

# 4 Ways to Quiet Your Spirit Before God

*Editor's Note: Steve Hill passed away earlier this year. This is one of his classic articles.*

Many have asked me how I've been able to maintain my Christian walk over the past 30 years, even in the midst of life's fiery trials.

I'm going to share with you some of the secrets of my longevity. I'm not an old man, but I'm also not a young man. I've preached the gospel now for nearly 30 years, and I expect to preach the gospel for at least another 30 years.

The longer I live, the longer I want to live. I don't want to miss a thing that God has for me. I don't want to die and miss the revival that's coming. I want to experience the great move of God that's just on the horizon. I want to see millions get saved and whole nations come to Christ. This is what I live for, and it's the reason why I plan on living to a ripe old age. How about you?

The truths that I'm going to share with you have become invaluable to me over the years. They are a part of the fabric of my being. I live by them, and I challenge you to do the same. Learning to live by them will cause you to be rich in the Spirit. It will affect your physical and mental well-being and can even add years to your life.

The Lord wants to prepare us for the days to come. There are incredible victories ahead of us, but there are also storm clouds on the horizon.

I meet believers all the time who become frazzled and agitated when they encounter tests and trials. As long as the sun is shining and things are going smoothly, they're OK. But the

moment storm clouds appear, they become anxious and fall apart.

In John 14:27, Jesus admonishes us, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (NKJV). He said, "Let not." That means don't allow it. The choice is ours. Friend, you are the one who allows people, situations and circumstances to agitate you. Your heart becomes troubled because you allow it.

I have problems and difficulties in life just like everybody else. But I have learned not to let things get me down. I've made it 30 years in ministry, and I'm going to make it the next 30 years because I don't let stuff get to me. I simply don't allow it.

One time we had planned a huge outdoor festival in Tallahassee, Florida. Our whole purpose for the event was to win the lost. We brought in all the major Christian bands of the day, such as Petra, Mylon Le Fevre, Joe English, and DeGarmo & Key.

It was an expensive outreach, costing tens of thousands of dollars, which I personally had to raise. We had a professional stage built that was two tractor-trailer rigs long and 20 feet deep with a 40-foot-tall backdrop. It was absolutely massive. We also had a huge tent for those who were going to get saved.

After months of hard work and preparation, the week of the event finally arrived. We were fully prepared. Yet something happened that we could not prevent: rain.

Wouldn't you know it, the forecast for the entire week of the event was rain, and the weatherman was right! It rained all day Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. After five days of nonstop rain, the ground was like a massive, mushy sponge. Not exactly conducive to an outdoor event where everyone brings their blankets and sits on the ground.

Meanwhile, people from all over the southeastern United States were calling and canceling because of the weather.

By this time, most people in my shoes would have been frazzled, as were many of my friends. You know, when something like this happens, the natural tendency is to start questioning whether you heard from God or not. You start wondering if your endeavor was a dream from God or a nightmare of your own making.

But do you know what I did the night before the event as the rain continued to pour and it looked like we had a disaster on our hands? My wife will tell you what I did that night. I slept soundly!

How could I do that, you wonder? Because I'd learned the secret of quieting my spirit in the midst of the storm.

You see, I knew that I wasn't going to change a thing. The weather was out of my control. There was no sin in my life. I loved God. For whatever reason, He was simply letting it rain. Maybe a farmer somewhere was praying just a little too hard for rain.

The day of the event we met at 4 a.m. to pray. The festival was scheduled to go from 6 p.m. to midnight. It rained nonstop that day—6 a.m., 9 a.m., 12 p.m., 2 p.m. Rain, rain, rain and more rain.

The grounds were soaked. Talk about a potential nightmare. We had to cover the massive outdoor stage with huge swimming pool covers so the bands wouldn't get electrocuted in the rain!

By this time, most of my friends were coming up to me and asking what I was going to do. Very few had faith that the crusade would be a success.

Suddenly, at 3:00 p.m. that afternoon, the most incredible thing happened. The skies split open and the hottest sun I had

ever felt came out in full force. It was like a big round fireball standing right above us. You could almost see the water coming out of the ground. Within two hours, the ground became completely dry!

The change in the weather was so remarkable that the local media even used it as a major story. Thousands of people came to the event, and multitudes got saved. It was awesome!

The funny thing about it was that my friends who were all freaked out and advising me to cancel because of the rain came to me afterward and said, "I knew all along that God was going to come through."

The storms that I faced during that situation were both natural and spiritual. But I was able to hold steady and not buckle under the pressure because I had learned how to quiet my spirit in the midst of the storm.

I'm sharing a secret with you, my friend. Learn how to trust in God. It is going to be moisture to your bones, health to your body and peace to your soul. No matter what's going on in your life, learn to relax and say, "Jesus, You have everything under control."

One of my favorite scriptures in the Bible is Psalm 131:1-2:

"Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child" (KJV).

This picture is one of a child who is past the breastfeeding years but remembers that on mama's breast is the place of warmth and peace. It's the place where his hunger is satisfied. It's also the place where he hears the quiet, soothing beat of mama's heart.

Spiritually speaking, the Lord wants us to have that same sincere, childlike spirit. Everybody says they want to abide under the shadow of the Almighty. The only way to live in someone's shadow is to be close. My friend, the only way to dwell in that secret place and to hear the soothing beat of His heart is to get so close to Him that you're leaning on His breast.

This is what the psalmist is talking about. He's saying, "I'm not going to allow myself to get all stirred up about stuff. My heart is not haughty. I'm not going to involve myself in matters that have nothing to do with me. I'm going to be like a weaned child. I'm going to draw close to the Lord and stay in that place where I can hear His heartbeat. He is my place of refuge, my strength and my peace."

You see, when we're brand-new, baby Christians, the Lord loves on us in such a sweet, tender way. He'll hold and caresses us much like a mother does her newborn babe. But as time goes by, He stops babying us. He begins to deal with us differently. Why? Because if He continued to coddle and baby us, we'd never grow up to become men and women of God.

I remember when I was a baby Christian. It seemed like every time I opened my Bible, He would speak to me through a Scripture. I continually felt His presence.

But I'm not a spiritual babe anymore. I'm not in diapers. I'm not a little toddler, nor a teenager. I've passed through boot camp. I'm a soldier now—a warrior in the Lord's army. Now I often have to dig to get a Word from the Lord. As a warrior, I have to go back to the manual of His Word to receive strength and then pick up my sword and use it in battle.

But oh, my friend, when I get a little frazzled out there in the war and I hear the clanging of the enemy's armor pressing in on me, how beautiful it is to draw away and quiet myself before Him. How sweet it is to shut everything out and come

before Him with that childlike heart and say, "Jesus, I quiet myself before You. I just want to lean upon You, to draw close to You, to hear Your heartbeat."

I'm sharing with you some precious secrets from my walk with God. Here's how to quiet your spirit before Him:

### **1. Acknowledge God as your only refuge and strength.**

The first thing that I do to quiet my spirit is to acknowledge Him as my only refuge and strength. I always start by telling Him, "Jesus, You're everything to me. You are the peace and the joy of my life. You are my salvation. You've set me free. You are my refuge and my deliverer. You are my hope. You're everything to me."

Why do you have to do this when it's time to quiet your spirit? Because there's always something trying to get between you and your heavenly Father. There's always something trying to weave its way into the throne room of your heart. But as you get on your knees and acknowledge who He is to you, those hindrances will fall by the wayside.

The great thing about it is that you can acknowledge Him as your refuge and strength anywhere, anytime. You might be at school, at your office, in your kitchen making dinner or perhaps in your car.

As you learn how to quiet yourself before Him, people will come up to you and say, "How come this situation isn't bothering you? Everyone else is in a frenzy!"

If you take these principles and learn to live by them, you'll have them in your spiritual arsenal whenever a crisis comes along.

I remember when my mother suddenly died, just after we started our church in Dallas. It hurt worse than anything I had ever felt in my life because mom had prayed me into salvation.

None of the children were ready for her to die. It came as a shock and a blow to the entire family. But I'll never forget what happened. When she died, the Spirit of the Lord came upon me. I felt His presence the entire time we were making funeral arrangements.

I wept and wept because it hurt so bad to lose her. Yet the whole time my spirit was so quiet, and I felt His presence strengthening me.

What I'm sharing can really help you in the midst of a crisis. Your child could be on his deathbed in the hospital emergency room. The situation could look grim. But you can get on your knees in the chapel of that hospital and acknowledge God, saying, "Jesus, You are my rock. You are my strength. You are my salvation and my deliverer. You are the healer." There, in that quiet place, He will meet with you.

## **2. Focus your attention on Him through praise and worship.**

Now that I've acknowledged Him by declaring who He is—my refuge, my strength, my hope—what am I going to do with it? I'm going to focus my attention on Him through praise and worship.

I worship Him, saying, "Lord, because You are my strength and refuge, I worship You. Jesus, I glorify You. You've brought me through dark trials before, and You'll bring me through this one. You're the same God yesterday, today and forever. I worship You, Lord, in the midst of this trial. I thank You, Lord, that You're going to bring me through this, Jesus. You're so faithful."

Remember when Paul and Silas were in prison? They were not only chained; they had also been severely beaten. Most likely their prison cell was infested with rats, and diseases were rampant.

I can imagine Paul looking at the burns on his hands from the chains and the cuts all over his body. He and Silas were hurting, and their lives were in jeopardy. But what did they do? Instead of getting depressed and complaining, they began to praise God.

I can just hear them lifting their voices to God in praise in the midst of their desperation, saying, "We worship You, Lord. We worship You, Jesus. Thank You for Your presence. Thank You for Your strength. We love You, Lord."

It caught the attention of heaven, and God sent an earthquake to deliver them!

Likewise, the ears and eyes of heaven will bend toward you as you focus on Him through praise and worship.

### **3. Align yourself with His view of the circumstances around you.**

I must use the story of Jesus in the garden during His passion as the example of aligning ourselves to God's will.

Most of us are familiar with the prayer that Jesus prayed during His darkest trial in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Luke 22:41-42 says, "He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, 'Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done'" (NIV). After agonizing and pouring out His soul unto death, Jesus resigned Himself to the will of the Father, praying, "Not my will, but Yours be done."

But something else happened to Jesus in the garden after He prayed. Notice the next verse: "An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him" (v. 43). My friend, this is so powerful. Always remember that *after* Jesus resigned Himself to God's will, the angels strengthened Him.

And so it is with you. It's after you resign yourself to God's will that the angels will come and strengthen you!

#### **4. Don't allow yourself to take the present situation out of context.**

I have learned that the course of events in God's timetable will bring me to the place of His choosing.

I love how the Holy Spirit through Solomon depicts the seasons of our lives, when he wrote, "To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven" (Eccl. 3:1, NJKV).

Whatever you're going through, don't allow yourself to take it out of context. Remember, it's a season and it's going to pass. Think about how God has brought you through difficult times in the past, and realize that He's going to bring you through this season too.

Remember the promise found in Hebrews 12:11: "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (KJV).

Here is where so many miss it. They allow their present situation to dictate everything that's going on around them. Instead, you must learn to relax and say, "This is a season, and it is going to pass. It's going to bring the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Some good is going to come out of this."

Isaiah 30:15 tells us why it's so important to learn how to quiet our spirits: "In quietness and trust is your strength" (NIV). It doesn't get much clearer than that.

Quieting your spirit will help you navigate through the storms of life no matter what you are going through and no matter what's happening in the world around you. It's an art and a spiritual discipline that will change your life and help set

the course for your future as it has mine. Why not begin today?

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## **Gay and Christian? Revisiting the Question of 'To Judge or Not to Judge'**

There is a lot of confusion today over the subject of judging, and it seems that the one thing all of America knows is that "Jesus taught us not to judge." What does the Bible really say about judging?

I devoted an entire chapter to this subject in [\*Can You Be Gay and Christian?\*](#) and with every day that goes by, the question becomes more relevant. Does God's Word give us clear directives here?

If you look in 1 Corinthians, Paul writes that the spiritual man makes judgments about all things (2:15), he tells us not to judge anything before the appointed time (4:5), instructs us to judge those within the body who claim to be believers but are walking in open sin (5:12) but reminds us that we are not to judge the world in that same way (5:13), tells us we are to judge disputes in our midst since one day we will judge angels (6:1-3), encourages the Corinthians to judge what he writes (10:15), asks them to judge whether it was right for a woman in their meetings to pray with her head uncovered (11:13), and then tells them they must judge themselves when partaking of

Communion so they will not be condemned with the world (11:31-32).

Paul has a lot to say about judging.

As for Jesus, in Matthew 7:1-5, He teaches us not to judge hypocritically or superficially and not to condemn, while in John 7:24, He teaches us not to judge by outward appearances but to make righteous judgments.

In reality, the world could not function without proper judgments being made, from judges in the courts to parents in the homes to every individual believer.

All of us make judgments every day—you will make judgments as you read this article—but are we making righteous judgments or are we being judgmental?

I recently wrote an article entitled "[Let the Separation Come](#)," explaining that the divide over homosexual practice within the body is absolutely necessary, as painful as it may be.

Since then, the National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) [confronted Steven Cobb](#), president of both WaterBrook Multnomah (which publishes authors like Randy Alcorn, David Jeremiah and John Piper) and Convergent Books, which published Matthew Vines' pro-homosexual book, claiming that he was an evangelical.

Rather than repenting of his error, Cobb pulled his publishing conglomerate out of NRB. (For my earlier article on the subject, see "[A Shameful Day in Evangelical Christian Publishing](#).")

From a scriptural perspective, and based on the NRB's Code of Ethics, the NRB engaged in righteous judgment. (The code states, "I will refrain from any sexual conduct or lifestyle, such as homosexuality or adultery, which is inconsistent with

Scripture, or any promotion of the same.”) It will be interesting to see what WaterBrook Multnomah’s fine Christian authors and staff choose to do in the coming days.

A few days after the NRB’s interaction with Cobb, Howard Books, the Christian imprint for Simon & Schuster, [announced](#) that it was publishing a book by music artist Jennifer Knapp, first well known for her contemporary Christian recordings but today known as an out-and-proud lesbian while still a professing Christian.

The book is a clear apologetic for “gay Christianity,” as noted in the press release from Howard Books, which states that Knapp “talks about the importance of her faith, and despite the many who claim she can no longer call herself a believer, she maintains that she is both gay and a Christian.”

Interestingly, journalist Jonathan Merrit [points out](#) that Knapp bluntly told *Christianity Today* in 2010, “I’m in no way capable of leading a charge for some kind of activist movement,” adding, “I’m not capable of getting into the theological argument as to whether or not we should or shouldn’t allow homosexuals within our church.” How things have changed!

As for Howard Books, it is a member of the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association, and the ECPA would do well to follow the example of NRB’s president and CEO, Jerry Johnson, who [explained](#), “This issue comes down to NRB members producing unbiblical material, regardless of the label under which they do it.”

Either Howard Books repents of its wrong decision to publish this book or it resigns from the ECPA (or is forced to resign by the ECPA). They cannot have it both ways.

The same goes for Knapp, for whom we should pray and reach out with gentleness (Gal. 6:1). Either she repents of practicing homosexuality or she no longer claims to be a follower of

Jesus. To do both at the same time is impossible, no matter what gay apologists and their allies tell us. God and His Word have not changed.

And if she refuses to repent, all Christian venues should stop working with her, while continuing to pray for her and appeal to her, as per 1 Corinthians 5.

At the same time, we are to reach out with compassion and longsuffering to all nonbelievers who identify as LGBT, not making their sexuality the issue at all, and under no circumstances should we separate ourselves from them (as long as that doesn't mean partaking of their sin; this is the same with all nonbelievers).

Again, this is in harmony with Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 5, and this reflects the heart of God, who loved us and sent His Son to die for us while we were yet sinners, lost in rebellion and guilt (see the whole New Testament for this!).

When I share the gospel with someone who tells me they are gay, I make clear to them that homosexuality is not the principal issue, that the real issue is their lack of relationship with God—that they are not so much sinners because they are homosexual but they are homosexual because they are sinners and that Jesus paid for every sin in their lives. And I explain the message of repentance and faith, speaking the truth in love.

There is good news for all in Jesus, even for the very worst of sinners, including people like me, saved in 1971 from heroin and LSD, from lying and stealing, and from all kinds of wickedness and pride.

At the same time, because of who Jesus is, true believers must separate from those who claim to know Him and yet walk in persistent, open and unrepentant sin.

This too is the gospel.

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## After Matthew Vines Flap, Another Christian Publisher Gives 'Gay Christian' a Platform

Four years ago, when musician Jennifer Knapp declared to the world that she was in a lesbian relationship, conservative Christians around the country released a collective gasp. They had traveled from far and wide to hear her sing and purchased more than 1 million of Knapp's albums. But the Grammy-nominated musician's revelation tested their loyalty.

At the time, Knapp had already been on a seven-year professional hiatus and declared she was not interested in being a poster girl for the gay Christian community. Neither did she feel equipped.

"I'm in no way capable of leading a charge for some kind of activist movement," Knapp bluntly told *Christianity Today* in 2010, adding, "I'm not capable of getting into the theological argument as to whether or not we should or shouldn't allow homosexuals within our church."

But her sense of readiness has apparently changed. Simon and Schuster is preparing to release a book by Knapp in October titled, *Facing the Music: Discovering Real Life, Real Love, and Real Faith*.

According to the publisher's website, Knapp is "now an advocate for LGBT issues in the church" whose memoir tells the story "of her troubled childhood, the love of music that pulled her through, her dramatic conversion to Christianity, her rise to stardom, her abrupt departure from Christian Contemporary Music, her years of trying to come to terms with her sexual orientation, and her return to music."

The description continues: "She also talks about the importance of her faith, and despite the many who claim she can no longer call herself a believer, she maintains that she is both gay and a Christian. ... Jennifer has witnessed heartbreaking struggles as churches wrestle with issues of homosexuality and faith."

Simon and Schuster is releasing the book through Howard Books, its Christian imprint, which is a member of the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association. Earlier this year, there was controversy within the ECPA about another member, Waterbrook Multnomah, whose sister imprint, Convergent Books, published *God and the Gay Christian: The Biblical Case in Support of Same Sex Relationships* by Matthew Vines. Some members felt that the book strayed from evangelical orthodoxy by endorsing homosexual behavior.

As a result of the brouhaha, the National Religious Broadcasters forced WaterBrook Multnomah to resign its membership in the organization. NRB's president and CEO Jerry Johnson wrote in a letter to board members: "This issue comes down to NRB members producing unbiblical material, regardless of the label under which they do it."

According to Jennifer Smith, publicity director for Howard

Books, Knapp is expected to deliver the manuscript to her editor next week.

“We know it’s her story and obviously the position she’s found herself in as a recognizable Christian artist coming out as gay. She shares about how she has come to terms with herself and her own sexuality and is able to speak on the topic and say, ‘Look, God loves me through this.’”

While Smith did not say whether Howard expects a similar controversy to the one Waterbrook Multnomah faced due to Vines’ book, she sent the following official statement from Howard Books to Religion News Service to elaborate on their expectations:

“While we understand there will be some people that don’t necessarily agree with this book, there are others who want to have this conversation. This is simply a vehicle for us to encourage Christians to open their hearts and minds to having the discussion openly. At the end of the day, this book is an opportunity for Jennifer to tell her story and we want to be part of that conversation.”

Given the momentum of this issue among American Christians, one can only expect more books like Vines’ and Knapp’s will be coming. The question is now how organizations such as NRB and the ECPA will respond. Phone calls to National Religion Broadcasters for comment were not immediately returned.

Upon coming out of the closet, some of Knapp’s fans expressed outrage and disappointment while others rallied behind her. One month after Knapp’s interview in *Christianity Today* about coming out, her album *Letting Go* debuted at No. 73 on the “*Billboard* 200 Chart.” When *Facing the Music* hits bookstores in October, sales numbers will reveal if her fans have stuck around. But they may also be a bellwether of where the Christian community at large is on the matter of homosexuality and the church.

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# Bounce Back From Your Blunder

Last week I made a mistake. It was a serious mistake that couldn't be covered up, but not quite so bad of a mistake that there wasn't a fix. In other words, I couldn't make it so people wouldn't see. I had to admit my mistake.

I've been noticing an unfortunate trend in my response to stress—especially the stress of making mistakes (i.e., being human): I freak out. I anticipate disaster, devastation and doom (the “three Ds”). I'm working to change this and have progressed to the point that I can now see, like through binoculars, that God might be up to something.

My new perspective started about 12 years ago. I lost my temper at my family. Then, feeling truly awful, I crawled in the bath (the only place to be alone in a house with four small kids) and sobbed my heart out to God, asking forgiveness as the “three D” waves hit me from every side.

Then God spoke. He said simply, “Do you think I didn't plan for that outburst?”

I am not a rager—in fact, in moments of true anger, I tend to say those pieces of truth people don't like to hear so we keep to ourselves. But I felt so bad for hurting the people in my family that it took God's intervention for me to realize He really is at work, even in our mistakes, errors and moments of extreme humanity.

When you are submitted to Him, bowed at the throne room of heaven, then even your mistakes are being used for His glory.

This means that instead of anticipating the “three Ds,” we can truly take our humanity to God and anticipate new opportunities, fresh perspectives and peace. Not to be too sci-fi, but this adds a fourth dimension—the spirit

realm—which means our “three Ds” can become fourth-dimension (4-D) encounters.

Do the 3-D waves hit you from time to time? What do you do to see God’s perspective and anticipate 4-D opportunities?

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## **Hell Has Arrived in Syria**

*Note from Messiah’s Mandate Ron Cantor: Moti Cohen recently had the opportunity to go to Jordan with a team from Israel made up of Jewish and Arab believers. His report from Jordan is quite powerful.*

### **Hell on Earth**

A few hours ago, I arrived in Israel after visiting Jordan, and I am still trying to digest what I have seen there. The evil in the Muslim world is overwhelming. What is happening in Syria unveils its true face. Yeshua said that the thief comes in order to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10), and Syria is a clear example of this.

The army of Assad is wiping out city after city—both the Islamic rebels and Assad’s army kill everybody in their way—and the victims are mostly found among the innocent: children, women who have been raped, people murdered in front of their family, old people who are tortured. For millions of people, hell has arrived in their land. Over 3 million refugees have fled Syria, 1.5 million of which escaped to Jordan.

### **The City Fhes**

We traveled to Amman as a group of nine Israelis—seven Arab Israeli pastors and two Messianic Jews. Our first stop was in Fhes, a half-hour away from Amman. There are tens of thousands of Syrian refugees in this town. In the refugee camps, which have been set up near the Syrian border, there are tents where the refugees receive food and medical care. The problem is that the camp is already full, and there is no possibility to enter it. Therefore, thousands of families go to other Jordanian cities.

In Fhes, I saw Syrian children living on the streets, begging for money. Most of the families manage to rent an apartment in one of the poor districts. Sometimes a family of 25 people—parents, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles and their children—live in one apartment. The apartments are unbelievably overcrowded. In some of those we visited, there was no furniture, only mattresses with bags of clothes next to each one. There were no tables, chairs or other furniture. In some cases, more than one person slept on the same mattress.

At the beginning, I didn't understand why there were so many mattresses in the distribution center. But after having visited people in their homes, I understood that the children, the old and the sick are spending most of their time on the mattress, and therefore it was important for us, among other things, to provide families with mattresses.

### **The Story of Yussuf**

One of the families we visited was the family of Yussuf, a 30-year-old Sunni Muslim, married with two little daughters. He told us that he grew up in the Syrian part of the Golan Heights—an area very close to the Israeli border. Before the war broke out, this part of the Golan Heights was populated by Sunni, Shiite, Alevi and Druze Muslims, as well as Christians living peacefully side by side. After the war broke out, there was a split, and all these groups started to fight one

another.

Yussuf told us that he was a Sunni, raised to believe that Israel was the biggest enemy of the Arabic people. However, at a certain stage of the war, the situation in the Golan Heights became so difficult that he and his family started to hope that Israel would interfere and occupy the whole of the Golan Heights. He understood that the Israeli government is much better than Assad's regime. Assad's army completely destroyed the city Yussuf lived in. They bombed, leveled and burned everything.

Many people that Yussuf knew are now dead—including family members and close friends. Yussuf shares a one-room apartment with his wife's family in Fhes. We gave them food, mattresses, diapers, cooking pots, baby food, clothes and games. The family of Yussuf was very thankful and said that the believers who help them give them a lot of comfort in the difficult life situation they are in.

### **The Story of Muhammad**

During one of our visits, we met Muhammad, a 17-year-old boy who was shot in his knee by the Syrian army while fleeing from Syria to Jordan. Injured, he managed to cross the border and was treated by the Jordanian medical workers, who finally let him join his family in Fhes. All these things happened only two weeks before our meeting, and when we visited his family, he had to leave in the middle of the meeting in order to go to work.

We asked him how he managed to work with such a serious injury to his leg, for we noticed that the entire knee was covered by sutures. He looked at us sadly and said that there was no other way. Eleven people lived in the house, and only he and two of his brothers could work. He explained that the refugees didn't have a working permit, so they had to work many hours for small amounts of money. He works in a restaurant 10 hours

a day for only six dinars, which is the equivalent of \$7.50.

Before Muhammad left for work, we asked him if we could pray for him, and he agreed. We prayed for healing for his leg, and of course for the healing of his heart from all the hatred and anger he harbored in his soul. We prayed for the whole family, that the Lord would give them comfort in all the pain they were going through, and we invited them to come to the local church.

### **The Story of Aida**

In another visit, we met a lot of young widows with children. Most of the women were between ages of 18 to 22. Aida was one of them—a widow at 21, with two little girls. When we visited her family, she didn't say a word and didn't stop crying. We saw the sadness and the pain in her eyes. To be a young widow is a tragedy, but to be a young widow in the Muslim world is even a greater one.

In the Muslim world, a widow is a burden, and many times the family tries to make her marry an older man so that she will stop being a burden to the family. Aida lost her husband two years ago, when the Syrian army entered their village and simply executed all the young men, including her husband. It was sad to see her little daughters—ages 5 and 3—and to know that without a father to protect and to take care of them, they were exposed to a very difficult life. We pray to God through Yeshua, that He might show them the way, how to find in Him their hiding place from all their pain.

### **The Story of Rana**

One day, as we were visiting refugee families, an elderly woman whose name was Rana approached us. She asked us to pray for her son, who has been missing for about two years. All she knows is that before the war broke out, her son was a soldier in the army of Assad. When the war began, he joined the rebel

side. Now he is missing, and she doesn't know whether he is alive, injured or dead. Although the chances of him still being alive are very slim, she continues to believe her son is still alive and will return to her one day.

During our conversations with the Syrian refugees, we saw there was a high percentage of people with missing family members. These people don't have peace day or night for lack of knowledge about what happened to their loved ones. We prayed along with Rana, that God would give her an answer concerning what happened to her son. Who knows? Maybe there will be a happy end to this story.

### **The Story of a Pastor**

When we arrived in Jordan, we met a certain pastor. He felt in his heart a calling from God to minister to the Syrian refugees. He told us that in the 1980s and 1990s there was a devastating war between Iraq and Iran. During this war, over 1 million refugees passed the border from Iraq to Jordan, and the congregations in Jordan had the opportunity to minister, to help and to bring the gospel to the refugees who came from Iraq. The pastor told us that at that period, hundreds of refugees came to the Lord Yeshua. After the war ended and they returned to Iraq, many of them founded congregations, which brought good fruit to the kingdom—leading many Iraqi families to Yeshua.

This testimony gives hope to the believers in Jordan who work with the Syrian refugees. We want to believe that through this joined ministry between Israeli Messianic Jews and the Israeli Arab Christians among the Syrian refugees, many of them will give their lives to Yeshua, return after the war to their home country, and spread the gospel among their friends and families. Let us continue to pray that this ministry will bring good fruit unto the Lord.

## **Irbid**

On our last day, we were in the city of Irbid, an hour and a half from Amman. We turned one of the main rooms of a congregation into a distribution center and invited a hundred refugee families to come and receive items, including food, clothes, games for the children, diapers, baby food and more.

The circumstances in Irbid are very hard. Almost 600,000 refugees live there. From a sanitary point of view, it is a disaster. The government cannot handle all the waste on the streets, so the refugees burn their piles of waste. The local population abuses the refugees. A member of the congregation told us that his landlord is trying to get him out of the apartment in order to rent it to Syrian refugees, the reason being that while he pays 50 dinars a month, Syrian refugees pay between 250 and 300 dinars a month.

Two or three refugee families share one apartment and are ready to pay a lot of money in order to not to live on the street. Jordanian citizens also rent them apartments, which are uninhabitable—such as shops, stores and industrial buildings. The Jordanians continually increase the prices and threaten to throw the people on the street if they refuse to pay.

Additionally, there is human trafficking, which I call “prostitution with a religious seal of approval.” There is a Muslim law that allows a man to marry a woman for a week or two, then to divorce her and return her to her family. The sheikhs and the rich people in Jordan try all the time to seduce refugee families with money. Mostly it is the case with older men who are trying to get young girls, whose ages many times do not surpass 14 or 15. The Syrian families are sometimes in such difficult situations that they agree to sell their girls for money.

## **Pain and Hope**

The pain of the families is great. There is no family that has not lost loved ones. We saw a lot of widows and orphans, mothers who lost their children, people with missing body parts. Many refugees are injured. The war in Syria is a full-fledged catastrophe. We saw hatred and anger in their eyes. Everybody there is talking about revenge. When they speak about Assad and his army, there is murder in their eyes.

During our visits to families, we spoke with them about forgiveness and faith in Yeshua—that forgiveness and faith can set us free from all anger and purify our hearts from it. We hope that the humanitarian aid and our common prayers will lead them to the love of Yeshua and to the ways of God.

I returned to Israel with a lot of pain because of the sufferings these refugees have to go through. But I also returned with a lot of hope, knowing that just as there were many new believers after the war between Iraq and Iran, so also the war in Syria will unveil the evil and the lies of Islam, and many people will understand that God sent His only begotten Son to die for them, so that they may live.

*For the original article, visit [messiahsmandate.org](http://messiahsmandate.org).*

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## **TD Jakes' Daughter Brings Healing to Masses Through Personal Testimony**

As the daughter of T.D. Jakes, Sarah Jakes knows all about living in the spotlight and unrealistic expectations. Today she's found freedom and is helping others as well. Check out our exclusive interview with the daughter of the megachurch

pastor.

**CHARISMA:** When did you first discover that your testimony could help bring healing to others?

**Sarah Jakes:** I created this blog and took what I was feeling and I put it into words. It exposed my wounds and helped me vent. I revealed situations that still had pain, and I found out that I wasn't just telling my story, I was telling the story of a lot of other people. The blog began to really grow. It helped me to heal from things I didn't know I was still dealing with. I found healing through telling my story.

**CHARISMA:** What types of situations did you share on your blog?

**Jakes:** I was married for four years, but when I first got married I was still coping with loving myself. When I got married I really wanted [my husband] to love me back so that it could be validation for me that I was lovable. But because he had his own issues and his own brokenness, we ended up breaking each other even more.

At the time I started the blog there was this lady who was pregnant with a child by my husband. She was due July 19 and my birthday was July 17. I was trying to become this perfect wife. I had been through a teen pregnancy and had cleaned up my act—I was doing things the “right” way. Yet I was still hurting and saying, “Why? Why is this happening to me?”

That's why I began writing the blog. [Until now] the general public has only known about my teen pregnancy; they haven't known about some of the difficulties I endured in my marriage.

So I'm excited to see the inspiration that comes from me being willing to share that part. It's amazing to see how God really covered me during that time, even though I tried to create a perfect picture. He really did show me that my life didn't have to be picture perfect for Him to bless it.

**CHARISMA:** What spiritual lessons did you learn from your experiences?

**Jakes:** Life is funny. When I was pregnant with my son, I thought it would bring [my husband and me] closer together. Our baby was premature and so we really had to huddle together to get through the pregnancy.

I thought maybe God was showing us how to work together. Now that I'm in a different stage of life, I realize that maybe my teen pregnancy was preparation for a larger stage where you have to learn to deal with isolation and people not always liking you or the things you've gone through. So I would say right now the greatest lesson is that it really is OK to be broken.

**CHARISMA:** You reveal this in your new book, *Lost and Found*. Explain the title.

**Jakes:** I called it *Lost and Found* because I didn't really know that I was lost. I was still trying to find my way, and my heart was in the right place. I didn't think that you could be lost if you were doing the right things and you were trying. Then finally when I really admitted [that I was lost], that gave me the grace for God to really find me.

**CHARISMA:** What would you like readers to take away from your book?

**Jakes:** That they have the grace to try again. Whether it's a divorce, whether it's a teen pregnancy, or whether you were the victim or the villain in someone's story, you really do have the grace to try again.

One mistake doesn't have to define the remainder of your life. You still have time and you still have hope, and if God is with you, He said He's going to complete this work in you.

But we have to really give Him permission to complete that

work. And if readers of this book really accept grace and the ability to try again, then I know that God will meet them as He has met me.

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## **Brazilian Christians: 'Prophetic Destiny' With Israel**

The Bible says many nations will come up to the city of Jerusalem to worship the Lord.

That very thing took place recently when a group of Brazilians came to the Tower of David in Jerusalem's Old City to worship.

From late afternoon and throughout the evening, Brazilians gathered to celebrate the God of Israel.

Ana Paula Bessa led the worship. In her home country, she's led concerts with as many as a million people attending. She believes Brazil has a special destiny with Israel.

"I believe the Brazilian nation is arising to pray for the peace of Jerusalem," Bessa told CBN News.

Her husband, Gustaf, said many of their countrymen are coming to Israel for that very purpose.

"Many Brazilians from all over Brazil, they are coming to Israel in order to pray—to pray for Israel and pray for Brazil in this place, in this nation," he said.

Today, the Holy Spirit is raising up prayer warriors.

"We have a big role in this because [Brazil is in revival](#)," Ana

said. “And the Holy Spirit is raising up intercession on behalf of the end times.”

She believes revival is changing her nation.

“Today we have almost 40 percent of the population declaring they are born again Christians, and the churches are full,” she said. “The people are open to receive Jesus even on the streets.”

Brazilians bring exuberance to their worship.

“The redemptive gift of Brazil, this joy, this celebration for Jesus—and that’s why we bring it to Israel because it’s our redemptive gift,” Gustaf said.

“We believe we have a destiny, a prophetic destiny to bless and bring the Second Coming of the Lord,” Ana said.

For the original article, visit [cnnnews.com](http://cnnnews.com).

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## **7 Keys for Women to Answer God’s Call**

You may feel that you’re the least qualified for God to use and the most unlikely candidate for His Spirit to fall upon. Guess what? You’re just the kind of person He chooses! God is glorified in your weakness.

The apostle Paul wrote, “But He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me” (2 Cor. 12:9, NIV). If you fall into the category of the least likely,

you are a prime target for the Lord to come and wrap Himself around you.

### **The Chosen Ones**

When you count yourself among God's chosen, you must understand that your position carries great responsibilities as well as privileges. I am really thankful that the Lord is bringing a release for women in ministry today.

He is setting our hearts and our voices free, but in the midst of it all, we must be careful to keep our focus. We will have opportunities for far more battles than we can possibly endure. Therefore, we must choose wisely and carefully discern the battles that the Lord has given us to fight.

The issue isn't the Lord's releasing women to minister. The issue is the lordship of Jesus Christ. We're not here to promote our agenda.

Constantly harping on women's rights comes from the wrong spirit. We want to build the body of Christ by focusing on unity. This means repairing the breach between men and women.

When we stand before others we must be careful not to be guilty of self-exaltation. Jesus told us in Luke 14:10 to take the lowest seat and to let the host invite us to a higher place.

In many cases women have assumed leadership or responsibility because men have failed to do so. Women have seen the need and jumped in. Unfortunately, many times they have done so out of a wrong spirit and have taken an inheritance that was not meant for them.

We are to be "labourers together with God," as Paul says (1 Cor. 3:9, KJV). Whether we are men or women, we are to take our stations on the wall and do our jobs, thankfully receiving the inheritance that God has given us and running with it, all the while helping those next to us to do the same.

It's called servant leadership, and it requires a humble heart. You must be willing to let God raise you up.

If you want to be able to walk in the authority God wants to release to you, then you must learn how to walk under the authority that is over you—the Lord's authority. If you want to see release in your own life, then you must be in right relationship with the Lord and with those whom He has placed in authority over you.

When you are in your proper place, doing God's will and exercising the gifts that He has given you in the body of Christ, then you experience victory and impart to others their sense of destiny and calling.

Each of us has a great responsibility to the generation that will follow us—our children. If they are to fully realize their place in God's plan, then we must give them a pure stream from which to drink—a stream unpolluted by bitterness, division and fear; a stream whose way has been cleared by heroes who have gone before.

### **A Time for Heroes**

The book of Nehemiah describes how the exiled Jews who returned to Jerusalem rebuilt the walls and repaired many of the buildings, including the "House of the Heroes" (Neh. 3:16, NIV). What was this House of the Heroes?

According to historians, it was probably a barracks that had a section set aside to honor the memories and exploits of the great heroes of the Israelite nation. It contained artifacts such as scrolls, carvings and shields. The importance of keeping alive the memories of the heroes of God was honored.

Today God wants to place a heroic anointing on His people. We have been set free for a purpose. God is restoring the heroic anointing of His leaders to shape a generation that will walk in power.

A hero breaks through a barrier in one generation so that the next can go even further. For centuries no runner had broken the four-minute mile.

In 1954 a British medical student by the name of Roger Bannister did so by developing new ways of training. You might think that a record that took so long to achieve would stand for a long time.

However, less than two months later, another runner broke the four-minute mile. By the end of the year, 13 people had done so.

Once someone proves that something can be done, it creates an environment of hope and possibility that enables others to do it. That's what being a hero means. God has chosen thousands of people to be the heroes for future generations. It's great to be free in Christ, but if we celebrate that freedom for its own sake and hoard it for our own benefit, then we miss our ultimate calling. God has anointed us to live heroically beyond the immediate and beyond the personal.

### **Shaping the Next Generation**

How can you be sure to maintain an unpolluted stream to pass on to those who follow? It requires hard work, prayer and vigilance. There are seven general principles that will help us keep our stream pure.

**1. Develop a passion for God's Word.** How important is the Bible in your daily Christian life? Do you read it devotionally, or study it vigorously, trying to understand everything you can?

If you are interested in accepting the anointing of a hero and living vicariously for another generation, understand that God is calling you to be exactly what Scripture teaches. None of us can afford to distance ourselves from Scripture, to settle for anything less than learning and understanding everything

we can. For the sake of future generations we've got to hammer into the Scriptures and ask God for the understanding.

**2. Expect to be wounded.** Have you ever been hurt taking a stand for Jesus? Do you carry deep pain over something that another person said or did to you? Wounds are occupational hazards used by God to make us into the heroes that He has called us to be.

Anything of value costs something. King David said that he would not offer to the Lord that which cost him nothing (2 Sam. 24:24). Everything we do as Christians takes on more meaning when we have paid a price for it. The pain is worth the price if it means you can pass on an untainted stream to those who come after you.

**3. Build character from your wounds.** To many, character means not doing certain things. However, in the Scriptures, the word "character" means to bear up under suffering and difficulty. Ruth is called "a woman of noble character" because she bore up under difficulty (Ruth 3:11). The Lord uses the hardships of your life to build in you pillars of character that can sustain the anointing that will rest on them.

**4. Don't give place to bitterness.** Hebrews 12:15 says, "See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many." The Greek word for "defile" carries the idea of a dye for coloring clothes. If you allow roots of bitterness to spring up in your life, they will dye or taint everything you do.

What do you do about bitterness in your life? When the Israelites in the wilderness complained to Moses because the water was too bitter to drink, Moses threw a piece of wood into the water and the water became sweet (Ex. 15:23-25). When you throw the wood (the cross of Jesus) into your waters of bitterness, they will become sweet.

**5. Submit to one another.** A lot of us get uncomfortable with

the word *submission*, and with good reason. Men have mistreated women throughout history, acting as if they could go it alone without the gifts that women bring. The great danger that lies in the current release of women into ministry is that it will degrade into a feministic Holy Spirit women's movement that is at odds with the men.

All of us, men and women, need to re-examine the Scriptures to understand the model that God intends. The apostle Paul summed up that model very nicely for the Ephesians: "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Eph. 5:21). God didn't intend the women to go it alone any more than He intended for the men to do so. We can't afford to pass on to the next generation an ungodly spirit of independence.

**6. Don't compromise your call.** There is a tendency among Christian women today that when the traditional corridors of ministry are closed to them, they seek alternative routes. Let's take intercession, for example. Now, if that's your calling, get after it! But don't choose that route simply because it's a well-worn path for women—especially if your calling is somewhere else.

The path of least resistance may not be the right path! If you settle for what's easy or open to you right now, you may miss out on God's higher calling on your life.

**7. Drive a stake in the heart of the fear of man.** Often the fear of man stems from having too lofty a picture of humanity and too limited a picture of God. Man and his institutions seem so big and substantial while our concept of God is restrained by sin and unbelief.

The book of Isaiah contains some powerful descriptions that compare mankind to God. The prophet wrote: "'All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. ... The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.' ... He brings princes to naught and reduces

the rulers of this world to nothing. No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than He blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff...The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and His understanding no one can fathom" (Is. 40:6,8,23,24,28).

The God who created the universe is the same God who has commissioned you. He will strengthen and empower you. When you realize this, the fear of man will fade into the background.

### **Seize the Day**

Take courage! You are chosen! The King of heaven and earth has called you to be a hero in this generation. The Spirit of the Lord is with you, the same Spirit who led and gave courage to Joan of Arc, Perpetua, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Corrie ten Boom and countless other women who heard God's call and seized the opportunity in their day. May we rise up and join this exalted company of the chosen—His beloved!

There is a call to courage being pronounced in our day. Do you hear it? If so, then sign up right now. Volunteer freely to be on the front lines in Jesus' name, so that the Lord can be glorified through your life.

*Michal Ann Goll along with her husband, James, is the co-founder of Encounters Network and an author of several books.*

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# **'I Was in Prison and You**

# Didn't Visit Me'

When Jesus says on the Day of Judgment, "I was in prison and you visited me (Matt. 25:36 NLT), what will you say?"

A couple months ago a letter from a reader, David Bradford of New Mexico, caught my attention. He wrote to say he had been sending a subscription to *Charisma* for years to a friend in prison in Huntsville, Texas. His friend is an on-fire Christian, leading Bible studies and growing in his faith while serving his debt to society for breaking some serious laws regarding business ethics.

"Your magazine not only goes to Bill, but also is passed around to hundreds of inmates who are hungry for the Light of the world," David wrote. He went on to say that he and his wife continued to buy their subscription even though he had been laid off. He challenged me to send magazines to prisoners and offered to help.

We give subscriptions when asked. But we could do so much more by partnering with ministries like that of William Bumphus, who was featured on the cover of *Charisma* years ago. We supply William with books and magazines and help his prison outreach in other ways. His is an example of a ministry that can give us lists of names of many prisoners who would be blessed every month to get a copy of *Charisma* in the mail. Yet we know there are countless others we're unaware of who would also love to receive the magazine.



That's why we have developed the Charisma Cares Prison Outreach. With the help of readers like you, we can send thousands of *Charisma* subscriptions to prisoners.

Through our non-profit partner, Charisma Cares, your tax-deductible gift of \$10 pays for two gift subscriptions, \$15 pays for three and \$100 pays for 20.

We get requests every week asking for free subscriptions. Of course they have no money to pay, so we send them a subscription and have been doing that for years. Most of the letters we get are just asking for a free subscription, but sometimes we'll get letters commenting on articles they've read or telling us about their lives. Some of them break your heart.

One such letter was from a man also named David who was incarcerated in Arkansas for 20 years for rape. He had been moved by reading an article called "A Home for Stella" from several years ago highlighting Stella's House, a home in Moldova that rescues orphan girls from human trafficking. (Often prisoners comment on old articles because older issues of the magazine are circulated in prison for many years.) David said he was glad to read that teenage girls who age out of Moldova's state-run orphanage system and quickly trafficked as sex slaves are instead given hope and a home in a Christian environment.

"I am glad I am serving time because I hurt someone physically and mentally," he wrote. "[It] has cost me my daughter and 20 years of my life. I don't care that I'm doing time. I just want help too. Is there any help for me?"

It grieves me to think of the hopelessness men like David feel—especially around Father's Day, when few are remembered by their families, often because of the trail of broken lives these inmates have left.

For the past few months we've organized a network of prison ministries that will give us the names, addresses and inmate numbers of prisoners who want to read *Charisma*. To avoid contraband getting into facilities, prison regulations require that magazines be mailed through the post office. That's easy for us to do; we mail issues to people's homes anyway. We just need to know the recipient's name, either from a request from the prisoner or from a chaplain. If you know a prisoner you

want to bless, send us their information with your own subscription information and we'll handle it as we would any gift subscription.

These subscriptions are actually tax-deductible through our nonprofit partner Charisma Cares, a part of Christian Life Missions. You'll receive a tax receipt, and our company makes the issues available at cost—\$5 each, which covers paper, postage and fulfillment costs. Give any amount and Charisma Cares will apply 100 percent to this program with nothing taken out for overhead.

Jesus said, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Matt. 25:40)—and that includes serving those who are incarcerated. Isn't this an investment in the lives of the prisoners Jesus asked us to visit? Think of how a single copy can get passed around to inmates eager to read something from the outside world. What a witness!

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**Steve Strang** is the founder and publisher of Charisma. Follow him on Twitter [@sstrang](#) or Facebook ([stephenestrang](#)).

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## **Take Authority Over Your Enemy**

I went to church for years and never heard about the devil. It's not fun talking about him, and I don't ever want to put too much focus on him. But the truth is, we have an enemy. First Peter 5:8 says, "...That enemy of yours, the devil, roams around like a lion roaring [in fierce hunger], seeking someone

to seize upon and devour.” It’s important for us to believe in the power and authority we have in Christ over our enemy so we can have the great life God wants us to have.

There are so many Christians who seem to be going through their daily life just hoping they can get through the day. They go from one problem or crisis to the next, and they lack a confident, bold faith in God that can keep them stable and full of His peace and joy in the difficult circumstances of life.

The good news is, God doesn’t want us to live in the emergency room of life all the time. He wants us to get to the point where we know what to do to have a great life and take responsibility for ourselves, trusting we can do whatever we need to do through the strength we have in Christ (Philippians 4:13). This means we know who we are in Christ and how to walk in the authority we have as believers in Jesus.

### **The Truth About What You Have in Christ**

John 10:10 tells us Jesus gave His life so we can “have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows)” (AMP). When we accept Christ as our Savior, we receive the assurance of eternal life, but we also become joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17) and are entitled to have everything He is and everything He has: grace, peace, righteousness, joy and power and authority over the enemy.

Matthew 10:1 says, “Jesus summoned to Him His twelve disciples and gave them power and authority over unclean spirits, to drive them out, and to cure all kinds of disease and all kinds of weakness and infirmity” (AMP). This authority has been given to every believer. It’s important to understand that the devil has power, but we have power *and authority* in Christ. And our enemy only has the authority that we give him. Many times we give him the ability to attack us through ignorance.

The devil hates anyone who is trying to do any good in the

world, and his influence can be seen in the evil things people do. We live in a war zone: there are wars in the Earth and we also encounter spiritual warfare in our mind and emotions. For example, when I'm tempted to be selfish and complain, it's not God working in my life. James 1:13, 17 says, "...God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights..." (NKJV).

We need to learn how to be proactive and resist the devil immediately. First Peter 5:9 says to "withstand him; be firm in faith [against his onset—rooted, established, strong, immovable, and determined], knowing that the same (identical) sufferings are appointed to your brotherhood (the whole body of Christians) throughout the world" (AMP). Notice this verse says to resist him *at his onset*.

Don't wait to see how bad things will get or how much you can get away with before you get in trouble. Be firm in your faith at all times, and resist the enemy immediately when he comes against you. God has a plan for your life, and walking in the authority you have in Christ is an important part of experiencing His will for you.

### **The Greatest Weapon You Have**

The Word of God is an offensive weapon in our warfare against the enemy. It contains life and has the power to renew our mind, heal our brokenness and change our lives! The Word contains God's wisdom and the direction we need for every problem we face. Everything we need is found in the Word; it's God's love letter to us, our instruction book for life and reveals all of God's promises to us as His children.

The power and authority in God's Word equips you to go after the devil—he hates the Word and must bow down to it. But we must approach the Word with the attitude, "With God's help, I'm going to do what it says." That's the key to operating in

the authority we have in Christ.

I want to encourage you to make it a priority to spend time with God and study the Word. Go for quality, not quantity; meditate on Scripture so you really get it deep down in your heart. Make a predetermined decision to apply what you learn to your life. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help you, and He will show you how to obey the Word in your daily life.

Remember that in Christ, you have everything you need to enjoy your life and have the abundant life He died for you to have. God has equipped you to stand up to whatever comes against you. Through the power and authority you have in Christ, you can remain stable, full of peace and joy, and advance God's kingdom in the Earth at all times. That's God's plan for you!

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