

# Is It OK to Smoke in Church?

Christian comedian Jason Earls tells the story of when he visited a church that had designated smoking and non-smoking sections for guests. Earls saw worshippers praising the Lord while smoking a cigarette. He finds the comedy in it, but is smoking in church ever acceptable? Share your thoughts in the comments.

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## Ministries Activate Crisis Response Teams for Anticipated Florence Damage

In preparation for Hurricane Florence, Christian humanitarian organization World Help has activated its crisis response program to deliver emergency aid to people affected by the storm.

The group will work with local churches and relief organizations to provide supplies to people in the areas most affected by the storm. Every \$50 donated, which will provide items like bottled water, food and hygiene items, will help one victim of the storm survive in the coming days.

Additionally, World Help has set up a relief collection station at its offices in Virginia—1148 Corporate Dr., Forest, VA 24551—so residents can donate items including canned food, flashlights, batteries, toiletries and Bibles. These items will be rushed to the most affected areas in North Carolina. Central Virginia residents interested in donating supplies to World Help can call **800-541-6691** for more details.

“We are doing everything we can to be prepared to help as many people as possible,” said Mark Hogsted, vice president of international programs at World Help, who is overseeing the disaster relief response. “In the days ahead, getting clean water and other emergency supplies to the affected areas will be critical, especially as some people might be left without power for days or even weeks.”

Meteorologists have said Florence could be the strongest hurricane on record to hit the East Coast. Millions of residents in Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina have evacuated or taken shelter in anticipation of the storm.

“Above all, we are asking people to say a prayer on behalf of those who are in the path of Hurricane Florence,” Hogsted said. “People are afraid, and we want them to know they’re not alone and, no matter what happens, help is on the way.”

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## **Real-Time Prayer App Lets You Intercede for Persecuted Christians**

The No. 1 request of persecuted Christians is prayer. Many testify to feeling the support of those prayers, which help them to sustain their faith. Now Open Doors USA is making it even easier to pray and let persecuted Christians know of the multitude of prayers. The organization is launching the Pray for the Persecuted Church prayer app. Available now on Apple and Android devices, users can download the app at or through the Apple and Android stores.

The Pray for the Persecuted Church prayer app will provide

notifications of specific prayers submitted from persecuted Christians who are living out their faith in the world's most difficult places to be a Christian.

Users can click "I prayed" to acknowledge they are partnering in prayer for a specific request. Users can also share the prayer requests on their own social media channels or via email and text, letting others know to pray for Christians whose struggles are often unknown to the rest of the world. The app was inspired in part by traditional church prayer chains in which church members pass prayer requests along to each other by a phone tree. Users are invited to download the app and leave a review.

"Open Doors USA's new app is a great way to see real-time updates and prayer needs from persecuted Christians and let them immediately know that other Christians are praying for them around the world," said David Curry, president and CEO of Open Doors USA. "I hope that everyone will make praying for the persecuted church a daily part of their lives. Our prayers and support are extremely important as persecution against Christians continues to rise."

One out of every 12 Christians around the world faces persecution, and Christians are oppressed in at least 60 countries.

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## **3 Tried-and-True Tips to Fight Your Lust**

### **1. Walk in the Spirit**

Scripture tells us to walk in the Spirit so we won't satisfy

the desires of the flesh (Gal. 5:16). The Scripture continues to list the behaviors of the sinful nature. Inappropriate sexuality is definitely a front-runner on this list.

You may be asking, how do I walk in the Spirit? You may have images of deep prayer, fasting, and memorizing Scripture. While those are all fantastic spiritual disciplines, I would rather give you the tip Paul used in 1 Corinthians 13 about love.

Walking in love is walking in the Spirit. If you love God and bring Him into a potential lust situation, it will decrease. If you love your wife, children, parents, pastor and church members, your lust will decrease. Even if you just loved the woman you want to lust after, and put her needs first to be holy, human and real, your lust would decrease.

Love is walking in the Spirit. Lust needs selfishness for fuel. When you walk in the Spirit, lust's fuel supply dries up. Say goodbye to lust when you start walking in love.

## **2. Not My Inheritance**

This tip has helped me personally in breaking free from lust's deception. I believe God gives us each our own inheritance. Nobody can have or take my inheritance and it includes many different things. One part is that my inheritance alone is my precious wife, Lisa.

Your wife is your only sexual inheritance from God. The other women, images and fantasies are not your God-given inheritance. When you face a situation to lust, you can simply state, "Not my inheritance," in your mind.

The woman you are looking at is not yours in any way, shape or form. You can't make a covenant of love to her. In no way can you create a scenario that she's your inheritance. Accepting your inheritance fully allows you to reject someone else's inheritance.

That woman is not your inheritance; she is someone else's. Whoever he is, he is trusted to protect and not consume his inheritance, much as you hope the men in your wife's and daughter's worlds will honor your inheritance. So honor their inheritance by simply stating in your mind or even out loud, "Not my inheritance."

### **3. Attitude or Gratitude**

This tip will help you combat the lie that your wife isn't enough. When the enemy and lust want to talk about your wife, it's important to have a tried and true method to defeat the attack.

Lust wants you to focus on your wife's flaws. What you want to focus on is her awesomeness and her strengths. She is a uniquely designed woman of God and created just for you. You know her more intimately than anyone and would be the best person to highlight her strengths.

Write down on paper or in your phone a list of five to ten things you absolutely love about your wife. For single guys, list five features of a woman of God. She is an amazing person spiritually, intellectually, emotionally and physically.

Keep the list in your wallet or in your phone. Anytime you hear your wife being criticized in your mind, pull out your list and say these strengths out loud. You can start thanking God for these strengths in your wife. God loves hearing appreciation for the gift He has given you so freely.

When you speak these out loud or thank God for your wife's strengths, lust's lies appear to be petty and weak and you stay in an attitude of gratitude toward the woman you really love. {eoa}

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*the author of several books including, Lust Free Living. You may contact Dr. Weiss via his website, or on his Facebook, by phone at 719-278-3708 or through email at heart2heart@.*

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## **Terrorism Expert Brigitte Gabriel Knows Majority of Muslims Are Not Violent, but Here's What Concerns Her**

While Islam proves to be the fastest-growing religion in the world, ACT! for America's president and founder Brigitte Gabriel addresses radical Islamic terrorism in the face of political correctness. In 2014, during a Q&A session at a Heritage Foundation forum, Gabriel addresses a Muslim woman's comment on how majority of Muslims are peaceful:

"Of course, not all of them are radicals," Gabriel affirmed. "The radicals are estimated to be between 15 to 25 percent. ...That leaves 75 percent of them as peaceful people, but when you look at 15 to 25 percent of the world's Muslim population, you're looking at a 180 million to 300 million people dedicated to the destruction of Western civilization. That is as big as the United States."

In her book *Rise: In Defense of Judeo-Christian Values and Freedoms* (Frontline, 2018), Gabriel writes on "the irrelevance of the peaceful majority," citing points in history when genocide was committed by a minority group; such as the Holocaust—"Most Germans were peaceful, yet the Nazis drove the agenda"—and, of course, 9/11 when it only took 19 hijackers to bring about the deaths of nearly 3,000 Americans.

“There are plenty of peaceful Muslims in the world who do not practice or endorse the type of barbarism that threatens our way of life,” Gabriel says, “but my point is that these peaceful Muslims do not magically cancel out the threats posed by violent ones.”

It’s for this reason that Gabriel exhorts fellow patriots to not fall into believing that they’re morally inferior, or ‘Islamophobic,’ when speaking out about radical Islamic terrorism. Rise includes steps on how to navigate this tension without fighting fire with fire:

“When hostile leftists resort to ad hominem attacks, labeling you bigoted, Islamophobic, racist or worse when facts you’ve outlined conflict with their feelings, stick to a fact-based response as best you can.”

Rise also provides statistics from Pew Research Data and other polls to challenge former President Barack Obama’s claim that 99.9 percent of Muslims seek order, peace and prosperity.

“99.9 percent?” Gabriel says. “Really?”

In a *Charisma* magazine interview, she asserts, “Two percent of the passionate will always rule the 98 percent of the indifferent.”

Gabriel speaks from her experience as a Lebanese Christian whose home was blown up by Islamic radicals in 1975. For seven years, she and her family resorted to living below ground in an eight-by-ten-foot bomb shelter. A military tank drove her to school while, on other days, Gabriel had to sprint to and from school, diving into ditches while bombshells exploded over her head.

Having experienced extremism firsthand, Gabriel hopes her daughter and her daughter’s children—and her daughter’s children’s children—will never face the same threat of terrorism in America. She urges readers to not become the

irrelevant majority and to take action on behalf of their country, community and family.

“Fragmented we are fragile, but united we possess the potential to save this nation from doom and restore it to its rightful place as the greatest in the history of mankind. But we cannot accomplish this from our keyboards. We must rise and take action, matching the enthusiasm of our enemies.” {eoa}

*This article is based on Rise: In Defense of Judeo-Christian Values and Freedoms (Frontline, 2018) by Brigitte Gabriel. Gabriel is one of the leading terrorism experts in the world, providing information and analysis on the rise of global Islamic terrorism. She lectures nationally and internationally about terrorism and current affairs. She has addressed the United Nations, members of the US Congress, the Pentagon, the Joint Forces Staff College, the US Special Operations Command, the FBI and many others. In addition, Gabriel is a regular guest analyst on Fox News, CNN, MSNBC and radio stations across America. She is founder and chairman of ACT for America, the largest national security grassroots organization with almost 1 million members dedicated to keeping America and its citizens safe from foreign and domestic threats. Gabriel is the author of two New York Times best-sellers: Because They Hate and They Must Be Stopped.*

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## **How Simeon Teaches Us to Finish Our Race Well**

*Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It*

*was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's by the Spirit, he came into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he received Him in his arms and blessed God and said:*

*"Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation (Luke 2:25-30).*

The name "Simeon" refers to hearing. Over two decades ago, the Holy Spirit highlighted Simeon to me, a man who ran his race with determination and in faith until the very end. I recognized that, although most everyone else in Jerusalem was clueless that the Messiah and sovereign King of the universe had been born, Simeon was in tune and heard the Lord.

Three years before this, back in 1993, Holy Spirit showed my husband, Randy, that we were going to have another son, and that we were to name him Simeon. Just as God promised Simeon that he would not die until he saw the birth of the Messiah, our son Simeon and his generation would live to see the second coming of Christ. The Lord told my husband not to tell me the name—that He would reveal it to me in His perfect timing, which happened to be approximately three years later. Our son Simeon John was born in 1996; he is now almost 22 years old.

Based on this personal revelation, I believe that we, or at least our children and grandchildren, are living in the generation that will witness the return of Christ. Therefore, it is imperative that we are tuned in and sensitive to the Holy Spirit and stay active in faith all the way to the end of our lives, pouring into the next generation, like Simeon in Luke 2.

Finishing the race well will look different for everyone—for one, it is serving as a watchman on the wall in the global prayer movement; to another, it might entail discipling the

younger generation; and to others, it might be more of an evangelistic focus.

The way we end our race is more important than how it began. Like Simeon, we want to be in sync with God's perfect will, at the right place at the right time, pleasing God. Otherwise, we'll have a misdirected focus, and we will miss out on the fullness of God's intended destiny for our lives.

It's sad to see older saints slip into patterns of fear, self-pity, depression and bitterness. But the common theme in the Bible is running the race of faith to win, and fixing our eyes on Jesus—He is the prize! The longer I live, the more I realize just how sovereign God is and how intimately involved He wants to be in our lives (see Ps. 46:1–5, 97:9, 145:18; Dan. 4:17).

I recently heard the Holy Spirit say, "Let love set the pace of your day." Love never fails. Whenever we are yielded to the Spirit and motivated by His ways of love, we will enter His rest and glorify God (see Heb. 4:9–10). Those who are challenging to be around are gifts from God to teach us to love and are usually the ones who need to be loved the most. End your race loving others well (Matt. 5:43–48; 1 John 2:3–11).

In Acts 20:24b, Paul states, ""that I may joyfully finish my course and the ministry which I have received from the Lord Jesus." For Paul, there was a high cost to following Jesus faithfully to the end. The same is true for many other heroes of faith mentioned in Hebrews 11 and referred to as the "great cloud of witnesses" in Hebrews 12:1–2.

Joshua is an excellent example of someone who faithfully completed his journey. Here are some insights on his life from a devotional by T. Covey entitled "Joshua—A Man Full of Commitment":

*There are many great things said of the man named Joshua in*

*the Old Testament. Joshua was a man full of humility, full of faith, full of the Spirit, and full of courage.*

*Joshua's life was also full of adventure. He witnessed the plagues, the giving of the Law, and the people always complaining. He saw a river parting, not once, but twice. He watched the mighty walls of Jericho crash as the people shouted. He saw Achan and his family die from their stoning. Most of all, he had a personal encounter with the Lord Jesus. Few human beings have ever experienced more than Joshua.*

*If Joshua had lived in modern times, he could have written a best-seller. Just think of the possible titles!*

*"Don't Go Camping With a Bunch of Bellyachers"*

*"The Day the Sun Stood Still"*

*"Harlots Who Escape by a Thread"*

*Joshua's book would not have been complete if he had not been able to write the final chapter. Someone has said, "It matters little how you begin the race. It's how you finish that counts!" Joshua was a man full of commitment, and he finished well.*

*At the end of the book of Joshua, Joshua knows that his earthly life is almost over. He gathers all the leaders of Israel together and reminds them of what God has done for them since the time of Abraham. He recounts explicitly all that happened after they crossed the Jordan River and entered the Promised Land. He tells how they conquered their foes with God's help. He also points out how God let them be defeated when sin had entered their midst. Joshua finishes by urging the people to fear the Lord and serve Him faithfully.*

*Near the end of his life, Joshua stood before the people and said:*

*“Therefore, fear the Lord and worship Him in sincerity and truth. Get rid of the gods your fathers worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and worship the Lord. But if it doesn’t please you to worship the Lord, choose for yourselves today: Which will you worship—the gods your fathers worshiped beyond the Euphrates River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living? As for me and my family, we will worship the Lord” (Josh. 24:14–15, CSB).*

*For 110 years, Joshua had faithfully served the Lord. He had fought battles, crossed raging rivers, defeated enemies and stood firm when others didn’t. Therefore, at the end of his life, he could boldly say, “As for me and my family, we will worship the Lord.”*

*What a testimony! What a life! What a man of God!*

*God is calling you to walk by faith just like Joshua did. The first key is to hear from God. Next, you must believe God. Lastly, you must act on what God is telling you to do. It is time for you to take your stand for the Lord just like Joshua, Simeon and all the faithful men and women of God have done over the many centuries of human history.*

Beloved, don’t settle for mediocrity in the remaining years of your life. This quote is very fitting: “Don’t give in to short-term thinking! Stay focused on the end game. You don’t get the trophy until the race is over, so be determined to finish strong!”

Here are some other essential keys to finishing one’s race in victory:

Self-condemnation is a snare of the enemy because it keeps our focus on ourselves—don’t go there (Rom. 8:1).

Don’t allow your flesh with its passions and desires to rule your life—yield to the fruits of the Holy Spirit instead

(Gal. 5:22–25).

Shake off regret and focus on the positive—regret only chains you to the past. It's not about doing everything perfectly; it's about moving forward. God's not limited to our mistakes or dependent on our successes. Our identity is secure in Christ and not based on performance (Phil. 3:3–14).

Believe that God is good and incapable of anything less than goodness (Rom. 8:28).

Doubt and unbelief are walls of self-preservation we hold up around our hearts, which tie up God's hands from moving on our behalf. Steps of faith in God remove the barriers and release His divine intervention (Matt. 13:58, Heb. 11:30).

When negative thoughts come knocking on the door of your heart, don't invite them in and entertain them—they are not your friends. Send them away in the name of Jesus (2 Cor. 10:3–5).

The goal of our race is to set our minds on things above, and to please the Lord—not people (Col. 3:1–2, 23–24).

Only God is qualified to sit in the judgment seat. Whenever we attempt to sit there, we end up in the accuser's place with Satan, instead of sitting with Jesus as an advocate on behalf of others (Heb. 4:12–13, James 4:11–12, 1 John 2:1, Rev. 12:10).

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how Jesus is interceding for people who hurt or oppose you, and for those who are in difficult circumstances (Rom. 8:34, Heb. 7:25).

God is sovereign—we are not. Surrender control, because you never had it anyway. You suffer even when you get what you want in the here and now because you eventually have to give it up. Nothing ever stays the same, because change is inevitable. Whatever we do with a motive of love for God will last for eternity (Eccl. 2:3–11; Luke 9:23–25, 17:33).

Before losing his life for Christ on the mission field, evangelist Jim Elliot once said, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." Let's run our race, like Mr. Elliot, faithful to the end!

What can you do today to finish your race well? {eoa}

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Juliet is also a licensed minister and a certified Christian counselor.

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## **Demolish Your Devilish Doubts With This Simple Insight From the Apostle Paul**

In Acts 27 (AMP), there's a great story about the apostle Paul. He was travelling by ship with some people when "a violent wind...[a northeaster, a tempestuous windstorm like a typhoon], came rushing down from the island" (v. 14). For days they were caught in the storm, and at one point it was so fierce, they were "violently tossed about by the storm" (v.

18b) and had to throw the ship's equipment overboard. They ended up without food, hungry, stranded—seemingly without hope.

In that moment, Paul stood in the midst of the survivors and said to them, “I urge you to keep up your courage and be in good spirits, because there will be no loss of life among you” (v. 22a). He then shared that an angel of God told him this, and said in verse 25, “So keep up your courage, men, for I believe God and have complete confidence in Him that it will turn out exactly as I have been told.”

How could Paul, in the middle of a horrible storm, ask the people to “be in good spirits” and have a good attitude? Because he believed in his heart—without a doubt—“that it will turn out exactly as I have been told.”

I love that! It's a great picture of the power of faith in God when all hope seems lost. And we can have the very same faith that Paul had if we will overcome doubt.

We all face storms in life, and some are more difficult than others. That's why we have the gift of faith. Ephesians 6:16 (ESV) calls it “the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one.” Doubt is a type of “flaming dart” that the enemy uses to attack our faith.

We usually experience doubt after we've made a decision. In James 1:6, the Bible says having doubt is like being tossed about like the wind, which feels as though you're trying to go in two different directions at the same time. And it's miserable to be torn between two places, not able to decide what you really believe.

It's in those moments we have to choose whether we are going to believe God or the enemy ... God or our feelings ... God or what people tell us ... God or our circumstances.

When doubt comes against us, we have to lift up the shield of faith. We do this when we open our mouth and say what God's Word says, rather than grumbling and complaining about the problem. Our faith is released as we say, pray and do the Word. So in those times, open your mouth and say, "I believe that everything God has told me will come to pass!"

Maybe you're doubting whether you can hear God's voice or not. This happens because we usually doubt ourselves more than we doubt God. Now I'm not talking about actually hearing a voice; I'm talking about that knowing we have inside our hearts about what is right or wrong. That's the still, small voice of God. Believers in Jesus Christ all have it, but many don't have the confidence to trust it.

The Bible says in James 1:5b that when we need wisdom, we can go to God, "who gives generously to all without reproach" (ESV). This means that even with our imperfections, God will be faithful to us and give us what we need if we will ask Him for help. He loves us, blesses us and uses us in spite of us, because He is faithful! And we never have to doubt that.

I've learned through my own relationship with God that He's not expecting me to be perfect; He wants me to do my best to be in His will and take steps of faith as He leads me, through His Word and the promptings He speaks to my heart. Remember, He wants us to put our confidence in Him.

God really does want to speak to you personally and lead you in His great plan for your life. So don't be afraid to step out and do what's in your heart. If you make a mistake, you'll learn from it and go on. That's how we "step out and find out." And we all have to do it.

I want to encourage you to begin making confessions every day that will help you grow in your faith and confidence in God. We need to make declarations like "God loves me. He wants to speak to my heart. I can hear from God. He is faithful to me

and will lead me in His will for my life. And I believe it will be exactly as God has told me!”

By God’s grace, we can be bold in faith and overcome every attack of doubt during the storms of life.

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## **Is This What’s Blocking God’s Will for Your Life?**

Placing what we want in front of the need will hinder our growth in the Father. It blocks His will for our lives. The Father said He will supply all of our need according to His riches in glory (Phil. 4:19). We tend to want what we see and what our flesh yearns.

We don’t think like the Father because our ways are not His ways and our thoughts are not His thoughts (Isa. 55:8-9). What we want is often not good for us. What we need is always connected to our walk in glorifying the Father. He promised to give us the desires of our hearts, but what are the desires of our hearts?

Whatever the Father’s will is for our lives, this should be our desire. We must align with His will. Yeshua’s prayer in Gethsemane was “Not my will, but your will be done.” Who would want that cup? He asked if the cup could pass by me? (see Matt. 26:36-46).

Yet, the Father has predestined the cup for Yeshua. He was created for the cup. When the time had come for Yeshua to receive what He needed from the Father, He had come to realize it wasn’t about what He wanted, it was time to receive what He needed.

Are you in a time of need and you think what you want will be fulfilling? Talk to the Father so He can give you a supply of strength and peace. A big helping of boldness, wisdom and knowledge. Maturity isn't easy, but it is fulfilling.

You were designed with purpose. You were created for destiny. The Father redeemed you to have eternal life. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). The more your desires become more like the Father's, the more you faith will move mountains on your behalf. His promises are the substance, and His will is the evidence we need in our walk with Him. {eoa}

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## **This May Be the Godliest Thing to Do When You're in Way Over Your Head**

Are you in over your head today? Does your life seem to be a persistent and fast-moving merry-go-round of appointments and expectations and demands?

God knew that life, at times, would be simply more than one man or one woman is able to handle and so He, in His eternal kindness, initiated a brilliant strategy to deal with the vicious cycle of never-ending busyness. The victorious answer that God has for the ceaseless claims that clamor on one's

life can be discovered in a four-letter word.

Rest.

“Come to Me, all who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28).

In this world of incessant excess, of perpetual productivity and of repetitious assumptions, there is a place of quiet rest where you will be restored, renewed and refreshed. This place of rest is a powerful antidote to the whirl of life in which we live.

I am not merely referring to eight great hours of sleep, nor am I solely encouraging a nap every now and then, although both of those disciplines are healthy and potent for the human body.

The “rest” that God calls us to is a place of unmatched communion and sweet interaction with Him. Your rest with the Lord may look different than my rest, which is part of the joy of His attention to our lives.

For me, it is restful to read a book, to listen to music and then to go for a walk while I pray. Your idea of rest may be to spend time with a dear friend or work in your garden. For some people, resting in His presence might include watching children play in the evening hours, recalling His faithfulness over the years or even serving quietly at church.

For some people, intercession is a restful discipline while for others knitting while listening to worship music brings great rest to their individual soul. Taking a drive through the beauty of God’s creation brings rest and comfort to my weary heart, while meeting with a mentor or a mentee restores my husband’s tired body.

What does “rest” look like for you? Are you choosing to diligently participate in the rest that only the Father

brings?

Rest is a wonderful opportunity to meet with the Father and to hear His voice. Rest can only be experienced when we lay our agenda down and partner with Him as we walk through life.

I dare you, today, to take some time to just rest!

“Return to your rest, oh my soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you” (Ps. 116:7, NASB). {eoa}

**Carol McLeod** is an author and popular speaker at women's conferences and retreats, where she teaches the Word of God with great joy and enthusiasm. Carol encourages and empowers women with passionate and practical biblical messages mixed with her own special brand of hope and humor. She has written eight books, including *The Rooms of a Woman's Heart*, *Defiant Joy!*, *Holy Estrogen!*, *No More Ordinary*, *Refined*, *Joy For All Seasons*, *Let There Be Joy!* and *Pass the Joy, Please!* which releases on February 1, 2018. Her teaching DVD, *The Rooms of a Woman's Heart*, won the Telly Award, a prestigious industry award for excellence in religious programming. You can also listen to Carol's "Jolt of Joy" program daily on the Charisma Podcast Network. Connect with Carol or inquire about her speaking to your group at .

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## **Prophecy: I Am Ordering Your Steps to a Breakthrough Showdown**

I heard the Lord say: "I am ordering the steps of the hungry to the eye-opening experience. I am ordering the steps of the

righteous to the purposes and plans I've called them to. I am ordering those who are not content to stay in the place they are, to the place that I've called them to come.

"I am inviting you to come higher. I am inviting you to go deeper. I am inviting you to press a little more, press a little more, press a little more because there are obstacles that are in your path," says God, "but I am ordering your steps to the place where you will come to a showdown with that which has prevented you from your breakthrough. I am ordering you to that place where you will face down the giants that defy you, and you will overcome them," says God. "Not by might, not by power, but by My Spirit," says the Lord.

"I am opening your eyes even now, and I'm causing you to see your enemies with pity and with mercy. I'm opening our eyes right now, and I am causing you to see yourself as you really are in Christ. I am opening your eyes right now. It's an eye-opening encounter, even now, right now, in this place. Open your spiritual eyes and see Me and know Me for who I really am. Because I am the conqueror of all conquerors. There is nothing that can stand in defiance of My will.

"I am making a way for you to come to that place of the showdown, to come to that place of overcoming, to come to that place where you will make the enemy bow, in My name. I am ordering your steps to that place of encounter where you will see Me differently than you've ever seen Me before. You will see Me as the captain of the hosts. You will see Me as your provider in the midst of a famine. You will see Me as the one who loves your soul unconditionally and who will hold on to you through every storm, and who will be there for you in every instant, whatever season you are walking in.

"I am shaking up your paradigm of who I am and who you are in Me. I am shaking and stirring your perception of who the enemy is and who he is not. For some of you have seen the enemy as greater than, bigger than, stronger than. But you need to see

Me as all of that and more. I am greater than. I am bigger than. I am stronger than and I am on the inside of you. So open your eyes and take another look. Open your eyes, and I will remove the scales that have caused you to see in part, to know in part and to walk in partial blindness.”

“I am bringing you to that place of an eye-opening encounter, and you will see the big picture. You will see far out ahead. You will have a vision for the future, the vision that I have for you. It’s a vision of a future of a hub of success, of prosperity, of healing, of victory. My vision for you is awesome.

“So, open your eyes and be willing to see past where you are standing now, and be willing to see two, three, four, five yards ahead, a hundred meters ahead. Be willing to see out in the distance and don’t let the obstacles that you see in your path sway you any longer. Don’t let the obstacles that are in your path sway you from pressing on, pressing in, pressing through, because when you press, I am pressing with you.”