

Bible Teacher's Warning: This Toxic Tool Can Open the Door to Demonic Evil in Your Life

Read time: 2 minutes, 32 seconds

The Bible paints vivid stories of spiritual affliction, possession and healing—stirring accounts that have captivated Christians for over two millennia, while also sparking vibrant conversations about the relationship between good and evil.

The discussion over spiritual warfare and the levels to which people face affliction has also ignited ongoing theological debate. Among the terms to emerge in this ever-complex discussion is “deliverance,” a word sometimes interchangeably used for “exorcism.”

“Deliverance is the act of getting free from the burdens and the trauma that the enemy has had an inroad into our lives for,” Bible teacher Jareb Nott recently told “Billy Hallowell’s Playing With Fire Podcast.” “Deliverance [is] simply a matter of ministering freedom and removing the demonic attachments that really have come into our lives.”

Nott and his wife, Petra, are co-authors of the book “The Science of Deliverance: How Spiritual Freedom Brings Physical Healing,” operate a deliverance ministry and train others to help set people free from demonic influence.

Listen to them explain their views on how pornography and other issues have demonic elements.

Nott explained the differences between people who are completely overtaken by the demonic—individuals who have fully committed themselves to evil—and those who struggle with certain issues or in various arenas in their lives.

Full possession, he said, is rare. But issues like pornography, among other struggles, are far less irregular and can open believers up to spiritual problems.

“Most people, they’re not going to fully commit their lives to Satan,” he said. “What we see frequently is there are areas in our life, say the gates of pornography ... our eyes, our ears. The things that we are involved in because they’re enticing.”

When people “dip their toes” into such sinful behavior, Nott said it can have dire consequences.

“We dip our toes in,” he said. “That’s the open door for that particular issue and that particular demon to infiltrate our lives.”

Nott differentiated between ministering to a person completely overtaken by evil and one who has engaged in pornography or some other moral struggle.

“If I had to minister to someone who was fully taken over and possessed to that degree, it would potentially be a more deliberate, longer-term effort for that individual to come to the knowledge of Christ, because you’re walking them through first of all renouncing and repenting for all of the participation that they have willingly given themselves to,” he said.

Nott continued, “For those areas in their life whereas somebody who maybe dabbled in the Ouija board or pornography, those are areas where we can quickly renounce, repent. We break the evil attachment and we command the demon to go and it’s a done deal.”

Despite the difference in approach, “freedom remains the same,” he said.

Nott is hardly the first person to connect pornography to the demonic realm.

In an interview with Faithwire earlier this year, Sathiya Sam, a Christian author who has developed a systematic process to help men overcome pornography addiction, also highlighted “a demonic component” to porn consumption.

“The reality is, when you engage in something as toxic as pornography, you’re almost like literally dancing with the devil, like you’re really engaging with something demonic and giving him a foothold,” Sam said, noting that, while some men might experience early success in overcoming pornography, many will relapse “because they have not built the spiritual maturity to actually sustain the breakthrough.”

Hear what Jareb and Petra have to say about these issues here.

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Famous Comedian Drops Hollywood in Glenn Beck Interview

Read time: 2 minutes 28 seconds

Rob Schneider has made a resurgence in his career, and it’s not in comedy.

Once considered the sidekick in Adam Sandler movies, and scoring a few lead roles in films for himself, Schneider has emerged as a voice of reason among the Hollywood elites.

Glenn Beck hosted the comedian on his podcast, and viewers were amazed at how relatable and well-read Schneider came

across.

The public's view of Rob was that he was just a funny-man comedian that did not bring much depth. He proved them wrong by giving an insightful and thought-out interview, explaining how he was willing to give up his entire career for his children. YouTube comments on Glenn Beck's page expressed high praise and astonishment at Schneider's interview.

"Are you willing to lose it all for what you believe? Glenn asked during the interview.

"Absolutely," Schneider answered. "Because if we don't have it, then we have nothing. ... I don't care about my career any more. I care about my children and the country that they're going to live in," he added.

"My hope is this. My hope is a beautiful story from a chaplain in England," Schneider explained.

"When the American flyers came over in the early days of World War II ... their friends were getting blown out of the sky. They would go over in the bombers and half would come back or two-thirds would come back ... and there was one particularly awful week or two weeks where there was a very high percentage of these pilots getting blown out of the sky."

"They went to the Air Force Chapel, and a pilot said 'Our friends are dying. Why should we do this?' [...] The chaplain ... said, 'Humanity has come out of the dark ages. We've come out of where people get burned at the stake, people believe and people go along with this. There's a darkness that we have come out of into more of an enlightened period, a freer period. [...] This is a step back into that darkness. It is the darkest parts of humanity, and we need to stand up for that now. And that requires this.' So, they all flew."

The majority who actually watched the podcast praised Schneider for his stance on protecting the future and American

ideals so his children can live free.

There were news outlets like Newsweek and those who did not agree with Schneider's principals that attacked him and his career in response to the interview.

Schneider tweeted a response to the blowback:

I prioritize supporting a country that provides the same Freedoms for my children that made my career possible. This legacy to me is more important to me than the next chapter of my career.

*Love,
Rob*

– Rob Schneider (@RobSchneider) August 31, 2022

This trend of celebrities standing up for American values, such as Christ Pratt, Tim Tebow, Stacey Dash, Jon Voight and others has an impact on society because of the scope of their reach.

God is known for using imperfect, flawed humans to carry a message that He wants His people to hear. The response to the interview shows that people are listening and hungry for a move of God. {eoa}

James Lasher is a Copy Editor for Charisma Media.

Archbishop: Pope Francis' Apology for Past Sins Only a

Start to Repair What's Broken

Pope Francis' recent apologies to Canada's First Nations was a good start to correcting the egregious wrongs done to many indigenous peoples in the name of "Christian mission." Now, other Christians should follow suit.

In addition to the many pure-hearted, sacrificial missionaries, for centuries there were other westerners who went around the world with a narrow and reductionist view of the gospel that was infused with cultural superiority. Others feigned a missionary enterprise altogether in order to advance an unfair political and economic advantage. Certainly some good emerged from this work, but the downside is that some Western Christians managed to seriously damage many indigenous cultures, customs, perspectives and leadership.

This was antithetical to the gospel of the New Testament, which envisages the message of Jesus as always contextualized. It's time for the whole church to apologize for these social sins, and to make sure that we have thoroughly learned from errors of past centuries.

True Christian mission is never about forcing people to join a religion or adopt a culture. Nor is it simply about externally converting people and checking them off a list of those going to heaven after they die.

Being "missional" in God's kingdom is always about giving people the opportunity to engage with God, the Bible and Jesus within their own cultural context.

It is about helping people experience the life-giving presence of Jesus Christ in their lives through the divine work of the Spirit. It is about ensuring people know Jesus as Lord of life now, as well as in the life of the kingdom of God to come.

God always attracts the needy and poor through His love. Our

self-sacrificing love for the very people God loves can never be merely about making more Christians. They need to be treated as fully human, not viewed as “people groups” to Christianize.

While the broader evangelical world rightfully recognizes the heroes of faith who gave their lives to take the gospel of Jesus across the globe, we must also recognize some of the sins that accompanied our global missions. Too often Christians have imposed our cultural Christianity through political and economic power and profited from colonialism rather than from calling out the wrongs and racism of colonial structures.

Political power, according to the great reformer Martin Luther, makes what is right wrong and what is wrong right.

But a true theology of the Cross of Jesus Christ states the problem for what it is, acknowledges the sin and works to find correction and forgiveness.

True Christian mission desires only to take the person of Jesus to the world through sacrificial love and service without taking advantage of the people we serve, or ruling over them. Their choice to love and follow Jesus is their own. All we can do is give the invitation of Jesus.

The church of the global south, where I live and minister, was blessed by the Christian missions of the past that brought the message of Jesus, who loved us fully, served the poor, eradicated illness, built schools, codified languages and provided fresh drinking water, to name only a few of the many life-saving missional projects.

Thus, the so-called campaign for reparations is an inadequate solution to genuine repentance and reconciliation.

Today’s generations bear the burden to learn from the past and need to invest in creating a new world for future generations.

In our world obsessively commercialized we fail to realize that money simply cannot solve these problems. And after all, how far back does one go? What of India's, dalits whose ordeals go back thousands of years? Will the upper caste make reparations for millennia of exploitation? Is it even possible?

Yet, just because this solution isn't practical, or even advisable, it doesn't mean we can wash our hands of the necessity to do something to restore what's broken.

A couple of decades ago, about 700 low caste leaders accused the Indian church of participating in caste racism. At a national event, I felt compelled to accept my part and ask for forgiveness and I requested time to put things right. It was a powerful, impactful experience for me and for them. Today, we are still working together to make things right, but the key word here is *together*. It is a long, long process.

To apologize, we must first acknowledge the shortcomings, both past and present. For example, do global Christians understand that using a term such as "discipling a whole nation" is often viewed in countries such as India as being political, an effort to turn India into a Western lackey?

This kind of evangelical sloganeering like "discipling a whole nation" or "reaching unreached people groups" is deeply problematic. Why is it that only people living outside the Christian West are among the unreached, or represent a nation to be disciplined? This leads to the absurd assertion that there are Western examples of whole disciplined nations.

Do we also accept that some ministries in developing nations carry out projects funded by the West to meet fundraising expectations, and not due to a deep biblical understanding of Jesus' mission of love and mercy in the context of those communities?

Christian leaders in the global south have also failed. The

people we live among are not hostile to Jesus, but they are hostile to what they see as a Western religion. We have not listened to our own people. Even as an Asian, I cannot simply say the West is responsible for the problems. I must acknowledge that as part of the global church, these are my sins, too. I apologize for them.

With today's global communications, where every sin against humanity is amplified, anything short of a collective acknowledgement of social sin is simply inadequate. The Pope's apology should be the beginning, not the end, of finding our way through history's errors together. {eoa}

Archbishop Joseph D'Souza is an internationally renowned human and civil rights activist. He is the founder of Dignity Freedom Network, an organization that advocates for and delivers humanitarian aid to the marginalized and outcastes of South Asia. He is archbishop of the Anglican Good Shepherd Church of India and serves as the president of the All India Christian Council.

Retired Pentecostal Pastor: What Do You Know About This Special End-Times Messenger?

Note: This is the first of a two-part end-times study.

In Revelation 14:6-7, the apostle John speaks of a special messenger having an "eternal gospel" to preach to all those remaining alive on earth. "Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the eternal gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth, to every nation and tribe and

tongue and people. He said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give Him glory, *for the hour of His judgment has come*. Worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water" (emphasis added).

The word "nation" in verse six is the Greek word "ethnos" or, we can say, "ethnicity." So, this angel is to bring a great and final message in the end times to *ethnicities*, or as the inclusive children's chorus reads "... red, brown, yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight! Jesus loves the little children of the world!"

Actually, this "eternal gospel" preaching by the flying angel is significant in that it seeks to draw "every nation [*ethnicity*] and tribe and tongue and people" to worship our Creator God, "who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water" (v. 7).

Some might question why this great and final messenger would focus on creation. This "eternal gospel" (meaning Good News) is about the Maker of heaven and earth. He is the Creator of all things and therefore able to control and judge all things.

He was incarnated to earth and therefore able to redeem and restore all who come to Him. If no other witness or circumstance had ever "spoken" to them, the "God-shaped vacuum" in the human soul may respond to this basic gospel message and the fearful witness of the end times.

Commentator Henry Morris has said, "The *creation* is the foundation of the gospel, the *second coming* is the "blessed hope" of the gospel and *the cross and empty tomb* constitute the power of the does not really preach the gospel unless he places and teaches all these together in their true majesty and fullness."

The Hope of Heaven and the Horror of Hell

This "eternal gospel" (Rev. 14:6) conveys both the hope of

Heaven as well as the reality of judgment and Hell to come.

God's right to judge is also His sovereign right to reclaim the authority that had arrogantly been given by the god of this earth (Satan, the "dragon" of Rev. 13:3-8) to the "beast," the antichrist of the last days, who exercised authority "over every tribe, tongue and nation [*ethnicity*]" (Rev. 14:7).

The urgency, which this final warning demands, is shown in the angel's loud voice (Rev. 14:7a), which boldly and bluntly declares, "Fear God and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come..." The right for God to judge every soul is founded on the fact of creation. God made and owns it all!

The angel urged those still on earth to "worship and honor God! The time has come for him to judge everyone. Kneel down before the One who created heaven and earth, the oceans and every stream" (Rev. 14:7, CVE).

This last phrase reminds us of the "fountains of the great deep" which were broken up as God judged mankind in Noah's day (Gen. 7:4-12). The land/water/atmosphere complex, originally made by our Creator-God (Genesis 1 and 2), were all changed by the judgment of the Great Flood (chapter 6) and this flying angel will warn that another great divine judgment is imminent! "Fear God, and give glory to him!"

Both lost men and fallen angels have rejected God as Creator and refused to repent of their sins. Godless evolution has deceived our children for generations! Paul reminds us that unrighteous men of old deceived themselves and "exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever, Amen" (Rom. 1:25).

Now, at the end of the age, this angelic messenger warns all remaining mankind that "the hour of His judgment has come." This is the "eternal gospel," which both warns and encourages

the inhabitants of the earth.

Warning: We All Are Accountable to God

The Bible teaches that “each of us will give an account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:12). See 2 Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 4:13 and Revelation 20:11-13. Jesus was clear: “On the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak” (Matthew 12:36). If other believers sin against us, we are to hold them accountable but also to freely forgive them (Matthew 18:15-17). Leaders are clearly accountable for their actions (1 Tim. 4:12; Heb. 13:17; Luke 16:10-12; James 3:1).

It is interesting that when Paul witnessed to his fellow Jews, he sought to convince them that Jesus of Nazareth was the prophesied Messiah. But when he turned to the Gentile ethnicities he first preached the gospel of creation (Acts 14:14-17; 17:22-30).

Possibly this is why the angelic messenger urged all mankind, even those of isolated cultures or limited understanding, to turn in simple faith to the One who had created them, trusting Him to save them “from the wrath to come!”

Accountability in the Gatherings of God’s People

After condemning sexual immorality among believers, Paul instructed the church at Corinth to remove a man from their fellowship who had ongoing sexual relations with “his father’s wife” (1 Corinthians 5:1-2). Then he warned: “Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump” (v. 6-7). We must hold fellow believers accountable to live up to the high calling they and we have in Christ. Gathered accountability is for our mutual sakes and to prevent the escalation of sin and its consequences in our gatherings of God’s people (see 2 Samuel 12:1-14; Luke 17:3; Galatians 6:1-5; James 5:16).

How About You?

One day, when least expected, while life is continuing as usual (as in Noah's day), the time and day of God's judgment will come (Matt. 24:37-39). Are you ready? Are you trusting in your ethnicity, education or social ideology to preclude any judgment that may await mankind in these last days? Are you hoping that God will "grade on the curve?"

Don't do that!

In simplicity, follow these ABCs:

- *Acknowledge* your sins to your Creator God.
- *Believe* in His Son, Jesus Christ, and His redeeming and reconciling work on the cross, as affirmed by the empty tomb and the teachings of His apostles.
- *Confess* Him to others as your Savior and transforming Lord of your life and future.

Part 2: "Jesus, the Judge of all the world!"

Gary Curtis served in full-time ministry for 50 years, the last 27 years of which he was part of the pastoral staff of *The Church on The Way*, the Van Nuys' California Foursquare church. Now retired, Gary continues to write a weekly blog at [and](#) frequent articles for digital and print platforms.

Millennial's Radical Prayer Journey Shakes Tech Industry

With Popular New App

Read Time: 2 minutes 16 seconds

Tired of living a life a dark and empty life with what felt like no purpose, a 29-year-old used his journey of finding God through meditating on the Bible to shake the app industry. Alex Jones was raised in a Christian high school was baptized, confirmed and went to Mass every Sunday, but had no personal relationship with God.

Jones created the app "Hallow" and shares his inspiring journey on the app's website. He says he started to read simple books on the Christian faith at its very core. "Aspects from these discussions and books resonated within me: arguments about free will, about faith, about love. I started to think that maybe this whole Christianity thing wasn't all just a fairy-tale after all," Jones says.

After reading about St. Thomas Aquinas, he started to ponder whether he could find a relationship with God too. It was through his desire for relationship that birthed the app, Hallow. He used what he was finding in his own prayer life, priests and faith leaders from different denominations to find different methods to find growing peace in God.

"And what we found was more than we ever could have expected. We found a world deep with history, experience and teaching going back thousands of years," Jones says.

The principle behind the app, which has million downloads so far, is to create a 'personal retreat' each morning in your home. Jones says their goal isn't creating new ways to pray, but to bring the world's contemplative prayer methods that already exist to the Christian faith today.

After the first year of launching, Hallow became the No. 1 Catholic App in App Stores and has now crossed 100 million

prayers completed through the app in 150 countries.

There are prayers to begin your day with as well as a technique called 'The Examen' developed by St. Ignatius of Loyola a man born in Spain that founded the Jesuit order. Jones encourages people to ask the Holy Spirit for help, "to show you where God was present [in your day] and to guide us to the moments He wants to bring our attention to," Jones says.

"Last, but certainly not least, is Lectio Divina—the first method of prayer we cover that directly incorporates the Bible," Jones says. The goal of the prayer is to let go of your own agenda and open yourself up to God through the Bible.

Jones says his relationship with God has completely transformed. He is happier, at peace, joyful, thankful and has found a true friendship with God. "We joke, we laugh; He pushes me, He helps me," Jones says.

In an interview with Fox News, Jones says the average user is 34 years old. "They're struggling to sleep at night, but they want to stop scrolling through Instagram or TikTok and use their time differently," Jones says.

Actor Mark Wahlberg uses the app and Jones says, "He and his wife use the app all the time, and they have been incredible partners."

You can download the app in your app store and listen to meditations, reflections and sermons. {eoa}

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State Approved 'Kidnapping?' What This New California Bill Really Means

The California state Senate passed a bill Wednesday making it a sanctuary state for children seeking transgender medical treatment—even without their parents' permission.

The bill allows California courts to take "temporary emergency jurisdiction" over out-of-state minors if they are seeking transgender drugs, surgery or mental healthcare.

The bill would make California a legal destination for kids who want to make their sex changes permanent and according to the California Family Council (CFC), would become a gateway for children to receive hormones, puberty blockers and irreversible gender surgery.

"This is a gut-and-amend bill that basically declares 'open season' to kids across the country when it comes to transgenderism," said Jonathan Keller, president of the California Family Council, a conservative group. "This is the mutilation and amputation of children's bodies. This is really what is at stake here."

"Gut-and-amend" means SB 107 started in the Senate as a completely different bill but was changed before it got to the Assembly floor.

As CBN News reported, SB 107 was introduced by state Sen. Scott Wiener (D-District 11) to fight against what he called "brutal attacks on transgender children" in states that have moved to protect minors from being sterilized by puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones and sex-change surgeries.

Some states are labeling these irreversible treatments as

child abuse when they're performed on children who are too young to fully comprehend what they're doing.

Chloe Cole, an 18-year-old teenager who was born female but identified as male before changing course and returning to her biological gender, was one of those children.

She testified before the Senate on Wednesday.

"I was fast-tracked into medical transition after being diagnosed with dysphoria," she explained. "In California, a child can pick their gender identity, and a care provider questioning that would be considered conversion therapy."

Cole said she was not misdiagnosed, but mistreated.

"I was approved for a double mastectomy, all by the age of 15," she explained. "Who here really believes I should have had my healthy breasts removed or that should have been an option?" she questioned. "How many more children's bodies will be destroyed before you actually listen?"

"SB 107 will open the floodgates for confused children like me," she added.

Under the bill, the courts would be instructed to ignore certain instances of kidnapping. For example, if a child was taken from a parent to receive gender transitioning services in the state.

SB 107 "takes a flying leap over the precipice," said Matthew McReynolds, a senior attorney with the Pacific Justice Institute. "Actually declaring that it will welcome and protect kidnappers—including parents who have been adjudicated as unstable and unfit to care for their children—as long as the adult absconding with the child says they are doing so to put the child into gender-hormone therapy or some other, Orwellian 'gender-affirming' care."

For the rest of this article, visit our content partners at .

Ministry in the Metaverse: A Fad or a New Frontier to Preach the Gospel?

Read Time: 2 minutes, 11 seconds

Even as COVID restrictions relax, many houses of worship have found it difficult to attract returning parishioners at their pre-pandemic attendance levels. The resulting physical and financial drop-off further complicates the worrying trend of church closures outpacing new ones to replace them.

But the shift also stirred a religious awakening of sorts, forcing once reluctant pastors and church leaders to rethink their outreach and adopt widely-used technology, like livestreaming which has allowed them to reach audiences far beyond their church walls.

Now some faith leaders are considering what's next on the technology horizon and the implications for ministry, eyeing the uncharted world of the metaverse to plant churches and preach the gospel.

Metaverse: A Primer

Not to be confused with Marvel Comic's multiverse, the metaverse is a 3D digital world that allows users to experience an alternate reality using computer software and specialized VR equipment, like goggles and haptic suits that use sound vibrations to mimic physical sensations that can simulate touch.

To the casual observer, it's easy to dismiss the computer-generated depictions as cartoons or video games, but in

reality, they represent real people guiding their avatar selves in a much more immersive world than what most people are accustomed to experiencing on their phones, tablets or computers.

That realm is gaining interest among the curious and the faithful, including ministries like based in Edmond, Oklahoma. Its Church Online Platform helped 30,000 churches continue to spread the gospel even as their physical doors shuttered in the wake of the global shutdown in March 2020.

While many churches are still struggling with attendance, has witnessed growth—even adding a campus in the metaverse last December, a reboot of a previous venture on another multimedia platform called Second Life. Much like traditional missions, its decision was based on a desire to be a “light” in a space that lacks a Christian influence.

“We found that the environment was a rich environment for ministry,” said Bobby Gruenewald, pastor of innovation at . “When there’s new technologies and new platforms and all the new attention that the metaverse is getting today, we want to be present and we want to learn and understand how we can do ministry in it.”

For the rest of this article, visit our content partners at .

Why Believing Conspiracy Theories Corrupts Your

Christian Witness

Reading Time: 6 minutes, 28 seconds

Today's world is being shaped by lies in terrifying ways. In recent weeks, for example, we have witnessed Vladimir Putin's disinformation campaign to justify the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

But it's not just officials in the Kremlin making spurious claims; during the pandemic we've also been bombarded by falsehoods. Conspiracies appear in our search results, while scrolling on social media or in conversations with friends and family.

What were, at one time, beliefs held by extremists, fringe groups or eccentric uncles—*the earth is flat, the moon landings were faked, I know who really shot JFK*—have now filtered into the mainstream consciousness, aided by technology that makes sharing content easier. In a world that can be confusing, complex and at times seemingly out of control, conspiracies offer us the illusion that we can understand reality without too much effort on our part.

Christians in the US, in particular, have been linked to conspiracy theories, with real-world consequences. In two surveys from the Public Religion Research Institute, white evangelicals were found to be one of the most likely religious demographics in America to buy into one or more of the claims of the political conspiracy theory QAnon. The theory has been found to have shaped the motivations of Americans involved in the storming of Capitol Hill, which resulted in the deaths of at least two people.

QAnon started with cryptic posts on an online message board, but it soon went mainstream. The conspiracy theory alleges—among other claims—that a vast Democrat pedophile ring operates out of a pizza parlour in Washington DC. In the

'canon' of QAnon, Donald Trump is the leader of a movement resisting this hidden evil and there will be an apocalyptic moment (referred to as a 'storm') that will sweep away morally corrupt elites.

Why Do Christians Believe Conspiracies?

Pervasive distrust makes conspiracies plausible. When the government lies or the media misreports, distrust can fuel paranoia. When people cannot trust their leaders, they turn to other sources of information. Now we have 'alternative facts' to counter 'official narratives.'

Scandals in the media in recent times, as well as innocent mistakes made by reporters, may also be fueling people's changing perceptions of journalism as a force for good. This can lead to a mass exodus from traditionally trusted sources of information. This paranoid posture encourages conspiracies, not because people want to believe lies, but because they believe they're already being fed them.

Confirmation bias also makes us susceptible to conspiracy theories and, in this respect, Christians are no different from non-Christians: we interpret our world downstream based on what we believe upstream. For example, if you believe the earth is flat, you're more likely to engage and share information that confirms this belief. This process is aided by algorithms online that serve you more of the content you usually click on and share. Because the world is fast-moving and we're all prone to confirmation bias, information that doesn't fit our worldview is swiftly dismissed rather than interrogated and weighed. "That isn't real, it's photo shopped," is an easy response to an image that challenges our understanding of our world and our place within it. Heading upstream to question our foundational beliefs can be a long and painful process, one that many would prefer to avoid. And so lies beget lies.

More Scandalous Than Any Conspiracy

Finally, Christians may wrongly assume our faith acts as a key to omniscient knowledge. The reasoning goes: because we know *the* truth, we must know *all* truth. Just because scripture presents an alternative understanding of ultimate matters—of human sin, death and salvation in Jesus—it doesn't follow that anything claiming to be an 'alternative' take is true. Alternative and conspiratorial explanations of politics, pandemics or vaccines are not automatically more plausible.

In the New Testament, the apostle John reminded early Christians that “the whole world is under the control of the evil one” (1 John 5:19). With one eye on the Bible and the other on our world, conspiracy theories about hidden evil might seem attractive. After all, wasn't there a hidden plot in Esther? Didn't Daniel fall prey to a conspiracy against him? But we must ask ourselves another question: what did God intend when He gave scripture to the Church? Unlike conspiracies, scripture doesn't entertain our quest for control or provide answers to our predictions and suspicions; in fact, it's full of mystery. Perhaps John wrote Revelation not as a secret code for the next world order, but to help us imagine living true to the coming kingdom in *any* world order.

In 1943, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was reflecting on how German Christians embraced Hitler. He concluded that “stupidity is a more dangerous enemy of the good than malice... Against stupidity we are defenseless.” He was making the point that some Christians had exercised extremely poor judgement when deciding where their allegiance lay. But despite Bonhoeffer's assessment of the situation, he checked himself: “Nothing we despise in other men is inherently absent from ourselves.”

It is easy to shame strangers—and even friends—who share conspiracies, but I read that quote from Bonhoeffer as an invitation to embrace a different approach. We can make a stand for what is right in ways that do not belittle

others—and which might actually help to change their minds. Contempt only serves to coerce people into ‘correct beliefs’ through shame.

One way we can live in love with our neighbors who buy into any conspiracy theory is by learning the humility to more regularly say: “I don’t know.” Conspiracies offer a sense of superiority, of being ‘in the know.’ We disrupt that misplaced confidence by embracing the posture that confesses our limitations. No one is completely correct in the beliefs they hold, theologically, politically or otherwise.

Neither do we enjoy finding out we’ve believed a lie; we all appreciate being given the dignity to change our minds without shame.

We can also learn the art of persuasion. Minds are changed over time. Arguments are not persuasive but combative. Picture truth not as one massive boulder we roll down a hill at someone in an argument, but instead, as one of those annoying pebbles that get stuck in your shoe. Eventually, you have to stop walking, take off the shoe and deal with the pebble. Persuasion is the act of placing pebbles of truth in people’s shoes. They can come as questions, honest conversation or empathy that seeks to understand someone else’s perspective.

When Conspiracies Come to Church

Within this landscape, it is likely that conspiratorial outlooks are held by some in our churches. And while I may be advocating for a compassionate approach, when it comes to discussing conspiracy theories with Christians, I would err on the side of caution. It is imperative that non-believers who come to our churches to explore Christianity do not leave thinking they must embrace these theories to enter the kingdom of God. It may not be the task of those in the pulpit to denounce political conspiracies week in and week out, but the church does have a role to play in forming Christians who are

bearers of truth. Paranoia is not the lens through which Christians should view the world, or as Philip Yancey once said: faith is “paranoia in reverse.”

Ironically, Christianity is more scandalous than any conspiracy. It takes an act of God in us to confess that all reality hinges on a Jewish peasant hanging on a criminal’s cross in a backwater province of the Roman Empire. The church confesses that this man is the Creator God incarnate, the God of Israel, resurrected, reigning over and reconciling the entire cosmos to Himself. But while the grace of God brings us to recognize that Jesus is Lord, it doesn’t provide transcendent knowledge about what’s going on in the White House; we have brains and experts for that.

Conspiracies may confirm our suspicions and allow us to feel we’re in control, but they corrupt our Christian witness. So rather than reducing the complexities and chaos of the world to a few neat theories, why not embrace our faith and “the peace of God, which transcends all understanding” (Philippians 4:7)?

In this process we must not sever our connections with people who believe conspiracies, because when Jesus said, “love your enemies” and “love your neighbor” (Matthew 5:43-44) he kept a door open for change; one we must not shut through contempt or cynicism.

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See the Unseen with the Eyes of Your Heart

Is it hard for you to trust that God is working on your problem because you can't see everything He's doing? I know that having faith is easy, until the devil assaults you with doubt and unbelief.

But no matter how hopeless your situation looks or feels, God wants you to know that you can trust Him to do something great. You just have to walk by faith in order to see with your spiritual eyes what you can't see in the natural.

Paul said in Ephesians 1:18-19 (NIV), "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in His holy people, and His incomparably great power for us who believe".

As long as we *believe*, God keeps working. So, when we feel discouraged, we need to *encourage* ourselves that He is doing good things *behind the scenes*.

In the last couple of years, I've formed a habit of saying, "This is going to end well." No matter what I am feeling, I'll say, "God is good and He's going to work this out for my good. He's going to teach me something new and I'm going to be a better person than I was before."

I think consistency should be one of our greatest goals as believers—continuously filling our minds with God's Word, thinking positively, being prayerful at all, peaceful, joyful. Jesus said, "In this world you will have trouble" (John 16:33, NIV). But we can be glad anyway because we know

how the story ends. Jesus continued, saying, "But take heart! I have overcome the world."

A Look into the Unseen

"The kingdom of heaven" is referenced throughout the New Testament. When Jesus began His public ministry, he said, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near" (Matt. 4:17, NIV). Like most people would, Jesus' disciples presumed that He was going to set up an earthly kingdom with a palace and a throne. But He rules over an *invisible kingdom*, in the spiritual realm.

For example, did you know there are angels with us right now? Many of us don't really think about that because we can't see them with our natural eyes. But just because we can't see them doesn't mean they aren't there. God is a mighty God, and He rules over a mighty kingdom.

Psalm 91:11 (AMPC) says, "For He will give His angels [especial] charge over you to accompany and defend and preserve you in all your ways [of obedience and service]."

As we become more conscious of the fact that God is always with us and He's assigned His angels to defend and protect us, it should make us feel safer, more empowered to do what He's called us to do and less likely to give up when things get hard. But here's what we have to remember: No matter what kind of support He gives us, if we don't believe that we have it, then to us, it's as if we don't have it.

Faith Is the Key to Victory

First John 5:4 (NIV) says, "This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith."

Hebrews 11:1 tells us how it works: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (KJV). Faith is a real thing; it has *substance*. In other words, faith

is firmly committed. It refuses to be swayed by our ever-changing emotions or our current circumstances.

For example, if you wake up in the morning and your back is aching, you can't stand your job and your house is a mess, faith says, "Yes! I'm ready to face this day because I can do whatever I need to do through Christ" (see Phil. 4:13).

If you're in a tough place in your marriage, or your children have drifted away from God, or you have a lifelong dream that is yet to be fulfilled, faith says, "God is working, and this is going to end well."

It won't always be easy, but God will always be with you to help you. And by faith, you can keep believing even before you see the result of what God has been doing all along.

Mark 11:24 (NIV) says, "Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."

Whatever you're going through, I encourage you to live with the positive expectation that something good is going to happen to you. Keep an "I can" mindset, and stir up your faith, believing God for greater things. And remember, no matter what you see or don't see, *God is working in your life.*

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored more than 140 books, including *Battlefield of the Mind* and *The Power of Thank You (FaithWords)*. She hosts the *Enjoying Everyday Life* radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit .

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Prophetic Word: The Spirit of God Says 'Things Are Shifting for Great Victory'

The Lord says, "For who shall stand against God? Who shall stand against the righteous Judge of all things? Who shall stand against our advocate, Christ Jesus? Who shall stand in a place to think that they shall be high and lifted up and be lofty in their pride? They shall fall. Unusual, strange deaths that will shock the earth ... Oh, there shall be silence, but yet it shall be so loud.

Things Are Shifting Now

"Things are shifting." The Spirit of God says, "Things are shifting. Things are shifting for great victory. Things are shifting for great celebration. Things are shifting. Listen! That there is an end... There was a moment in the Red Sea crossing where God declared, 'The Egyptians that you see today, you shall see no more.' There was an end to their agenda. There was an end to their pursuit. There was an end to the demonic spirits that worked through them. And this is what is coming; this is what is being unveiled; this is why you are shifting now. You are shifting now.

Do Not Be Moved by Storms—It's the Time of Global Freedom!

"Do not be moved by darkness. Do not be moved by storms. Do not be moved by the storms. Do not be moved by the darkness, for it is but to distract from the shift that shall bring the revolution of light in a way that you have only dreamed of—to bring the nations into glory and into the manifestation of My goodness," sayeth the Lord God of hosts.

“Who is the dragon that they think they can breathe great threats? God’s hand grabs ahold of your breath, dragon, and silences you and restrains you, China! No, you won’t. This is not the time of global bloodshed; it is not the time for war. It’s the time of the global freedom that doesn’t come by the hand of man, but it comes by *something greater*. And God says, “‘The greater’ is the Spirit – the Spirit of Truth. And with the truth that is marching on across the earth is the sound of His marching – the Spirit of God. It’s the sound of liberty to the nation that restrains kings, that restrain armies for battle.

Only Rumors of Wars

“You shall not,” says the Lord, “you shall not preempt. And, no, these are not the end times of that war; so let that be just rumors of wars. And I speak—from the court of heaven and in the office in which I stand, ‘They are only rumors of wars.’ And as Elijah stood and said at My word, ‘It shall not rain,’ so I stand with the backing of God Himself, and I say, ‘Rumors only of wars.’ But you have no substance; you have no authority granted by the Lord, God of hosts—the Captain of the hosts and His army. You shall not preempt. You shall *not* bring the nations to war, at My word.”

Shattered

Shattered! Who can stand with God in this time? I stand with You, Lord, in Your plan. I see the protection of God. I see a perimeter around our shores. For you think you are hidden off our shores. No! We are *backing off* rumors of war that they want to make wars. And the Captain of the host Himself has stepped in and said, “I am the One that speaks. I am the One that restrains the armory of men. There is no missile, there is no armory, greater than My hands. Therefore, watch.”

A Word for China, Russia, South America, France, the United States and Canada

I see the hand of the Lord grabbing you, the bear of Russia. I see the Lord with His other hand grabbing you, the dragon of China; and His grip has been tightened. Therefore, you shall do an about-face; you shall change your position, and you shall not strike.

“Who but can quiet the earth and restrain kings who have blood upon their hands? Who can restrain the forces of darkness? I have restrained because you have gathered together tonight. I have restrained,” says the Lord.

“What is happening that so many shall step down in you, South America? What is happening that one even in Europe shall say, ‘I am done.’

“You fool in France, who do you think you are that you say you won legally? You are but a coward, and I come for you, France; and I come for your leader.

“Ukraine, you call yourself ‘president’; you are not what you appear. Therefore, I have given you a space to do what is right and what is needed. But you have shaken hands with those in this land, America, and you will be exposed.

“Putin, you will not go back to the pride of the former Soviet Union. And your agenda shall be met with My global freedom, and you shall not win.

“And I will show you, Canada, what a leader looks like shaken and with their pants down. You’ve been lied to; you’ve been treated harshly. This is not the way of your future.

“The trumpet sound is getting louder over you, America. You thought you could put the trumpet away. My hand is still upon the man, and it shall blast loud. And the enemies of the trumpet shall screech.”

Hank and Brenda Kunneman pastor the Lord of Hosts Church, a thriving church in Omaha, Nebraska, and are the founders of

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