

Lip-Synching Couple Bring the Joy of Wholesome Entertainment to the Internet

Danny and Kristin Adams were both already making a good living in the entertainment industry in Los Angeles.

But both members of the Christian couple knew, deep down inside, it wasn't enough to satisfy their souls as believers. They knew that, if they were going to serve God well, changes had to be made.

They moved the family from California to Indianapolis, Indiana, where they began to make internet videos. Not ordinary videos, but comedic, lip-synching videos—in costume for the most part—that have gone viral on their YouTube channel, their Facebook page and on their own website, .

Considering the very questionable material that comes over the airwaves these days, it's wholesome, family-oriented content that Danny Adams says many people, especially Christians, simply crave.

“Our heart is to make family-friendly content, where God is always welcome,” Danny told Charisma News' Jeff Struss. “I grew up with that; Kristin grew up with that; but that type of programming just doesn't seem to exist much anymore.

“Lip-synching was big in our lives in the 1980s, and it swung back around a few years ago. Where other people are lip-synching now, we've kinda cornered the market on this because we added the layers of costuming and things like that. I think we grabbed the attention of people just going down memory lane with the right kind of music. It's fun, and most only last 10 seconds until you hear a new song and see a new look between us.

“This is something very powerful, I believe,” Danny said. “You’ve got grandma, grandpa, the parents and the kids watching the same thing at the same time. It’s great stuff.”

In addition, the Adamses recently wrote a marriage book titled *The Road to Love and Laughter: Navigating the Twists and Turns of Life Together*, and it has captured the attention of the public well.

For more of the Adamses’ story and to find out how you can enjoy their fun content, watch the video above and tune into .
{eoa}

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.

Michael Gungor, Atheism and the Great Falling Away

Michael Gungor is the latest Christian celebrity to denounce Christ, part of the unfortunate fulfillment of a prophetically-inspired question I posed nearly a decade ago announcing the great falling away is underway.

The popular Christian alternative rock musician is a full-blown atheist now. And his wife has followed him into his apostasy. A meme is circulating around Instagram in which Gungor insists, “Jesus was Christ. Buddha was Christ. Muhammad was Christ. Christ is a word for the Universe itself. You are Christ. We are the body of Christ.”

Blasphemy! This is a doctrine of demons! He’s not the first. A growing number of “visible” Christians have turned their back

on Christ—and for all those with name recognition, there are likely thousands upon thousands more who have strayed from His heart.

Don't ignore the signs of the times. In His discussions on the end of the age, Jesus warned us not to let anyone deceive us (Matt. 24). If it weren't possible to get caught up in the great falling away, Jesus wouldn't have issued such a strong warning to His followers and left a record of it for you and me.

Discerning Doctrines of Demons

Paul wrote, “Now the Spirit clearly says that in the last times some will depart from the faith and pay attention to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their consciences seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth” (1 Tim. 4:1-3).

Some have indeed departed from the faith because they have engaged with deceiving spirits and embraced doctrines of demons. We've witnessed more than one man of God with a major ministry platform bow a knee to doctrines like universalism, deceiving and being deceived with this deadly heresy. Despite many in the church lifting their voice against heretical teachings, these deceived ministers hold fast to their demonic doctrine.

We've also watched famous pastors speak lies in hypocrisy—lies that left many hurt, wounded and disillusioned—and yet they remain adored and adorned in the megachurches that made their name great. Clearly, the conscience of some influential church leaders has already been seared with a hot iron (see 1 Tim. 4:2). Some have become the proverbial blind leading the blind.

And would you believe it? Some modern-day, Spirit-filled churches even reserve the right to tell you whom you can or

can't marry (along with many other details of your personal life). I've known folks who have nervously gone to ask the pastor for permission to marry another congregant, hoping that their request wasn't denied and their love wasn't dashed. And this wasn't during the Shepherding movement but recently.

The Great Falling Away

Victorious believers will overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony—and the fact that they do not love their lives even unto death (Rev. 12:11). I fear there may be fewer victorious believers at the end of the age than some may think.

The Bible tells us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12). We need to get at it because this is sure: Jesus is coming back for a glorious church without spot or wrinkle (Eph. 5:27). I believe the spots and wrinkles will fall away before His return. The gates of hell are trying to prevail against the church and will ultimately fail, but not before enticing some believers into heresy, idolatry and other sin.

I don't believe in once-saved, always-saved doctrines. I believe you can lose your salvation. I don't think it happens overnight. I think it's a slow progression down the slippery slope of deception.

I often ask people who are deceived this question: "How would you know if you were deceived?" I've never met one who was deceived find an answer for the question. Rather, they insist that they cannot be deceived or that they would know if they were. If we don't think we could be deceived, we're deceived already. And if we are deceived, we wouldn't know it unless the Holy Spirit broke in and opened the eyes of our heart.
{eoa}

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.

New CfaN Church Movement Exploding With Growth Despite Pandemic

A new study from Lifeway Research says church attendance across the U.S. is declining. A Gallup poll released in March says that church closures are projected to double or triple in the aftermath of the COVID pandemic.

These findings are summarized by an article in Religion News Service titled "Study: More churches closing than opening." Yet despite these grim reports, there is another side to the story. Daniel Kolenda (successor to the renowned evangelist Reinhard Bonnke) believes that there is a golden opportunity presenting itself to the church.

"It's an opportunity for a reset," Kolenda said. "What if we could use this occasion to return to a more authentic expression of church—preaching the gospel, winning the lost, and discipling the nations."

Kolenda is not simply theorizing. In the height of the pandemic, he, and the ministry he leads—Christ for all Nations (CfaN)—started planning to launch a brand-new local church expression of their ministry. The new effort is picking up incredible momentum as it heads toward its official August 15 launch date.

More than 1,000 people have professed newfound faith in Christ as a result of their outreaches in Orlando over the last few months. Dozens of local small discipleship groups have been launched—often attended by the many new converts. Lakes, ponds, swimming pools and hot tubs have become baptismal

tanks. It has all the energy and momentum of a movement.

Hundreds of ministers from across the U.S. and around the world have relocated to the greater Orlando area to be a part of Nations Church. Many of them originally came to be trained in Christ for all Nations' mass Evangelism Bootcamp.

CfaN has documented more than 80-million conversions through their supermassive outdoor "crusades." They have seen some of the largest gatherings in human history, with hundreds of thousands regularly packing large fields to hear the gospel preached. Their Evangelism Bootcamp is a strategy to "multiply evangelists for the harvest."

But it's not just the Bootcamp Evangelists that are relocating. Many internationally recognized ministers have come to fill roles in the nascent congregation's leadership team. On Mother's Day in May, Kolenda announced that Eric Gilmour (Sonship International) would join the pastoral team with plans to bring his popular teaching ministry to the church.

On May 23, Kolenda again brought exciting news to the young congregation: Scott McNamara (Author of *Jesus at the Door*) will join the team to lead the church's evangelism department. McNamara joins a "dream team" of highly influential and nationally recognized evangelists, like Levi Lutz, Joe Oden and Jerri Hill, wife of the famed Brownsville Revival Evangelist Steve Hill (1954-2014), that are also on the leadership team.

On June 6, Kolenda likewise told a capacity "Pre-Launch" crowd that world-renowned praise and worship leader, Eddie James, will relocate to Orlando, with his entire ministry, to serve as the Nations Church worship director. James will head a team that already includes the legendary Leonard Jones (formerly of Morning Star Worship), dynamic worship pastor Jenny Weaver, acclaimed worship leader/songwriter Amber Brooks, *The Voice*

finalist Andrea (Thomas) Hand and many more.

In addition to these ministers and leaders, hundreds of families are relocating to Orlando from around the country to be a part of the church's "launch team"—so many, in fact, the church has a link on its ministry home page that asks the question: "Moving to Orlando?" They have had to establish a special department to assist those relocating to be part of the new church.

The obvious question regarding all this excitement is "Why?" Each person has their own reason. Some point to divine leading. Some are drawn by the vision. Eddie James gave his perspective in a recent interview, saying, "I believe God is doing this because there is a harvest coming, and He is going to use Nations Church as a model—it's just the tip of the spear. It's an opportunity to demonstrate one of the greatest shifts of culture in church history."

Although the church has not technically started yet (officially launching on August 15), attendance at the pre-launch "Worship and Intercession Services" has reached capacity. The team is already on the hunt for larger facilities! Even more astonishing is the number of volunteers and "launch team" members who have signed up to help with everything from parking cars to children's church. At a recent meeting, Daniel Kolenda announced that Nations Church is on target to build a launch team of 1,500 people before the grand opening.

This incredible growth seems even more extraordinary against the backdrop of record numbers of church closures and decreasing church attendance across the nation. Perhaps the rise of Nations Church is just a glimpse of things to come—a fresh wave of new churches and ministries arising to meet the demands of a rapidly changing cultural landscape. Perhaps it is, as Kolenda put it, "an opportunity for a reset." {eoa}

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.

Disney Makes Television History Again With First Non-Binary Character

The Walt Disney mass media company is at it again, and it is making television history.

The organization introduced its first non-binary character in one of its Disney Channel series. Raine Whispers appeared in “Eda’s Requiem,” episode seven of season two of *The Owl House* on July 24.

The Owl House is a fantasy comedy that follows the story of a teenager in Connecticut who stumbles upon a portal to a magical realm and befriends a rebellious witch, Eda.

Non-binary, or genderqueer, according to Wikipedia, is an umbrella term for gender identities that are neither male nor female—identities that are outside the gender binary. Non-binary identities fall under the transgender umbrella since non-binary people typically identify with a gender that is different from their assigned sex, although some non-binary individuals do not consider themselves transgender, Wikipedia says.

The character is voiced by non-binary actor Avi Roque, who considers the opportunity as a “dream come true,” *Yahoo* reported. He says the pronouns used to describe his character are they/them.

Disney first introduced LGBTQ characters Luz Noceda and Amity Blight in *The Owl House* during the first season in 2020.

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, *CHARISMA PLUS*.

Through Churches Like Hillsong Atlanta, Facebook Says It's Now Targeting 'The Religious Experience'

Of all of the Big Tech venues, guess who says they are now targeting the "religious experience" in America? And take a wild guess at who is reporting on it.

It's Facebook, and it's *The New York Times*. That's not a misprint.

The New York Times, long considered one of the most liberal media outlets in the world, published what many Christians might deem a very odd story by Elizabeth Dias. It described how Facebook had made a proposition to pastor Sam Collier of Hillsong's new church in Atlanta, which opened within the past year, "to use the church as a case study to explore how churches can 'go further' on Facebook."

Strange as it may seem, that proposition came after Collier sought advice from Facebook on how to build a church in a pandemic, *The Times* reported.

"Facebook developers met weekly with Hillsong and explored what the church would look like on Facebook and what apps they

might create for financial giving, video capability or livestreaming,” the *Times* reports. “When it came time for Hillsong’s grand opening in June, the church issued a news release saying it was ‘partnering with Facebook’ and began streaming its services exclusively on the platform.”

“They are teaching us; we are teaching them,” Collier said. “Together we are discovering what the future of the church could be on Facebook.”

Why would Facebook do such a thing after its extensive history of limiting Christian outreach on the social media channel? In May 2021, actor Kevin Sorbo said his Facebook page had been deleted because “I’m a conservative Christian.”

In 2021, *Christian Newswire* reported that Facebook had blocked 70 million people from conservative content.

The *Times* piece met with skeptics in its Facebook comments section:

– Jennifer Taylor: “The only reason they are doing this is because church membership is at an all-time low and they want money,” Jennifer Taylor says.”

– Heather Riz: “Nope, nope nope! Religion’s place are in their houses of worship or on private FB groups. I don’t want to see ads telling me to go find Jesus or anything. Not my thing. To each his own, though.”

– DemocratsforLiberty: “Just as more and more people are turning away from religion, the big question is what is in it for Facebook? \$ of course.”

– Carla Rodrigues: “Quite sure God is not on FB.”

Diaz admitted that Facebook, which she said passed \$1 trillion in capitalization, “may seem like an unusual partner for a church whose primary goal is to share the message of Jesus” ... but that “the company has been cultivating partnerships with a

wide ranges of faith communities over the years.”

But beware. Later in the article, Diaz wrote that “the partnerships reveal how Big Tech and religion are converging far beyond simply moving services to the Internet. Facebook is shaping the future of religious experience itself, as it has done for political and social life.”

“The company’s [Facebook] effort to court faith groups comes as it is trying to repair its image among Americans who have lost confidence in the platform, especially on issues of privacy,” the article continues. “Facebook has faced scrutiny for its role in the country’s growing disinformation crisis and breakdown of societal trust, especially around politics, and regulators have grown concerned. About its outsize power.”

Collier says the partnership is all about evangelism.

“We have never been more postured for the Great Commission now,” he says, adding that Jesus said to “make disciples of all nations.” He told Diaz he is partnering with Facebook “to directly impact and help churches navigate and reach the parishioner better.” {eoa}

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.

It’s Time to Go Through Your Open Door

Acts 10:30-33 reads:

Cornelius said, “Four days ago I was fasting until this hour. At the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and suddenly a man

stood before me in bright clothing, and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered before God. Therefore send to Joppa for Simon, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. When he comes, he will speak to you.' So immediately I sent for you, and you have done well to come. Now therefore we are all here, present before God, to hear everything the Lord has commanded you."

This was the beginning of a phenomenal moment in history. God used one man with a deep reverence for God, a Gentile named Cornelius, to become the open door to the Gentile world. Up until this point, the gospel was only for the Jew. Yet suddenly the door opened through one hungry heart. Cornelius could not take the gospel to the Gentile world—it would have been foolish for him to try—but God could do it through him.

In the same way, when you are willing to open your heart to God's will, beginning with your own household, and then to your friends, neighbors and even people in places you have never been, you will discover that there is no limit to what God can do through a hungry heart.

When I was young I was very fearful, especially afraid of people in crowded rooms. I felt I had little to offer the kingdom of God, but I did have a hungry heart. I was walking the beat one day as a young cop, and I just started praying, "Lord, I want to win 100,000 people to You before I die." Then I began to be very specific in my prayer. "I don't want them to just be people who raise their hand in a service somewhere. I want them to be people who actually live for You and end up at Your throne. You will be able to look them in the eye and say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'"

Now at this point, I had never preached a sermon. I had no ability to speak in public whatsoever. But I had a hungry heart, and I was willing to embrace the impossible. I said,

“God, I am asking You to do something so far beyond me.”

Fast-forward many years later to when I was standing in the fields of Nigeria, in the midst of a civil war. By local estimates, there were somewhere between 400,000 to 700,000 people gathered. You could not see an end to the crowd in any direction. I remember that first night preaching to nominal Christians, Christians and Muslims, and talking about the worthlessness of all religion that has no compassion for its neighbor. I asked people if they were willing to open their hearts to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and about 100,000 people raised their hands to receive Christ!

I went back to my hotel room, and it suddenly dawned on me that in one hour, God had answered a prayer I had prayed years ago when all I had was a hungry heart. I got down on my knees beside my bed to give God thanks, and the first thing He spoke to my heart was, “Carter, don’t limit Me. Don’t put boundaries around Me. There is no limit to what can be accomplished through a hungry heart!”

In the book of Revelation, Jesus spoke to a particular church in Philadelphia, saying, “I know your works. Look! I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it. For you have a little strength, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name” (Rev. 3:8). In other words, “I know your heart hungers for Me; I know you want My presence in your life. I also know you do not have a lot of confidence in yourself or in your own abilities, but I have set before you an open door that no one can shut.”

I feel God is speaking the same thing to somebody reading this today. “You only have a little strength, but you have kept My Word the best you knew how. You have tried to walk with Me, and you have not denied My name by allowing unbelief to grip your heart. You still believe that I can do what I say I will do. You still believe that all things are possible with Me. And so I have set before you an open door, and as you go

through it, I will do something so powerful in and through you that people will have to acknowledge that I have loved you.”

I encourage you to yield to God’s plan for your life. You have no idea what He is willing to do through you. He has something in mind that is so much bigger than anything you ever thought your life could amount to. But it starts with a hungry heart ... and then one little step of faith ... and then another step. Just keep going through every door He opens, and He will give you His Word, His plan and His Spirit. He will fill you with courage, and you will be amazed at the difference your life will make in this generation! {eoa}

Carter Conlon, *pastor of Times Square Church and host of It’s Time to Pray, was a speaker at the 2021 Promise Keepers Men’s Conference at AT&T Stadium.*

Founded in 1990 by Coach Bill McCartney, Promise Keepers is one of the most significant movements of God in the history of the church. In 1997 alone, Promise Keepers packed 22 NFL stadiums and gathered 1 million men for Stand in the Gap: A Sacred Assembly of Men at the National Mall in the District of Columbia.

Today, PK is on the move again. Under the new leadership of Ken Harrison, we’re praying for massive revival and transformation in our nation by 2025. More than ever, America needs a revival of godly men. Our nation faces problems that can only be overcome when men of integrity–promise-keeping men–fulfill their destinies as godly husbands, fathers and leaders. To find out more, click [here](#) or [here](#). You can also connect with Promise Keepers on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube.

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.

Veterans Affairs Plus New York City, California Mandate Vaccinations for Health Care Workers

The Department of Veterans Affairs became the first federal agency on Monday to require vaccination for its 115,000 health care workers. The American Medical Association and 56 other leading medical organizations are now calling for mandatory vaccinations for workers at all health care settings, including nursing homes nationwide.

California will soon require vaccination or negative weekly COVID tests for state and health care workers. New York City will also mandate vaccines or tests for municipal workers, including teachers and health care workers, and urging private employers to require shots.

“It’s quite clear the delta variant has changed the game,” said New York Mayor Bill de Blasio (D). “We need to move to stronger measures.”

In the meantime, Florida’s governor says ordinary people should not be forced or mocked into taking the vaccine.

“They have different reasons for why they don’t take it, and I think that the more they’re hectorred by government officials or some of these folks, that is not gonna get them to ‘yes,’ I can tell you that right now,” said Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis (R).

Los Angeles, California; St. Louis, Missouri; Savannah,

Georgia and other areas are imposing mask mandates indoors even for the vaccinated. That goes against CDC guidance stating only the unvaccinated should wear masks inside, but that may change.

“It is scary, especially when the numbers are getting worse,” Missouri resident Audrey Thomas said. “I definitely think wearing masks would be a good thing.”

The delta variant, which makes up 83% of COVID cases in America, is much more contagious than other strains we’ve seen before, largely because people infected with it can carry up to 1,000 times more virus. That means people who have no immunity are most vulnerable. {eoa}

For the rest of the story, visit our content partners at .

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.

What Government Said About the Bible

I had the privilege to interview Robert J. Morgan last week in our studio. His grandson Luke was with him, and we had a divine appointment to discuss his new book, *The Jordan River Rules*. My time with Morgan propelled me back into his bestselling book, *100 Bible Verses That Made America*.

When I first began to read the book, I spot-read various verses, and each reading inspired me deeply. I continued to read the book as a devotional a few mornings of each week.

This past weekend, after spending time with Morgan, I read the

book from start to finish. I'm so glad I did. When colleagues asked the routine Monday-morning question, "How was your weekend?" I could only think about what I'm about to share with you.

Vice President Theodore Roosevelt, addressing the Long Island Bible Society only weeks before being thrust into the presidency by the assassination of William McKinley, said, "A very large number of people tend to forget that the teachings of the Bible are so interwoven and entwined with our whole civic and social life that it would be literally—I do not mean figuratively, I mean literally—impossible for us to figure to ourselves what that life would be if these teachings were removed" (Robert J. Morgan, . *100 Bible Verses That Made America*, pp. xxi-xxii).

Roosevelt was prophetic. Yes, it is impossible to consider what life would be like without the Bible. Yet here we are in 2021, clearly able to picture living without a Bible in our hands. How many events do you read or hear about today that you never thought would happen?

President Franklin Roosevelt said, "We cannot read the history of our rise and development as a Nation without reckoning with the place the Bible has occupied in shaping the advances of the Republic."

I'm reckoning the decline of our republic as a cohort moves away from even a puny parcel of belief in the Bible as the inspired Word of God.

John Jay, the first chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, said, "The Bible is the best of all books, for it is the Word of God and teaches us the way to be happy in this world and the next. Continue therefore to read it and to regulate your life by its precepts" (Morgan).

It's stunning to read that a chief justice of the Supreme Court exhorted Americans to "regulate our life" by the

precepts taught in the Bible.

“In regard to this Great Book,” wrote Abraham Lincoln in a letter dated Sept. 7, 1864, “I have but to say it is the best gift God has given to man. All the good the Savior gave to the world was communicated through this Book” (Morgan).

Arguably the greatest president ever to lead America agreed that the Bible is a gift that keeps on giving.

Calvin Coolidge said, “The foundation of our society and our government rest so much on the teachings of the Bible that it would be difficult to support them if faith in these teachings would cease to be practically universal in our country” (Morgan).

We’ve come a long way from “practically universal.” Morgan’s assembly of significant quotes from government leaders of that era at once reminds us of the spiritual focus our country once prescribed and of how far we have drifted from the path. We need leaders who encourage a closer walk with God.

“A prudent person sees evil and hides himself, But the naive proceed, and pay the penalty”(Prov. 22:3, NASB).

Listen to both episodes of *Greenelines* with guest Robert J. Morgan here (*Bible Verses That Made America*) and here (*The Jordan River Rules*)*here (The Jordan River Rules)*. Subscribe to *Greenelines* on your favorite podcast platform for more inspiring stories like these. {eoa}

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.

Michael Gungor, Atheism and the Great Falling Away

Michael Gungor is the latest Christian celebrity to denounce Christ, part of the unfortunate fulfillment of a prophetically-inspired question I posed nearly a decade ago announcing the great falling away is underway.

The popular Christian alternative rock musician is a full-blown atheist now. And his wife has followed him into his apostasy. A meme is circulating around Instagram in which Gungor insists, "Jesus was Christ. Buddha was Christ. Muhammad was Christ. Christ is a word for the Universe itself. You are Christ. We are the body of Christ."

Blasphemy! This is a doctrine of demons! He's not the first. A growing number of "visible" Christians have turned their back on Christ—and for all those with name recognition, there are likely thousands upon thousands more who have strayed from His heart.

Don't ignore the signs of the times. In His discussions on the end of the age, Jesus warned us not to let anyone deceive us (Matt. 24). If it weren't possible to get caught up in the great falling away, Jesus wouldn't have issued such a strong warning to His followers and left a record of it for you and me.

Discerning Doctrines of Demons

Paul wrote, "Now the Spirit clearly says that in the last times some will depart from the faith and pay attention to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their consciences seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth" (1 Tim. 4:1-3).

Some have indeed departed from the faith because they have engaged with deceiving spirits and embraced doctrines of demons. We've witnessed more than one man of God with a major ministry platform bow a knee to doctrines like universalism, deceiving and being deceived with this deadly heresy. Despite many in the church lifting their voice against heretical teachings, these deceived ministers hold fast to their demonic doctrine.

We've also watched famous pastors speak lies in hypocrisy—lies that left many hurt, wounded and disillusioned—and yet they remain adored and adorned in the megachurches that made their name great. Clearly, the conscience of some influential church leaders has already been seared with a hot iron (see 1 Tim. 4:2). Some have become the proverbial blind leading the blind.

And would you believe it? Some modern-day, Spirit-filled churches even reserve the right to tell you whom you can or can't marry (along with many other details of your personal life). I've known folks who have nervously gone to ask the pastor for permission to marry another congregant, hoping that their request wasn't denied and their love wasn't dashed. And this wasn't during the Shepherding movement but recently.

The Great Falling Away

Victorious believers will overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony—and the fact that they did not love their lives even unto death (Rev. 12:11). I fear there may be fewer victorious believers at the end of the age than some may think.

The Bible tells us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12). We need to get at it because this is sure: Jesus is coming back for a glorious church without spot or wrinkle (Eph. 5:27). I believe the spots and wrinkles will fall away before His return. The gates of hell are trying to prevail against the church and will ultimately fail, but not

before enticing some believers into heresy, idolatry and other sin.

I don't believe in once-saved, always-saved doctrines. I believe you can lose your salvation. I don't think it happens overnight. I think it's a slow progression down the slippery slope of deception.

I often ask people who are deceived this question: "How would you know if you were deceived?" I've never met one who was deceived find an answer for the question. Rather, they insist that they cannot be deceived or that they would know if they were. If we don't think we could be deceived, we're deceived already. And if we are deceived, we wouldn't know it unless the Holy Spirit broke in and opened the eyes of our heart.
{eoa}

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.

Still Single? This Advice Might Help You Find a Mate

This past weekend I went to Seattle to help perform the wedding of my friends Mehari and Selam, two immigrants from Eritrea who fell in love only recently. They met remotely—not

on a dating site, but during a Zoom Bible study hosted by an Eritrean pastor from California during the pandemic.

Their wedding was a lavish, two-day affair that included colorful Eritrean costumes, drumming, lots of dancing and several feasts. But Mehari and Selam wanted Jesus to be the center of the celebration because they know He's the one who brought them together. They wanted all their single friends to know it's possible for two people in their 30s to find each other.

I meet lots of singles these days who are anxious about their dating prospects. The clock is ticking, and they wonder if God is still in the matchmaking business. I always assure them that He is—but that there are some things they can do to get in the position to find a mate. If you want to be married, here are some steps that might help move you further along in the process:

– **Make sure Jesus is on the throne of your life.** You can never go wrong when you put God first. Matthew 6:33 (NASB) says: “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided to you.” Marriage is a need, and God is eager to meet it. And since it is the biggest decision you'll ever make, why trust your own instincts to choose the right person? Ask the Lord to guide you.

– **Make spiritual growth your priority.** A marriage is strong when both the husband and the wife are strong Christians. If either is immature spiritually, problems will multiply. That's why you should spend your single years becoming a mature disciple. Paul told the Corinthians that single believers should pursue “undistracted devotion to the Lord” (1 Cor. 7:35b). Get involved in a church, study God's Word and become a passionate worshipper.

– **Make a list of your relationship preferences.** It's OK to desire certain qualities in a spouse. Maybe you prefer a girl

who is short, a guy who is older than you or someone who has a certain educational background. Psalm 37:4 says: "Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart." Just check your motives and make sure your desires are not selfish or unrealistic.

– **Get rid of your false expectations and fantasies.** Many singles have totally unrealistic ideas about what marriage and romance are all about. Some girls have been conditioned by Disney cartoons to expect a guy to sweep them off their feet and take them to his fairy tale castle. That's not going to happen. Neither will you ever feel the level of heartthrob described in romance novels. Pornography has also ruined romance for people; some guys who are addicted to porn can't even experience normal arousal without it. Come down to earth and get real. Marriage will never resemble your perfect dream world.

– **Set your moral standards high and never sell out.** Every unmarried Christian needs a list of non-negotiables. Never compromise your sexual purity. If a sweet-talking guy from your church's worship team tries to lure you into a one-night stand, refuse his charm. If you feel attracted to a girl and then realize she flirts with every guy and doesn't share your values, back off. And never date a nonbeliever with the intention of converting them.

– **Get busy with your life and career.** The worst thing any single can do is sit around waiting for a mate. Moping is not attractive. Don't be desperate. God loves you just the way you are, and you don't need a husband or wife to make you valuable. Live your life. Finish your education, achieve your professional goals and get involved in ministry. It's more likely you will find your mate while pursuing your dreams than while sitting in a corner mourning your singleness. (And remember: Love does not pay the bills. You need a job to be married!)

– **Seek emotional healing.** I know singles who jump from one dysfunctional dating relationship to the next and never realize they have serious issues to address. Don't wait until you are married to realize you have addictions, bitterness or unresolved pain. If you don't get rid of your drama now, your marriage will be filled with drama. Seek prayer ministry at your church or find a counselor.

– **Take care of yourself physically.** You don't have to be a cover girl or a GQ stud to find a mate. We come in all shapes and sizes, and your spouse is going to love you the way you are. But making yourself more attractive doesn't hurt. If you always look like you just got out of bed, ask some honest friends to give you a makeover. If you need to lose weight, stop making excuses and start a sensible food plan and exercise routine.

– **Develop an active social life.** Some Christian guys I know are afraid to ask a girl out for coffee, yet they play video games all day while complaining about loneliness. You will never find a mate in a vacuum. You have to break out of your shell and make yourself available. You don't have to pair up when you gather with a group of singles for fellowship. Many dating relationships start as innocent friendships—and then a romantic spark turns into a flame.

– **Find a married mentor to help you prepare.** You don't have to navigate the journey from dating to marriage all by yourself. Seek out a trusted older friend to help you. Ask questions. Share your fears. Marriage is a huge decision, but a mentor can give you the courage to embrace your future. And they will be cheering the loudest at your wedding because they've played a small part in God's miracle.

When I saw Mehari and Selam standing together at the church altar last weekend I was reminded again that God is in the business of putting the right people together. He loves marriage because He created it! You don't have to be anxious

about it. Psalm 37:5 says: “Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He will do it.” {eoa}

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.