

Despite COVID Restrictions, Bill Johnson Says Churches 'First Have a Responsibility to God'

As the senior leader of the charismatic megachurch, Bethel Church, in Redding, California, Bill Johnson was one of many ministry leaders in the state who were put into an awkward position by Governor Gavin Newsom during the COVID-19 crisis in 2020 and 2021.

Johnson and other kingdom leaders worked diligently with local authorities to do what was lawfully responsible during the pandemic. But Johnson told me on [a recent edition of the Strang Report](#), their biggest priority is to “maintain the values that we have as leaders of a church family.”

In other words, leaders could not ignore their duty to their congregations and their vow to God to continue to bring the gospel to the masses.

Ministry leaders like Johnson were forced to walk a fine line. In the end, however, God and His warriors won. When the COVID-19 restrictions were slightly relaxed, Johnson says the glory of the Lord came to his Bethel congregation “in ways we’ve not seen for a very long time.”

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During the pandemic, churches had been considered “nonessential” in California and therefore weren’t able to meet, despite other congregations being allowed to do so in other states. Churches who ignored the mandate were harassed and fined.

Pastor Che Ahn, founder of Harvest Rock Church and Harvest International Ministry, received threatening letters from the Pasadena criminal prosecutor saying staff and anyone who attended church would face criminal charges, each up to one year in prison, and daily fines of \$1,000.

Those threats alone caused a great deal of anxiety for kingdom leaders in California.

“This past year has been like no other: that goes without saying,” Johnson says. “The lockdown, all of the restrictions in our country, but more specifically, I mean, who would have ever thought that the church would be called ‘nonessential’ and that the government would try to levy fines on churches

for holding services?

“It really has been a crazy season—an unexpected season. We were really warned of the Lord to get into the system and not be afraid of politics and politicians. We have worked really hard with our local authorities to do what is responsible in this pandemic. We’ve walked in good standing with the city and had good counsel with the health leaders. We’ve tried to be responsible citizens, but also responsible for the Lord to love people and serve them well. It’s been our approach to honor city government because we have meaningful relationships there. But, most importantly, we must be honorable to serve the church well, and that’s what we’ve committed ourselves to do.”

Johnson said other churches in the Redding area continued to meet, but due to its high profile, Bethel continued to receive criticism from the media for any actions deemed inappropriate during the pandemic.

“They [other churches] are not the focal point of the news,” Johnson said. “They’re not the focal point of public criticism. We felt that our responsibility was to follow the policies the best way we knew how, but also to make our presence known and to train our people to have their meetings in their homes. And so, we ignored all policies that said people couldn’t meet in homes and that sort of thing. We actually worked hard to support or to fuel or empower the people to meet in homes, and we’ve had tremendous breakthrough as a result.”

And once churches return to full capacity, Johnson said he expects even stronger breakthrough not only in California, but around the country.

For more of my interview with Bill Johnson, [listen to the entire episode of the Strang Report at this link](#). Be sure to subscribe to the *Strang Report* on [Apple Podcasts](#) or your

favorite podcast platform for more words that will inspire and challenge you in the power of the Holy Spirit. {eoa}

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Joyce Meyer: Keys to Answered Prayer

When you pray, do you have a vague feeling that something is lacking ... that there isn't any power in your prayers? Do you struggle with doubt or fear, or simply lack confidence that God even hears you at all?

I used to have feelings like this and would think, *Maybe I didn't say the right thing, or pray long enough, or my words weren't eloquent enough.* It was so frustrating because I didn't want to waste time, wondering if it was doing any good. After I pray, I want to know that God is working and my prayers make a difference.

It's easy to complicate our relationship with God and think we have to do certain things a certain way for them to be effective. But I've discovered that powerful, life-changing, dynamic prayer is amazingly simple!

Two Things We Must Do

It's vitally important for us to have faith in God when we pray. Hebrews 11:6 (AMPC) says, "Without faith it is impossible to please and be satisfactory to Him. For whoever would come near to God must [necessarily] believe that God exists and that He is the rewarder of those who earnestly and

diligently seek Him [out].”

Ask yourself, “Do I believe God hears me, that He cares about me and wants to be involved in every area of my life?” If we don’t really believe God loves us and wants to help us, we will struggle to have faith in Him. That’s why knowing and experiencing the love of God is critical to developing a powerful prayer life.

It’s also important to approach God with sincere hearts. James 5:16b says, “The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working].” A sincere heart is focused on God, trusting that He hears you and will answer. It doesn’t mean you have to cry or yell to pray with sincerity; it’s all about the attitude of your heart toward God.

You Have to Ask

It’s exciting to get the revelation that God loves us, cares for us and wants to help us. But we have a part to do in getting the things God has for us—we have to ask. James 4:2b says, “...You do not have, because you do not ask.”

Now, it’s important to understand that we have to ask for God’s will to be done, not just for the things we think we want or should have apart from Him. James 4:1 tells us that striving to get what we want based on our carnal or fleshly desires leads to “strife (discord and feuds) ... conflicts (quarrels and fightings).” This causes us to be jealous, covet what others have and become angry when we can’t “obtain [the gratification, the contentment, and the happiness]” we are seeking (James 4:2).

These verses show us what causes problems in people’s lives. We think we’re unhappy because we don’t have all the stuff we want. But the reality is only God can give us what we’re longing for in our hearts. He alone is the source of righteousness, peace and joy (see Rom. 14:17). And we will

never enjoy life until we learn to abide in Him and trust Him to do what's best for us.

The Key to Praying for God's Will

If you're not sure whether you're asking for God's will in your life (and we all go through times like this), then you need to take time to just abide in Christ. In John 15:7, Jesus says, "If you live in Me [abide vitally united to Me] and My words remain in you and continue to live in your hearts, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you."

To abide means to live, dwell and remain; it's not just spending time with God on Sunday morning and then going through your week doing what you want apart from Him. God wants to do life with us Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday too! As we spend time studying His Word, meditating on the Word, communicating with Him through prayer and asking Him to fulfill His plans for us, we will know His will in our hearts.

It's an amazing privilege to be able to talk to God! I want to encourage you to come to Him with humility and ask Him for the desires that are in your heart. Tell Him, *"Lord, I don't want anything You don't want me to have. So if this is not Your will, don't give it to Me. I'm trusting You and want You to be in control of my life."* Pray about everything that's on your heart, and keep it simple. Remember, prayer is simply talking to God, and you can pray anytime, anywhere, all day long ... and He will answer. {eoa}

Note: The views and opinions expressed throughout this publication and/or website are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Joyce Meyer Ministries.

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Prophetic Word: The Lord Says, 'I Am Rebooting Your Love Walk'

At the start of the month, I asked the Lord what He had in mind for May, and this is what He said:

"In May, I am rebooting your 'love walk.' Your love has grown cold in many areas compared to the way I desire for My love to burn in you. You have been too exhausted to love well, but now that I have rebooted your soul and spirit through some measure of rest and refreshing, it's time for Me to reboot your love walk also.

"Think not that your time of rest and refreshing is over; it is not. In reality, it has only begun. It may take several years for you to learn the new rhythms of a life that is based in My rest, but this month, I will reinforce your foundations, beginning with your love walk. It is time for you to become lovesick for Me again.

"Read Psalm 119 this month and pray through it. It is the lovesick prayer of a hungry man, the prayer of My servant David. Allow the words of this psalm to saturate your soul. These words are My words that I put in David's mouth to pray and express himself, and they will help you express yourself too. This is the psalm of the month."

Concentrate on Your Foundations

"May is a month of foundations. Concentrate on your foundations this month:

- "Become revitalized in your seeking of Me.
- "Ask Me to help you hunger and thirst after My Word again.
- "Ask Me to make you a person of prayer, of the Word, of fasting this month.
- "Ask Me for grace to fast and fast well when you feel led to fast.
- "Ask Me for help with everything; I will not fail you or let you down!"

Speak Words of Big Faith

"You will see the declarations that you have been speaking begin to take root and grow this month. You have been speaking the Word diligently over your situation, and by doing so, you have brought blessing upon yourself. Trust in Me and in the ability of My Word to manifest blessings in your life. Continue speaking big words over your life in May.

"If you're going to speak, you might as well speak words of big faith. It takes the same energy to speak a word, whether it is a word of faith or a word of doubt and unbelief. So if you are to expend energy, why not make every word that comes out of your mouth into a building tool to build the big life you desire?

"Don't cast your pearls before swine this month or any month (not all people can understand), but continue speaking big words of blessing and hope for your future. Proclaim them loudly so that all can hear, and I will give you rest in the field of My blessing that I will bestow upon you in response to My Word."

Ask Me

"Always pray for Me to rebuke the devourer. You are at a new level of intimacy with Me and a new level of blessing. The

enemy would love to rob you of your blessing, but he cannot if I rebuke him. Continually ask Me to rebuke the devourer for your sake, and I will.

“Ask Me to show you things that you cannot ask or think this month. Eye has not seen nor ear heard the things I have prepared for you in the month of May. You will receive these things if you ask Me for them. It is just that simple.”

Saving the Best for Last

“I love you, My child. Think not that I do not love you because I have taken My time to answer some things. You have been hidden like an arrow in My quiver (Isa. 49), but I will take you out of My hiding place and propel you forward when I deem the time is right. I always save the best for last, though, so you can be assured that the things in front of you will be greater than all the things behind you.

“You can also rest assured that I have not forgotten even one of your dreams. I feel the burning of your heart and your wondering at My waiting period. I know you feel distressed in your spirit right now, but I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Ask Me to show you a sign for good, and I will. I am working in the situation even now.”

Don't Worry or Fear—Just Seek Me!

“Those things that eye has not seen and ear has not heard are laid up for you this month. I have kept some things back that you will need in this moment; I will give them to you at the right time. I am He who equips you for battle, and I will never let you move forward without the tools you need. Do not worry or fear; I will help you!” says the Lord.

He continued: “You have been worried over many things, but only one thing is needful. Only seek Me. Return to your simple faith—the faith you had before you started trying to figure it all out. Seek Me in the morning and in the evening. Praise Me

in your coming and in your going, and all will be fulfilled. I will supply all your needs this month and every month.

“I know it feels uncomfortable sometimes, but I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Do not think that I have abandoned you; far be it from Me to do such a thing! I have not abandoned you and never will. You have also been feeling like others have abandoned you, but I am your source of comfort, encouragement and fulfillment.

“Seek Me, My child. Come back to the foundations and shore them up. Walk in simple, lovesick hunger and adoration with Me—and I did say ‘with Me,’ for I am as lovesick for you as I desire you to be toward Me.

“I love you so much, My child. Ask Me to demonstrate My love in new ways today, for you need to see it. Ask Me for My comfort and encouragement today, for you need them both. I will help you if you ask.” {eoa}

***Jamie Rohrbaugh** is an author, speaker and presence-seeker whose heart is for the local church. Called to intercession and prophetic ministry, her passion is to see sons and daughters transformed by the love of Abba Father. Jamie blogs for a global readership at fromhispresence.com, where she writes about prayer, personal revival and the supernatural lifestyle, and she has written for various ministry outlets. She holds a master’s degree in biblical studies from Berea Seminary and is a grateful member of the Redbud Writers Guild. Jamie serves as a domestic missionary in Chattanooga, Tennessee.*

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Anointed Writer Says He's Privileged God Allowed Him to Write 'The Chosen'

As a *New York Times* bestselling author, Jerry Jenkins is well aware of the numerous books (besides the Bible) published about the life of Jesus, and he's seen many, many movies and television shows about our Lord and Savior.

For that reason, Jenkins wanted to write something that would portray Jesus in a much different way—a way that would show his humanity and everyday life. He wanted readers to see Jesus through the eyes of those who actually met Him, and to be changed and impacted in the same way they were.

That became a much easier task when his son, Dallas, a filmmaker, produced the highly-acclaimed crowd-funded television series, *The Chosen*. Jerry Jenkins, the co-writer of the *Left Behind* book series with Tim LaHaye, said he watched each episode of the first series of *Chosen* 20 times to help him write the book.

"Some of those movies and television shows are hard to relate to," Jenkins told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network. "So, Dallas said let's hone in on the humanity of Jesus, His sense of humor, the way He interacted with friends and how they were changed to be something they never were before they encountered Him.

"It's turned out to be a very emotional experience to watch to see how it's rendered. There is some artistic license, and obviously we never want to add or take away from the gospel. But we didn't know what these things might have looked like

before they were rendered in Scripture. This series has been seen 140 million times and in almost every country of the world, and I was as moved by it as much as anyone else.”

Jenkins says that his son is planning on producing seven seasons of the television show and that he has the good fortune of being contracted by Focus on the Family and Broadstreet Publishing to write the first three books for it. Of course, he says he’ll do more if he’s asked to, depending upon the success of the television series.

For more of Jerry Jenkins’ work with *Chosen* and his story as a lifetime writer, listen to this entire episode of *Greenelines*.
{eoa}

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Deliverance from the ‘Dead Man’ Spirit

I love casting out devils, and I recently encountered one I didn’t know existed.

It’s called the “dead man” spirit, and many people may be hosting it without knowing it.

If things are going wrong in your life and you’re experiencing manifestations of death, such as death in relationships, death of dreams or massive warfare, this could be the answer. {eoa}

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'Cheerleader for the Lord' COGIC Evangelist Joyce Rodgers Dies at 65

Joyce Rodgers, evangelist, speaker, author and founder of Joyce Rodgers International and Primary Purpose Ministries Inc. died Wednesday at the age of 65 after battling an undisclosed illness.

In a social media post, the ministry announced the "peaceful transition" of its founder, saying, "Today, we honor and celebrate the life of this extraordinary woman who has gone on

to receive her reward. May the God of peace be with the Timmons family; our friends and partners of this ministry and the countless lives she touched around the world.”

The announcement comes just days after Rodgers was [installed](#) as the supervisor for department of women for the Texas Northeast First Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction. Prior to taking that post, she served as the chairperson and administrative facilitator for the International Department of Women.

Born Nov. 13, 1955 in Texas, Rodgers started her illustrious ministry career serving in the children and youth ministry. She was described as a life-strategist who coached “women and young girls on how to achieve success on God’s terms,” according to the [ministry website](#).

She wrote the 2017 hit, *Go Big: Believe in God*, following a devotional titled *ReJoyce* in 2013. Her first book, [Fatal Distractions](#), was based on the 1987 morality tale, *Fatal Attraction*, to educate women on the “subtle killers” that can steal a woman’s spiritual passion.

Rodgers became known throughout her time in ministry as a “cheerleader for the Lord,” but she first accepted His call to ministry in the late 1980s under the late S.E. Mitchell, pastor of St. Andrew Church of God in Christ, her local church in the north Dallas suburb of Denton. “My life was centered around the church, and I was always the youngest assigned to read Scripture at the revivals, even when I couldn’t read very well,” she said in a 2004 *Charisma* [interview](#).

She was commissioned in 1999 as COGIC’s International Youth Department chairlady.

Earlier this week, the ministry requested the body of believers to rally behind Rodgers in prayer for [healing](#).

As reports of her death traveled, prayers and stories of her legacy flooded in.

Current presiding COGIC Bishop Charles Blake [tweeted](#) in loving memory of the renowned evangelist.

In loving memory of the incomparable, one and only, faithful woman of God, Supervisor Joyce L. Rodgers. We honor her life and legacy! Praying! pic.twitter.com/UPwb4rJfKp

– Bishop Charles Blake (@BishopCEBlake) [May 19, 2021](#)

Famed Gospel singer Donnie McClurkin was reportedly one of the first to share the news of Rodgers' death. He called her his sister in his [Facebook post](#), saying, "With a heavy heart that expected a different outcome, it is the will of God...we concede to God's sovereignty and accept His will!"

Bishop T.D. Jakes, who had also petitioned for her healing prior to her death, thanked Rodgers for "teaching us to slay our giants with the full fervor of faith" in his [Twitter post](#).

Though we will miss her guiding wisdom, we know that she will continually captivate the Lord with her daring, beautiful words as she sits with our Heavenly Father. Rest in power, [@MsJoyceLRodgers](#). Thank you for teaching us to slay our giants with the full fervor of faith! [#COGIC](#) pic.twitter.com/g8BN2xpIda

– T.D. Jakes (@BishopJakes) [May 19, 2021](#)

Please join the Charisma staff in praying for all who mourn the loss of Joyce Rodgers. {eoa}

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CN Morning Rundown: Mike Pence Believes Biden's Weakness Is at Root of Violence in Israel

Here's a quick summary of the top stories on cn.mycharisma.com:

[Mike Pence Believes Biden's Weakness Is at Root of Violence in Israel](#)

In a recent National Review [op-ed](#) the former vice president first applauds the Trump administration for the "future of peace" it cultivated with Israel, and then goes on to link the Israel-Hamas conflict with the "weakness" of the Biden administration.

"President Biden and congressional Democrats have abandoned unambiguous support for our ally Israel, emboldened our enemies, and turned their back on the policy that yielded historic peace deals in the Middle East," Pence explains.

He continues, "Under the Trump-Pence administration, we made it crystal clear to the world that America stands with Israel."

['Give God All the Glory': Pro-Lifers Raise Funds to Support 2,530 Pregnant Women](#)

For the fourth year in a row, thousands of pregnant women are blessed with faith-based support and free ultrasounds. In a society where 95% of woman who are wrestling with a decision about their pregnancy will choose life when they see their child's beating heart at a pregnancy center, this simple act is vital.

Through the 2021 “Heartbeat of Hope” campaign held earlier this month, The Light FM listeners donated enough money in a single day to support 2,530 pregnant women.

This year, The Light FM partnered with seven faith-based pregnancy centers to bring awareness to their services including pregnancy tests, counseling, ultrasounds and post-abortion programs.

[Georgia Pastor Sees Holy Spirit Demolish Demonic Spirit of Abandonment](#)

Pastor Janet Swanson knows what it’s like to face severe spiritual warfare. At one point, her marriage began to fall apart, her son became sick, her church suffered a split and the family’s finances came under attack.

The enemy continued to speak lies to her, and discouragement became a regular part of her life.

“Everything in our life, it seems, was attacked at one time. We were in it, and everything seemed like it was falling apart,” Swanson told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of [Greenelines](#) on the Charisma Podcast Network. “In my head, and then in my spirit, the enemy kept telling me things like, ‘Your husband doesn’t love you. He’s going to leave you.’ The church is like, ‘You’re worthless. Nobody wants you. Nobody cares about you.’”{eoa}

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, [CHARISMA PLUS](#).

Understanding the Demonically Inspired Methods of the Religious Spirit

Have you, like me, ever wondered what exactly is a religious spirit? Does the Bible tell us anything particular about it? How does this spirit operate? Why should we care about what it is and how it affects our churches and leaders?

In the story of the woman who washed the feet of Jesus with her hair, we encounter a religious spirit accusing Jesus of spiritual blindness and dismissing His authority. In other encounters, this spirit incites murder against Jesus and those who follow Him.

In this riveting conversation about the religious spirit, my guest and good friend, [Rabbi Eric Walker](#), answers our questions and uncovers this demonically inspired mode of operation that seeks to stop a move of the Spirit of God. You've got to listen to this episode of *Move Forward with Dr. Kim Maas* on the Charisma Podcast Network.

I believe God is preparing the church to receive a harvest of souls. These new believers will need discipleship and training in the things of the Lord. If a religious spirit is in operation, these new believers could be taken advantage of, spiritually abused and led astray by blind guides, or leaders overtaken by a religious spirit. On the other hand, if we have defied a religious spirit, cleansed our houses with worship and lead by the fullness of the Spirit, these new believers will thrive and grow, becoming strong in the Lord. Join me in this important conversation on [Move Forward with Dr. Kim Maas](#). You will be so glad you did!

Also, you won't want to miss out on two recent Move Forward with Dr Kim Mass episodes. Listen to my interview with [Candice](#)

[Mishkin](#), the founder and CEO of LoveBrave, who was miraculously healed and delivered from a 20-year addiction to drugs. She now travels the world to set captives free from every kind of demonic bondage. The other interview is with [Jo Moody](#). Jo Moody is the founder and CEO of Agape Fighters, as well as the author of *Minute by Minute* which covers her near-death experience and miraculous healing of 14.5 years of debilitating nerve pain.

Move Forward with Dr. Kim Maas, on the Charisma Podcast Network, empowers you to move you forward in the call of God for your life, your career and your ministry through prophetic insight, practical teaching and powerful conversations with influential leaders. Be sure to [subscribe](#) so you never miss an episode. {eoa}

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Texas Governor Effectively Eradicates Abortion With New ‘Heartbeat’ Law

Gov. Greg Abbott signed the “Heartbeat” bill into law Wednesday, banning abortions after six weeks—when a fetal heartbeat can usually be detected—in the state of Texas. Up until this point, state law prohibited abortions after about 20 weeks. The law makes exceptions for medical emergencies.

“This [bill](#) ensures the life of every unborn child with a heartbeat will be saved from the ravages of abortion,” he [tweeted](#) in his announcement.

The law also allows for private citizens to sue abortion providers. It is scheduled to be in effect by September, if it does not meet challenges in court.

“Our creator endowed us with the right to life and yet millions of children lose their right to life every year because of abortion,” Abbott said in a bill signing ceremony, captured on [videos](#) posted on social media.

“In Texas, we work to save those lives,” he continued. “And that’s exactly what the legislature did this session.”

He offered his thanks for all the pro-life groups that “worked tirelessly” to pass the bill, and for “everything they do to cultivate a culture of life in Texas.”

The law is one of the most pro-life abortion laws in the nation, and is announced just days following the Supreme Court’s historic [decision](#) to review the Mississippi bill that would ban abortions after 15 weeks. This will be the first major abortion case to reach the High Court with its new conservative majority.

While other pro-life laws have centered on government mandates, the Texas law is unique in that it gives power to the individual citizen to sue abortion providers, regardless of if they are connected to someone who had an abortion or not. In the past, abortion providers could sue the state for restrictions such as this, but in this case, the law is not enforced by any one state official, therefore, the bill’s proponent’s say there would be no one to sue.

“It’s a very unique law and it’s a very clever law,” [said](#) Josh Blackman, a constitutional law professor at South Texas College of Law Houston. “Planned Parenthood can’t go to court and sue Attorney General [Ken] Paxton like they usually would because he has no role in enforcing the statute. They have to basically sit and wait to be sued.”

John Seago, with Texas Right to Life, said the goal of the law is to encourage abortion providers to comply with the law rather than fighting it in court.

Lila Rose, founder of pro-life advocacy group LiveAction, tweeted her praise for the bill. "This is a great step toward total protection," she said.

BREAKING: [@GregAbbott_TX](#) just signed a bipartisan "heartbeat bill" into law in Texas

"This bill ensures that the life of every unborn child who has a heartbeat is protected from the ravages of abortion."

This is a great step toward total protection. <https://t.co/KpUjjR5DvY>

– Lila Rose (@LilaGraceRose) [May 19, 2021](#)

The group's page also echoed her sentiments, saying, "Much work is still to be done, but this is a great step forward."

BREAKING: [@GovAbbott](#) signs a bill into law banning abortion after a child's heartbeat can be detected.

THANK YOU to the human rights advocates who brought this bill through the finish line.

Much work is still to be done, but this is a great step forward. <https://t.co/51sMuVPl0H>

– Live Action (@LiveAction) [May 19, 2021](#)

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