

# 2 Ways to Help Venezuela Right Now

As the world obsesses over the power struggle for Venezuela's presidency, most Venezuelans are worried about something else: "Will my children eat today?"

That is what Isabella has been asking herself for months, and her story will break your heart.

Isabella's son recently died of starvation ... and now she is terrified she will lose her other two children if help doesn't arrive soon.

Isabella, whose name I've changed to protect her, was in tears as she told us about her 14-year-old son. In his final days, he was so skinny that his bones poked through his skin. She hates that she couldn't save him. And she hates that she feels just as powerless to feed her two daughters.

Like many other mothers in Venezuela, there's not much she can do to keep her children alive.

She and her husband used to have a thriving business producing school uniforms. They lived comfortably with all of their needs met. Then, the economy crashed. The price of food and other basic necessities doubled every few weeks.

They had to start selling their possessions just to make ends meet. First, they sold their company's machinery ... then their cars ... and eventually their house, so they could eat.

But it wasn't enough.

It's clear Isabella's daughters and many other children won't survive unless they receive food soon.

Emergency aid was blocked from entering the country in

February, and tear gas was even fired into the crowd of families eagerly awaiting this aid. Many families were counting on that food, but they were soon back where they started—starving.

Since then, the Venezuelan government has agreed to allow some humanitarian aid into the country, but there is still a critical need for more.

Our organization, World Help, has partners working on the ground to provide food and other essentials. I'm not overstating it when I say that this food is literally helping save lives.

So as you watch the Venezuelan crisis unfolding on the news, I'm asking you to stop right now and do two things: pray for the people of Venezuela and give if you can to provide food and other lifesaving supplies to people like Isabella and her girls.

*Vernon Brewer is the founder and CEO of World Help, a Christian humanitarian organization serving the physical and spiritual needs of people in impoverished communities around the world. Follow him @vernonbrewer.*

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## **'Pastor's Pastor' and Bible Teacher Warren Wiersbe Dies at 89**

Cedarville University celebrates the legacy of Warren Wiersbe, one of the foremost Bible teachers, professors and authors of the 20th century. Known as the pastor's pastor, Wiersbe passed

away Thursday, May 2, at the age of 89—two weeks before his 90th birthday.

Last year, Wiersbe and his wife, Betty, announced their plan to gift his immense personal library of books to Cedarville University. This impressive collection of commentaries, nonfiction publications and works of literature, estimated at between 13,000 and 14,000 titles, will be housed in the Warren and Betty Wiersbe Library and Reading Room, to be located in Cedarville's Center for Biblical and Theological Studies.

"Warren Wiersbe was a personal hero, faithful preacher, wordsmith and a dear friend," commented Cedarville president Dr. Thomas White. "We will work hard to continue his legacy of service to our Savior at Cedarville."

Wiersbe began his ministry in 1951 at Central Baptist Church in East Chicago, Indiana, where he served until 1957. Next, he spent four years at Youth for Christ as director of the literature division before he became the pastor at Calvary Baptist Church of Covington, Kentucky, from 1961 to 1971.

It was during his ministry in Kentucky that he became a frequent guest speaker in Cedarville University's chapel program. Then Cedarville president Dr. James T. Jeremiah often returned the favor, preaching at Calvary Baptist when Wiersbe had engagements that called him away from his duties there.

Wiersbe spent a large portion of his ministry at Chicago's Moody Church, named for 19th-century American evangelist Dwight L. Moody. Wiersbe ministered over the radio through his "Songs in the Night" program while at Moody and with Back to the Bible radio network from 1980 to 1993. He had an active conference speaking ministry until 2004.

Wiersbe was a prolific author, writing more than 170 books, including his very popular "BE Series Commentaries," which characterizes books or sections of Scripture with a "being" verb matched with a descriptor, such as "Be Free" for the New

Testament book of Galatians or "Be Amazed" for his commentary on the minor prophets.

He taught practical theology classes at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, from 1978 to 1982 and is a former distinguished professor of preaching at Grand Rapids (Michigan) Theological Seminary.

Jason Lee, dean of the Cedarville School of Biblical and Theological Studies, along with Cedarville's president Dr. Thomas White, visited with Wiersbe last fall.

"Dr. Wiersbe loved the Word," Lee said. "He took a strong stand on the authority of Scripture. And now our students can be shaped by the same resources that shaped him. He spent decades investing in the church through his teaching of the Word, and now he'll be able to continue that through students picking up the same resources for the same purposes.

"When we were with him, he said to Dr. White and me, 'Preaching is loving people through the Word.' We hope our students catch that spirit."

"Dr. Wiersbe's life and ministry has been committed to the right handling of the Scriptures, and pouring into others who would do likewise," noted White. "Cedarville has been blessed with the privilege of stewarding a portion of Dr. Wiersbe's tremendous legacy. This considerable collection, which is more than books on shelves because of the marginal notes and observations, is the accumulated wisdom and insight of one of the great servants of the church in the 20th century. We thank God for this amazing privilege."

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# Spirit-Filled Psychologist: The Key to Reviving Your Passionless Marriage

Long gone are the days when the average American considered divorce scandalous. Between 40% and 50% of marriages end in divorce, according to the American Psychological Association. And sadly, even though the divorce rate is somewhat lower among committed Christians, the church can't immunize a marriage to an ugly separation.

Dr. Doug Weiss—a Christian psychologist in Colorado—says he has ministered to countless couples who have told him, “We’re just not in love anymore.”

Even couples that have been together for up to 30 years can go through seasons of feeling distant from each other. In an interview with Weiss for my “Strang Report” podcast, he told me that the key to fixing a passionless marriage is for spouses to change their perspective. (Click [here](#) or scroll up to listen.)

“What’s interesting is when you’re dating, you think like a lover,” he says. “But what happens is that as soon as the pastor says, ‘I pronounce you husband and wife,’ you go from thinking like a lover to now defining what your role in the relationship, your role as a husband.”

Weiss says that this transition from thinking like a lover to thinking like a spouse drastically changes the way couples relate to each other. It also changes husbands’ and wives’ expectations for themselves.

“It’s easy to say, ‘OK, I fix things. I work hard. I’m a good husband,’” Weiss says. “Well, that doesn’t meet the emotional-connection need of a woman, so she feels unloved. She feels

alone. And she says, 'Well, I'm a good wife if I cook, if I can make a decent apple pie.' And what happens is you're defining your own role, which may not actually have anything to do with your spouse feeling close or connected or wanted or desired or pursued."

Weiss has so much insight to share about this topic that he wrote a book called *Lover Spouse*, which you can purchase at his website, . One of the exercises in the book requires spouses to write down how they would act if their spouse was their lover.

"I've done this in my clinical sessions many times," Weiss says. "And 100% of the time, the other person knows what that means—whether it's 'Getting you coffee,' 'Show you by taking you out more' because they haven't had a date in three years, or whatever it is. They intuitively know how to be the other person's lover 100% of the time."

But the problem is that they no longer think being their spouse's lover is their responsibility. Thankfully, Weiss says, the couples who do this exercise often have an "aha" moment when they realize what is truly required of them to love their spouse.

Even Weiss' pastor has benefited from reading the book. Weiss tells me that while he was in church one day, his pastor's wife began praising her husband. She said he had been serving her and being there for her in sweet ways as of late.

"He had been reading *Lover Spouse*," Weiss tells me. "He's told me on four different occasions, within a week, that this book is the best one. [He says,] 'It's changing the way I think. It's helping me to get into a different mindset about my role as her lover. She says I'm a good husband, but I haven't been a great lover. And this is putting me in a whole different path, and it's been great.'"

If you feel as though your marriage has lost the spark it once

had, don't give up hope. I encourage you to read Weiss' book *Lover Spouse*, and when you're done, share it with another married friend!

Listen to my full interview with Weiss for more insights and tips to having a healthy marriage by clicking here or scrolling to the top of this article.

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## **Her Dad Was Shot to Death; Then She Befriended the Shooter's Mother**

Forgiveness is one of the most difficult quests in the human experience, especially when it comes to horrific crimes and injustices. Survivors of events like the Columbine tragedy—people who have made a concerted effort to let go of hate and anger toward those who perpetrated the unthinkable—offer some of the most powerful acts of forgiveness for us to ponder.

Some of these incredible and touching stories are told in 's *After Columbine*, an original series that focuses on faith, hope and forgiveness 20 years after two students entered Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, and committed tragic acts of violence.

Coni Sanders, daughter of teacher Dave Sanders, who died at Columbine, is now a therapist who works to help violent offenders get on the right path. In *After Columbine*, she revealed that she and Sue Klebold, one of the shooters' mothers, have formed a surprising friendship.

WATCH NOW: Stream 'After Columbine' Right Now

"A lot of people will reference forgiveness in relation to my friendship with Sue Klebold," she said. "I have nothing to forgive her for. She didn't do this."

Watch Sanders describe her story and see other amazing acts of forgiveness from Columbine survivors (you can watch the entire, three-part *After Columbine* series here):

Sanders described her initial anger and frustration at the killers' parents. But, as time went on and she had kids of her own, she said her perspective shifted.

"I could be the best parent in the world, and my kids might still make choices and decisions that I don't agree with," she said.

READ ALSO: The Incredible 'God' Stories That Unfolded at Columbine

Years after the 1999 attack, Sanders spoke with an author who was in touch with Klebold. Sanders told him that she would like to talk with Klebold, if Klebold was willing.

"A couple of months later I got an email from [Klebold] and she said, 'I would be more than happy to meet with you,'" Sanders recounted. "I was so nervous. We decided to meet at a coffee shop in Littleton."

As Sanders walked into the meeting, she recalled the thoughts that streamed through her mind.

READ ALSO: How to Forgive: Essential Lessons From the Bible

"I kept thinking, 'What am I doing here? This woman's son murdered my dad,'" she said, noting, though, that she was so determined to find out why the assault happened that she forged on with the meeting.

In the end, Sanders was stunned by what she discovered.

“We started talking, and she is one of the most peaceful, most compassionate, most comforting people I think I’ve ever known—and I didn’t want her to be,” Sanders said. “I wanted her to be awful, I wanted her to be terrible, I wanted it to be this, ‘Yup I knew it she’s a terrible person. She raised a terrible kid and that kid killed my dad.’”

That narrative, though, didn’t win out, and the meeting was the start of an unlikely friendship between Sanders and Klebold.

“At the end of this coffee—two hours—she hugged me, and she said, ‘I don’t know why I feel the need to tell you that I love you,’” Sanders said. “And I didn’t know why I had the feeling I wanted to tell her that back.”

Two years later, Sanders and Klebold meet every month to find ways that they can work together to create something powerful and impactful that doesn’t sensationalize their friendship.

“If anybody’s pain is greater than my own, in my eyes, it’s hers,” Sanders said.

*You can watch the full, three-part After Columbine series [here](#). {eoa}*

*This article was originally published on Pure Flix Insider. Visit [Pure Flix](#) for access to thousands of faith and family-friendly movies and TV shows. You can get a free, one-month trial [here](#).*

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# I Dare You to Tell Me the Economy Is 'Booming' After Reading This

After taking an honest look at the facts, I don't know how anyone can possibly claim that the U.S. economy is "booming." I really don't. We hear this sort of rhetoric from the mainstream media all the time, but it doesn't make any sense. As I discussed yesterday, nobody should be using the term "booming" to describe the state of the U.S. economy until we have a full year when GDP growth is 3% or better, and at this point, we haven't had that since the middle of the Bush administration. And as you will see below, the latest numbers are clearly telling us that the U.S. economy is not even moving in the right direction.

Economic conditions are getting worse, and they weren't that great to begin with. According to the calculations that John Williams has made over at [FRED](#), the U.S. economy is already in a recession, but of course the Federal Reserve will continue to tell us that everything is just fine for as long as they possibly can. Unfortunately for them, they can't hide the depressingly bad numbers that are coming in from all over the economy, and those numbers are all telling us the same thing.

The following are 19 facts about our current economic performance that should deeply disturb all of us:

1. In April, U.S. auto sales were down 6.1%. That was the worst decline in eight years.
2. The number of mortgage applications has fallen for four weeks in a row.
3. We just witnessed the largest crash in luxury home sales in about nine years.

4. Existing home sales have now fallen for 13 months in a row.
5. In March, total residential construction spending was down 8.4% from a year ago.
6. U.S. manufacturing output was down 1.1% during the first quarter of this year.
7. Farm incomes are falling at the fastest pace since 2016.
8. Wisconsin dairy farmers are going bankrupt "in record numbers."
9. Apple iPhone sales are falling at a "record pace."
10. Facebook's profits have declined for the first time since 2015.
11. We just learned that CVS will be closing 46 stores.
12. Office Depot has announced that they will be closing 50 locations.
13. Overall, U.S. retailers have announced more than 6,000 store closings so far in 2019, and that means we have already surpassed the total for all of last year.
14. A shocking new study has discovered that 137 million Americans have experienced "medical financial hardship in the past year."
15. Credit card charge-offs at U.S. banks have risen to the highest level in nearly seven years.
16. Credit card delinquencies have risen to the highest level in almost eight years.
17. More than a half-million Americans are homeless right now.
18. Homelessness in New York City is the worst it has ever been.

**19.** Nearly 102 million Americans do not have a job right now. That number is worse than it was at any point during the last recession.

But at least the stock market has been doing well, right?

Actually, the Dow Jones Industrial Average has been down for two days in a row, and investors are getting kind of antsy.

Hopes of a trade deal with China had been propping up stocks in recent weeks, but it looks like negotiations may have hit “an impasse”:

*The latest round of trade talks may have hit an impasse, raising doubts about the chances of an early trade deal between the world's two leading economies, Chinese official media reported on Thursday.*

*Unlike the previous negotiations, the 10th round of high-level economic and trade talks, which concluded here on Wednesday, had fewer details about specific discussions and results, state-run Global Times reported.*

I warned my readers repeatedly that this would happen. The Chinese are going to negotiate, but they are going to drag their feet for as long as possible in hopes that the U.S. will free Meng Wanzhou.

Of course that isn't going to happen, and so at some point, the Chinese will have to decide if they are willing to move forward with a trade deal anyway.

But if the Chinese drag their feet for too long, Trump administration officials may lose patience and take their ball and go home.

In any event, the truth is that the U.S. economy is really slowing down, and no trade deal is going to magically change that.

And a lot of other pundits are also pointing out that a substantial economic slowdown has now begun. For example, the following comes from Brandon Smith's latest article:

*The bottom line is, the next crash has already begun. It started at the end of 2018, and is only becoming more pervasive with each passing month. This is not "doom and gloom" or "doom porn," this is simply the facts on the ground. While stock markets are still holding (for now), the rest of the system is breaking down right on schedule. The question now is, when will the mainstream media and the Fed finally acknowledge this is happening? I suspect, as in 2008, they will openly admit to the danger only when it is far too late for people to prepare for it.*

Hopefully things will remain relatively stable for as long as possible, because nobody should want to see a repeat of 2008 (or worse).

Unfortunately, we can't stop the clock. We are already more than a third of the way through 2019, and we will be into 2020 before we know it.

It has been an unusual year so far, but I have a feeling that it is about to get much, much more interesting.

*This article originally appeared on The Economic Collapse Blog. Reprinted with permission.*

*Listen to the podcast to hear Michael Snyder discuss the economy.*

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# Prophetic Dream: God's Glory Will Be Your Rear Guard

In March 2019, I dreamed I was walking with a friend very slowly and intentionally through a home. We were both barefoot, and I made sure to walk through each and every room before exiting the house. We then continued this walking pattern outdoors for a short distance, but the dream ended as if to say "to be continued." Because our walking pace was rather slow, there was a tendency to stand still and become idle rather than continue moving forward. At the same time, there were these nasty pockets of ants and centipedes crawling all around on the ground. When we stood still, I noticed the ants and centipedes would start to gather and swarm around our feet preparing themselves to devour our flesh as their next meal. As long as we kept moving forward, however, these scavenging insects would leave us alone.

This was one of those dreams that had several meanings layered on top of each other. I'm going to give you the prophetic interpretation for just one of those layers that I believe is geared towards all of us.

First of all, a "friend" in a dream can symbolize Jesus. Jesus is the friend who "sticks closer than a brother" (Prov. 18:24b). He is always for us, with us and never forsakes us. This dream, then, was about our divine partnership with Jesus. Being barefoot in a dream is also very significant. For this particular dream, it was about taking territory and possessing an inheritance. "I have given you every place that the sole of your foot shall tread" (Josh. 1:3). The dream made clear that taking territory, a destiny or a prophetic promise, requires a continual forward motion. It also gave encouragement that going slow is not always a bad thing. Yet there was a warning to not stand still, but to keep moving forward. If you didn't heed the warning, then you would become preyed upon by the

devouring elements.

This dream is still unfolding, and I took note of a Scripture that kept resonating with me just prior to the Marvel Dallas conference at the end of April 2019. It reads, "And your righteousness shall go before you; The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard (Isa. 58:8b, NKJV)." Another version says it this way, "Your godliness will lead you forward, and the glory of the Lord will protect you from behind (Isa. 58:8b, NLT)." It's the same message as the dream. It's time to get moving, even if the progress seems slow. You need to take your next step and His glory will become your rear guard.

This is the message I've been walking out prophetically, a message that covered me when the Holy Spirit told me to do something new.

### **An Unusual Miracle**

At the Marvel Dallas conference, speaker and host Fiorella Giordano began to communicate a mind-blowing revelation about the wisdom of God. When she did, I heard the Spirit say, "When you minister tonight, I'm giving them the miracle crown of gold on the wisdom tooth." He added, "It's a sign of the supernatural wisdom being released as a result of this gathering." I would like to add that I've been walking in a new realm of glory and miracles in connection to my recent book, *Glory Carriers*. When I wrote the last chapter of the book, a felt glory from the Holy Spirit came on me specifically for the miracle of supernatural weight loss. This felt glory has continued to unfold into other unusual miracles since that time. Still, this kind of miracle is highly controversial. I saw it happen before at one of my institutes through a guest speaker, but I've never personally administered it.

As I stood in front of the audience, I began to coach them about our "miracle-selective" attitudes and that we have no

right to dictate to the Spirit of glory what miracles He can do or not do. I explained that we should not be offended when God does a miracle that we don't understand.

Signs and wonders are often prophecies, and they always point to Jesus. They speak a message, they confirm the word that was preached, and/or they tell us the things to come. This crown of gold would be all of these. I then reminded myself of the dream and Isaiah 58:8 and found the strength to move forward on His word and instruction. I said to the crowd, "The Lord is releasing the miracle of gold on the wisdom tooth." And then I asked everyone to check their neighbor's mouth. I realized how uncomfortable people were about this, but I kept insisting. Finally, one older gentleman raised his hand because His upper back molar had been supernaturally crowned with gold.

I invited him forward, inspected the beautiful gold tooth for myself and then invited others to see it too. Several people came up to look and were filled with wonder at what they saw. And then it gets even better. While people were viewing the single gold tooth, suddenly another gold tooth appeared in the bottom of his mouth. This set off a flurry of excitement, and I will also assert that this double miracle confirms the season we are in. We are in a season of double blessing, a prophetic word that so many prophets have shouted.

Now why would I need the Lord to be my rear guard in regard to this? Wouldn't everyone receive this miracle and be as excited as we were about it? Sadly, no. When I posted the picture of his upper gold tooth on my social media, I received a swarm of vicious criticism from people I've never seen or heard of before. It created quite a storm of arguments for and against this miracle, but God was in control the entire time. I realized within about 24 hours that all of this arguing ultimately publicized the miracle much further than it would have if the religious naysayers would have just left it alone. I then noted all the positive increases in my social media activity and interaction, my book numbers and so forth, and

how this ended up working for me and not against me. Although I removed all the critical content and sincerely prayed for my critics, I was still satisfied that the risk was worth it. God proved Himself to be my rear guard when I moved out on His word.

He will do the same for you. It's time to move out on the word God gave you. It's time to take a next step towards your destiny and inheritance in the Lord. I believe the Holy Spirit is speaking to your heart and encouraging you to keep moving forward in this very moment. And remember, He has your back.

My prayer for you: Holy Spirit, You are so good! You don't whip us into obedience but powerfully encourage us with Your awesome truth. I pray for each person reading this today. If they are stuck in a holding pattern, I pray they get unstuck. If they are scared to risk the next step, I command that fear to go, in Jesus' name! You said You have our backs, but insist we move when You move. Holy Spirit, we trust You, and we surrender. We are going forward, step by step and from glory to glory. Amen! {eoa}

**Jennifer Eivaz** is a bestselling author of *The Intercessors Handbook*, *Seeing the Supernatural* and her latest release, *Glory Carriers*. She is also a featured writer for several online publications including the *Elijah List* and *Charisma* magazine. Jennifer is a vibrant minister and conference speaker who carries the wisdom and fire of the Holy Spirit. Jennifer loves the presence of God and is a prophetic voice to her church and to many others. Jennifer is the founder of *Harvest Ministries International* and executive pastor with *Harvest Christian Center* in Turlock, California. Jennifer is married to HCC's Senior Pastor Ron Eivaz, and they have two wonderful children.

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# Do You Release These 12 Crucial Sounds of Prayer?

Each and every one of us has a part to play in God's orchestra of prayer. What is your special sound? What instrument do you play? The Holy Spirit directs the movements of this divine symphony according to the score of God's Word.

**I have identified 12 distinct "sounds" that come forth in the orchestra of prayer. How many of these sounds are part of your prayer arsenal?**

## **1. Thanksgiving**

Prayers of thanksgiving are like the first movement in a symphony. They open the way to a concert of worship and intercession. The psalmist declares, "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving" (Ps. 100:4), and that is what we do. That is what happened for the grateful leper in Luke 17:11-19.

According to Old Testament law, lepers were supposed to declare, "Unclean! Unclean!" wherever they went (see Lev. 13:45), and they were expected to stay away from other people. But 10 lepers approached Jesus for healing. Nine of them continued on their way, incredulous and in high spirits. But one turned around and came back to express his thanks directly to the rabbi whose power had healed him. He is the one whose thankful heart opened the way to more liberty, joy, and healing. The others were cleansed—but he was made whole. Jesus told him, "Your faith has made you well" (Luke 17:19b). Thanksgiving is an important quality of a healthy, whole person.

## **2. High Praise**

What follows “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving”? It is “and into His courts with praise” (Ps. 100:4). Thanksgiving and praise are not quite the same thing. There is a progression. First, we thank God for His goodness: “For the Lord is good” (v. 5a). Then, we praise Him for His greatness: “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised”(Ps. 48:1a). Always remember that praise is one of the highest weapons of spiritual warfare. Praise opens prison doors and sets the captives free.

### **3. Worship**

Following thanksgiving and praise, we move into heartfelt worship. Despite the fact that I am comparing these aspects of prayer to instruments in an orchestra, in reality, worship pertains less to music—which is how we tend to think of it in a contemporary church context—and more to an inner attitude of the heart. To worship is to bow down, to kneel, to prostrate oneself.

We might begin with joyful shouting, as Psalm 95 encourages us in its first few verses, because God is so great. Our expressions of praise, which can be chosen as an act of the will, may then lead us into heartfelt worship as the ultimate expression of surrender to God. Worship, according to the first point of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, is “the chief end of man.” It is foundational to our faith, with or without audible musical notes.

### **4. Dedication (Consecration)**

Building on what has come before, we present ourselves to God. We “present [our] bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God, which is [our] reasonable service of worship” (Rom. 12:1b). This enables us to enter into the high priestly prayer of Jesus in John 17 as we are set apart for the Lord and sanctified. He prayed to the Father, “For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they may also be sanctified by

the truth" (John 17:19).

Our prayers of consecration are a lovely sound to the Lord's ears. He loves to hear "saving grace" prayers, too, but our dedication and consecration prayers show Him that we know we are not our own, that we were bought with a price. "I surrender all" resounds from the orchestra of prayer. Jesus Christ is our Master and Lord!

## **5. Prayers of Commitment**

As we progress, our prayers of dedication and consecration lead to prayers of commitment, and we say, as the psalmist did, "Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O Lord God of truth" (Ps. 31:5). As we commit ourselves to Him, we rest in faith-filled trust. He will take care of us, down to the smallest detail of our lives. "Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him, and he will help you" (Ps. 37:5, NLT).

Committing is an act; trust is an attitude. Whenever your load becomes too heavy, you cast your burden onto the Lord (see 1 Pet, 5:7.) You commit it to Him. And then you leave it with Him; you trust Him with it. You give it and then leave it.

## **6. Prayers of Petition**

Many times, we pray simple prayers of petition in addition to prayers of commitment. We can expect each of our prayers to be answered—if they line up with the will of God. "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us" (1 John 5:14, MEV). I like to say it this way: God came up with the original "World Wide Web." His "WWW" consists of His will, His Word and His ways.

When you pray, do you ask the Bible way? "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you will receive them, and you will have them" (Mark 11:24). This does not mean that you will have everything you fervently

desire, but that you will align your desires with His as you walk in increasing holiness.

## **7. Prayers of Intercession**

At last, we reach intercessory prayer (the primary topic of my book, *Strike the Mark*). Did you know that all those different “sounds” of prayer must be heard first? We have to come through the gates with praise before we can enter into the Most Holy Place.

Intercession is not “devotional prayer.” That form of prayer should have been covered already in your earlier time of communion with the Lord. Intercession is making prayers of petition on behalf of others, standing in the gap between man’s imperfection and God’s perfection. We confess the iniquity of others as if it is our own and we ask for God’s mercy. (See, for example, Isa. 59:2-15.) What a high honor it is, a labor of love, to be allowed to stand in the gap on behalf of other people!

## **8. Prayers of Supplication**

The apostle James tells us that “mercy triumphs over judgment” (James 2:13b). To pray according to mercy is always to pray according to God’s heart. This is much more difficult than it sounds—even impossible. In fact, you cannot lift up a cry for mercy without receiving God’s grace to do so.

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16, KJV). We cannot come boldly to the throne of grace in our own human strength. We must come with heartfelt thanksgiving, praise, and worship, surrendering our own agendas. Then we can receive His heart of mercy and pray according to His will.

## **9. Prayers of Command**

At times, coming “boldly” entails uttering commanding words of prayer, as Joshua did when he spoke to the Lord and then released commands to the sun and the moon, so that the sun stood still for an entire day (See Josh. 10:12-15.) It takes a profound gift of faith to do something like that.

The prayer of command is declarative in nature. Even though you may not play that “instrument” regularly in the prayer orchestra, it is important to know that it is an authentic biblical option.

## **10. Prayers That Decree a Blessing**

Much more often, we utter prayers of blessing, even decreeing specific blessings. We can bless others with the words that the Lord gave to Moses, “May the Lord bless you and keep you.” Remember this key point: we are part of a speech-activated kingdom.

This is how God releases His blessings on His people: “They will put [‘invoke, NKJV marginal note] My name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them” (Num. 6:27). When, fueled by the gift of faith, you decree something that is according to the will, word, and ways of God, all things are possible! (See, for example, Matt. 19:26.)

## **11. Prayers that Thwart the Enemy**

Can we utter prayers that denounce or limit the powers of darkness? Can we bind Satan from continuing his work? Well, Jesus illustrated the believer’s power to do so when He cursed a fig tree that was not bearing fruit, after which it withered and died. (See Matt. 21:18-22.) This is like a prayer of command coupled with righteousness and faith. Jesus inspected the tree and found no figs, only leaves, on it. It had given the external appearance of being fruitful, but upon closer examination, it proved to be unproductive.

This is the kind of prayer that draws a line in the sand and

says, "Enough is enough. No more!" This form of prayer should be exercised with wisdom perimeters. It requires clear discernment and faith and should be employed only after confirmation from God.

## **12. Persistent Prayers**

The final sound in the orchestra of prayer is one of persistence. The orchestra keeps on playing even if the lights go out. There is the familiar parable in the book of Luke about the persistent widow whose appeal to the judge was answered only because she would not let it go. (See Luke 18:1-8.) Earlier in Luke, Jesus told another parable about a friend whose persistent entreaties produced results. (See Luke 11:5-8.)

Keep on praying. Don't give up. The more you pray, the more God will keep on drawing you into His heart. You and I have been called to be enforcers of the kingdom of light over the (temporary) kingdom of darkness. Giving up is not an option!

### **Target Practice**

*Almighty God, in Jesus' great name, I thank You that the fervent prayer of a righteous believer prevails! By the grace of God, I am adding these various sounds of prayer into my understanding. Holy Spirit, guide and direct me in choosing which instrument should be selected at the appropriate time and how to play it. I praise and thank You that You are teaching me how to release prayers that will strike the mark without fail in Jesus' great name. Amen and Amen! {eoa}*

*Be sure to tune in to my podcast, "God Encounters Today," on the Charisma Podcast Network. [Click here to subscribe!](#)*

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# Why There Is No Such Thing as 'Ethical Porn'

In recent years, there has been a rise in pornography producers claiming they make "ethical porn." They are trying to overcome the negative press around porn's link to human trafficking and sexual abuse.

Ethical pornography is described as porn that is legally made, fully respects the rights of both male and female performers (including consenting to all actions), provides violence-free and good working conditions, promotes sexual diversity and provides fair pay. But is that the reality?

Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology research fellow Megan Tyler says, "The claims about ethical porn ... are more industry propaganda than anything else, and are—what would elsewhere be rightly recognized as — corporate 's for a small segment of consumers who would like to think that their pornography consumption is unproblematic, and they would like to think that what they are doing is totally different from what others are doing when, in reality, it all feeds the same commercial sex industry."

The idea of ethical porn is obviously a marketing stunt that distracts people from finding healthy sexuality. It prevents people from finding true healing for the deep wounds that are the real causes of pornography addiction.

Joshua Sharp, a Master of Divinity student and graduate assistant at Truett Seminary in Waco, Texas, said, "Personally, I find the concept of 'ethically sourced porn' about as absurd as 'ethically sourced cyanide.' Pornography is corrosive to relationships, individual sexual health, and

spiritual vitality.”

## **Pornography Is Simply a Matter of Lust**

By making porn users feel that watching porn is fine since all the actors are fully consenting and enjoying their jobs, the porn industry convinces consumers that watching videos on a computer doesn't hurt anybody, so what's wrong with it?

But even if you believe the lies that the producers were doing everything legally and providing acceptable working conditions, can pornography ever be considered ethical and harmless?

According to Matthew 5:27-28, the answer is no.

“You have heard that it was said by the ancients, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.”

Joshua Sharp explains, “A person does not look at porn to appreciate the beauty of God's design for human sexuality. A person views porn specifically to pursue sexual satisfaction through the objectification of other people. The screen and the page allow the viewer to bypass relationship, commitment, sacrifice and love. The people in the picture or video are no longer people; they are objects to be used and disposed of at will. Consuming pornography, then, is inherently lustful, and those who make pornography do so specifically to feed others' lusts.”

Former porn actress Jessica Neely is now an anti-pornography activist. Bluntly she explains,

“Lust is something that is never going to be satisfied. It is a trap that makes you resent your wife. My job was to make you hate your wife. Lust is a monster that can never be satisfied. The very end-road of an all-consuming addiction is a

guaranteed death. You are going to lose everything.”

## **Porn in Any Amount Harms the Viewer**

Pornography is harmful to you because it literally changes your brain, affects your relationships with God and people and impacts all areas of your life.

Dr. Tim Jennings, the author of *The God-Shaped Brain* is also featured in a cinematic small group study that helps men quit porn. In the Conquer Series, he explains,

“I don’t want people to get this idea that you have to be a porn addict for porn to be a problem. Porn’s a problem at any dose, and it doesn’t need to be utilized at any dose. Just like I wouldn’t tell people, ‘Well, as long as you’re not addicted to cocaine, cocaine’s fine.’ Well, it’s not.”

There is a bonding nature to watching porn. You create a bond to the actress or person on your screen rather than with your wife or husband. It requires no personal interaction, commitment or rejection. Eventually, you desire to spend more and more time with the image on the screen than with your spouse.

Wendy and Larry Maltz, authors of *The Porn Trap*, wrote, “Powerful human bonding hormones, such as oxytocin and vasopressin, are released with orgasm. They contribute to establishing a lasting emotional attachment with whomever, or whatever, you happen to be with or thinking about at the time. The more orgasms you have with porn, the more sexually and emotionally attached to it you’ll become.”

## **Porn Addiction Grows Stronger**

Porn addiction is a four-step process: addiction, escalation, desensitization and acting out sexually.

Northpoint Recovery said, “What once seemed like an enjoyable way to spend a weekend can escalate quickly. It often doesn’t

take long before the porn that once excited a person to seem mundane. To compensate, they may begin viewing things that most would agree go too far.”

According to Reformers Unanimous, “Pornography addicts develop tolerance and it only takes a short time before escalation sets in ... he has to have ever-increasing ‘doses’ of pornography, and these must be of a stronger and stronger stimulation to elicit arousal originally brought on by ‘soft porn’ ... Material that would have once been repulsive—horribly shocking—now becomes acceptable, even commonplace.”

Ethical porn does not exist. Sex was created by God to be used only within the bounds of marriage. Any other use violates God’s plan and cannot lead to peace and healing.

Matt Fradd, the author of *The Porn Myth*, summarizes,

“If you want something to flourish, you need to use it in accordance with its nature. Don’t plant tomatoes in a dark closet and water them with soda and expect to have vibrant tomato plants. To do so would be to act contrary to the nature of tomatoes. Similarly, don’t rip sex out of its obvious relational context, turn it into a commodity and then expect individuals, families and society to flourish.”

## **Freedom From Porn Is Possible**

Don’t be fooled by the lie of ethical porn. If you want to be truly ethical, then live a life changed by God’s love and grace and the practical guidance of the Conquer Series. Over 1 million men are starting their journey to freedom through this course that is packed with solid biblical teaching, powerful testimonies and action video footage.

Conley Nichols has been through the Conquer Series. He wrote,

“Great series. The best I have ever seen. It has changed my life.”

Learn more at .

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## **Bill Johnson: How to Resist the 'Anti-Christ Thoughts' Deceiving the Church**

Bill Johnson believes Christians must be more vigilant than ever to be reigned in the mind of Christ and not led astray by worldly thinking. In this video clip from a recent sermon at Bethel Redding, Johnson says, "We are inundated with words, with ideas, with thoughts that are so contrary to the kingdom. I grieve as I watch people that I know in the body of Christ that will adopt things that are so contrary to the kingdom of God, and they'll not just adopt them in the sense that they no longer resist them. They will even begin to promote these things that are very, very much against Christ—Anti-Christ thoughts and ideas."

Watch the video to learn how to guard yourself against these deceptions.

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## **Nearly 40,000 Young Adults Declare 'Give Me Jesus'**

The 2019 Passion Conference drew nearly 40,000 young adults to

sold-out arenas in Atlanta, Dallas and Washington, D.C. in January. At the event, Passion's worship team—led by Melodie Malone—led them in the song "Fade Away," which declares, "Let all else fade away/ Take the whole world/ But give me Jesus/ Let all else fade away." Watch the powerful live music video of the performance [here](#).