

A Supernatural Lifestyle Doesn't Mean Chasing Gold Dust

Nothing silences a skeptic quicker than a bona fide miracle from God. I've known former atheists who became Christians by seeing God's supernatural power show up among everyday people. I'm not talking about minor "miracles" like finding a \$20 bill on the street, but instead limbs growing out, eyesight being restored, tumors disappearing and lame people walking. Like Thomas upon seeing a resurrected Christ's hands, these kinds of healings can cause even the most ardent doubter to confess Jesus as Lord (see John 20:28).

Likewise, countless Muslims around the world today are becoming believers after meeting Jesus in a dream, being healed by Him (without anyone praying or laying hands on them) or having other supernatural encounters with the Lord. It's exciting to see Joel 2:28-29 coming to pass in our day! And if you've read *Charisma* before, you've undoubtedly seen reports of how the Holy Spirit continues to move supernaturally, drawing people to Jesus with signs, wonders and miracles.

But the supernatural also attracts extremists. Not just those radical for Christ (something we should all want to be), but also those who jump from conference to conference seeking their next spiritual high from an angelic encounter, prophetic word or dream interpretation. If you've been to a healing conference, you know that when there's an atmosphere that invites the Holy Spirit to move freely, you draw those with a penchant for spiritual extremes (and immaturity).

That's fine. After all, Jesus handpicked a zealot to be among His 12 disciples, and I'm sure He attracted a fair share of weirdos wherever He went. The problem wasn't and isn't those

people, whom we should love as Jesus did; it's the belief they often hold that supernatural encounters are the end-all experiences. And sadly, this viewpoint still runs rampant within Spirit-filled churches and charismatic conferences as we elevate supernatural experiences over everything else.

Don't get me wrong: God calls each of us to a supernatural lifestyle. He desires for us to live out Jesus' promise that we would do even "greater works" than what He did (John 14:12). But so that we remain focused on Jesus and don't veer into unbiblical mysticism in our desire to see the Holy Spirit move through us, let's remember what walking in the supernatural *doesn't* do.

1) It doesn't supersede intimacy with Jesus. When it comes to living supernaturally, it's tempting to divorce the miraculous works of God with a relationship with Him. Yet Jesus' miracles were always a greater invitation for others to know Him. It's one thing to see the hand of God at work; it's another to, like Paul, consider everything—including signs, wonders and miracles—"a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:8, NIV).

2) It doesn't replace the presence of God. God's manifest presence ushers in the miraculous. Too often we think it's the reverse and end up chasing the gold dust or gold tooth fillings more than we care about actually being in the presence of a holy God.

3) It doesn't elevate us in God's sight. The Holy Spirit doesn't use us to do the miraculous because we've done something special, carry a weighty title or have a super-spiritual lineage. He moves through us because of His own nature. Don't let spiritual pride disqualify you from walking humbly before God as a broken yet redeemed vessel He can use for *His* glory.

4) It doesn't trump love. Paul makes it clear that we can speak in tongues, be prophetically gifted, carry supernatural insight and have miraculous faith; but if we don't have love, it's for naught (see 1 Cor. 13:1-3).

5) It doesn't signify true discipleship. Just because you walk in the miraculous doesn't mean you're a true follower of Jesus. In fact, Christ disowned those who would claim to know Him by the demons cast out and wonders done in His name (Matt. 7:22). And in Matthew 24:24, He warned of "false messiahs and false prophets" who would deceive with "great signs and wonders."

6) It doesn't excuse us from the Great Commission. Why have the "power evangelism" messages from leaders such as Oral Roberts, T.L. Osborne and John Wimber resonated with so many? Maybe it's because they kept Jesus' last command at the forefront of their ministries. Rather than letting hype surrounding supernatural healings lead the way, they kept evangelizing and discipling the nations as the centerpiece.

As believers, we each have the gift of the Holy Spirit available to us. To avoid derailing our opportunity to walk with Him in a supernatural relationship, let's understand what this lifestyle does and doesn't entail.

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Here's Why Your Low-Fat Diet Could Be Backfiring

The very common advice to people suffering from heart disease has always been to avoid the overconsumption of saturated fat. Such saturated fats can be found in red meat, butter and cheese.

Saturated fats have the ability to deposit in arteries and clog them; this is why numerous health-conscious people in the U.S. prefer healthier fats, such as canola oil as opposed to butter.

However, the results of this study are not shocking for people who are conscious of modern nutrition. It is important to know that there is no solid evidence to attest to the fact that saturated fat can directly cause heart disease. People usually believe this theory because nutritional strategies over the last decade have been directly affected by bias, wrong information, ambition and politics.

'Saturated Fat Causes Heart Disease'—Who Came Up With This Idea?

In 1950, a scientist at the University of Minnesota, Ancel Benjamin Keys, rose to instant fame and was also featured on the cover of *Time* magazine after declaring his idea that the consumption of saturated fat increases cholesterol, which in turn results in heart attacks. Since Keys was the director of the largest nutritional body, he could easily flaunt his idea among people. He performed the study named as "Seven Countries" on more than 13,000 men from the U.S., Europe and Japan. Keys concluded that instead of aging, poor nutrition is the major cause of heart disease in people.

What Did Critics Say?

Critics found that Keys desecrated various scientific rules during the study to draw this conclusion. For instance, he chose countries like Italy, Finland and Yugoslavia, where people could easily be convinced. However, countries such as West Germany, France, Switzerland and Sweden, where people consume lots of fat but still remain healthier, were not included in the study.

The study was conducted on islanders and peasants from Crete who tilled their fields and consumed less cheese and meat. Also, Keys visited Crete after World War II and examined the diet of islanders during Lent, when they stopped consuming cheese and meat. Therefore, Keys could not correctly analyze their consumption of saturated fat.

Because of the difficulties with the surveys, he took into account only the data obtained from a few dozen people. This figure was much lower than the 655 he had initially selected to study. These flaws in his study were exposed later, in the year 2002, when a scientist examined the work conducted on Crete. However, until then, it was too late and his misinterpretation was already adopted internationally.

There were many others studies that followed later on. There were more than six large trials that pitted a diet rich in soybean and corn against one with more animal fats. However, those trials had issues with their methodology.

In many studies, there was no restriction on smoking, while in others the participants were permitted to move in and out of the research group during the study. Thus, the results obtained were not trustworthy. Well, nothing could be done until then, since a lot of money was spent to prove Key's assumptions. People were so much in favor of Keys' idea that they started to think it was true.

In 1977, a nutrition professor at Harvard, Mark Hegsted, convinced the U.S. Senate to recommend the Keys diet; he

claimed Americans should change to Keys' diet because of the advantages it contained. He further stated that the Keys diet is safe to consume and there are no identified risks. However, there were many scientists who warned regarding the unintentional result of the Keys diet; today we are facing with a few of these.

What Are the Consequences of Consuming a Low-Fat Diet?

It has been found that reducing the amount of fat results in the consumption of more carbohydrates, and therefore the consumption of carbohydrates has increased by 25 percent since 1970. However, according to the latest government data, consumption of saturated fat has been reduced by 11 percent.

In spite of consuming cheese, meat and eggs, we are consuming more fruit, grains, pasta and starchy potatoes. By reducing the amount of fat in our diet, we are filling our body with carbohydrate-based foods.

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For the original article, visit .

Yes, the Devil Always Overplays His Hand

When I listened to my voice mail I was absolutely shocked. An angry young man on the other end line spewed, "How dare you,

Jennifer LeClaire, tell Michael you don't believe me. Don't you know that I get every message you send and receive on your phone? How dare you!"

Yes, apparently someone I know found a way to hack into my smartphone's messaging system and intercept every text message I sent or received. This person was reading personal details about my life, as well as the lives of those I was ministering to, for months. It was beyond creepy.

Of course, when I realized this I immediately signed out of my messaging account and changed all my passwords. But when the dust settled I was reminded of a lesson: the devil always overplays his hand and, ultimately, the devil always exposes himself in the end. Although there's no scripture and verse in the Bible that says that, there are plenty of examples in the Word that prove the point.

Justifying Job

Job's faith was sorely tested at the hand of Satan. Job lost his sons and daughters, his possessions, and even his health. It was so bad that his embittered wife suggested he curse God and die and his friends suggested there was some secret sin in his life. But he would not turn his back on Jehovah.

"When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot has held fast to His steps; I have kept His way and not turned aside. I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth, more than my necessary food" (Job 23:11-12).

Although God gave Satan permission to sift Job, he overplayed his hand. God not only vindicated Job among his wife, brothers, sisters and friends who judged his heart, he also set Job up as their intercessor, elevating him to a position of honor.

Job had a heart tender before God even in the face of the

enemy's attacks. And we know the end of the story: "And the Lord restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before" (Job 42:10)

Moses Marched On

Pharaoh kept the Israelites in bondage for hundreds of years. One day, God called a deliverer named Moses to tell Pharaoh, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel; 'Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness'" (Ex. 5:1). Pharaoh didn't take too kindly to that command and made things even harder for the Israelites, commanding the taskmasters to withhold the straw to make bricks without reducing the quota of bricks (see Ex. 5:6:9).

After each plague God released into Egypt, Pharaoh would promise to let Israel go—and then change his mind. This happened over and over and over again until finally, one last time, Pharaoh actually allowed Israel to start leaving. But before they got too far out, Pharaoh changed his mind again and sent his army out against them. Pharaoh overplayed his hand and was defeated at the Red Sea.

"Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and when the morning appeared, the sea returned to its full depth, while the Egyptians were fleeing into it. So the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained. But the children of Israel had walked on dry land in the midst of the sea, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left" (Exodus 14:27-29).

Haman Figuratively Hanged Himself

Haman had it out for the Jews. He was second in command to the king. Everyone honored him except Mordecai, who refused to bow to him in the streets. Haman loathed Mordecai and when he

discovered his Jewish descent he set in motion a plan to destroy not only Mordecai—but all the Jews.

“Haman said to King Ahasuerus, ‘There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from all other people’s, and they do not keep the king’s laws. Therefore it is not fitting for the king to let them remain. If it pleases the king, let a decree be written that they be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who do the work, to bring *it* into the king’s treasuries’” (Esther 3:7-9).

Mordecai called a fast and his niece, Esther—who happened to be married to the king—joined in. She found favor with the king, exposed Haman’s plan and turned it around on him.

“The king said to Queen Esther, ‘The Jews have killed and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the citadel, and the ten sons of Haman. What have they done in the rest of the king’s provinces? Now what *is* your petition? It shall be granted to you. Or what *is* your further request? It shall be done.” Esther said, ‘If it pleases the king, let it be granted to the Jews who are in Shushan to do again tomorrow according to today’s decree, and let Haman’s ten sons be hanged on the gallows” (Esther 9:12-13).

Here’s the takeaway: Be encouraged. The enemy sometimes turns up the heat, but God is in control. He won’t allow more to come on you than you can bear—and he won’t let the enemy have his way in the end. The devil always overplays his hand and God always restores anything Satan manages to kill, steal or destroy.

If you’ve lost anything at the enemy’s hand, then believe for a Job-like restoration and if things look all but lost, remember Moses and Esther. You win! Amen!

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author of several books, including The Spiritual Warrior's Guide to Defeating Jezebel. You can email Jennifer at @ or visit her website here. You can also join Jennifer on Facebook or follow her on Twitter.

Teaming Up With Angels to Overcome Darkness

As the church, our job is just to believe God. We are to pray, to worship God, to declare His Word, and to unleash a torrent of angelic activity because He is ready in these last days to do everything He's ever done through history.

He is ready to do it in one compact generation. So much of what He's ready to do is going to be done with angelic partnerships, with their help, support and activity.

We are at a time in history when the angels are with us. Even when we feel most vulnerable or weak, God is going to help us. He is going to help us come into alignment with how things really are.

Remember when Elisha's servant said to him, "What are we going to do? The enemy has come for us." And Elisha prayed, "Lord, open his eyes." Elisha said to his servant, "Son, there are more with us than against us."

Then the same servant, who only moments before had only seen the natural problem, discovered his eyes had been opened and he saw hovering over the Syrian army an angelic host of warriors. That took away all his fear. (See 2 Kings 6:15-17).

The same is true for us. Sometimes our fear is based on a lack

of revelation of how things *really* are. How things really are goes like this: *God wins!*

God is great. He has released an angelic army, and the angels outnumber the demons. Angels are stronger than demons. Angels are here to help us. We are on the winning team and in the winning time.

In these last days God is going to bring such an escalation of angelic activities. It already is increasing exponentially because of the time of history we are in. It is a tremendous time for us to really be aware there are more with us than against us.

Whatever city you live in, whatever part of the world you live in, there are millions—countless numbers—of angels there. They are helping you, and they are helping God's purposes. They are bringing God's kingdom on earth and fulfilling God's business.

Don't be afraid. There are more with us than against us.

✘ Adapted from *Angel Stories* by Jonathan Nixon, copyright 2014, published by Charisma House. If you have ever wondered if angels really exist, have a purpose, interact with us and are assigned to protect and do God's bidding on our behalf, this book is for you. It will answer questions and bring clarity to your understanding. To order your copy click on this link.

Prayer Power for the Week of 5/26/2014

This week thank the Lord for His angelic protection on your behalf, and commit yourself again to exercise your faith in total trust that His plans for you are good ones, and that He will work all things out for your good. Thank the Lord for those who have given their lives to preserve the freedoms this nation enjoys, and pray for the families and loved ones who have suffered their loss. As we honor them this Memorial Day continue to pray that our nation would also honor God and turn

back to His righteous ways. Pray for those persecuted for their faith in Christ, for worldwide revival, the peace of Jerusalem, and the soon return of our Lord. (2 Kings 6:15-17)

The Wife Must Submit, and So Must the Husband

In marriage, God requires us to submit to Him first and then to each other. For those whom this truth irritates, this post is specifically for you. Now that I have your attention, let's ask some questions.

In the many marriage conferences I have attended over the last few years, I always hear about the longstanding debate where the wife must submit to her husband. This, of course, always brings up some tension, mainly among the ladies in the crowd. The men nod their heads, of course, but are quickly sustained.

I also hear a lot of confusion on this topic with couples who are struggling in their marriage. Typically, the husband is trying to drive home the point that she must submit to him, not even knowing where it's written or how to actually define it, and the wife will naturally fight against his wishes, she, again, not knowing the rules on submission or love. So what are the rules?

What Does the Dictionary Say?

- Submit: "to give over or yield to the power or authority of another"
- Love: "a profoundly tender and passionate affection for another person"
- Respect: "to hold in esteem or honor"

These definitions sound like the type of relationship we all need to have with Jesus. Agreed? Now, what about our marriages?

What does the Bible say about submission and love?

The standard for this information can be found in Ephesians 5:21-33. The big verse that stands out for **wives** and submission is verse 22: "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord." The next big verse that stands out is verse 24, which says, "Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything."

The big verse that stands out for the **husbands** and love is verse 25: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her." The next big one is verse 28: "In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself."

These verses bring up the exact points that wives are to submit to their husbands and husbands are to love their wives. Note that there is no hierarchy mentioned here in these verses. There are different roles mentioned, but they are equal. This might be the key point.

To put these verses in a better perspective, I made this infographic below to help you understand those Scriptures. Review the graphic and then review your marriage and relationship with Jesus. What are you waiting for?



The infographic helped me understand the connections between our roles in marriage and our roles in our relationship with Jesus. All at the same level, the wife must submit to her husband just as the church submits to Jesus, and the husband must love his wife just as Jesus loves the church. Do you agree with this graphic? Expand on your thoughts in the comments.

Is that it? Are husbands exempt from any form of submission?

Absolutely not. In fact, if you read all of the verses in the Ephesians passage above you, would see that the first verse says, "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." Another hot verse on submission can be found in James 4:7, which reads, "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

These verses make it clear that both men and women, married or not, must learn how to submit to God. If you take the initiative to be submissive to God and understand what it means, you will be able to better apply the principles in your own relationship or marriage. Starting to make sense?

So, what is the bottom line? It's simple: Both spouses must learn the details on submission and love. Jesus sets the example for us in the Scriptures, and you must learn to live them out in your own marriage.

In the case of submission, yes, the wives must learn how to submit to their husbands according to the Scripture. But in the same sense and on the same level, husbands must learn how to love their wives according to the Scripture.

If you are personally living out the principles in your walk with Jesus, it will be much easier to live out these principles in your own marriage. As we are all the body of Christ, we are all one flesh. As a married couple, we are and have become one flesh.

So, here's your challenge:

- Husbands, ask your wife today how you can love her better.
- Wives, ask your husband today how you can submit to or respect him better.

What aspect of love or submission do you struggle with in your

own marriage? Feel free to share your thoughts in the comments below.

Maturity is a blog built on establishing spiritual maturity in today's man. The goal is to assist men in building better marriages and help them in grow in maturity and explore different aspects of manhood. features new weekly blog posts, daily social media updates and a powerful resources page. Stay up to date with the Maturity blog communities on Facebook and Twitter.

For the original article, visit .

Despite Death Sentence, Sudanese Woman Refuses to Renounce Faith in Christ

Daniel Wani, the husband of the Sudanese woman sentenced to death for refusing to renounce her Christianity, says she will not likely change her mind.

Meriam Yehya Ibrahim, who just gave birth to her second child in prison while her eldest is being held with her, was convicted of apostasy. She was sentenced to receive 100 lashes and to be hanged because she would not profess to be a Muslim.

Since Shariah law considers Ibrahim a Muslim—the religion of her father who abandoned her as a child—Sudan will not recognize her marriage to Wani, a Christian and U.S. citizen. But he says her resolve will not fade.

“There is pressure on her from Muslim religious leaders that she should return to the faith,” Wani told CNN. “She said,

'How can I return when I never was a Muslim? Yes, my father was a Muslim, but I was brought up by my mother.' "

Wani said he will stand by his wife and that he's hopeful for her situation.

"I'm hoping that given the way people have come together around the world, which I want to thank them for—all the rights groups, all the broadcasters. The media has really supported us, to the extent my phone now doesn't stop. ... It's looking like it had an effect. Perhaps it will result in the judgment being overturned," he said.

Rights groups and foreign embassies around the world have condemned Sudan's sentence against Ibrahim. But the government has so far stood by its ruling, even releasing a statement saying they are not "violating human rights."

There is no timetable on when Ibrahim's sentence will take place. She and her son have been detained since Jan. 17.

Poll: Majority Believe People Are Born Gay

The support for same-sex marriage may have hit its highest point since Gallup started polling on the topic, but Americans remain split on how people come to be homosexual.

According to a recent Gallup poll, more than a third of Americans (37 percent) believe people become gay as a result of factors such as upbringing and environment, while 42 percent believe people are born gay. The latter number is down from a 2013 poll, in which 47 percent believed people were gay

at birth.

Gallup reports: “Those with college educations, whites, females, liberals, Democrats, high-income earners and those who seldom or never attend church are the most likely to believe that being gay or lesbian is something people are born with.”

The poll, conducted May 8-11, shows that Americans’ views on the topic have evolved. When Gallup first asked about the origins of homosexuality in 1977, more than half (56 percent) attributed it to upbringing and environment, while a mere 13 percent believed sexual orientation was determined at birth.

By 2001, 40 percent of Americans believed homosexuality started at birth. Since then, they have been divided on the topic. The scientific community is also divided over the issue of sexual orientation and how it is determined.

“There is no consensus among scientists about the exact reasons that an individual develops a heterosexual, bisexual, gay, or lesbian orientation,” the American Psychological Association says.

The United Kingdom’s Royal College of Psychiatrists recently released a statement saying people are not born gay.

WATCH: ‘Left Behind’ Trailer Shows Post-Rapture Chaos

The first teaser trailer for the *Left Behind* remake coming to theaters this fall was released Friday, offering a glimpse at the reboot of the book and film series.

The one-minute trailer shows Nicolas Cage as pilot Rayford Steele and Chad Michael Murray as journalist Buck Williams, along with the confusion and destruction that follows the rapture.

Watch the trailer below.

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