

Topple the Idol of Control in Your Life With This Spiritual Demolition Tool

Transformation begins with the renewing of your mind (Rom. 12:2). Your behavior maps out a small “road” in your brain that creates a basic pathway for your thoughts.

As you repeat a particular behavior, your brain builds a bigger “highway” that allows for an increased volume and frequency of thoughts to move about. The results are your day-to-day actions.

In order to change your behavior, you must reprogram your brain. You have to deconstruct an existing highway and replace it with a new one. This is a process that takes time.

The Bible teaches us to be transformed by the renewing of our mind through the power of God’s Word. In time, the result is the formation of an entirely new neurological road map that leads you to freedom from the past and to the better life you were meant to live.

God’s Word gives us specific ammunition to fight specific idols men face. Today we’re going to see how Scripture equips us to battle against the idol of control. Use these powerful verses to renew your mind and find your road map to freedom!

Fighting the Idol of Control With the Truths of Trust and Stewardship

Truths of Trust

“Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, yes, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand” (Is. 41:10).

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreads out its roots by the river, and shall not fear when heat comes, but its leaf shall be green, and it shall not be anxious in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit” (Jer. 17:7-8).

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths” (Prov. 3:5-6).

“Therefore, I say to you, take no thought about your life, what you will eat, or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body than clothing?” (Matt. 6:25, 33-34).

“Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God. Believe also in Me” (John 14:1).

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with gratitude, make your requests known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will protect your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6-7).

“Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time. Cast all your care upon Him, because He cares for you” (1 Pet. 5:6-7).

Truths of Stewardship

“The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and to keep it” (Gen. 2:15).

“The earth belongs to the Lord, and its fullness, the world, and those who dwell in it. For He has founded it on the seas, and established it on the floods” (Ps. 24:1-2).

“But he who unknowingly committed acts worthy of punishment shall be beaten with few stripes. For to whom much is given,

of him much shall be required. And from him to whom much was entrusted, much will be asked” (Luke 12:48).

“As everyone has received a gift, even so serve one another with it, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Pet. 4:10). {eoa}

For the original article, visit .

Jewish Organizations Concerned Over Former Diplomat’s Involvement in Current Anti-Israel Efforts

Several Jewish organizations and leaders are expressing alarm over former U.S. diplomat Martin Indyk’s role in the Obama administration’s recent Israel policy moves.

Indyk served as U.S. ambassador to Israel, and then assistant secretary of state, between 1995 and 2001, followed by a stint as President Barack Obama’s envoy for Israeli-Palestinian negotiations in 2013-2014.

Reliable Washington sources report that the maps and proposals Indyk and his aides formulated in recent years are still central to the Obama administration’s strategy for the Palestinian issue. Indyk also is said to have remained in contact with key U.S. policymakers even though he left the Obama administration and now serves as executive vice president of the Brookings Institution.

In media interviews and on Twitter in recent days, Indyk has

emerged as one of the most vociferous defenders of the Obama administration's Dec. 23 vote against Israeli settlements at the United Nations. He is also one of the most vocal opponents of President-elect Donald Trump's nomination of attorney David Friedman as U.S. ambassador to Israel.

Indyk's credibility is now being called into question, however, as several Jewish organizations are urging him to clarify whether or not he made a series of unusually harsh remarks about Israel and Jews in a tape-recorded private conversation when he was executive director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a prominent think tank.

In that conversation, in 1989, Indyk reportedly said Israelis are "paranoid," "arrogant" and think that "the rules of society do not apply [to them]" because "they are the goy's rules." Connecting Israeli attitudes to what he characterized as Jewish attitudes in general, Indyk reportedly said that "Jews would do whatever they can to avoid paying taxes," and that Jews believe it is justified to "find a way to ignore the law or get around it." He added, "In my own family, my grandfather used to stay up nights to figure out how to avoid paying taxes."

The reported remarks "echo three of the most infamous centuries-old tropes of anti-Semites," Prof. Eunice G. Pollack, a historian of anti-Semitism and co-editor of the *Encyclopedia of American Jewish History*, told .

"You have an updated version of the classic 'Jewish swindler,' combined with the 'disloyal Jew' who evades his patriotic duty to pay taxes, and the millennia-old 'arrogant Jew' who, in a more religious era, was accused of deriving his arrogance from his partner, Satan," said Pollack.

Jewish groups want answers

Indyk has not responded to multiple inquiries from about the statements. The quotations were first raised by the

organization Amcha—the Coalition for Jewish Concerns, headed by Rabbi Avi Weiss, when Indyk was nominated as ambassador to Israel in 1995. But they were not picked up by the news media at the time and were not raised by senators at his confirmation hearing.

Farley Weiss, president of the National Council of Young Israel, told , “I hope he didn’t say such things, and if he did, I hope he will disavow them. Either way, he needs to address the controversy.”

Sarah Stern, president of the Endowment for Middle East Truth (EMET), a pro-Israel think tank in Washington, said in a statement to that her organization is “calling on Ambassador Indyk to immediately clarify whether or not he made these horrific statements.” Stern said it would be “very ironic” for Indyk to oppose the David Friedman nomination over past statements that Friedman made, “if Indyk made the repulsive remarks he is alleged to have made prior to his own nomination.”

In a tweet quoted in *The New York Times* and elsewhere, Indyk sarcastically asserted that Friedman would be “a great ambassador for the deep settler state. But David Friedman needs to be U.S. envoy to all Israelis. Is he up for that?” In an interview with CNN anchor Chris Cuomo, Indyk said Friedman’s call for moving the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to western Jerusalem is “incendiary” because it “would imply that the United States was recognizing Israeli sovereignty over all of Jerusalem, including the Arab part ... which has the third-holiest mosque in Islam.”

Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, told that Indyk “forgot to mention that what he calls ‘the Arab part’ of Jerusalem includes a large Jewish community, the Western Wall, the Temple Mount and the Mount of Olives, which contains the oldest Jewish cemetery in the world. That mosque is the third-holiest site to Islam, but Har

Habayit (the Temple Mount) is Judaism's holiest site." Cooper said "the current status quo, in which the U.S. does not recognize any part of Jerusalem as sovereign Israeli territory, is patently unfair."

The Wiesenthal Center, World Jewish Congress, National Council of Young Israel and other Jewish groups have endorsed the Friedman nomination. J Street, Americans for Peace Now and Ameinu oppose it.

EMET's Stern, for her part, said that Indyk's "judgment and objectivity" were "severely undermined" two years ago, when it was revealed that he had accepted a \$ contribution from the government of Qatar for the Brookings Institution. Qatar is the largest financier of the terrorist organization Hamas.

Adam Kredo, a senior foreign policy writer for the Washington Free Beacon, told that Indyk "is known among reporters for anonymously criticizing Israel in the press, for planting stories meant to pressure the Jewish state into making concessions, [and for] leading the Obama administration's efforts over the years to discredit Israel and blame it for the failure in peace talks."

Indyk's Twitter war

Indyk took to Twitter this week to accuse Kredo of spreading "fake news" when Kredo reported that Vice President Joe Biden was involved in lobbying on behalf of the U.N. resolution against settlements. Israeli government officials subsequently publicly charged that Biden personally lobbied the government of Ukraine to back the resolution. Biden has denied the accusation.

At the same time, Indyk has been engaged in a Twitter mini-war this week with both an Israeli embassy official and a former colleague. It began with Indyk tweeting that the U.N. resolution was not an attack on Israel but was aimed only at "settlers, who undermine peace negotiations [and] are hurting

Israel.” Reuven Azar, deputy chief of mission at the Embassy of Israel in Washington, replied, “Please don’t lie to your followers. This pro-BDS resolution is unprecedented.”

Indyk shot back, “Diplomats are sent abroad to lie for their country. But that doesn’t include accusing people of lying. Leave that to your political bosses.” Azar responded, “We’ll keep fighting for our country and you’ll keep lecturing us,” to which Indyk sarcastically replied, “Happy Hanukkah to you too.”

Robert Satloff, who serves in Indyk’s former post as executive director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, weighed in on Azar’s side, tweeting, “I disagree w/my friend @martin_indyk. We’ve tried and failed using chainsaw on settlement issue; it needs a scalpel.” {eoa}

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Does Thomas Sowell’s Retirement Signal the End of Black Conservatism?

On December 27, 2016, at the age of 86, Thomas Sowell published his last column.

After publishing dozens of books and hundreds of columns, Dr. Sowell’s retirement may mark the beginning of the end of an era of black intellectuals who were champions of political and economic liberty. Other black scholars like Walter Williams, W.B. Allen and Shelby Steele are all in their 70s or 80s, and

there does not seem to be a cadre of like-minded black scholars in their wake.

While in Atlanta for Christmas, I stumbled upon a June 1994 issue of *National Minority Politics* magazine at my parent's home. The magazine began as a newsletter in the 1980s and eventually became a monthly periodical that was renamed *Headway* before publication ceased in 1999. Willie and Gwen Richardson published *Headway* to feature leading black and Hispanic conservative voices like Thomas Sowell, Walter Williams, Raoul Contreas, Roger Hernandez, Linda Chavez, Kay Cole James, Deroy Murdock and others.

The magazine hosted leadership conferences that created conversations between minority conservatives and politicians like William Bennett, Kay Bailey Hutchinson, Phil Gramm and Gary Franks. Many of *Headway's* events were captured on C-SPAN in the mid-1990s.

The political philosophy of *Headway* included the following:

1. Strong families: The foundation of any stable society is—first and foremost—strong families in every community. We should stress to our youth the importance of marriage and keeping families together.
2. Individual responsibility: Almost every human being is endowed with the necessary means to be successful—a sound mind and the ability to think, reason and make choices. These natural gifts are accompanied with the equal obligation to take responsibility for one's actions.
3. Free enterprise: Our nation has been the most successful on earth in fostering and promoting a free enterprise system with opportunity for all. Strengthening this system is our best hope for a thriving economy in the future.
4. Less government: The size and influence of government at all levels must be minimized in order to guarantee a

free society. Government should play a role in performing certain functions, like maintaining a strong defense, but we should not expect government to solve all our problems.

5. Strong Defense: Although it is not America's role to be the world's policeman, there are sometimes threats to American lives and interests which we cannot tolerate.
6. Community-based problem solving. Rather than looking to the federal government to solve local problems such as crime and education, we can and should develop solutions in our local communities.
7. Good taste and common sense in popular culture: The level of violence, promiscuous sex and immoral behavior on television, in movies and in music lyrics should be reduced as it has adverse effects on society, especially our children.
8. Compassionate conservatism: While stressing the importance of free enterprise and less government, we must recognize our responsibility as a society to help those who help themselves or who are unable to help themselves through no fault of their own.

What's missing from this list is an issue that became a defining position of the conservative coalition in the mid-1990s: abortion. With the rise of Newt Gingrich as the 50th Speaker of the House of Representatives and the passing of the Partial-Birth Abortion Act of 1995, abortion became a centerpiece of American conservatism beyond the concerns of economics and public policy.

Before that, abortion had not been a centerpiece of black conservatism because many black conservatives were more aligned with classical liberal political philosophy and Austrian economics, like Sowell and Williams, rather than religious-right conservatism.

The inclusion of pro-life politics into political and economic conservatism inadvertently took the wind out of the sails of

many conservative African American scholars who were more concerned with issues of political and economic liberty. For example, black conservatives like Condoleezza Rice, Thomas Sowell, Walter Williams, Shelby Steele, John McWhorter, Kiron Skinner and the like, have never made abortion a key issue.

Sadly, it seems that with the retirement of Thomas Sowell, and the inevitable retirement of scholars like Walter Williams, Shelby Steele, black scholars, as champions of political and economic liberty, will continue to fade away if abortion remains the litmus test for identifying one's allegiance to conservatism. This is the end of an era. Black conservatism was its most winsome and popular when it primarily addressed issues other than abortion.

Finally, we're left with the question of whether or not there will ever again be a coalition of black and Hispanic scholars who have the political philosophy like the one outlined at *Headway* magazine? Or, is the best yet to come? {eoa}

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ISIS Claims Responsibility for Istanbul Attack

Islamic State claimed responsibility on Monday for a New Year's Day mass shooting in a packed Istanbul nightclub that

killed 39 people, an attack carried out by a lone gunman who remains at large.

It described the Reina nightclub, where many foreigners as well as Turks were killed, as a gathering point for Christians celebrating their "apostate holiday." The attack, it said, was revenge for Turkish military involvement in Syria.

"The apostate Turkish government should know that the blood of Muslims shed with airplanes and artillery fire will, with God's permission, ignite a fire in their own land," the Islamic State declaration said.

There was no immediate comment from Turkish officials.

The jihadist group has been blamed for at least half a dozen attacks on civilian targets in Turkey over the past 18 months but, other than targeted assassinations, this is the first time it has directly claimed any of them. It made the statement on one of its Telegram channels, a method used after attacks elsewhere.

NATO member Turkey is part of the coalition against Islamic State and launched an incursion into neighboring Syria in August to drive the radical Sunni militants from its borders, sending in tanks and special forces backed by fighter jets.

Nationals of Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Lebanon, Libya, Israel, India, a Turkish-Belgian dual citizen and a Franco-Tunisian woman were among those killed at the exclusive nightclub on the shores of the Bosphorus waterway. Twenty-five of the dead were foreigners, according to the state-run Anadolu news agency.

Police distributed a hazy black-and-white photo of the alleged gunman taken from security footage. State broadcaster TRT Haber said eight people had been detained in Istanbul.

The authorities believe the attacker may be from a Central

Asian nation and suspect he had links to Islamic State, the Hurriyet newspaper said. It said he may be from the same cell responsible for a gun-and-bomb attack on Istanbul's main airport in June, in which 45 people were killed and hundreds wounded.

The attack at Reina, popular with Turkish celebrities and wealthy visitors, shook Turkey as it tries to recover from a failed July coup and a series of deadly bombings in Istanbul and elsewhere, some blamed on Islamic State, others claimed by Kurdish militants.

He pulled his Kalashnikov rifle from a suitcase at the side of the road, opened fire on those at the door, then threw two hand grenades after entering, Haberturk said, without citing its sources. It said six empty magazines were found at the scene and that he was estimated to have fired at least 180 bullets.

Security services had been on alert across Europe for new year celebrations following an attack on a Christmas market in Berlin that killed 12 people. Only days ago, an online message from a pro-Islamic State group called for attacks by "lone wolves" on "celebrations, gatherings and clubs."

In a statement hours after the shooting, President Tayyip Erdogan said such attacks aimed to create chaos and destabilize the country.

Four months into its operation in Syria, the Turkish army and the rebels it backs are besieging the Islamic State-held town of al-Bab. Erdogan has said he wants them to continue to Raqqa, the jihadists' Syrian stronghold.

Turkey has also been cracking down on Islamic State networks at home. In counter-terrorism operations between Dec 26-Jan 2, Turkish police detained 147 people over links to the group and formally arrested 25 of them, the interior ministry said.

Islamic State's Amaq website said the group was behind a car bomb attack that killed 11 people and wounded 100 in the city of Diyarbakir in November, but Turkish authorities denied this and said Kurdish militants carried out the attack.

The Russian ambassador to Turkey was shot dead as he gave a speech in Ankara on Dec. 19 by an off-duty police officer who shouted "Don't forget Aleppo" and "Allahu Akbar." {eoa}

(Reporting by Ahmed Aboulenein and Ahmed Tolba in Cairo; Editing by Giles Elgood and Ralph Boulton)

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Potent Resources to Make Your Prayer Life the Best It's Ever Been

The new year is one of my favorite times of the year. I love it because people give themselves permission to look up from the daily grind and reflect on where they are and where they are trying to go.

I try to build into my year times when God can speak to me big picture, but the week before and after New Year's Day is a natural time for that.

I could write a lot about capturing the adventure of following Jesus. Actually the book I am working on for 2017 will be perfect to challenge you to engage in the life God has for you.

But for now, let me try and set you up for success in your

prayer life in 2017. My top five most-read new posts of 2016 will set the stage that you need. Here they are (not in order of most read):

- “5 Steps to Get Your Prayer Life off the Ground”: Maybe you are feeling overwhelmed by where to start with a prayer life. This post gives you five steps to get started.
- “11 Leaders Give Advice to Have Your Best Prayer Life Ever”: The apostle Paul says we can grow with models. This post gives you prayer advice from people like Mac Powell from Third Day or Dave Butts, who is head of America’s National Prayer Committee.
- A great way to take a prayer life to the next level is to get involved in some sort of group prayer gathering. Whether you are leading a church in prayer or just starting a small group for prayer, “6 Ingredients of a Powerful Prayer Service” and “4 Prayer Services Most People Won’t Go to” are sure to give you some ideas for the new year.
- “10 Books That I Loved on Prayer”: If you want to dig a little deeper in your prayer life in 2017, consider reading a book on prayer this year. Of course, I wrote a book on the subject, but this list is a great collection that could change your life.

Don’t let these suggestions overwhelm you. Pick one thing or one book, and get started.

To paraphrase my dentist: Doing something poorly is better than doing nothing perfectly. Let us be a people that get to know Jesus more this year because simple decisions that we make. {eoa}

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For the original article, visit .

Prophetic Word for 2017: A Year to See, Seed and Prophecy

Writing a book is like having a baby and, well, I'm "expecting" again and plan to deliver my second book this coming fall.

For that reason, I recently went on a personal writer's retreat following a conference in Raleigh, North Carolina. The first night of my retreat caught me off guard when I had a powerful vision of Jesus. It was one those unexpected, came-out-of-nowhere type visions.

I saw Jesus facedown on the floor in full-throttle intercession to our heavenly Father for us. I couldn't understand what He was praying, but the moment and the atmosphere were astonishingly sweet. It made the Scripture that says He always lives to make intercession for us come alive (see Heb. 7:25). Only what was He praying for?

The next day, as I was writing, writing, writing, I found my focus somewhat distracted by the thoughts and visions of my head. Although some of this had been forming for a few weeks, it was on this day that I felt the anointing on it. Here it is:

"2017 is a Year to See, Seed and Prophecy into the Next 100 Years."

A Promise Fulfilled

I've waited in anticipation for 2017 for over a decade. It began when a prophet said to me in 2007 that I would become a household name within 10 years. Wow. What a word! Although I'm not yet a household name, a Seer did see something afar off namely that I would come forward and be speaking to many of you today. It also focused my eyes on the year 2017 as being a year that's the end of a thing and the beginning of a great thing.

Not long after this prophetic word in 2007, I discovered that my church, Harvest Christian Center in Turlock, California, had been incorporated in 1917 having emerged following an evangelistic visit in Turlock by Aimee Semple McPherson. We will celebrate our 100-year anniversary this 2017, the finishing and completion of a successful century in God, but also a time to see, seed and prophesy into the next century.

God often speaks through divine coincidences confirming His word through two or three witnesses (Matt. 18:16). When something seems to be playing on repeat, it is usually the Holy Spirit making a point. And so here it is again, 2017 being a year to end something and a year to begin something.

In addition, I already have the strangest relationship with the number 17. This number somewhat morphs and shifts in meaning depending on the season, but it's always appearing and speaking to me like an oracle.

While in Raleigh, for example, my hotel room number was 317, my Wi-Fi code was 1117 and my rental car tag was 1017. And then when I picked up my luggage from the flight back to California, I picked it up at carousel number 17. In addition, I had already been prompted to prophesy to the Raleigh conference host about this number, that it was her promise of victory for land acquisition.

That word being based out Jer. 32:9-15 when Jeremiah purchased land for 17 shekels as a prophetic act thus declaring the

captives would return to Israel and own houses and lands again. This was again another confirmation. It's all eyes on 17, specifically 2017 being a completion year and a seed year.

Only the Pure of Heart Can See

I felt prompted by the Holy Spirit to pray this prayer for myself about six months ago. I began to ask the Lord to create in me a clean heart and to remove any secret faults in my life (Ps. 51:10; Ps. 19:12). Out of this prayer, came a powerful revelation on the Spirit of Leviathan, the King of Pride (Job 41) and a redirect in my life to go low and let the Lord answer my enemies for me.

I do believe there is a time to confront things and take up a cause when needed, but for this season, specifically the election season, I was being given a different strategy. It became not only a message to me, but a message to my church and to others.

I was also learning firsthand that being quick to repent for yourself and for the sins of others, thus "going low," was a war move and an intense spiritual strategy from the Holy Spirit to bring conviction and deliverance.

Stephen the martyr, for example, insisted on forgiveness for his killers, including Saul, which I believe paved the way for confrontation and conviction of sin in Saul's life (Acts 7 & 9) To my surprise, the first message I preached on pride resulted in an unexpected demand for ministry. That very week, our prayer chapel was packed out with men and women wanting to repent of pride and be free of it once and for all.

Through this, God was leading me into some fresh understanding. He said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God (Matt. 5:8). "In other words, the pure in heart can see what God is doing, and they can see afar off. If we want to see a vision for the next 100 years, we will have to first cleanse our hearts with the help of the Holy

Spirit. He is dealing with the pride in our hearts. It's a problem and it's in His way. He is also dealing with any dark parts in our soul so that we can see clearly. Are you ready to see and see afar off? If so, put yourself under the dealing of the Holy Spirit and allow Him to build a clean heart inside of you (John 17:17).

What About the Return of Christ?

Finally, my first presumption and communication about seeing a vision for the next 100 years was that Jesus must not be returning quite yet. Just so you know, I'm a believer in the Book of Revelation and cringe when I hear people dismissing it or pretending it doesn't say what it says. I did realize my presumption and then asked the Holy Spirit for more clarity. What came to my heart was this, "Where there is no vision, the people perish (Prov. 29:18a)" and, "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"(Luke 18:8b).

In other words, we must proceed in faith, planning, believing and positioning ourselves for greater measures, greater works and greater glory to come in the next 100 years. This is a word to our personal legacy, our families and for our nation. If we don't, we are guaranteed destruction. Nevertheless, our Heavenly Father is the only One who knows when it's time for Jesus to return (Matt. 24:26). Jesus will interrupt His plans, should our Father declare, "It's time."

See, Seed and Prophecy

Vision requires provision, and provision always begins with a seed (2 Cor. 9:6-13). That's why 2017 is a seed year. It's a year to be intentional. Just like Jeremiah purchased land for 17 shekels and prophesied to Israel's future, now it's your turn to sow. It's your turn to sow and prophecy to the seed being planted for the next 100 years of your family and the future of your nation.

You might be asking yourself, "Where and how do I sow?" Sow

however the Holy Spirit directs you, knowing that God's holy angels are on the look-out for these prophetic seeds and prophetic declarations. Your prophetic act and declaration will put them on assignment for decades to come (Ps. 103:20).
{eoa}

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For the original article, visit .

Mat Staver: The Oslo Accords Made Things Worse for Israel

When President Obama directed the U.S. Ambassador to Israel to allow a U.N. committee to pass an anti-Israel resolution, he betrayed Israel and America. Secretary of State John Kerry made matters worse when he ranted for over an hour against

Israel.

Obama's anti-Israel rhetoric in the final days of his presidency is not surprising, since we have known his support for Israel has never been strong. The two-state idea for a lasting peace is a fallacy. It is a failed experiment. There can be no lasting solution for peace until the Palestinian Authority and the Hamas government in Gaza recognize Israel's right to exist.

Most people do not realize there are two competing factions of Muslim Arabs in Israel. Mahmood Abbas is the figurehead for the Palestinian Authority (PA) in Ramallah. He was booted out of Gaza when Hamas took control of the government. Hamas is a recognized terrorist organization. Neither group has authority over the other. Neither the PA nor Hamas in Gaza has a mandate from the people they represent to negotiate peace with Israel. Neither group acknowledges Israel's right to exist. Both groups want all of Israel and want to exile all Jews from the land. There can never be a two-state solution under these circumstances.

In 1993, President Bill Clinton hosted Israeli Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin and Palestinian Liberation Organization negotiator Mahmood Abbas for the signing of the Oslo Accords. The following year, the Israeli and Palestinian signers received the Nobel Peace Prize. The Oslo Accords created the PA and transferred control of certain Palestinian populated areas to the organization. The Israeli Defense Forces and security began to phase out of Gaza and later from Bethlehem. But, instead of securing peace, the Oslo Accords have worsened the situation. Gaza is now controlled by Hamas and continues to launch missiles into Israel. Jews, Christians and even Arab Muslims are not safe in Gaza, from which Jews and Christians have fled. Many Jews and Christians have also fled Bethlehem. Entering Bethlehem, Jews are confronted with a sign warning them not to enter.

The best way to fail in the future is to continue the same failed policies of the past. When the Hamas government encourages Arab Muslim children to become suicide bombers, and when their children are taught that Jews are pigs or the Satan, there can be no foreseeable two-state solution. The anti-Israel rhetoric of Obama and Kerry is shameful and will soon be gone. The anti-Israel resolution by the U.N. is more than just cause to defund that incompetent organization. {eoa}

Mat Staver is founder and chairman of Liberty Counsel and President of Christians in Defense of Israel.

10 Invigorating Steps to Feasting on God's Word

I annoyed my little Awana girls.

They gathered around me to say their Bible memory verses last night. I always make them explain what the verse means and talk about how we should obey it or believe it. This makes them nuts, because really they just want to say it as fast as they can and get me to sign my name in their books so they can move on.

When I got an eye roll last night, it reminded me of how we act toward God sometimes. Just kind of going to church and maybe reading the Bible but saying, "Please don't make me slow down and learn this stuff and think about how I'm actually going to do it."

It was ironic. One little girl was learning a verse about how we have a new life in Christ. She was impatient that I was making her talk about what that meant. She didn't know that

slowing down and taking time to think about the verse and talking about what it means and how it works in our lives are what open our hearts to the very Source of new life.

I think I need to teach my Awana kids how to meditate on Bible verses, and maybe you'd like to learn how too.

It sounds all mystical, but it's not.

10 Steps to Meditating on the Bible

1. **Read** the verse in its context. Maybe read the whole chapter it's in.
2. **Ask questions** of the verse. Who is talking to whom? What? When? Where? Why? How? Question the text to death.
3. What significant words are **repeated**? They're probably important.
4. Look up the meaning of any words you don't know.
5. What does this verse mean? (Does it mean what you always thought it meant?)
6. Is there anything in the verse you need to **believe**? If so, decide immediately if you will. If believing this verse seems impossible, talk to God about it.
7. Is there anything in the verse you need to **obey**? If so, decide immediately what action you're going to take.
8. Write the verse on a note card. Work on **memorizing** it throughout the day. (You've spent this much time on it. You might as well make it permanent in your thinking.)
9. **Talk about the verse** with a spouse or a kid or a friend.
10. **Pray** through the verse before you go to bed.

That's a long list. Do you feel like my Awana girls? Are you thinking, "Wow, can't I just read the Bible and move on?" The answer is no, not if you want your life to change.

Which of the steps above is a new idea for you?

President Obama Made a 'Midnight Sneak Attack' on the Second Amendment

Our friend Liz Sheld of PJ Media brought to our attention another example of Obama's perfidy in transferring power to President-elect Donald Trump.

Although Obama likes to empty out Guantanamo Bay of dangerous terrorists and commute the sentences of criminals guilty of breaking federal firearms laws, says Sheld, he doesn't like law-abiding American citizens to possess firearms.

Ergo, as he heads out the door of the White House, Obama's putting the finishing touches on a new policy that would deprive recipients of disability insurance and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) of their Second Amendment rights. The administration will now characterize those citizens as "mental defectives," thereby having their ability to own a firearm subject to the federal Gun Control Act.

Supplemental Security Income helps blind, disabled and elderly people with little to no income. Previously, it was understood that "mentally defective" referred to one's mental health. Citizens who have been institutionalized against their will are restricted from owning a firearm. The new definition of "mentally defective" has nothing to do with being mentally ill, says Sheld.

Sheld also points out the new rule does not make clear how an individual could appeal the agency's decision to deny Second Amendment rights. Wrote the NRA, "The rule would not provide

those subject to its terms the ability to defend their suitability to possess firearms before the actual loss of rights took place. In other words, it offers no due process on the question of losing Second Amendment rights.”

Instead, observes Sheld, a victim of the new regulations would have to petition for his constitutional right to own a gun because he poses no threat to the public safety. Has it even been established that SSI recipients are responsible for the “gun violence” the administration has been targeting? Do we know what percentage of gun criminals are on SSI?

While Obama has no idea how many or what percentage of criminals who use guns are on SSI, we do know of Harvey Lembo, a 67-year old retired Maine lobsterman who is confined to a wheelchair.

Lembo, who is hard of hearing and winces in pain when he moves from his motorized wheelchair to a stuffed sitting chair, said he just got tired of people ripping him off, so he bought a gun—legally.

Prior to shooting burglar Christopher Wildhaber, Lembo said he had lamented to a friend over the weekend that he was tired of having his one-bedroom apartment burglarized—five times in six years, he said, the most recent incident just two weeks prior.

“I never planned on using it,” Lembo said.

One night, he was awakened—he’s not sure by what—and noticed that the clock read 12:04 a.m. He saw a shadow pass from the kitchen toward his living room. At first, he thought it was his cat, Mittens, but the shadow was too big.

“I pulled my gun out from under the pillow, got in the wheelchair, rolled out here and he was standing here at my pills,” Lembo said during an interview. The room was lit by the light he leaves on all the time.

Lembo said Wildhaber told him, "I'm here to rob you like everybody else."

Lembo described the burglar as clean-cut, wearing khaki shorts and a white T-shirt. He ordered the man to sit on the coffee table against a wall while he called police.

"I told them, 'I got him under a gun. If he makes a move, I'm going to shoot him.'"

"I don't know what he was on, but he was out of his mind," Lembo said, demonstrating how Wildhaber kept looking down and covering his face with his hands.

When Wildhaber bolted toward the kitchen and the apartment's front door, Lembo turned and fired, putting a slug in the fleeing man's shoulder.

Lembo said he had never seen Wildhaber before. He suspects the person who stole from him last month, taking prescription pills that included morphine and oxycodone, \$1,000 and the key to his safe deposit box, had spread the word that he was an easy mark.

Although Lembo isn't a Second Amendment activist, he said having a gun seems like common sense now.

"Everybody should bear arms," he said. "If everybody beared [sic] arms, we wouldn't have this [crime] problem."

"I don't think anybody is going to come in here now," Lembo told the Portland (Maine) *Press Herald*.

[Click here to read Liz Sheld's "Obama Administration Yanks Second Amendment Rights from SSI Recipients."](#)

[Click here to read the full account of Harvey Lembo defending himself and his home. {eoa}](#)

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Jonah's Major Prophecies: The Parallel Path Between Israel and the Church

Jonah delivered two major prophecies. The first is recorded in 2 Kings 14:25—to enlarge the borders of Israel.

It was a message of victory and power. He seemed to be very motivated to deliver this kind of prophecy.

The second was recorded in the Book of Jonah to bring repentance and revival to the nation of Assyria—a Gentile nation, often seen as an enemy of Israel. Jonah very much did not want to bring this message. It was counterintuitive and contrary to his motivation and orientation. He said no to the Lord.

He had to overcome his own resistance to the message. When he did (with the help of a big fish), the message brought revival to the whole nation. The message about repentance was based on his own personal testimony of a miraculous “death and resurrection” experience. That was a form of pre-gospel message. He fulfilled an image of Yeshua (Matt. 12:40).

An entire nation came to faith. This was an initial stage of the future international Gentile church. It was a predecessor to Paul's preaching to the Gentiles and establishing churches around the world.

In addition, the moral reformation in the nation of Assyria changed the whole society. They became the most powerful

nation on the earth and dominated the history of the Middle East for the entire 8th century B.C. They became a great kingdom power on earth.

Repentance, revival, testimony of Yeshua's future death and resurrection, Gentile church, kingdom authority, changing history ... all of that resulted from one message. Jonah's two prophetic messages were parallel, but the message to the Assyrians had more effect than the one directed to the Israelites. The message that required death to pride and ego produced more than the one of victory and power.

People are usually more motivated to deliver the types of messages that fit our idea of victory, but often it is the message that requires denying oneself and one's ambition is what has the greater results for the kingdom of God. Even Yeshua had to pray "not My will, but Yours" (Luke 22:42b) at Gethsemane before the crucifixion. Ultimately, that self-denying obedience produced much more fruit than His healing revivals before the cross.

We may also see in these two types of prophecies the two parallel paths of Israel and the church. The disciples of Yeshua wanted to "restore the kingdom to Israel" (Acts 1:6) in the first century. However, Yeshua instead sent them out to the Gentiles "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8c). Perhaps, like Jonah, they didn't want to "give" the kingdom to the Gentiles.

Thank God, today we have the opportunity to do both. We serve the dual restoration of Israel and the church (Rom. 11). Both are coming to their fullness as we approach the coming kingdom of Messiah on earth. {eoa}

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For the original article, visit .