

Are Sexual Sins OK If You Repent Right Away?

“Does it really matter? I mean, God loves me and He forgives me. So it doesn't really matter.”

So went the conversation with a young man and woman. They professed faith in Christ and were fairly active in church attendance. They did not understand why it was a big deal that they were sexually active outside of marriage. After all, God is a loving God. He forgives us when we do wrong. Why make a big deal out of sin?

“Pastor, you spend too much time focusing on repentance and people confessing their sin. When people come to the altar, we should just be speaking blessing into their life and declaring over them the good things God has for them and not focus on sin and repentance.” Such was the conversation of a couple with their pastor.

Has the Church made too big a deal out of sin and repentance?

Since God is love and a God of mercy and grace, why not make that the emphasis and not focus on sin and calling people to repentance.

That was the issue surrounding the rhetorical question of the apostle Paul when he wrote to the Church in Rome. *“What shall we say then, shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?”* (Rom. 6:1).

Since God is a God of grace, it does not matter if we continue doing wrong. He will forgive. In fact, He has already forgiven, right? That is why Jesus died on the cross.

The apostle does not agree. His answer to this question is,

“God forbid!” New American Standard translation says, *“May it never be.”*

The suffering of Jesus Christ is not to excuse continued bad behavior, “After all, God has and will forgive us.” The unimaginable sufferings of Christ make it possible for even the worst kind of sinner to live a transformed life, free from sin. The apostle Paul wrote: *“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father; we too may live a new life”* (Rom. 6:3-4, NIV).

The torturous whipping of Jesus’ back, the excruciating crown of thorns, and the grotesque nails in His hands and feet paid the priceless ransom for the sin of every human being. The reception of that ransom paid is not universally applied because God made it so. The redeeming power of the whip, the thorns, and the nails is only made effective when an individual makes the choice to believe and to receive the regenerating power of the blood of Jesus Christ and the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit.

When the apostle Peter preached the powerful sermon on the day of Pentecost, the crowd was moved by his message and declared, “What must we do?” Peter’s answer was clear and straight forward. *“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins ...”* (Acts 2:38, KJV).

Heavenly Father has provided only one way to enter into the finished work of Jesus Christ and that is through repentance of sin. Each individual must personally confess their sin, turn from their sin, and ask Heavenly Father to forgive them and wash away their sin by the blood of Jesus Christ. Then walk the “new life” not continue living the same sinful life style. Jesus said, “Go and sin no more.”

No matter how repugnant that maybe to a post-modern generation, it is the only way to receive grace and mercy. Away with easy believe-ism! Jesus Christ paid an awful price for lost humanity. Shall we make light of it by excusing our love for sin by continuing in the very behavior for which He died; then arrogantly proclaim, "God loves me. He has forgiven me."

I will say as the apostle proclaimed, **"May it never be!!"**

Dr. F. Dean Hackett has served in full-time Christian ministry since October 1971. He has ministered throughout the United States, Canada and Europe, serving as pastor, conference speaker and mentor. He has planted four churches, assisted in planting 15 others, and currently serves as lead pastor of Living Faith Church in Hermiston, Oregon. Dr. Hackett founded Spirit Life Ministries International in 2001 to facilitate ministries in Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina and to open a training center for workers in those nations. You can find him at [F. Dean Hackett – Foundational](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Pinterest](#).

Haman Is on the Loose Again

"For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14, MEV).

At this time in history, there are ancient demonic spirits that are on the loose again on a global basis, seeking to destroy life and society as we know it. I keep hearing the words in my heart, "Shields Up!" and "Unite!" Whether it is

Brussels, Belgium, San Bernardino, CA, Paris, France, the Middle East or other cities and nations, we are in the midst of a global warfare. It is time to put our shields together in intercession and call forth intervention in a time of crisis.

In this time of Purim, we must realize our battle is not against flesh and blood but against powers, principalities and spirits of wickedness in the heavenly places (see Ephesians 6:12). I am grateful that many prayer ministries are working together in our day and time, in the As One – A National Appeal to Heaven initiative, to shut the gates of the enemy, prayer walk every neighborhood and street, to lock arms and join our shields together to create a modern day Home Land Security Border Patrol Guard!

The Origin and Description of Purim

The celebration of Purim originated out of the decrees of Mordecai and Queen Esther (Esth. 9:29-32). It was a time when intervention arose through desperate acts of prayer and fasting led by Queen Esther to overturn the decree for the annihilation of the Jewish people inspired by Haman. Haman's evil plot was revealed, the tables were turned and he was hung on his own gallows. The events took place roughly between 483 to 471 B.C.

According to the Jewish calendar, Purim is held in the month of Adar, which usually falls in February or March each year. Moses was born in Adar. It is the month when the Jewish leader of the Maccabees defeated the Syrians, and also the month when the orders were given to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem before the reconstruction of the temple and first return of the Jewish people to Israel. Historically, the period of time known as Adar has been a time when God HAS intervened in times of crisis.

Although Purim was founded in biblical times, its observation is not commanded by God as are the holy convocations mentioned

in Leviticus 23. But the Holy Spirit is prophetically calling believers today to participate in this special time of sacrifice in this generation.

Haman's Lineage Exposed

King Ahasuerus unfortunately promoted a man who eventually became one of Israel's all-time worst enemies. His name was Haman, and he is described as the "son of Hammedatha, the Agagite" (Esth. 3:1).

Haman's lineage is significant to the history of Purim. He was a descendant of Agag, who was a king of the Amalekites in the days of Saul and Samuel. Saul defeated Agag but disobeyed the Lord by allowing him to live. The prophet Samuel rebuked King Saul for his disobedience then "hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord" (1 Sam. 15:33).

Being an Amalekite, Agag was part of the group of people who were long-term enemies of Israel. Because of their treatment of the children of Israel in the days of Moses, God declared war on Amalek "from generation to generation" (Ex. 17:16). In Jewish teaching, Amalek is seen as the epitome of anti-Semitism.

Haman therefore had a heritage of enmity toward the Jewish people. As the book of Esther unfolds, we see how Haman was used to exhibit this generational hatred toward God's chosen people.

The problem is that this ancient, malevolent spirit has plagued our planet throughout the generations. It has no regard for human reason, logic, good intentions or mere religious pursuits. This dark spirit of anti-Semitism—or what may be called "the spirit of Haman"—is on the loose once again.

The Mordecai Anointing

As I wrote in my book, *The Coming Israel Awakening*, “The Holy Spirit wants to inject the burden of the Lord for purposes of God among the Jewish people into the global prayer movement, like a nurse with a fully loaded needle. We need a potent injection of God’s heart into our heart! That is why God wants to raise up a Mordecai anointing to prepare Esther for a time of intervention. We need to know what Esther accomplished, but what was Mordecai’s task? What was his divine assignment?”

“Mordecai’s job was to raise up and prepare Esther for her hour of influence before the king. Mordecai raised Esther as his own daughter. He did not bow down or pay homage to Haman, who sought the destruction of the Jews, but only worshipped the one true God. He intercepted Haman’s scheme of the enemy and revealed it with wisdom to those in authority. He walked in prophetic counsel and instilled courage into Esther.

“Esther, properly tutored and mentored by the counsel of Mordecai, seized the moment through prayer and fasting. Esther was anointed to intervene and stand in the gap, yet she had to walk in cooperation with the preparation of Mordecai, the spiritual authority God had placed in her life.

“God chose to work through Mordecai to alert Esther to her destiny and timing of her intercessory acts on behalf of the Jews. God is looking for modern day Mordecais to prepare His people for such a time as this!”

Shields Up For Such a Time As This!

A Prayer for Purim and Beyond

“Lord, we pray that the Holy Spirit will release revelation to the leadership of the global body of Christ to be modern day Mordecais who help prepare Esther – the bride of Christ—for her task of standing in the gap against the demonic forces of Haman manifesting in many different forms today. We pray for a Holy Spirit Border Patrol Guard for our cities and nations, and especially for Israel and the Jewish people

worldwide. Holy Spirit, we ask you to anoint the reading of the book of Esther in these days. Awaken the “watchmen worldwide” to unite together to extinguish the fiery darts of the evil one for Your kingdom’s sake! Amen and Amen!”

Dr. James Goll is the founder of Encounters Network, Prayer Storm and helps carry on the work of Compassion Acts. For information on his online school visit: . James continues to live in Tennessee and is a joyful father and grandfather today.

For the original article, visit .

6 Ways to Deal With Emotional Manipulation

Over the weekend, I posted a Facebook graphic titled “9 Sure Signs You’re Being Emotionally Manipulated.” Within minutes, it was liked and shared over 1,000 times and has reached well over 1 million people in less than a week.

Gee, I guess manipulation is a big issue in the body of Christ. Of course, that’s not all that surprising. I imagine we have all run into emotional manipulators in our Christian walks and have been tempted to manipulate situations in our own right. You can find manipulation in homes, in schools, in workplaces—and in churches. Before we move on to the six ways to deal with emotional manipulators, let’s look at the sure signs in the original post:

(1) People give you ultimatums; (2) People use tears against you; (3) People give you the silent treatment; (4) People play the victim; (5) People make you walk on eggshells; (6) People

guilt you; (7) People skew the facts; (8) People twist your words; and (9) People suck the life out of you. If you want more explanation on each of these points, watch the video at the bottom of this article.

What Is Manipulation?

Ultimately, manipulation—which Merriam-Webster defines as “to manage or utilize skillfully; to control or play upon by artful, unfair or insidious means especially to one’s own advantage; to change by artful or unfair means as to serve one’s purpose— is a form of witchcraft. Witchcraft is a work of the flesh listed in Galatians 6.

Listen to Jennifer’s podcast on this topic: [How to Deal With Emotional Manipulators](#).

Rick Joyner has one of the best definitions of witchcraft I’ve heard: “Witchcraft is counterfeit spiritual authority. It is using a spirit other than the Holy Spirit to dominate, manipulate or control others. Any authority or influence that we gain by our own manipulation or self-promotion will be a stumbling block to us and will hinder our ability to receive true authority from God.”

I’ve fallen victim to manipulation more than once. When you believe the best, it’s difficult to believe Christian brothers and sisters would tap into a controlling spirit in attempts to put you under their thumbs, handle you or otherwise direct your actions. But it happens—and it happens too often. We need to learn, then, not only to discern when people are manipulating us but how to stop the manipulator from succeeding in his nefarious maneuvers—and how to make sure we’re not tapping into this work of the flesh ourselves.

[JOIN JENNIFER ON FACEBOOK FOR SPIRITUAL COMMENTARY AND ENCOURAGEMENT. CLICK HERE.](#)

In addition to the nine sure signs in my graphic, you will

eventually discern manipulators because resentment will strike your heart. You may feel like you're extending yourself far beyond your natural boundaries to help them—but they aren't there when you need them. What the manipulator wants at any given time always seems more important than what you need. At some point, your friends may start to point out the manipulation.

6 Ways to Deal With Emotional Manipulators

So how do you respond? What do you do when you've realized that you've been under the thumb of an emotional manipulator? How do you break free?

1. Repent. Ask God to forgive you for coming under a false authority. Yes, we are called to walk in love (Eph. 5:2) and prefer one another (), but that doesn't mean we have to allow someone to make us emotional slaves. There's a difference. For freedom Christ set us free (Gal. 5:1).

2. Forgive yourself. Once you see the manipulation, you'll probably be angry with yourself or feel dumb for falling into the emotional manipulator's trap. Forgive yourself (1 John 1:9). It can happen to anyone. You've got a kind, loving heart, and you believed the best. Just learn a lesson and stop the abuse.

3. Learn to offer a diplomatic "no." Emotional manipulators may get angry when you stop catering to their every need and stand up for yourself, but stick to your guns. You don't have to be mean-spirited when you decline to submit. Just politely but firmly tell them no. Like the Bible says, let your yes be yes and your no be no (Matt. 5:37).

4. Ask push-back questions like: "Does this seem reasonable to you?"; "Are you really expecting me to do this for you?"; and "Do I get to have an opinion here?" Many times, manipulators will back down. Other times, they will argue their case. Like Paul told Timothy, don't argue back (2 Tim. 2:23-24).

5. Deploy a time buffer. When the manipulator asks you to do something for them that's unreasonable, use these four words: "I'll think about it." This is less dramatic than saying no and can help you avoid the manipulator's wrath. A soft answer, as Solomon said, turns away wrath (Prov. 15:1).

6. Confront the manipulator. Just like a bully on the playground, emotional manipulators sometimes need to be confronted. This may sound scary to you, but remember God did not give you a spirit of fear but of power, love and a sound mind (2 Tim. 1:7). If you hope to save the relationship, the manipulator needs to be made aware of his tactics and given a space to repent. Jesus even gave Jezebel a space to repent (Rev. 2:21).

If the manipulator will not repent, it may be time to cut ties. Often, emotional manipulators create soul ties with their victims by finding their weaknesses and ministering to their needs before they start making demands. It can be difficult to cut loose. Other times, as in marriages, you can't always cut loose. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to bless the manipulator with a revelation of His love and truth, and ask Him if you should stick it out or break ties with your manipulating friend. {eoa}

Why Confidence Isn't the Answer to Fear

Rarely do I get headaches, but I think I'd been stressed over the last few weeks, which led to shoulder scrunching and a grand finale of muscle knots.

While the house was quiet on Saturday, I talked to God about

this stress—trying to get to the root of it. Landing on the word *fear*, I acknowledged that I run a low-grade fear all the time. Fear that I'm not doing a good job teaching my students. Fear that I'm not taking care of my body or my home the way I should. Fear that I'm not loving my family and friends in a meaningful way.

Insidious Fear

I think what I need is confidence, Lord, I prayed.

So I looked up the word CONFIDENCE:

A feeling of self-assurance arising from one's appreciation of one's own abilities or qualities.

A definition full of “self”? That was definitely NOT what I needed. **Confidence is not what God prescribes.** He wants us to exercise poverty of spirit, a constant awareness of our weakness and great humility.

But I want to be confident. My soul screams for it.

I want to be confident!

I don't want to be inadequate. I don't want to be needy. I don't want to make mistakes that require an apology. I don't want to fail and have to relearn. I don't want to give anyone a reason to correct me. I despise this hunger I have, to do what is right every minute of the day, only to find myself falling short of being good.

But Jesus speaks these words:

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled” (Matt. 5:6).

Almost every day, when I thank the Lord for my food, I say to

Him, "Thank You so much that I've never known what it means to truly be hungry."

But maybe I do know.

To have just one day where I do everything right? I know what it's like to be hungry for that. I yearn to be able to lift my head up from shame.

Jesus tells me that I am blessed if I live in this hunger, and He makes me a promise: *You will be filled. This voracious desire to do everything right will be satisfied.*

In her book *Living Fellowship*, Dr. Helen Roseveare says:

We are created to be containers.

Containers need to be filled, if they are to function. God's plan was that we should be filled with His Holy Spirit and so reveal godliness. This demands that we agree to be emptied of self first, so as to be filled with Him.

We do not seek to be self-confident, only to be empty, available containers.

So I wrote a book about my emptiness, about my hunger to be righteous, and as I scratched out my story, I saw evidence that, little by little, God has been fulfilling my desire to be good and to do what is right.

He is slowly making me blameless by filling my empty places.

And the same promise is for you. **If you struggle with fear of failing and you have an appetite to become a person who does what is right, there is great hope.** Jesus came to make you blameless, and as you take your hunger to Him, He will satisfy you. Walk closely with Him, and you will make progress to become a better person every day.

Come away from your shame, and begin to experience the

blameless life Jesus has always intended for you. {eoa}

Chuck Pierce Points to Key Prophecy Over Next 6 Weeks

In a Leap Year, there are two months of Adar. This gives us an opportunity to realign the past year, refocus on all the loose ends, and get ready to “pass over” into the remainder of the season that lies ahead.

As you are aware, we entered 5776 at Rosh Hashanah in September of last year. In our culture, we became resolute to advance on Jan. 1, 2016. Now we have come to the final preparations to keep pressing to Passover and VAV (or stake claim) to the best of our destined future.

Only the Lord could have orchestrated such an incredible Firstfruits Weekend to propel us into our next season of ascension! As we came to bring our first and best to the LORD, He ordered the best revelation that we could have for this time. All three of our gatherings brought forth key revelation for this season. If we will be focused from this moment forth for the next six weeks, then everything that we are asking the Lord about we will find manifesting in a new way.

Understanding the Process of Firstfruits, the Biblical Key to Prosperity

God planned for His people to meet corporately and worship each month. This celebration is called Rosh Chodesh. This celebration occurred in both Old and New Testament history. This was a major key to the early church’s power and success.

Proverbs 3:9-10 says, *“Honor the Lord with your substance, and with the first fruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your presses will burst out with new wine”* (MEV).

In Romans 11:16, *“For if the firstfruits is holy, the lump is also holy!”* We sanctify our finances by giving God our firstfruits. We sanctify our time by giving God a firstfruits also!

By participating in firstfruits we are:

- Reminded that God is the Source of all Blessings!
- Disciplined to seek His kingdom first!
- Stirred to remember that He is to be our first Love!
- Released into revelation that directs us from the wave offering until the time of gathering the harvest!
- Assured of confidence that our Father will always provide!
- Initiated into a new expectation of a visitation and harvest that will come in days ahead.

By disciplining yourself to participate in firstfruits celebrations, the process of watching over our inheritance matures. This leads to your promises being fulfilled! Firstfruits celebrations demonstrate and move us closer to the final “ingathering” that is being developed in our hearts (Heb. 11:13-14; Eph. 1:11, 14, 18; Col. 1:12; 1 Pet. 1:4).

A Key Firstfruit Adar 2 Prophecy!

“The next six weeks will be a time of un-downing your nest. For many of you have grown accustomed to the place where your nest is, but I will be removing the down in the nest that you’re in. This removal will be the preparation of propelling you into the future I have for you.

“Do not be discouraged from the pricking that you go through over these next six weeks. For the pricking, and the pricks

that you hear coming, are part of the un-nesting that will propel you higher as you begin to be pushed into the next dimension of your destiny. This is My time of pushing you forth.

“As you have heard today, mercy will come, mercy will come, mercy will come, mercy will come, mercy will come, and mercy will come again! I will have a people rising above the fray in this land!”

Shout, “Let there be light!” Declare this is your time of recalibration! Decree triumph over the five-dimensions of enemies that would try to come against you. This is your time to enter into the preparation for your next level of ascending! {eoa}

Charles D. “Chuck” Pierce serves as president of *Global Spheres Inc. (GSI)* in Corinth, Texas. This is an apostolic, prophetic ministry that is being used to gather and mobilize the worshipping *Triumphant Reserve* throughout the world. Chuck also serves as *President of Glory of Zion International Ministries*, a ministry that aligns Jew and Gentile. He is known for his accurate prophetic gifting which helps direct nations, cities, churches, and individuals in understanding the times and seasons in which we live. He has authored over 20 books, including the best-sellers *Interpreting the Times*, *Redeeming the Time* and *Time to Defeat the Devil*. Visit his website, .

4 Myths of Revival

I devoured accounts of revival that perpetuated a romantic view of this phenomena which caused me to stumble. Maria Woodworth Etter’s stories of setting up a tent and hosting a

service where people were healed and delivered created a hunger in me to see God heal and deliver my friends. I wanted to see people miraculously healed and delivered and thousands of people flooding into services. While I've seen healing and deliverance in my church that hosted a revival for 20 years, I've also seen death, divorce, and people fall away.

When I first started attending my church located in a small country town, I was struck by how ordinary the people were in the church. They were hard working moms, dads, grandmas, grandpas, students, teenagers and children who loved God. There were lines of people from all over the world standing in front of their church, but the members were very humble and unassuming people. They attended church six days a week and served behind the scenes in services that were five to six hours long. Many of them left church at 1 a.m. and got up early the next day to go work.

Living and serving among them through the highs and lows of life revealed some myths that I believed about revival. Most Christians believe these myths which can keep them from receiving the work of God. Here are some common myths about revival

1) Revival is for sinners. The definition of revival is 'to revive or bring back to life.' Those who were once alive come close to dying and they need to be revived back to life. Jesus was the original revivalist who focused his ministry on his people – Israel.

"But He answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel'" (Matt. 15:24).

Revival isn't for the sinner who has no interest in God although I've seen dramatic conversions. Revival is first for the Christian. When revival began at Smithton Community Church, they expected drug addicts and the down and out to flood into their church. Instead, buses and van loads of

Baptists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, Catholics and many other churches came to the services.

As Christians traveled from other countries and testified of having an encounter with God, the leaders realized that God sent a revival for His people. Jesus brought a move of the Spirit to His people. The Romans and Greeks or Gentiles were not the focus of Jesus' ministry although they would join His work later.

2. Revival is the solution to all of life's problems. This is the romantic idea that I had of revival. Revival would save my marriage, make me rich, heal me from sickness or pull in my wayward child. While my marriage was literally rescued by revival and stretched my faith to start a business, I've seen people get sick and die, divorce, kids back slide or fall away.

When my daughter was born with special needs after I was on staff at my church, I thought that revival didn't work. After all, she should have been born healthy since I poured my life out for the cause. That summer after she was born, my husband, Jerome, lost his job. I questioned revival and realized that I made it an idol.

I considered leaving my church until God asked me if I was there to sit on the front row and get phone calls from the pastor. I responded to God by saying I wasn't there to get special favors but because He had called me. God spoke to me that He had not changed His mind.

I was still called to this church even though circumstances didn't line up with what I believed. Even though I questioned the legitimacy of revival, I still admired the pastor and his wife because I had worked closely with them. I knew how much they loved God, loved people and operated in integrity. The pastor encouraged people to run to God and give Him more of your time and life when you were in trouble. I trusted the

pastor as a person and followed his advice.

We followed the pastor's teaching on trusting God and our situation dramatically turned around. God blessed my husband with a job and my daughter had no major health issues. I've learned through the 17 years of disappointments, breakthroughs, healings, sickness, death, miracles, divorce, broken families and the highs and lows of life that although God moves among people, we still live in a fallen world. We live on a planet with disease, death, horrific crime, poverty and injustice, yet the only way God moves is through people.

The Holy Spirit needs a vessel to flow through. That vessel is a frail, flawed human being. The problem isn't the message of revival. The problem is that people who love God are prone to be fickle and are easily discouraged by hard circumstances.

3. Revival is a random, sovereign move of God. The accounts that I read of revival in Wales or the Moravians led me to believe that we can hope that God moves but it is ultimately up to Him. We can't do anything to create a climate conducive to revival. We can only hope and pray.

I learned that the outpouring that struck my church in March 1996 was preceded by several years of prayer for revival. They didn't take prayer requests during these prayer meetings, but focused on revival. I believe that those heart-wrenching prayers focused on God alone made them attractive to His Spirit. If Jesus had to pray all night, how much more do we need a prayerful lifestyle?

Revival is God moving within frail, human vessels. In most examples of supernatural activity in the Bible, God needed a willing vessel. He needed Mary to carry the Messiah. He needed Ananias to initiate Saul into his apostolic ministry as Paul. He needed Peter to carry the revival to a Roman centurion, Cornelius. Ultimately revival begins with a relationship between you and God and other people. People are the carriers

of revival. We can create an atmosphere that God likes or shut Him out.

4. The evidence of revival is thousands of people saved at an evangelistic crusade. This is going to shock you and please know that I'm not anti-evangelism. I just think that we may have an American church idea of evangelism that differs from the early church style of evangelism.

Jesus did not conduct one evangelistic crusade to reach out to the Romans. He focused exclusively on bringing revival to His people that made God attractive to Romans such as Cornelius. Jesus brought revival to devout Jews.

While we read about thousands of people who were added to the church daily in the book of Acts, remember this:

"And continuing daily with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:46-47).

The people experiencing revival met in the temple or synagogue. They were not in a Roman coliseum or bathhouse, they met in 'church.' Revival began with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on 120 believers praying together.

The people in that prayer meeting that unleashed the power of Pentecost on the planet were devout Jews and Gentiles that loved Jesus. They were willing to die for what they believed in. Their devotional life would probably make American Christianity look worldly and carnal. They wanted the Holy Spirit and He came.

The prayer meeting was not an evangelistic crusade. This was a gathering of people who loved God, laid their lives down for each other and gave everything they had to the cause. The

number of believers grew as they met together, attended to the apostles teaching and fellowshiped. They were a community that made their faith attractive to unbelievers with their life of serving and loving one another.

Revival is God moving among a community of believers. As I was free from these myths, I've drawn closer to the revivalist, Jesus. My heart longs for Him and aches for the people of God to know Him and enjoy the benefits of belonging to Him. We need Him and we need each other for God to break forth in a fresh move today.

Leilani Haywood is the Online Editor for SpiritLed Woman. An award-winning writer, Leilani is the author of Ten Keys to Raising Kids That Love God. Follow Leilani on Twitter or Facebook.

WATCH: These 3 Words Will Dramatically Change How You View Yourself

There's a prevailing lie that has infiltrated much of the culture. The propaganda that you and I are mere products of some primordial soup that randomly formed together to create life is spread throughout our classrooms and TV programs. "There's no purpose or reason for existence," is what's implied. "We're all just accidents of evolution."

This notion of purposelessness is further bolstered by the epidemic of fatherlessness. Many people today are raised in homes of an absent parent. More and more people feel alone and abandoned, which they then relate to their heavenly Father.

Many believe that if they're meaningless to their parents, then they must also be meaningless to God.

You Are No Surprise to God

Sure, it might be true that you were a surprise to your parents. But you are no surprise to God! The truth is that God had you in mind before your parents ever conceived you. Like a potter's hand to clay, God crafted you with great care, from the inside out. Not a single one of your features were an afterthought.

Now, let me let you in on a little secret: God knows you better than you know yourself! David revealed that God knows when you sit and stand, the hairs on your head and the words you'll say before you say them. Think about that! God knew what He was getting before He formed you. And despite the good, the bad and the ugly, He still chose to bring you into existence.

God Chose You

In Ephesians 1:5, Paul assures, "He predestined us to adoption as sons to Himself"

One day while reading this, I pondered, "What were God's thoughts toward me before I was formed?" Then the Holy Spirit spoke something that nearly brought me to tears. He said, "I know Kyle will mess up more times than not, but I'm taking a chance on him to accept My Son, Jesus, and enter into My family. I'm not afraid of his past—I have a plan to erase that. A relationship with Kyle is worth the price I have to pay for it."

You should replace my name with yours. Hear that: God says that a relationship with you was worth the price He had to pay for it. And what a huge price that was!

A Profound, Three-Word Truth

Declare this three-word truth today: “God chose me!” Think about the implications of that! You are not an accident, nor are you unwanted. Regardless of the way you entered this world or what’s happened since you’ve been here, you are God’s desire. Build your confidence on the truth that God has chosen you, and even against all odds, He has a plan to use you! {eoa}

Kyle Winkler equips people to live in victory. His mobile app, *Shut Up, Devil!*, is the No. 1 spiritual warfare app; and his recent book, *Silence Satan*, has helped thousands shut down the enemy’s attacks, threats, lies and accusations. Kyle holds a Master of Divinity in biblical studies from Regent University. Get daily encouragement from Kyle on Facebook and Twitter.

The 5 Masks of Pride

Have you ever asked the Holy Spirit to teach you something and then quickly realized you asked for more than you bargained for?

That’s what happened to me a couple years ago when I asked for a revelation on what pride is and asked the Lord to convict me in areas where I was missing it. It all started because one day I was minding my own business reading a book on my Kindle, and I heard in my spirit that I had an issue with pride.

I was confused. “*Pride? How, Lord?*”

At that time, I had always looked at pride as the excessive glorification of one’s self—an arrogance of sorts. If someone asked me if I was dealing with pride based on this definition, I would say no. However, what the Lord revealed to me is that I was worrying about what others would think and allowing a

concern over perception to take precedence over seeking Him for His will in a specific situation I was faced with in my business, and that was a form of pride.

I didn't recognize this as pride because it was not one of the more obvious forms of pride. It was in disguise. Honestly, it didn't feel good to have that revealed, but I was grateful that God loved me too much to allow it to be a barrier for me. It was at that moment that I repented (changed my mind and turned away from it), made the right decision to handle the situation His way and also asked the Holy Spirit to reveal the various subtleties of pride whenever they reared their ugly head.

He truly delivered. Over the next few weeks, the Holy Spirit would either point out a situation where I was being prideful or would reveal to me when someone else I was observing or interacting with was displaying pride. There are so many layers, and they all come down to being self-centered and self-focused rather than Christ-centered and Christ-focused.

Here are some of the other examples of pride in disguise:

Timidity

Have you ever decided not to speak up about something that you felt led to speak up about? I've been there. Most likely, it was due to fear, but the reason for the fear is often concern over how you will be perceived by others when you speak up. The Scriptures encourage us to be strong and courageous, and with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, we should be bold as lions.

Procrastination

A surprising form of pride is procrastination. When we are putting things off, it's often due to feelings surrounding the task at hand, and we're allowing those feelings to govern

our motivation to take action even when things are urgent. We have to check our hearts for the reasons why we're procrastinating, and if it's not Christ-focused, we have to renew our minds in that situation and take the appropriate next action.

Faking It

Oftentimes we'll put on a good face for everyone even when we're a mess on the inside. Some argue that this is standing in faith or "faking it until you make it." While there's no reason to reveal the specifics of our struggles with everyone, there are people in our lives that we can and should be real with.

Independence

Independence can lead to refusing to ask for help and doing everything yourself. This one is a tough one for so many, and I've been guilty of this myself on numerous occasions. The truth is that it is actually a blessing for others to bless you, just as you consider it a blessing to bless others. When you need help, get help and don't be shy about it! If you've been burned before, that comes with the territory. Don't allow a bad experience to create a spirit of independence that says, "I don't need help from anyone" or "I can do this myself," even when help is needed—both in personal and professional life.

Preoccupation

To be transparent, this is one that the Lord is still working with me on. Oftentimes we are so busy or preoccupied with things going on in our own lives, or preoccupied by the distractions provided through social media and technology. During those times, it's easy to miss what the Lord desires to show you or miss opportunities to have an impact in the lives

of others, not just those you are close to, but even complete strangers. By being less busy and distracted, we can remain more Christ-focused and aware of what He's doing.

This is something we should all want to get a handle on, because the Word of God tells us that He despises pride! Here's just a little of what the Bible has to say on the matter:

"Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; be assured, he will not be unpunished" (Prov. 16:5).

"Then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery" (Deut. 8:14).

"Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honor is humility" (Prov. 18:12).

I'm sure there are other subtleties of pride that I didn't cover and likely some that have yet to be revealed to me in my own walk. However, I urge you to be proactive and not wait for the Lord to interrupt you while you're reading a book like I did. Ask God to show you the areas where you're displaying pride so that you can repent and move forward knowing confidently that the enemy can no longer use that against you to delay you from your next level. {eoa}

*Reprinted from . **Shae Bynes** is a passionate storyteller, best-selling author, and engaging teacher whose life was completely changed by encountering God. She enjoys the response she receives when she tells people that she is a Firestarter, igniting fires in the marketplace and in the bedrooms around the world. Shae has authored several books on the topics of God-centered and Spirit-led business and marriage and is the Host of The Kingdom Driven Entrepreneur Podcast. Visit to learn more.*

When You Face Your Mortality

My friend Harold was told that he wouldn't make it past five years during his fight with cancer. "I felt like I had lost my breath," he said. "Then it became really clear what was important in life."

We were on our way to the hospital to see Lucy, whom doctors and specialists have dismissed. They told her that they had done everything that they could. She was in the same zone that Harold called "facing your mortality." We confess Scriptures and try to pray our way out off that no-man's land, but God sent Harold and Lucy to that place.

"What was that priority that became clear when you heard that report?" I asked Harold. I expected to hear that the priority that became clear was his family. He said, "My walk with God."

That surprised me because Harold doesn't come across as your super spiritual Christian dispensing Scriptures and prophetic words. He served behind the scenes at the Smithton Outpouring, a revival that attracted a quarter-million people from around the world to a town of 532. Harold raised four kids, worked and went to college while serving during six services a week. Harold was one of 68 families that moved to Kansas City. He faced his fight with death in Kansas City.

"So your walk with God became your priority," I said. "Yup, I needed him to live," he said.

I haven't been in that place of facing my mortality. I'm healthy and have some struggles that aren't giants like a life-threatening illness. My giants are fighting for inclusion for a special-needs daughter and my finances.

Yet that very day my mortality erupted like a monster inside when I received a bill that I didn't think I could pay. I threw a coffee cup across the room overwhelmed by the frustration of trying to do everything right and yet that was not enough. I instantly felt ashamed that I caved into fear. I figured out my budget, which revealed that the bill was covered.

An hour later I was sitting in the hospital visiting my friend, Lucy. She was surrounded by friends praying for her. One of those friends, Randy Long, is a hero of mine and we hugged each other at this unexpected reunion around faith and mortality. I admired Randy for his walk with God after he tragically lost his son.

Lucy was upbeat, funny and cloaked by a glow of peace. She was going home in a few days for "palliative care," medical jargon for comfort during a fight with an illness that's beyond human ability to treat. Now she is completely depending on God to live.

I'm standing with Lucy and her family and friends, believing that God will do what only He can do and that she will be a testimony to the doctors and specialists. I told Lucy about how I threw a cup against the wall and she laughed. "You don't want to know what I've done when I'm mad," she said.

I had to hold back tears because I know that my little episode isn't like the storm that she is walking through. I don't know the outcome, but I know that God will be there. I know that God is walking with her now. And that God is walking with me now.

I know that the No. 1 priority in my life is my walk with God. My No. 1 priority is how I treat Him, how I talk to Him and how I love Him. Achievements, deadlines, ministries, chasing success and people whose opinions of me I have cared way too much about will fade away when it comes down to just me and

God.

I picked up the shards of that broken coffee cup strewn across the kitchen floor in tears. I should be a spiritual giant after everything I've learned and been taught. I'm a writer and an editor of a publication read by millions of people. I should confess Scriptures, pray and believe God.

Instead I caved into my mortality and God was there. He took away my shame. He took away my fear and then I did what I thought I should do. I prayed, I fought, I stood in Scriptures. I did this with Him in my mortality.

What about you? Do you avoid your mortality, thinking that He would dismiss you as unspiritual and weak? I encourage you to face your mortality as an uninvited guest that brings someone else with them. Someone who casts mountains into the sea, stops storms and rains down manna. I am weak, but He is strong.

Leilani Haywood is the Online Editor for SpiritLed Woman. An award-winning writer and author of Ten Keys to Raising Kids That Love God, you can follow her on Twitter @leilanihaywood.

How to Know It's Really God Speaking to You

I know that a lot of Christians get frustrated about the subject of hearing God's voice. I can remember when I was a young Christian and older ministers would say, "The Lord told me this" or "The Lord told me that," and I would think, *What do you mean, 'The Lord told you'? Did He just talk to you? Did you hear Him out loud? How did you know it was the Lord?*

I would get more than a little irritated with them. But I have since come to learn, after walking with the Lord for a while, that He is the still, small voice that speaks inside my spirit—and He wants to speak to me and guide me even more than I want Him to. He wants to do the same for you. I can tell you that it takes a little practice, but now I hear Him all the time, and He leads me on a daily, even hourly, basis. He wants to do the same for you.

The Guide on the Inside

By “practice,” I mean that you get into the habit of asking and listening, being aware of His presence in you. When you’re on the job, driving your car or walking into a new situation, give ear to the Holy Spirit. Say, “Lord, what shall I do in this situation?” Start by practicing with small things, such as finding something you’ve misplaced or asking which way to turn while driving, and pretty soon you’ll get good at distinguishing His voice.

How can you continue learning to recognize God’s voice when you’re making decisions? The answer is, look to the inside—to God’s Holy Spirit within you. The Holy Spirit is “The Guide on the Inside,” and every born-again believer has Him living within.

The children of God—that means you—are led by the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:14). When Jesus left the earth and went to heaven, He left us His Spirit (aka the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of God) to live in us and guide us. The very Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ dwells in you as a born-again believer: “But you know Him, for He lives with you, and will be in you” (John 14:17). Jesus didn’t leave us here helpless! He left us with a Helper to assist and support us, and to empower us to finish His work on Earth.

Our goal when making decisions should be to recognize and follow the voice of the Holy Spirit. John 10:27 says, “My

sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”

Never forget that! He knows you, and you hear His voice. And because you do, you can follow His leading.

In my own life, when I saw that Jesus said, “My sheep hear My voice,” I started believing that I could hear His voice. If a friend of yours calls out to you from across a dark room, “Come this way!” and you hear his or her voice, you can follow the sound until you find your way out. It’s the same with hearing the Lord’s voice, and the Bible says you do hear it.

Too many times I hear Christians saying things such as “I can’t hear the voice of God” or “I don’t know if God is talking to me or not.” But that’s not what the Bible says. It says we do hear His voice! It also says we know Him. Jesus Himself said, “I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Counselor, that He may be with you forever: the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, for it does not see Him, neither does it know Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you, and will be in you” (John 14:16-17).

You know Him! When you know someone, you recognize his voice and you know the intent of his heart. It’s time to start believing the intent of God’s heart toward you is always good and that you do know Him and hear His voice.

Then you need to listen. By that I mean stop and spend time in God’s presence—reading His Word and praying—so He is free to speak to your heart and lead you. Too many times we’re so wrapped up in our busy lives that we give God no place to talk with us.

The Holy Spirit is a gentleman. He’s not going to force Himself upon you or even interrupt your everyday life unless you give Him permission to. Very often, I think, He’s waiting for us to turn aside from all our busyness and seek Him. Hearing Him is really more up to us than it is to Him.

I encourage you, especially when you're facing a decision, to spend more time with the Lord. By that I mean spend more time reading the Bible, meditating, listening and praying. Some of us have a pretty good daily devotional habit. If you don't, you need to establish one. Read the Bible every day!

For many of us, maybe in the morning, we read our one-page devotional and accompanying Scripture, then review our prayer list and pray for five minutes. And that's good. But when you're facing bigger decisions, that might not be enough. Sometimes drastic times call for drastic measures. You might need to put a little more time in if you need to hear the voice of God clearly before you can make your decision.

Instead of reading two or three Scriptures, read an entire chapter. Or find verses that pertain to what you're believing for, and spend time reading them and meditating on them to soak your spirit in God's Word until faith comes.

Be sure you spend time just listening. So many times when we're in need, we do all the talking during prayer. But prayer is two-way conversation between you and God—and He's the one who knows everything! You already know what you know. Instead, you want to know what He knows. So take time to listen.

How Do You Know It's God?

I don't know about you, but I've met many Christians who claim God told them to do something, but the end result of their decision turns out really badly! That tends to make us all nervous because we think, *How then do we know when it's God's voice that's leading us?*

The way to be sure you're hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit, God's voice, is to spend time learning it. How did you get to where you could recognize the voice of your parent, your sweetheart or your children? You spent time with them. If you were never around them, you wouldn't recognize their voices. Well, it's the same with recognizing God's voice. You

get familiar with His voice by spending time with Him, and you do that by reading and meditating on His Word because that is Him talking with you.

I once heard a perfect example of this. The way the Department of the Treasury trains its agents to recognize counterfeit U.S. money is by having them spend a lot of time studying real money. They get so familiar with the real thing by handling it, looking at it, smelling it and running it through various tests that a counterfeit bill will jump right out at them because it doesn't react or feel like a real bill.

It's the same for you. If you become so familiar with God through His Word—by studying it and recognizing how He thinks, acts and views you—then when a different voice tries to lead you, you'll recognize it instantly as a counterfeit or a lie.

You and I will never be able to recognize the real-deal voice of God unless we spend time in His Word. That's good news, because it means you are totally in charge of that part! You can decide for yourself how much time you spend in God's Word. Just know that as you do, you'll get more and more familiar with His voice.

The Inward Witness

The main way you and I "hear" the voice of God is not audibly. It's through what I'll call the "inward witness." The Spirit of God will give you promptings in your own spirit, or your inner man (Eph. 3:16), which is the part of you that has been born again and made a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17).

Promptings are inclinations or thoughts. I like to describe a prompting as a "knowing in your knower." It comes as you're reading the Word, seeking God in prayer or listening carefully for His guidance. You'll either begin to feel a peace as you consider the decision or an uneasiness. My spiritual father used to describe the peace as "a smooth, velvety feeling" in your spirit and the uneasiness as a "scratchy" feeling. I

think that's a good way to describe it.

I have been led by the inward witness more times than I can count, in big things and in small ones. I often say out loud, "Holy Spirit, which way should I go?" or "What should I do here?" And then I listen—not for an audible voice, but for that "still, small voice" on the inside, in my spirit (1 Kin. 19:12-13). I listen for His prompting.

I also do this very often when I am counseling someone. As she sits across from me and tells me her problem, I listen to her, but silently I ask the Holy Spirit: "How do I help this person? What should I say? What's the answer here?" In essence, I have my spiritual antenna up, giving attention to the inward witness that will give me answers about how to best help the person.

Sometimes, when I've lost something, I'll ask the Holy Spirit where it is (because He knows everything, you know!), and I'll get a thought similar to *Go look under the front seat of the car*. Now, my mind might say, *That's silly. It couldn't be there*. But when I look, there it is!

Those may be examples of small things, but it's good to practice on small things. When I'm making major decisions, I often will give myself more time to listen for the inward witness. I will let the Lord solidify the word in my spirit, and then I'll "try it on" before making a move one way or the other.

Karen Jensen-Salisbury travels the world preaching and teaching God's Word. She's been a pastor, children's minister and a writer for more than 30 years. She and her husband, Bob, live in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

If you liked The article, you'll love the book

In Karen Jensen-Salisbury's book *How to Make the Right Decision Every Time: 10 Keys for Finding God's Direction* (Charisma House), you will learn how to apply biblical wisdom to every decision you make, reaping the blessing of peace. You can find this book at [www.charisma.com](#), or anywhere Christian books are sold.