can't deny the supernatural call of God on these female leaders' lives.

At a Glance

- Beverly Crawford
- Kimberly Daniels
- Naomi Dowdy

Most of the women profiled did not set out to become full-time ministers, let alone apostolic church leaders. In fact, many of them had no formal Bible-school training when God first tapped them on the shoulder and they, like the prophet Jonah, tried to run from His call. But in spite of their seeming lack of preparation, their initial resistance and persecution from those around them, God led them supernaturally into leadership and is using them mightily to advance His kingdom. Will you fully heed to God's call on your life? These women did and they have impacted many lives on their journey.

Beverly Crawford

Beverly Crawford has been hungry for God since she was a little girl. But after her mother died when she was 10, she turned away from Him and focused on other pursuits.

In 1974, a friend invited her to church, and Crawford, at 29, gave her life to Christ and was filled with the Holy Spirit. She joined a large West Coast congregation and became involved in ministry, teaching Sunday school and a Bible study for women that eventually attracted men as well. It grew so large that the only venue big enough to host it was the 1,400-seat sanctuary.

"That's how things got started," she says. "That's how I learned to flow in the gifts."

During her 10 years at the church, Crawford was licensed and given responsibility for the youth department, the women's ministry and the singles ministry—yet she had never been to Bible school. All her training came from the Holy Spirit, she says.

In the mid-1980s, she stepped down from her church duties and began an outreach Bible study. At the time she had no intention of starting a church, but on the way to joining a different congregation, God spoke to her.

"He told me, 'I didn't tell you to join a church; I told you

to start one,'” she says.

Today Crawford’s Bible Enrichment Fellowship International Church in Inglewood, California, has 4,000 members and supports radio and television ministries as well as an apostolic network, prophetic seminars, and numerous community outreaches.

Kimberly Daniels

To look at her now, poised and well-dressed, expounding on God’s Word before her 500-member congregation at Spoken Word Ministries in Jacksonville, Florida, you’d never know Kimberly Daniels spent her youth on the streets of that same city, running with a gang and becoming involved in crime and violence. A prostitute and drug addict for a time, Daniels was anything but the picture of a future pastor.

Today, however, the only hint of her former life is her familiarity with the devil’s ways—and her willingness to confront the enemy when she discerns he is encroaching on God’s territory. In fact, it was her boldness to take on the devil in order to bring deliverance to inner-city youth that first earned her a reputation as the “Demon Buster.”

Daniels kicked her cocaine habit when she joined the Army and then gave her life to Christ while on active duty in Germany. She immediately began leading a Bible study and was preaching within six months.

When she returned to the U.S., she started a center to help girls get off drugs but had trouble finding a church that would accept them. Finally, God told her: “You pastor them.” And out of her drug center came a church.

In addition to pastoring Spoken Word and overseeing Word Bible College, Daniels leads Commanders of the Morning, a large network of intercessors she trains in prayer and spiritual warfare. Through her Iron Sharpens Iron ministry she equips

believers to operate in the fivefold ministry and encourages them to fulfill their God-appointed roles in the church. She also travels worldwide to minister in conferences and plans to open a second church, Rhema Way City Church, in Jacksonville this year.

Naomi Dowdy

When Naomi Dowdy was a girl, God spoke to her through the hymn "Let the Lower Lights Be Burning," a song that likens believers to the lights around a lighthouse. While she was singing the words of the chorus—"Let the lower lights be burning/ Send a gleam across the wave!"—in a church service one day, she heard a voice say aloud to her, "That's what I want you to do."

Later, in San Diego, Dowdy sat on the shore as often as possible—but it wasn't to let her light shine for sinners. She had drifted from God and was working the night shift so she could spend all day on the beach.

But immediately after she gave her life to Christ at age 25, Dowdy says, she began preaching, first on Skid Row in San Diego and later on the radio. Then God appeared to her in a vision and told her He was going to send her to "the islands of the sea." For nine years she worked as a missionary in the Marshall Islands, teaching at Bible schools, planting churches and training pastors throughout Asia—until God offered her her own church.

"I didn't want to be a pastor," Dowdy says. "It was not even on the radar screen."

But she agreed to lead the pioneer Assemblies of God church in Singapore for six months. Nearly 30 years later, she resigned as senior pastor of Trinity Christian Centre. She had grown the church from 42 to 4,500 members, founded a Bible school and seminary—now TCA College—and developed a cell model currently used by thousands of churches around the world.

Dowdy, with bases in both Dallas and Singapore, continues to give spiritual oversight to the church as the resident apostle. She is also the founder and president of Global Leadership Network and the Global Covenant Network.

Maureen D. Eha is the features editor of *Charisma*.

This article is from the June 2007 issue of *Charisma*

Parenting Pains

✘ It might sound like a cliché, but parenting is the toughest job on Earth. After about 20 years of on-the-job training, we begin to figure out what it is all about. By then it's time to let go and pretend we don't care any more. Added to these difficulties are our own personal problems, which can include marital conflict or divorce, physical illnesses, financial pressures and the other cares of living. Our unmet needs, such as those experienced by single parents, can also lead us into behavior that will later seem terribly foolish.

Do I sound as though I'm whining here? I hope not. I'm simply attempting to articulate the challenges that can accompany parenthood and the particular discomfort that occurs for parents of strong-willed children

when they begin to feel they have botched the assignment. (The parents of compliant children may not fully understand this emotional reaction, although there is usually enough related stress to affect everybody.)

Despite the discouraging moments, it is my firm conviction that bearing and raising children is worth everything it costs us. Along with the difficulties come the greatest joys and rewards life has to offer.

How could that be true? How can the very thing that brings us anxiety and stress be the source of such happiness and fulfillment? There is an obvious contradiction here that bears consideration.

Christian writer and apologist C.S. Lewis tried to express the indescribable pain that he experienced when he lost his wife to cancer. He would not have been so devastated by her passing, he said, if he had not allowed himself to love her with all his heart.

In the movie *Shadowlands*, based on this period of Lewis' life, he wondered if it would have been better never to have loved at all, and thereby to have avoided the risk of losing the woman he adored. It would certainly have been "safer" to live in a fortress, protecting himself from disappointment and grief by remaining emotionally detached and uncaring.

Lewis considered these responses to sorrow and decided that in

the end, love

is worth the risk. This is the way he penned his conclusion:

“To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will

certainly be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it

intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it

carefully around with hobbies and little luxuries ... lock it up safe in the

casket or coffin of your selfishness.

“But in that casket-safe, dark, motionless, airless-it will change. It will

not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable ... The

only place outside heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers

of love is hell!” Then Lewis added this concluding thought:

“Why love if losing

hurts so much? We love to know that we are not alone.”

Doesn't this insight speak eloquently of the pain associated with parenthood?

It certainly does to me. This is what bearing and raising children comes down

to. Loving those we have borne is risky business, but it is a venture that

brings great joy and happiness. Even though there are often trials and tears

associated with the challenge, it is a noble journey.

We as parents are given the privilege of taking the raw materials that

comprise a brand-new human being and then molding him or her day by day into a

mature, disciplined, productive and God-fearing adult who will

live with us in
eternity. Doing that job right, despite its setbacks and
disappointments, is
surely one of the greatest achievements of our lives.

In his Bringing Up Boys Parenting Videos, Dr. Dobson shares
principles for
raising boys from his decades of expertise. This self-directed
program includes
four DVDs and an accompanying workbook that will equip parents
and youth leaders
to steer the boys they care about toward confident,
responsible manhood.

To request your copy visit

Dr. James Dobson is founder and chairman of the board of the
nonprofit
organization Focus on the Family (Colorado Springs, CO 80995;
or
) . Material is excerpted from The Complete Marriage and Family
Home Reference Guide and Bringing Up Boys, both published by
Tyndale House.

Pastor Offers Spiritual, Political Leadership

*Observers say Dave Edler, mayor of Yakima, Wash., is poised to
move on to a bigger political stage.*



[] Pentecostal pastor is offering both spiritual and political
leadership in

his community as mayor of Yakima, Wash.

Dave Edler, a former professional baseball player with the Seattle Mariners

and senior pastor of Yakima Foursquare Church, became mayor in 2006 and has

since been praised for building broad, bipartisan coalitions to address local issues.

Now, having helped his hometown achieve success in crime reduction and

economic development, Edler, 51, a Republican, stands poised to move on to a

bigger political stage, observers say. His pro-business stands combined with his

willingness to consider new taxes and support for legalizing undocumented

workers give him bipartisan appeal.

“I think he has the potential for higher office and would have no problem

getting elected,” said Yakima County Democratic Party chairman Paul George, who

served with Edler on the City Council. “I would hope he'd run as a Democrat.”

Edler, who has aspired to be a U.S. senator since his youth, said he is “open

to what might come politically in the future.” But recently when a chance to run

for an open state House seat emerged, he passed it up to focus on launching a

satellite congregation.

“[I'm] committed to making sure our church is prevailing, that whether I'm

there or not it will continue to have impact, be a blessing to our community,

and fulfill its redemptive purpose," said Edler, who is training Mark Grange, one of four young men he took in as a foster son, to eventually succeed him as senior pastor.

Edler accepted Christ in 1979 while struggling with drinking, drug use and a troubled relationship with his alcoholic father. After he retired from the Mariners in 1984, he eventually became a volunteer with Young Life, a Christian youth program. His work with young people led to his being offered a position as assistant pastor at Yakima Foursquare in 1994. He was named senior pastor in 1997.

Since then the church has moved into a larger facility on the booming west side of town and planted a satellite congregation led by another of Edler's foster sons, Cesar Dominguez. "What Dave does better than most is seeing the best in people and giving them the sense that they can accomplish and overcome anything," Dominguez said. "That had an impact on me as a teenager."

Edler said he decided to pursue his long-time interest in politics because he was troubled by a lack of strong leadership in the Yakima community. He was elected to the City Council in 2003, chosen by the council as mayor in 2006 and re-elected in 2007.

Edler said he is proudest of making the city and county

governments work together more effectively, helping reduce crime rates through a citizen committee he led, speeding redevelopment through more public and private investment, and improving the public image of Yakima, which long was seen as a hotbed of crime and drugs.

But Edler has faced his share of criticism. Some Christian conservatives complain that he doesn't talk publicly about issues such as abortion and stem-cell research. "I'm not one who chases those issues politically," Edler said. "It's the hearts of men and women that change the culture, not the political system."

Others, however, criticize him for talking too much about God. Even some supporters chided him for his National Day of Prayer speech in which he credited prayer for bringing \$5 million in state funding for Yakima's downtown development project. They note that the downtown redevelopment money was the result of a deal with the governor in exchange for the Yakima legislative delegation's support for her gas tax. "Prayer wasn't the reason," former Mayor Paul George quipped.

Edler responded with a disarming combination of faith and reason. "If there is a God, and He is able to move mountains," Edler said, "why not have a conversation with Him while you're trying to move those

mountains, then
acknowledge Him when the mountains get moved?"

After the 2008 election, Edler began participating in talks with other Republicans who are concerned about the GOP's future locally, statewide and nationally. "The Democrats did a better job of telling their story this year, and it doesn't hurt when the things that have happened with our economy happened," he said.

Yet despite his party affiliation, Edler said he will support the incoming president. "I personally will back President Obama and pray for him and for the best for our nation," Edler said. "Although I've been labeled a Republican, there are leaders in the Democratic Party I have voted for and would vote for. We don't need partisan politics. We need good leaders."
-Harris Meyer in Yakima, Wash.

Christian Broadcaster "Blown Off Feet" Near Gaza

International Christian broadcaster Earl Cox survived two Hamas rocket attacks last Thursday.



[] A Christian broadcaster and staunch pro-Israel advocate

narrowly escaped injury following two Hamas rocket attacks near the Israeli-Gaza border.

Earl Cox, founder of Israel Always, which has raised significant financial support for Israel in recent years, traveled to southern Israel last week to report on the Mideast conflict and to identify some of the many humanitarian needs in the border area.

According to a ministry report, as sirens screamed last Thursday in Sderot, Israel, warning the population of incoming rockets, Cox and his team **scrambled for cover** inside a portable bomb shelter. Though they escaped serious injury, the rocket landed so close to Cox and his crew that shock waves from the blast threw him and one of his aids against the wall. "I was blown off my feet," Cox later recalled.

After the first blast, he and others escaped a second rocket attack unharmed after taking cover in a nearby building.

"Those of you in America who don't believe this war is real, let me tell you, it is real," Cox said in a video appeal for prayer and financial support. "I know what it is like. It's terrifying, believe me."

Cox's wife, Kathleen, who organized a motorcade rally on Sunday from her home in Mount Pleasant, S.C., to downtown Charleston to show the Christian community's solidarity with Israel, knows the risks her husband is taking. "Earl [has] experienced a taste of the horror the people living in southern Israel suffer every day," she said.

Israel's offensive on Hamas militants holed up in Gaza entered a third week on Saturday, furthering a sense of civilian fear on both sides of the border. As observers worldwide hoped for an end to the fighting, the leader of an international ministry that advocates for the persecuted church called Palestinian Christians "clear losers" in the conflict.

"[We're] not politically involved with this conflict, and we don't attempt to tease out the answer of which side is most responsible for starting it," Carl Moeller, president and CEO of Open Doors U.S., told *Charisma*. "We stand with those who are suffering. Our major focus is [Christians in Gaza], since there are only about 2,500 of them left and they are in the cross hairs of both the Hamas extremists and the Israeli Defense Forces."

Bishara Awad, president of Bethlehem Bible College, which

maintains contact with Gazan Christians through the Baptist Church of Gaza, reported on Wednesday that three Christians, all of them civilians, have lost their lives in the war so far, and that civilian casualties often include women and children.

"We are witnessing a great humanitarian crisis; the situation in Gaza is horrible," Bishara said in a letter requesting financial and prayer support. "[Most] Gazans are out of electricity and gas, and most of the time they have no running water. There were days when they did not have any food to cook."

The Jewish state has consistently defended its decision to send Israeli troops and planes into Gaza as an act of self-defense. Israeli forces, which halt fighting daily to send humanitarian aid into Gaza, drew immediate support from the U.S. and other key allies for its actions.

Christians in the West who believe terrorism is the root cause of Palestinian suffering reject global denunciation of the Israel-led offensive, especially from the Arab world.

"Israel is again being condemned worldwide for commencing an attack against Hamas terrorists entrenched in Gaza," said Mideast analyst and *New York Times* best-selling author Mike Evans. "Israeli government leaders have reiterated that they [did] not wish to move militarily against the Gaza Strip and its inhabitants.

"They do, however, have the right and the obligation to protect innocent Israelis, which include both Jews and Arabs, from being held hostage by Hamas and its fellow terrorist organizations operating in Gaza," Evans added.

Other observers share Evans' view that Israel is being unfairly portrayed as the aggressor. "Whether it is bias or laziness, the media is not doing enough to provide the context for Israel's actions," David Brog, executive director of Christians United for Israel, told *Charisma* on Tuesday. "Israel did not just decide out of the blue to go into Gaza. On the contrary, Israel exercised enormous restraint as over 10,000 rockets and mortars have been fired into southern Israel from Gaza in recent years.

"What we are seeing now is a long-overdue response," Brog said. "By ignoring this history, the media too often portrays Israel as the aggressor when it is in fact only exercising its

legitimate right to self defense.”

Meanwhile, Chaya Mizrachi, a co-founder of Dugit Messianic Outreach Center in Tel Aviv, said on Tuesday that she planned to travel to the dangerous border town of Sderot to pray for Israel and its troops. “We have around 70 Messianic Jewish soldiers in the Israel Defense Force (IDF)—young believers fighting in Gaza,” she said. “I knew them as children playing with my girls. I have known some of their parents for many years. Now, today, they are fighting a just war in defense of their nation.

“Israel stands behind her soldiers, and we are involved in doing things to help,” she said.—**Paul Steven Ghiringhelli**

[Discuss this Article](#)

Women on the Rise

✘ Most of the women profiled did not set out to become full-time ministers, let alone apostolic church leaders. In fact, many of them had no formal Bible-school training when God first tapped them on the shoulder and they, like the prophet Jonah, tried to run from His call. But in spite of their seeming lack of preparation, their initial resistance and persecution from those around them, God led them supernaturally into leadership and is using them mightily to advance His kingdom. Will you fully heed to God’s call on your life? These women did and they have impacted many lives on their journey.

Prophetic Words for 2009

Editor's Note: *The word below was shared by R. Loren Sandford, founder and senior pastor of New Song Fellowship in Denver, Colorado, with his congregation in early January as part one of a two-part sermon titled "Prophetic Words for 2009." You can order both parts of the message on CD through the church's Web site (newsongfellowship.org). Sandford is the author of several books, including Understanding Prophetic People and The Prophetic Church (both published by Chosen). In the word, he encourages believers not to fear the future but to look ahead with hope toward all the good things God is going to do in our nation.*

Have a Healthy Heart

by Francisco Contreras, M.D.

Q. With heart disease as rampant as it is, just how concerned should I be if I have a high cholesterol level?

M.C., Coronado, California

A. When people get together and the subject of health comes up, it's very common to hear someone ask, "What's your cholesterol level?" If the answer is 195, people think it's good. However, if the answer is, say, 220, then the reaction is typically sympathetic.

Most people think anything under 200 is good and anything over that is bad.

But a level of 195 may not be good, and 220 may not be all that bad.

There is good cholesterol and there is bad cholesterol. High-Density Lipoproteins (HDL) is the “good” cholesterol and Low-Density Lipoproteins (LDL) is the “bad” cholesterol. The important thing is the ratio between them.

HDL actually helps prevent cardiovascular disease because it helps remove LDL from blood cells, which means that less LDL can enter into the blood vessel walls. HDL can reverse the buildup in the arteries and act as a blood-thinning agent. This is very important to good heart health.

LDL, on the other hand, is very unhealthy for you if the level in your blood is high. It can cause the inside layers of your arteries to inflame, and fatty plaques and platelets can begin to build up. The blood can start to thicken, a process that can lead to heart complications.

Here is the most important fact to know about cholesterol levels: It is not the individual levels of HDL and LDL or their combined levels that make a big difference. It is the ratio of HDL to LDL that will determine your risk for heart disease.

Your total cholesterol divided by your HDL should be less than 4, and your LDL divided by the HDL should be less than 3.

If your ratios work out to be less than 4 and less than 3 respectively, you

are at a low risk to develop heart disease. If your ratios are higher, your risk of heart disease is much higher, regardless of what the individual levels of cholesterol are. That is why a person with a total cholesterol greater than 200 may not be at risk, and a person with a lower cholesterol level may be at great risk.

I recommend that you have your cholesterol levels checked by a doctor and then work out your ratios. If you see that they are higher than what they should be, you should ask your doctor and a nutritionist to help you lower them, preferably through diet and exercise instead of prescription drugs. May you be blessed with a healthy heart.

Francisco Contreras, M.D., director of Oasis of Hope Hospital in Mexico, oversees the treatment of 600 cancer patients annually.