

Iran Scrambling as Protest Death Toll Rises

Iran's Supreme Leader on Tuesday accused enemies of the Islamic Republic of stirring unrest across the country as the death toll from anti-government demonstrations that began last week rose to 21.

Nine Iranians were killed in Isfahan province during protests on Monday night, including two members of the security forces, state television said.

Six protesters were killed during an attack on a police station in the town of Qahderijan. The governor of Falavarjan County said the protesters were armed.

The deputy provincial governor of Tehran said police have arrested more than 450 protesters in the capital over the past three days as security forces struggle to contain the boldest challenge to Iran's clerical leadership since unrest in 2009.

In his first reaction to the unrest, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said: "In recent days, enemies of Iran used different tools including cash, weapons, politics and intelligence apparatus to create troubles for the Islamic Republic."

Khamenei said on his website that he would address the nation about the recent events "when the time is right."

He did not mention any enemies by name but Ali Shamkhani, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, said the United States, Britain and Saudi Arabia were behind the recent riots in Iran.

"Saudis will receive Iran's unexpected response and they know how serious it can be," Shamkhani was quoted as saying by Tasnim news in an interview with Beirut-based Al Mayadeen TV.

Harsh Punishment

Musa Ghazanfarabadi, head of Tehran's Revolutionary Court, warned protesters on Tuesday that those arrested would face harsh punishment.

Ghazanfarabadi said the detainees will be soon put on trial and the ringleaders would face serious charges including "moharebeh" – an Islamic term meaning warring against God – which carries the death penalty. The semi-official ILNA news agency quoted Ali Asghar Naserbakht, the deputy governor of Tehran province, as saying that 200 people were arrested on Saturday in Tehran, 150 people on Sunday and about 100 people on Monday.

Hundreds of others have been arrested in other cities, according to agency reports and social media.

Naserbakht said the situation in Tehran was under control and police has not asked for the help of the Revolutionary Guards special forces.

Deputy Interior Minister Hossein Zolfaghari said 90 percent of the detainees were under 25-years-old, showing frustration among youths from the economic situation and lack of social freedoms.

A judiciary official was quoted as saying by ISNA that 20 ringleaders of protests in Karaj, the fourth largest city in Iran, have been arrested.

Iran's judiciary chief Sadeq Larijani ordered prosecutors on Monday to "punish rioters firmly."

The demonstrations which broke out last week were initially focused on economic hardships and alleged corruption but turned into political rallies.

Anger was soon directed at the clerical leadership that has been in power since the 1979 revolution, including Supreme

Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the ultimate authority in Iran's system of dual clerical and republican rule.

Iran is a major OPEC oil producer and regional power deeply involved in Syria and Iraq as part of a battle for influence with rival Saudi Arabia.

Many Iranians resent the foreign interventions and want their leaders to create jobs at home, where youth unemployment reached 29 percent last year.

Government spokesman Mohammad Baqer Nobakht said in a news conference that both protesters and the security forces should follow the law.

"People have the rights to protest but there is a difference between demonstration and those who are confronting the rioters should act within the framework of law," he said.

State television reported that protesters who set ablaze four mosques in villages in Savadkuh County in northern Iran on Monday have been arrested.

Reactions

Rouhani refrained on Monday from accepting responsibility of problems raised by protesters and he blamed his predecessor and also Iran's long-time adversary, the United States for the government's shortcomings.

Rouhani, seen as a pragmatist who is at odds with hardliners, said: "People on the streets do not ask for bread and water, but for more freedom," – implying that the protesters were not targetting his government but the more rigid establishment.

U.S. President Donald Trump supported the protesters in a tweet on Tuesday: "The people of Iran are finally acting against the brutal and corrupt Iranian regime... The people have little food, big inflation and no human rights. The U.S. is watching!"

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qasemi said on Tuesday “Instead of wasting his time by publishing offensive tweets to other nations, Trump should focus on internal affairs of America.”

Turkey said on Tuesday it was concerned by reports of people dying and public buildings being damaged in Iran.

“We believe it is necessary to avoid violence and not succumb to provocations,” the Turkish Foreign Ministry said in a statement, adding that it hoped foreign intervention would be avoided.

The Russian Foreign Ministry was quoted by the RIA news agency as saying external interference was destabilizing the situation and calling it “unacceptable.”

Iran and Russia are the main allies of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, while the United States, Saudi Arabia and Turkey support rebel groups. {eoa}

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Restarting a Year Successfully While Reducing Your Weight Sensibly

“... forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead” (Phil. 3:13b).

Who doesn't like the opportunity to start over and be healthier, happier and more fruitful? As we launch into a new year, God gives all of us the chance to forget and learn from

mistakes, plus make some quality decisions to do better going forward. May 2018 be your best year yet as He opens doors for you that no man can shut (see Rev. 3:8).

In Scripture, the account of Martha and Mary serves as an example of one person, busy but unfruitful, while the other prioritizes and is commended by Jesus (Luke 10:38-40). They're examples of the maxim, "If your output is greater than your input, then your upkeep will be your downfall."

For decades, I've practiced the spiritual discipline of fasting, enabling me to stay strong in the spirit plus maintain my weight. The focus of this commentary is on the former, but an added benefit can be maintaining healthy weight if practiced regularly.

Celebrating Fasting as a Discipline

When I ministered weekly to 2,000 primarily young people 15 minutes from the White House in the '70s, Bible teacher Derek Prince challenged us to fast, pray and simply obey the priority of praying for governing authorities "first of all" (1 Tim. 2:1-4), and then pick up the newspaper to see our prayers answered. In childlike faith we responded, and we saw, for the first time in U.S. history, a sitting president and vice president removed from office as unrighteousness was exposed. By the way, Derek also wrote a life-changing book entitled, *Changing History Through Prayer and Fasting*, that I highly recommend.

Fasting has a pre-eminent place throughout Scripture, yet most ignore or avoid it. It does bring discomfort, yet we desperately need it. The benefits far exceed the drawbacks.

"I hate fasting!"

Who said these words?

Would it surprise you to discover the individual is one of the

greatest advocates for fasting in America today? I'm talking here of a unique man of God I've known for 40 years as a close friend and fellow laborer for spiritual awakening in our nation, Lou Engle.

Years ago I sat in a living room with senior leaders and dear friends like Che Ahn, Lou and James Goll. We all stocked our plates with delicious food and sat down to fellowship.

When I hunkered down on the couch, Lou sat next to me. Previously, someone had whispered to me that he was in the middle of an extended fast, so I twisted my posture to avoid having the sumptuous delights in his line of vision.

Suddenly, my revivalist buddy startled me by saying, "Larry, don't worry, I'm OK. Enjoy your dinner! I hate fasting, but, ya' know, I love what comes from the investment."

Fasting Is Challenging

Face it: Fasting is not natural. It runs counter to our desire for comfort, pleasure and self-satisfaction. It entails discipline like the apostle Paul described in 1 Corinthians 9:27 (AMPC) "I buffet my body." He wasn't talking here of a food buffet!

When we humble ourselves through fasting to abstain from nourishment in order to seek God and His promised blessings, we position ourselves to be recipients of the "open reward" Jesus promised in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 6:16-18). As long as we abide by His cautions to steer clear of legalism and outward show, plus stay in expectant faith, we can be confident of blessings and breakthrough.

In Matthew 9:14-15, Jesus told some inquirers that His disciples weren't fasting while He as the bridegroom was present with them, but after He left, "then they will fast." Richard Foster in his classic work, *Celebration of Discipline*, said, "This is perhaps the most important statement in the New

Testament on whether Christians should fast today.”

Multitudes don't fast today because of bad religious experiences (raised Catholic, I was forced to fast weekly); or they believe it's a discarded Old Testament practice associated with sin, sorrow and mourning. Manufacturers of Mrs. Paul's Fish Sticks loved the mandatory Friday fasting, but scores of us detested it and celebrated its discontinuance.

Today we have the privilege of willingly engaging in a “bridal fast,” not out of legalism but a longing for greater intimacy with Him. We eagerly await the return of our bridegroom, the consummation of the age and the “new heaven and the new earth” (Rev. 21:21).

Inspiration From Leaders

Before he died at 81, I had the honor with apostolic leader Bob Weiner to pray with Campus Crusade founder Bill Bright. His countenance was like that of a 30-year-old, yet without any Botox! Bill once received the Templeton Award for Religious Progress and donated the entire \$1.1 million to promote the benefits of prayer and fasting.

He told us, “Fasting prepares us for the deepest and richest spiritual communion possible. It clears and liberates our minds to understand what God is saying to our spirits. It conditions our bodies to carry out His perfect will. When we persevere through the initial mental and physical discomfort, we will experience a calming of the soul and cooling of the appetites. As a result, we will sense the Presence of the Lord more than ever before.”

Richard Foster, whom I previously mentioned, said, “In a culture where the landscape is dotted with shrines to the Golden Arches and an assortment of pizza temples, fasting seems out of place, out of step with the times. In fact, fasting has been in general disrepute both in and outside the

church for many years. For example, in my research, I could not find a single book published on the subject of Christian fasting from 1861 to 1954—a period of nearly 100 years!”

Rediscovering 15 Rewards

As we restart a new year, are you a candidate for greater intimacy with God through prayer and fasting? Do you have a lost one God needs to awaken? Is there a broken relationship needing reconciliation? Are you in need of a miracle, healing, deliverance or freedom from debts? And yes, would you like to shed some excess weight in the process?

Rediscover the value of fasting to experience long-prayed-for breakthroughs and blessings in your life! Consult a doctor if you have health problems. Use wisdom if it is a water, juice, veggie, favorite food, one-, two-, three-day or extended fast. Expect some spiritual and physical resistance. Those are mild hunger pangs. You won't die!

Get started and stay motivated by regularly reviewing these potential benefits of fasting:

1. Renews spiritual vision
2. Brings a holy brokenness
3. Purifies our heart
4. Humbles our soul
5. Releases spiritual guidance
6. Subdues our flesh
7. Heightens spiritual awareness
8. Deepens communion with God
9. Clears our minds to hear God
10. Brings supernatural refreshing
11. Adds power to prayer
12. Brings deliverance
13. Brings greater fruitfulness
14. Facilitates breakthroughs
15. Cleanses the body and helps us lose weight.

Here's the deal: For over four decades, I've incorporated the spiritual discipline of fasting as a regular part of my life. Start your year in strength with this time-tested tool for staying sharp and strong while shedding those extra pounds as a side benefit along the way.

Join with Jesus, the early church, Paul, Jonah, Esther, Moses, David, Elijah, Nehemiah, Daniel and countless others throughout the ages who have recognized fasting's potential for releasing the atomic power of God!

Remember, Jesus began His first recorded fast "filled with the Spirit" and ended "in the power of the Spirit" (Luke 4:1,14).

Happy New Year!

To gain further inspiration, enjoy the video, *Rediscovering Fasting For Blessings and Breakthroughs From God*.

WATCH: President Trump Asks Ben Carson to Bless the Nation Through Prayer

President Donald Trump recently asked former Republican primary candidate Ben Carson to bless the country at a meeting to close out 2017.

Watch the video to see what Dr. Carson asked the Lord for.

What No One Is Telling You About Iran

It's true that CNN and the *New York Times*, among other liberal outlets, have rightly been called out for their failure to report accurately on the protests in Iran. But there's something that not even the conservative media is telling you today, an important backstory that might be playing a role in this rising protest movement.

As for the left-wing media, Caroline Glick noted in her article in the *Jerusalem Post* that, "Given the earth shattering potential of the protests it is extraordinary to see the liberal media in the U.S. and Europe struggle to downplay their significance." And here in the U.S., "former members of the Obama administration and the liberal media have determinedly downplayed the importance of the protests."

Similarly, writing for the *Daily Wire*, Ryan Saavedra stated that, "The media initially ignored what was going on in Iran, likely because it reflected negatively on former President Barack Obama, whose Iran nuclear deal was supposed to help Iran's economy, and because the Trump administration's response was night-and-day better than Obama's response in 2009.

"CNN and *The New York Times* did a terrible job of covering the protests, while ABC News' Matthew Dowd declared that the U.S. did not have the moral authority to talk about Iran because 'we' don't talk about Russia."

So, again, the liberal media has been taken to task for its unfair coverage of the Iranian protests, and rightly so. In fact, it would be hard to find a greater contrast than that

between the courageous protesters and the cowardly media.

But there's something else going on in Iran that could well be playing an important role in the rising Iranian discontent.

It's something that has been building and growing under the surface and behind closed doors. And it remains one of the best -kept secrets in the world, despite occasional media reports in the last few years: Iranian Muslims are converting to Christianity at an unprecedented pace, perhaps by the thousands every day.

I've heard this firsthand from Iranian converts. I've heard it firsthand from Christian leaders who have worked with these converts inside and outside of Iran. And I've heard it from missiologists whose job it is to track such things.

And it's reminiscent of the conversion of tens of millions of Chinese behind the cover of the Bamboo Curtain. Missiologists were reporting it for years before the rest of the world found out about it. Now, it is an open secret, leading to headlines like this, from April 14, 2014, in the UK *Telegraph*: "China on course to become 'world's most Christian nation' within 15 years. The number of Christians in Communist China is growing so steadily that it by 2030 it could have more churchgoers than America."

When it comes to Iran, already in 2006, Reza Safa could write a book titled *The Coming Fall of Islam in Iran: Thousands of Muslims Find Christ in the Midst of Persecution*.

The website of Safa, himself a former Iranian, Shiite Muslim but now an evangelical pastor, declares, "Despite severe persecution by the Iranian government against underground churches, God's Word is spreading like a wildfire all over Iran. Pastor Safa believes that Iran will be the first Islamic nation to convert to Christianity."

This may sound like a pipe dream, but consider that a 2012 Pew

Research report claimed that, "The share of the population that is Christian in sub-Saharan Africa climbed from 9 percent in 1910 to 63 percent in 2010." And much of this growth occurred in the midst of Muslim-majority populations.

The same thing is happening throughout the Muslim world, confirming an article on the *National Catholic Register*, which claims that, "Muslims Are Converting to Christianity in Record Numbers." This too has been an open secret for many years now.

When it comes to Iran, the article repeats the claim that there are now three million Iranian Christians, which would mean a massive jump from the numbers posted in the respected prayer guide, *Operation World*. It claimed a total of 384,897 Christians from all backgrounds in Iran (compared to 74,054,491 Muslims), with just 117,678 listed as evangelicals. Getting from here to three million is extraordinary.

That's why Mohabat News (the Iranian Christian News Agency), reported in August, 2017, that, "Christianity has been growing at an exponential rate in the last couple of decades in Iran, causing the Islamic government a great deal of concern. In a most recent expression of their distress, one of the high profile Islamic seminary officials, Ayatollah Alavi Boroujerdi, stated 'accurate reports indicate that the youth are becoming Christians in Qom and attending house churches'."

And, the article continues, "This is not a new development. Earlier reports had also shown a surprising rise in the number of Iranians turning away from Islam and converting to Christianity."

That's why Fox News could report in 2016 that, "The number of Muslim converts who are risking prison or death by secretly worshipping as Christians in Iran's house church movement has grown to as many as 1 million people, according to watchdog groups."

Something powerful is happening in Iran, despite the intense

persecution Christians are facing.

My sources have been telling me that: 1) it's only a matter of time before the number of these conversions reaches a critical mass, allowing these new Christians to emerge from the underground into the public eye; and 2) it is the Iranian regime that is our enemy, not the Iranian people, many of whom love America and hate what the radical Islamic leadership has done to their country.

We should pray for these courageous Christians, and, more broadly, stand with these Iranian protesters. It could well be that there many secret converts among them. And we should applaud our government for letting Iran know that we are watching them carefully right now.

It could be time for this great, hidden story to be known to the whole world.

2018 Brings New Challenges and Hope for Persecuted Believers

As a new year begins, it's the perfect time to reflect on where we've been and the hope for tomorrow and the new year to come.

Thanks to the continued support of ACLJ members like you, 2017 was a very important and impactful year in our continuing quest to defend the rights and liberties of all Americans. We have achieved numerous victories for life, national security and persecuted Christians. Here are just a few of this year's

victories that you helped make possible.

After many years of litigation against the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), this year we achieved a significant victory. The IRS admitted it discriminated against conservative groups on the basis of their beliefs and apologized for its deplorable behavior. Even more important, we obtained a court order preventing the IRS from ever again discriminating against conservative groups for their beliefs. Here's how one law professor in *The Washington Post* described the impact we've had on the IRS bureaucracy: "They've been burned. They've been hammered. They've been bludgeoned. ... They're trying to survive."

At the United Nations, we stood up in defense of Israel—our most important ally in the Middle East. We took direct action at the U.N. General Assembly urging world leaders to stand against the BDS Movement (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions). We were able to put a spotlight on the U.N.'s anti-Semitic and anti-Israel agenda and defended Israelis against a \$34.5 billion lawsuit brought by terrorist sympathizers in U.S. federal court.

Here at home, we exposed the lies and corruption of the deep state. We uncovered troubling new information about the secretive actions of former Attorney General Loretta Lynch. We forced the FBI to release fired FBI Director Comey's draft memos exonerating Hillary Clinton before even interviewing her or other key witnesses. Through our work in filing Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests—and going to court when necessary—we unearthed critical information necessary to hold the FBI, the DOJ and the State Department bureaucracies accountable for blatantly lying not only to us, but also to the American people.

The new year brings new challenges. Big Abortion will continue to peddle its ideology of death. The deep state bureaucrats will keep manipulating Washington. Israel will continue to be

under attack at the U.N. And, the global persecution of Christians rages on.

And I'm delighted to report that in the year ahead, we are mobilizing to counter these very real and dangerous threats to our lives, our freedoms and our way of life.

We are determined to stop Big Abortion. We have two pro-life cases pending before the United States Supreme Court. In the first case, California has tried to compel pro-life pregnancy centers to advertise abortion services. However, the state does not have the right to compel anyone to advertise murdering the unborn.

In the second case, the National Abortion Federation has tried to censor incriminating videos of abortionists haggling over the price of baby body parts—actually bargaining about the price of lungs, hearts and other vital organs. Big Abortion is even trying to prevent law enforcement from obtaining this evidence. The Supreme Court has ordered the National Abortion Federation to respond to our cert petition in just a matter of weeks.

Our battle against the deep state intensifies. We still have more than 20 active FOIA requests—seeking vital information from the FBI, DOJ, NSA and State Department bureaucracies. We face a number of critical court deadlines in the weeks and months ahead. With your help, we will defeat the deep state.

The need to stand with Israel is now more important than ever. The U.N. refuses to accept the reality that Jerusalem is truly the capital of Israel. At the same time, the Palestinian Authority continues to align itself with terrorists and wage lawfare against Israel at the International Criminal Court (ICC). Further, Hezbollah, Hamas and ISIS continue their reign of terror in the region. In 2018, we will defend the State of Israel at the U.N. and ICC and work to aggressively counter the ongoing anti-Israel assault underway by radical

terrorists in many parts of the world.

Asia Bibi, a Pakistani Christian, remains on death row for her simple act of Christian charity: giving a Muslim coworker a cup of water while they worked in the fields. She has spent more than seven years away from her husband and five children. Pastor Andrew Brunson, a U.S. citizen, remains, for yet another year, in a Turkish prison on trumped-up charges. Worse still, Christians in the Middle East face genocide at the hands of radical Islamic terrorists as ISIS and its allies continue their jihad against our faith and way of life. Yet, we remain ready to advocate for those who live and fight for their Christian faith. This year we helped free two Christian pastors from possible death sentences in Sudan and defended an elderly Pakistani Christian woman persecuted for her faith. In 2018, we will continue the fight to free the oppressed—to stop the slaughter of Christians around the globe.

We promise to do all that we can—in this country and abroad—to stop the genocide of Christians. The persecution must end.

As a nation and as Christians, we have a good deal to be thankful for in 2017. And we know with the Lord's blessing, we will continue to achieve great results at the ACLJ—through our legal work, our legislative expertise, and our powerful media outreach.

But most of all, as we face a new year, I want to thank you—those who have stood with us at the ACLJ—those who are supporting our work through prayer and generous giving. I also want to assure you that we can do even more in 2018. Together—as a powerful team.

As the new year begins, I want you to know that we remain committed to safeguarding freedom and human dignity—here at home and abroad.

With the challenges ahead, I cannot help but reflect on the words of the Lord spoken by the Prophet Jeramiah in Jeremiah

29:11, “For I know the plans that I have for you, says the Lord, plans for peace and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

On behalf of the entire ACLJ family, I want to wish you and yours a very Happy New Year.

For the original article, visit .

Was 2017 a Year of Reckoning?

Next week, on January 8, the American Dialect Society will pick the “Word of the year” for 2017.

One of the top candidates is “reckoning”, a word which nominator Mary Schmick of the *Chicago Tribune* said “Has been everywhere”. According to Wall Street Journal writer Ben Zimmer the word “reckoning” “suggests a settling of accounts, especially for past misdeeds.” He states that the world dates back to 14th-century English, “referring to the last judgement”. Indeed, 2017 has been a year of “reckoning,” or judgment, from God.

It is not as if we were not warned. Many commentators, ourselves included, saw in the great American Eclipse of August 21, 2017, a warning from God. The fact that this eclipse occurred on the first day of the Hebrew repentance season of Teshuvah magnified the message of Teshuvah to return to the presence of God. For more information, you can download our book *Teshuvah Eclipses* at this link.

While many did repent and pray through Teshuvah, the nation as a whole did not. The day after the eclipse, the floods began, with the first in Kansas City, where torrents of rain had

covered the view of the eclipse. Next came hurricanes dumping four feet of water in southeast Texas, raking Florida from the Keys and up the western seaboard and destroying the infrastructure of Puerto Rico. Then came the wind-driven fires raging through the wealthy Napa Valley and devastating large areas around Los Angeles.

Now comes ice, as most of the nation has seen the coldest New Year in a century.

Back in the spring of 2017, scientists noticed that the energy output of the sun, measured by sunspot activity, had fallen to its lowest level in 100 years. Lower solar energy had historically led to a cooling climate cycle which features torrential rains, high winds which can drive fires and colder temperatures. Scripture teaches us that the Lord uses the forces of nature to send judgment (See Deut. 11:16-17, Ezek. 13:13 and Job 37:6-13). These reckonings of rain, fire and ice have forced a rebellious people to stop and pay attention to Him (Job 37:7).

Another form of reckoning, or judgment, came as the secret sins of powerful men were exposed (see Prov. 26:24-26). It began with sexual exploitation in the entertainment business, as women came forward with credible accusations which people began to believe. This exploitation had been covered over for years because of the "progressive" politics espoused by the abusers. Even the Democratic Party, which had stood steadfastly by Bill Clinton when his sexual abuses were exposed, turned on some of their own politicians in an amazing recognition that perhaps character does matter. For their part, the Republicans re-learned the lesson that character matters in a stunning electoral defeat in Republican Alabama.

Secret sins in the government were also exposed as the "Russia collusion" investigation, intended to entangle the Trump presidency, began instead to show that the Democrats had used Russian sources to manipulate the FBI and Justice Department

into spying on the Trump campaign. Many high government officials have been implicated in an apparent conspiracy to interfere with the Trump campaign while covering up the over \$100 million Russian payment to the Clinton Foundation and failing to mount a real investigation of the Clinton Server Scandal. Of course, the secret sins of some Trump campaign workers have also been exposed, even though they are unrelated to the "Russia Collusion" story. It seems that those who lied to the president and those who lied about the president may both fall into the pit they dug for him (Ps. 35:7-8).

As people of prayer, we should be praying that those under judgment will repent and learn righteousness in accordance with God's plan, as expressed in Isaiah 26:9. Because He is gracious and compassionate, the Lord may relent from sending further calamity (Joel 2:13).

Let us pray that the year of reckoning will bring forth a year of reconciliation with God and man, and healing for our land.
{eoa}

Ron Allen is a Christian businessman, CPA and author who serves in local, national and international ministries, spreading a message of reconciliation to God, to men and between believers. He is founder of the International Star Bible Society, telling how the heavens declare the glory of God; the Emancipation Network, which helps people escape from financial bondage; and co-founder with his wife, Pat, of Corporate Prayer Resources, dedicated to helping intercessors.

9 Tips to Reverse Your Holiday Weight Gain

Did you gain any weight over the holidays? I did. I put on two pounds. I'm ready to get them off, plus a few more. How about you? Here are a few tips to get you started on your reversal of the calorie blowout.

1. Don't stop eating altogether. Drink a veggie juice for breakfast. And eat a little protein. If you do skip a meal, it should be dinner, not breakfast or lunch. If you starve yourself all day, you'll be much more prone to binge in the evening—the very worst time for that.
2. Forgive yourself. Yes, you blew it! You didn't work out, and you ate too many potatoes and appetizers. A new year is just around the corner. So get ready to praise yourself for the weight you're going to lose.
3. Start moving right away! Join the club, get a workout buddy or take your dog for a walk. The point is to get moving and keep moving. You'll burn calories and build muscle. You'll also get the good endorphins pumping. That puts you in a positive mood; you'll be less apt to turn to food for a lift.
4. Ditch the carbs. Those breads, bagels, crackers and potatoes really pack on the pounds. They've got to be the first things to go. Hey, here's the good news. You'll feel better in less than 48 hours.
5. Write down your goals. How much do you want to lose? What else do you want to achieve? When it's on paper, it becomes real. Give that weight loss a due date. By what date do you want to lose the weight? How hard will you try when it comes to that goal?
6. Juice and eat your vegetables. Vegetables suppress your appetite. By the way, bread stimulates the appetite.
7. Throw out the holiday leftovers, except for the turkey

and veggies. You're done with that. Don't eat it to get rid of it, which will pile on more pounds.

8. Plan ahead. Take food with you on errands so you aren't tempted to hit a fast-food place. If you do get a food urge after dinner, eat a small low-cal snack, brush your teeth afterward, and "close down your kitchen."
9. Join one of my weight loss classes. I have two classes starting January 8—Juicing for Weight Loss and The Watercress Soup Diet. I'm teaming up with Angela for a new venture in weight loss. We're setting up 10 coaching emails and a webinar for both groups. Angela lost 70 pounds. She's traveled the weight-loss road. If you've tried many programs and have not succeeded, please don't think there's no hope. Join us in the new year. We're committed to helping you reach your goal.

Weight-Loss Buddy

- 3-4 carrots, scrubbed well, tops removed, ends trimmed
- 1 Jerusalem artichoke, scrubbed well
- 1 cucumber, peeled if not organic
- 1 lemon, peeled if not organic
- 1/2 small beet, scrubbed well with stems and leaves

Cut produce to fit your juicer's feed tube. Juice ingredients and stir. Pour into a glass and drink as soon as possible.

Serves 1

Note: Jerusalem artichoke juice combined with carrot and beet is a traditional remedy for satisfying cravings for sweets and junk food. The key is to sip it slowly when you get a craving for high-fat or high-carb foods.

From *The Turbo Diet* {eoa}

Cherie Calbom, M.S., holds a Master of Science in whole foods nutrition from Bastyr University. Known as "The Juice Lady" for her work with juicing and health, she is the author of 32

books, including her latest book *The Juice Lady's Guide to Fasting*. She and her husband offer juice-cleanse retreats throughout the year, *30-Day Detox* online and *Garden's Best Juice Powder*. "What You Can Do When Your Healing Doesn't Come" is one point from her teaching "7 Keys to Your Supernatural Healing." You can connect with Cherie at .

This article originally appeared at .

The Surprisingly Simple Solution to End the Enemy's Mind Games

The greatest hindrance to the new life that Jesus offers is the old life and the things of the world that tend to remind us of it. That's why in order to have what is good, acceptable and perfect, the apostle Paul instructed, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2a).

Certainly, those of us who have been in the church for a length of time are undoubtedly familiar with this concept of mind renewal. What we're not all as familiar with is how to practically do it.

Your New Position in Christ

While penning my book, *Activating the Power of God's Word*, I dissected Paul's instructions, which revealed the surprising solution. The answer for how to renew your mind lies in the word itself, which means "to resume to an original position after an interruption."

You see, when you were born again, you were instantly positioned as a new person in Christ. That's what 2 Corinthians 5:17a assures: "Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature." As this new creation, you now possess the fruit of the Holy Spirit: "love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control" (Gal. 5:22–23a). Because you're now clothed in Christ, you also get the identity of Christ: a child of God, righteous and complete, just to name a few of His attributes.

Interrupting the Interruptions

The struggle we face as Christians is that the world and the enemy continue to try to interrupt us with reminders and feelings that take us back to the old life—old ways of thinking, speaking and living—and to at least dampen God's promises of joy, peace and patience.

The key, then, to experience the new, transformed life that Jesus died for you to have is to interrupt the interruptions with the truth of God's Word.

Here's how to do it:

If feelings of fear try to interrupt you, resume back to your fearless position in Christ with 2 Timothy 1:7: "For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and love, and self-control."

If anxious thoughts try to interrupt you, resume back to your peaceful position in Christ with Philippians 4:6–7: "I am anxious for nothing ... And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will protect [my] heart and mind through Christ Jesus."

If reminders of mistakes try to interrupt you with guilt or shame, resume back to your forgiven position in Christ with 2 Corinthians 5:21: "God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2

Cor. 5:21).

As you interrupt the interruption with God's Word through your mouth, your mind focuses back on your position in Christ, which in time trickles down to transform everything about you.
{eoa}

Kyle Winkler equips people to live in victory. His mobile app, *Shut Up, Devil!*, is the #1 spiritual warfare app; and his book, *Activating the Power of God's Word*, uncovers 16 strategic declarations to transform your life. Kyle holds a Master of Divinity in biblical studies from Regent University. Get daily encouragement from Kyle on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Top Shelf

Credit card commercials ask us, "What's in your wallet?"

A better question to consider is, "What's in your toolbox?"

I have a clear picture in mind of a tall, clunky mechanic's toolbox. It's filled with drawers of various depths. It's fair to assume that the mechanic's most used tools are in the top pull-out. Rarely used tools reside in the box but are foreordained to a bottom drawer.

Knowledge workers are enlightened by their personal inventory of tools. A worker's productivity is largely impacted by the quality of tools available for random access. When we are called upon to add knowledge to a project, our primary contribution emerges from our storehouse.

As our eyes open widely this morning in view of the

possibilities of a new year, one thing seems certain. We're going to need a bigger toolbox. Many of last year's tools have elevated down to a less relevant drawer. The half-life of knowledge continues to narrow.

We must know more to do more. I have a few excellent college textbooks in residence in my home-office library. The books, while as comfortable as spaghetti night, rest peacefully on a bottom shelf. Shockingly, few people query me about state of the art marketing knowledge circa 1970.

The top shelf of my toolbox is an ellipsis for what awaits in 2018. I'm hungry to know more because more will be required of me.

As Solomon warned, knowledge is folly without the presence of God. Lean upon the Lord to fill your top shelf with His inspired Word. Lean not on your own understanding. Seek Him first.

"For the word of God is alive, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

Prophecy for 2018: This Is the Year of the Threshing Floor

There is nothing magic about 12:01 a.m. on January 1st. God is not dictated to by the calendar that man creates. While it is the beginning of the new year of 2018, for us who use the

Gregorian calendar, the Jewish new year of 5778 began on the evening of Sept. 20, 2017. So, from a biblical standpoint, we have been in a new year since September. Scripturally speaking, God operates in “times and seasons” (Eccl. 3:1) but, there are times when His divine providence lines up with our calendar, and we enter His times and seasons.

This is why we begin to listen so attentively to the Holy Spirit as we approach the change of years. We are trying to ascertain what the season of the Lord is. We are leaning in closely for prophetic direction to prepare and position us to walk uprightly in the coming days.

Each year I hear such variance in what representatives of the body of Christ say the Lord has told them regarding an approaching year. Sometimes it is more than variance; sometimes it is dissonance. We also release “words” that can be disjointed with little or no continuity from the previous year, making God appear schizophrenic. But I have found that God speaks in sentences. He is forming paragraphs. He is revealing complete thoughts. It may take multiple “words” or years before we understand what he is saying and doing, but He is progressive. “For He says, ‘Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little’” (Isa. 28:10).

This is how God framed this coming year to me. He has initiated a season of the threshing floor for His people. But, it has not appeared randomly or haphazardly. It has followed progressively what He has been doing in the most recent years. In 2015 God told me He was re-establishing His plumb line in His people and His church. In 2016, He told me we had entered a season of confirmation where He was going to begin to sovereignly bear witness of what was and wasn’t acceptable to Him. This year, in 2017, it was going to be a year of polar opposites, because the elevation of truth was also going to bring a revelation of error. People would be looking at the same thing and reaching two entirely different conclusions

because of how they responded and related to truth. You see, truth and light not only unite, they also divide.

A few months back, the Lord said to me that the light and truth of 2017 revealed the husk, but in 2018, He is going to deal with the husk, and that we had entered a season of threshing and winnowing.

There is such important scriptural and prophetic significance surrounding the threshing floor. Ruth, who is a type of the church, received the promise of betrothal from Boaz as her kinsman-redeemer, who is a type of Christ in the Scriptures (Ruth 3:6-15). She presented herself to him on the threshing floor after his work threshing and winnowing the grain was complete.

Solomon's temple, the house of God, was built on the very spot of a threshing floor that King David purchased from Ornan (Araunah) the Jebusite (2 Chron. 3:1). Previously, David built an altar to the Lord there to stop the judgment of God against Jerusalem, and God answered him at the threshing floor (1 Chron. 21:14-28). But that was not the first time God had tested His people at that place. This was Mount Moriah, it was the place where God tested Abraham's heart and asked him for Isaac as a sacrifice (Gen. 22:2-14). God was looking for something in Abraham and used great testing to reveal it. Even as God dealt with Abraham's outer man, he yielded to the process and built an altar and worshipped God.

Both historically and symbolically, the judgment of God and the purifying process are associated with the threshing floor. God struck Uzzah at Nachon's threshing floor for taking hold of the things of God incorrectly (2 Sam. 6:6-7). Jesus himself spoke of the work of the Holy Spirit to identify and separate the wheat from the chaff in final judgment. "His fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean His floor and gather His wheat into the granary; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3:12).

It is clear that a separation will occur at final judgment, but what of the separating, purifying work of the Lord in the lives of His people and His church before His return? Is He not at work cleansing and preparing His bride, removing spot and blemish with the "washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5:26b)? If His return is near as many believe, wouldn't the purifying process intensify? We must not relegate His threshing and winnowing of His people to only an end-time judgment. There is an outer man, a carnal man, a "husk" that must be dealt with and removed to reveal the inner man, the "kernel."

God is after the precious in us, the genuine, the eternal, the inner and the pure. In order to accomplish and reveal these, anything that is in the way must be identified and done away with.

What powerful imagery the Lord uses to help us see and understand. When Jesus spoke of the process of revealing the glory of God, He said it required that the outer be subjected to a process that revealed the inner. Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:23-24).

There are two important aspects that must not be overlooked here. First, the process was a violent separation: death. Secondly, though the word "grain" is used twice in this passage, the first word means the whole kernel with the outer shell and the second word means fruit. Or in other words, that which is produced after the outer is removed.

A dying process is one way to accomplish that, but the scriptures reveal others. God uses tribulation, difficulty and challenges to perfect and reveal the inner man. Paul references this twice in the same chapter. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, the excellency of the power being

from God and not from ourselves. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; and always carrying around in the body the death of the Lord Jesus, that also the life of Jesus might be expressed in our bodies. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that also the life of Jesus might be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then, death works in us, but life in you" (2 Cor. 4:7-12).

Why is God allowing or initiating these circumstances? He is after a removing of the outer and a revealing of the inner man. "While we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. "For this reason we do not lose heart: Even though our outward man is perishing, yet our inward man is being renewed day by day. Our light affliction, which lasts but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor 4:16-18). Though these two passages may not use the term "threshing" or "winnowing," it is in essence the same process.

The threshing floor involved two processes to separate the inner kernel from the outer unusable covering, and both were violent. First, pressure was applied to the stalk by either trampling or beating. This broke the grain away from what held it and caused it to move deep below the surface threshing to protect what was precious from actual damage. Second was a winnowing process of repeatedly tossing the grain into the air and allowing it to fall to the immovable surface of the floor. This not only further separated the chaff from the actual wheat grain by repeated impact, but amazingly used the wind to blow the lighter, worthless shell away. The weightier, inner, wheat grain would begin to appear and gather. This was the real harvest and what the planting, watering, tending and

threshing process was intended to yield.

Beloved, there is much error, immaturity and carnality in the church and the people of God today. Race and politics separate us. We have elevated positions, titles and even the very country we live in to a place of worship. We are enmeshed and intermingled with the very things we are called to speak against, and our witness has lost its credibility. The world needs to see and experience the life of Christ and truth from an inner man, but a carnal outer shell is in the way.

We have entered a season of the threshing floor. It began in 2017. God is after something in us, and He is both allowing and initiating circumstances in our personal lives, the church and even this country to deal with the husk that in is His way and separate it from us.

There will be times this year that the circumstances of our lives, the church and this country will appear violent as God tosses us again and again into the wind of the Holy Spirit to separate us from what must be revealed and removed. Our repeated impacts against the immovable truth of God will cause a breaking. It will appear as judgment, but His purpose is not vindictive but redemptive. It will work for our good if and as we yield to Him in the process and genuinely worship Him there as Abraham and David did.

How perfect God is in His ways. The first reference in Scripture to a threshing floor is associated with offering and worship. May we embrace the work of the threshing floor and the Lord's winnowing in our lives and in the church in this season.

“The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: When you come into the land where I bring you, then it will be, when you eat of the bread of the land you will offer up an offering to the Lord. From the first

of your dough you will offer a cake as an offering. As you make the offering of the threshing floor, so will you offer it" (Num. 15:17-20).

Pastor Gregory D. Reynolds is the founder and senior pastor of House of Liberty Covenant Church, in Cincinnati, Ohio, which was established in 2012. He has been shepherding for more than 21 years. Pastor Reynolds has long been a prophetic voice with a burden for truth and unity in the body of Christ and operates with a mandate from God to address the issues that bring error and separation within it. He has been married to his wife, Cheryl, with whom he shares senior pastoral leadership at House of Liberty, for 39 years. They have three adult children and have been blessed with four grandchildren.