

Grasping This Revelation of God Can Dramatically Impact Your Prayers

The other day I asked one of our new girls in the home what she would like for Christmas. She quietly whispered, "A little bag of chips."

I said, "No, I'm not going to give you a snack-size bag of chips for Christmas." She didn't know how to respond, so I asked if she would like a toy or a doll.

She lit up on the inside, which turned to a big smile on the outside, when she heard me suggest a doll, and said, "Yes, I want a doll!"

You know what she is getting for Christmas.

But this got me to thinking about how and why we respond to our Lord sometimes. Just as Estefani and I were walking hand in hand, talking together, God wants to do the same with us. Yes, He wants to take you by the hand, walk with you, talk with you and just be with you.

And I can just envision God saying to us, "Say, you know what? We are about to celebrate Christmas, the day you remember My birth. And I want to do something special. I want to bless you. What would you like to have?"

And many of God's people act like shy little Estefani. We do not know how to come boldly before His throne of grace and make our petitions known. Heb. 4:16 sends out the following invitation to us, "Let us then come with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." And Phil. 4:6 also says, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication

with gratitude, make your requests known to God.”

Don't be afraid to ask God for what you have need of or for the desires of your heart. He wants to bless you above and beyond that which you can even possibly think or imagine (see Eph. 3:20).

Let's face it: God is a giver. John 3:16 says that “God so loved the world that He gave ...” He loves to give us good gifts (see James 1:17.) like salvation, the Holy Spirit, healing, deliverance, wisdom and provision, to name just a few of the most important ones. And He's asking you, “What can I give you today that will bless you?”

Maybe you're even more like little Estefani, and you've never had someone demonstrate how much they really care. And you are uncomfortable with the fact that He loves you. God wants to take you by the hand and show you how to trust Him, how to be confident in His goodness towards you. He desires to embolden you with the power of faith so you will not hesitate to run directly to His throne of grace anytime you want.

Jesus doesn't want you to miss out on any of the benefits He so generously lavishes upon us. He's the giver of life (see Gen. 2:7): everlasting life (see John 3:16) and abundant life, too (see John 10:10). And He's asking you, “What can I give you today that will bless you, I mean really bless you?” {eoa}

Becky Dvorak is a prophetic healing evangelist and the author of DARE to Believe, Greater Than Magic and The Healing Creed. Visit her at .

What God's First Promise to Mary Can Teach Us About Silencing Satan's Lies

A dream can catch you by surprise. It usually comes in a way you never expected. With Mary, it came in a word or a group of words from an angel. And among the first of them was an affirmation: "The Lord is with you!" (Luke 1:28c).

Each time I read this story of the dream-delivering angel visiting Mary, I sense some of the shock she must have felt. By this point in time, Mary must have been minding her own business, doing what all good Jewish girls did, getting ready to be married, getting ready to watch one of her (and every other girl's) childhood dreams come true: a wedding—when, bam!—out of the blue, an angel startles her soul with one word: "Greetings! (Luke 1:28b).

Yikes.

Hmmm ... "Greetings!" That sounds like the same word used in military draft letters from Uncle Sam, doesn't it? They begin with "Greetings," too. Such warm salutations are often followed by sobering requirements.

From all appearances, Mary's life was moving ahead and steadily progressing, as were the lives of many other teenage Jewesses. By all accounts, she seems to have been raised in a fine family with God-fearing parents—her own faith evidenced that fact. And, like most young women her age, Mary was preparing to launch into life—into her own life. All her plans were moving ahead much as she had probably hoped. She had been courted and won by a respected suitor, Joseph.

Mary's father must have been delighted to have her marrying a carpenter, for his was a trade in constant demand. His work

would keep him close to home and would provide for her needs and, as they got older, maybe even some of her parents'. The plans for their marriage and their lives together were certainly all falling into place. I imagine they had already decided where they would live. The dimensions of their hopes and dreams were probably falling into quite pleasant places.

But then God showed up.

He came in a way Mary never would have expected. And, with his first word, "Greetings," her life was forever changed. When the angel said "Greetings," in essence it was God saying hello. And when God said hello to Mary, it meant she would have to say good-bye to several things. In order for her to say hello to God's will, Mary would soon have to say:

- Good-bye to her own ideas of what her future would hold.
- Good-bye to being the master of her own destiny.
- Good-bye to most things familiar and comfortable.
- Good-bye to controlling the thoughts and opinions people would have of her. You see, that's what dreams do. They will greet you, and then require something of you. They bring a great big hello into your life; but they also will require some good-byes.

Mary certainly must have had her breath taken away when she looked up and saw an angel with a God-sized voice saying, "Greetings!" Wouldn't you? But as the shock filled her soul, did you notice what the angel said next?

"The Lord is with you!" (Luke 1:28c).

Ahhhh—that must have been so good for her to hear. Wouldn't you love to have an angel speak those words over your soul?

What a reassurance it must have been to hear those words, especially at such a moment as this. A completely unexpected invasion from heaven into her life must have placed her emotions somewhere between outright fear and utter shock. But

can you imagine a more comforting sentence?

“The Lord is with you!”

Is there any truth more precious to a soul than this one? Could anything possibly be more affirming?

Unfortunately, among the dream-killers in our lives are the false notions we have about God, about the way He sees us and even the way He feels towards us. Sometimes we “hear” other words, words in our minds, words that play in our memories, words that wear and war on our souls, words God has never said, words such as:

- “The Lord is against you!”
- “The Lord is far away from you!”
- “The Lord is overlooking you!”

Have you heard those words before?

I have.

“The Lord is against you!” Have you felt this one recently? It is one of the favorites of the enemy of our souls, the ole’ dream killer himself. If he can cause you to question how God feels about you, then he can begin to dismantle the dream—and your confidence and peace along with it. Unless you believe that God is *for* you and *with* you, you will struggle to even believe that the dream in your soul is a gift *from* him. A distorted view of God will discourage your faith.

“The Lord is far away from you!” Have you heard that one whispered in your mind before? The dream killer also knows if God is distant in your thinking, the dream will be distant, as well. If God is out of reach, so will be the dream he has given you. He will try hard to get you to believe the lie that God is far away from you.

“The Lord is overlooking you!” Have you felt that way before? Recently? Perhaps the toughest knot to get unwound in our

souls is self-pity. This happens when we have our eyes more on what God is doing for others than on God Himself. We are more riveted on our circumstances than on His character. When the God-given dream seems delayed, we are instantly tempted to look at others who seem to be experiencing dreams come true. And, as we make the mistake of comparing ourselves (and our stories) to others, discouragement rushes in and diminishes our hopes. And a doubtful view of God destroys our faith.

Dreams are important; that's certain. A God-given dream is significant in His eyes—and should be in ours, as well. And yet there is something more important to Him than the dream or vision He wants to fulfill through my life and yours. It was so important that it was the first news release the angel proclaimed to Mary that day. No, the first order of business was not the dream, the vision or even the plan God was revealing. The first thing out of the angel's mouth after he said hello was not about an assignment or new mission; it was about a relationship—not Mary's responsibility to the world, but God's relationship with her. Before He called upon her to do anything, he first wanted to remind her He was with her. That in itself is miraculous. That alone is a dream come true—the best of all dreams, is it not?

On this day, before the “dream” (the Christ child) would ever take its first breath, Mary needed to know this: “The Lord is with you.”

A God-given dream can be shocking and surprising. But there is one thing much more amazing: the God of dreams and visions wants to share in a relationship with you.

And that is the greatest dream of all. {eoa}

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Are You Wishing the Holidays Would End Sooner?

The holidays can make painful memories, loss or grief seem even worse.

It's supposed to be the most wonderful time of the year with the gifts, Christmas parties and gatherings filled with yuletide cheer, but instead it's a time of sadness, loneliness and regret. Your emotions veer from nonchalance to anger and hopelessness. How do you get through the holiday season when you're feeling like this?

Perhaps you're one of the 45 percent of people who dread the holiday season, grappling with depression in silence, as reported by recent research published in Psychology Today.

Do something different this holiday season! Learn how you can overcome the holiday blues and find a new level of spiritual wholeness including:

- Simple practical tips to ease your journey through the holiday season
- Methods for handling painful memories and failed expectations
- Steps you can take to move toward emotional healing
- Simple strategies of prayer and spiritual warfare for the holiday season

Those feelings of dread won't disappear by just wishing them away or ignoring them till January. Take action today by visiting

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Vital Steps to Busting Your Healing Plateau

One of my readers, Jean, sent me the following prayer request. I believe this will encourage you and help you to believe for your healing and miracle.

Dear Becky, I would very much appreciate your prayers for healing for my gum disease, bone loss and lower teeth. I have an appointment on Friday at 2:30 with my dentist. I don't have the money for false teeth. I am 67 years old, and I don't want false teeth. I am totally by myself and have no one to help me except the Lord. Thank you for your prayers, Jean.

I respond. (Wednesday, Sept. 14, 2016, 10:39 p.m.)

Dear Jean, I join my faith with your faith for this situation. Right now, I renounce gum disease in your mouth. I release the healing power of the Holy Spirit to flow into your jaws, gums and teeth. I command all pain, swelling, pressure and head and jaw aches to cease in Jesus' name. I speak into the roots of your teeth to be healed from the inside to the outside of your teeth, your gums and jaws to be healed from the inside to the outside as well. I declare that you are healed. Put your faith into action, open and close

your jaws ... Be healed in Jesus' name, amen.

Jean's response to me: (Thursday, Sept. 15, 2016, 8:52 a.m.).

Dear Becky, I just checked my email now. Thank you so much! Praise God!! All is well. Thank you for standing with me on this!! God bless you for this, Becky. Thank you, thank you!!! Jean.

I wrote back to Jean straightaway. "Please share your healing testimony with me."

Later the same morning, Jean wrote back. (Sept. 15, 2016, 11:09 a.m.)

Yes, I will! Can tell you now there is no more pain or tenderness around the "offending" tooth on lower left!! No tenderness when I press on the gum portion where it was! Praise God!! Yesterday before writing you, I canceled the dental appointment for Friday at 2:30 CT this week, telling them I'd reschedule. (I just felt like I should, then a couple of hours later felt I should ask you for prayer.) I will write and let you know what the dentist says. Next Thursday at 3:00 P.M.. on 9/22 is the appointment. The Lord is the best dentist, and I thank the Lord for sending you to pray. All's well.

This came from smoking, which we know where that comes from. Jesus delivered me completely from smoking Dec. 31, 2014 when I got very sick with pneumonia and was coughing up blood alone in my house. I haven't wanted another cigarette since then, and I do not have withdrawals, nothing. I took care of my teeth, I didn't drink or do drugs at all, but I did smoke. There is a price to pay for sin. Sometimes even after one quits it. But now I just want to be right with Him no matter what. Smoking was very selfish of me, and it truly grieved the Holy Spirit, and I'm so sorry for that. When He let me

see how much (in a very gentle way) it broke my heart. Am so sorry for all those years of selfishness and going my own way. I will continue loving him no matter what.

Thanks so much for your post on faith this morning. I read it several times. I am going to read it every day. I have been going through continual "stuff" for five years now, ever since my mom died, one thing after another, bizarre things beyond my control, lots of stress, sorrows, etc. But it always works out well.

I am so glad He was there through it all for you and yours! Thank you so much for your post this morning. Thank you for praying for me, too.

Take note of a few faith principles that are activated during this healing process.

1. Jean repents of sin and is delivered from addiction. "Therefore repent and be converted, that your sins may be wiped away, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19).
2. She confesses her sin to another believer. "Confess your faults to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much" (James 5:16).
3. She doesn't blame God for this attack but is mature in faith and realizes there are consequences to bad behaviors. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).
4. Just as she goes to God for forgiveness, she now turns to Him for healing, too. "When Jesus heard it, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mark 2:17).

5. She has been feeding her faith with the healing word. "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

6. She puts her faith into action, reaches out and requests ministry for healing. "So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead" (James 2:17).

7. I respond with faith-filled words. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit" (Prov. 18:21).

8. She again activates her faith and does something she could not do before without pain: she opens and closes her mouth and bites down on her jaw. "Then he said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' And he stretched it out, and it was restored whole like the other" (Matt. 12:13).

9. She gives thanks to God for her healing. "One of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned with a loud voice glorifying God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks" (Luke 17:15-16a).

10. She testifies of the manifested healing power in her life. "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death" (Rev. 12:11).

Be encouraged by this delightful testimony and trust God for your healing, too. {eoa}

Becky Dvorak is a prophetic healing evangelist and the author of DARE to Believe, Greater Than Magic and, soon to be released, The Healing Creed. Visit her at .

This Key Character Quality Ignited Joseph and Mary to Change the World

The news must have felt like a punch in the gut.

The ultimate betrayal.

His fiancée was pregnant, and it was certainly not with his child—he had remained pure.

Tossing and turning on his bed, the battle waged within him. He loved her, and yet she had been unfaithful. How could he ever trust her after this? Should he break their engagement? That would only bring a thousand questions from family and friends, questions that demanded an explanation that would not only shame her but alienate her from the community and stain her reputation forever.

Tormented, he turned the scenario around in his head until he had examined every angle and decided to end their relationship as silently as possible.

It was in this moment that the oddest thing happened. In fact, when explaining it to others, they thought he was daft.

An angel appeared to him.

And the strange and utterly distorted situation only grew odder when the angel said there was no reason to fear because the Holy Spirit had impregnated Mary, his fiancée.

Who would ever believe that story?

What's more, this would fulfill prophecies he had heard about his whole life. The angel was asking him to play a part in an event that would forever alter all of history.

He would be the father to the Messiah!

Joseph was about to embark on the most terrifying and intimidating journey any father in history had ever walked. Surely he and Mary would be somewhat distanced from their peers. Anyone doing math would figure out that Mary had conceived prior to their wedding. This not only stained Mary's reputation but his as well. No one would believe them when they told them that the both of them had been pure when they married.

Yet, what would it be like to raise God in the flesh?

Every father throughout history has felt the weight of responsibility and intimidation of training young lives to become respectful and righteous men. But Jesus upped the ante.

How on earth do you raise the Son of God?

To further complicate an already-complex situation, his and Mary's natural children were the siblings to a boy who never sinned. Yes, raising children requires tailoring child-rearing to each individual personality, but how do you not compare their natural inclination to steal, lie, fight and throw tantrums to their oldest sibling who had never sinned—not even once?

When I contemplate the depth of faith Joseph displayed, I am both amazed and ashamed.

Amazed at a faith that was ready and willing to accept the words of the angel despite the challenge and serious implications they carried; ashamed because I know I don't have this depth of faith.

What if Joseph had rejected the angel's instructions? What if he had decided that marrying Mary would have been too complicated and risky?

How would have his decision to end their engagement silently

have altered God's plan?

The Bible doesn't talk much about Joseph. I see him as the quiet, steady type—the one who is content to remain behind the scenes and yet is reliable, dependable and rock-solid.

And his faith was just as solid.

A faith that empowered him to take on a role that no one else in history had ever filled before—a role that would forever set him apart.

A divine role that required him to raise the One who had shaped and formed him, the one who knew him better than he knew himself, the One who—indeed—had created the entire universe with a simple word from his tiny, rosebud lips.

Rosilind Jukic, a Pacific Northwest native, is a missionary living in Croatia and married to her Bosnian hero. Together they live with their two active boys where she enjoys fruity candles, good coffee and a hot cup of herbal tea on a blustery fall evening. Her passion for writing led her to author her best-selling book The Missional Handbook. At A Little R & R she encourages women to find contentment in what God created them to be. You can also find her at Missional Call where she shares her passion for local and global missions. She can also be found at A Little R and R on a regular basis. You can follow her on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Google +.

7 Surefire Tips to Help You Say No to Gluttony During the

Holidays

I used to have this love-hate relationship with the holidays. I salivated when thinking of all the decadent dishes I knew would be there, yet I hated the fact I had no ability to control what and how much I ate. I knew I'd be angry at myself when I saw the numbers start to rise on the scale.

Still, I planned to overeat. I dreamed about it. I looked forward to it. But I dreaded what would happen come January when I halfway woke up from my sugar and carb coma.

How Do I Stop the Madness?

There seemed to be no way to make the madness stop. I would go on a diet every January. Halloween would be the first holiday to throw me off course with all the candy available because, of course, I'd buy the kind I liked so if there were leftovers I'd have some to eat.

Then, Thanksgiving and Christmas with multiple family dinners and by the end of the year, I had gained back all I had lost in the 10 preceding months plus more. In January, I had to start all over again.

Only I Can Prevent Forest Fires

"Can't anyone help me stop this madness?" I'd scream to myself. In essence, I was talking to the right person because only I could prevent the burgeoning forest fire I had started once I began eating the things I had no control over. Only I had the power to stop myself from sinking once again into the abyss of food addiction, only me when I listened to God's leadership in my life.

Once I began to see the truth, it really helped me not only lose weight, but also live my life in God's true abundance, which has nothing to do with overindulging.

7 Ways to Survive

1. State your commitment and keep it. Write it out. Say it aloud to yourself so your brain knows exactly what you are committing to. Then, stay true to yourself. Plan ahead. Bring an alternative, such as a healthy fresh fruit and nut salad if you aren't eating processed sugar. Don't add any dressing, just fresh fruit and nuts. Set some aside for yourself because when I bring this to holiday dinners, it is usually gone quickly. Most people love alternatives to all the sugary desserts.
2. Know your limits. For many, that is not eating any sugar-laden desserts. Even one bite can be too much. Many times during the holidays, we falsely use the phrase, "Just this little bit won't hurt. I'll just have one piece of pie and then I'll be done." While this may work for some people, it does not work for those who know they are in the category of a sugar or carb addict. One bite leads to another piece and another piece to another and before we know it, we have lost track. One is too many and one more is not enough.
3. When filling your plate, choose a smaller plate if available and then, focus on vegetables but not vegetable casseroles. I'm talking about green beans with sliced almonds or fresh broccoli with garlic. Fill at least two-thirds of your plate with these first. Go for plain baked sweet potatoes or mashed sweet potatoes made with water and butter. Bring an appetizer tray of veggies, fruits, nuts and cheeses. Then you have something to snack on as well. Or provide these options at your own meal.
4. Thanksgiving or Christmas dinners can be healthy meals because many will have turkey as the main meat. This is a great low-calorie protein source. If you are hungry,

eat more turkey. Snack on the turkey. Turkey is good. Show the turkey some love. If you need something over the turkey go for the meat drippings, if they are available, instead of the gravy. If you are fixing the meal, have an alternative gravy made with some meat drippings, water and milk available. Use arrowroot powder if need be to thicken it a bit, but it's fine without it.

5. If you have a lot of weight to lose, understand that one holiday meal can mean disaster for you. Viewing your eating plan as a lifestyle instead of a diet will keep you on track. It's not worth throwing away a year of work in one meal. It can happen if you don't get back on track quickly. In my own life, I know this to be true. Once I went off track, even just once, I'd throw my hands up in despair and think, *Oh why not eat the whole pie?* And so I would. I think of diets as short-term fixes for a long-term problem. They do not work because we lose the weight and then put it back on as soon as we begin eating like we always have. We must understand that just like an alcoholic gets better by not drinking alcohol, we will get better by not eating the foods which are addictive to us.
6. A lot of tips out there in weight-loss land will tell you to eat a little of your favorite dessert, to eat sugar in moderation, to save room for your favorite foods and eat less of others. This is dangerous advice for the obese and morbidly obese. There is no stopping us once we get started. Many dietitians, nurses, trainers and doctors don't understand this. However, we know our bodies and we are the only ones who can begin to take charge of ourselves with God's help. We cannot be led astray because others can eat certain foods and we can't.
7. Change your mindset. I no longer look at holidays and

worry I will feel deprived of my formerly favorite treats. I need only look at my before-and-after pictures to understand sugar- and high-carbohydrate-laden foods are my enemies. I see it this way now: I get to eat healthy. Others are stuck in having to eat junk that clogs their system and makes them continue to gain weight, feel miserable and lead them toward an early death, which they could prevent if they just made the right decision.

What Is Freedom?

People ask me, "Don't you want to be free to eat whatever you want?" No, I don't. That mindset is what got me to 430 pounds in the first place. I am free now. I am free from feeling bound to the foods that call my name in the middle of the night and draw me to them.

I am free from my cravings. I am free to say no to food temptations. I am free to walk away and not feel drawn to the foods that will capture and enslave me again. I am free to make healthy choices. I am free to provide good fuel for my body.

My Thanksgiving Meal

This Thanksgiving, I made real food, the kind God created. I had turkey with drippings gravy; baked sweet potatoes; fresh green beans; asparagus; romaine salad with avocados, red onions and almond slices; fresh fruit and pecan salad; and hoecake, which is simply white cornmeal and hot water made like a thick pancake.

I'm going to experiment with a pumpkin cheesecake sweetened with bananas and stevia with a great pecan, date, cocoa crust. I have no idea if it will work or taste good, but I'll have fun trying to create something healthy and edible.

This Thanksgiving won't be about the food, though. It will be about the ones I am with and the memories I get to create. In the final analysis, this is what feeling abundantly blessed is all about.

Enjoy Super Abundance

After all has been said and done, you will find me counting my blessings, naming them one by one and taking them to the Father of all, the Creator of me and you, good healthy food and the abundance of love and laughter we enjoy each and every day.

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 15:13).

Teresa Shields Parker is a wife, mother, business owner, life group leader, speaker and author of Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds and Stopped Trying to Earn God's Favor and Sweet Grace Study Guide: Practical Steps to Lose Weight and Overcome Sugar Addiction and Sweet Freedom. Get a free chapter of her memoir on her blog at [Teresa Shields](#) . Connect with her there or on her Facebook page or Twitter.

Early Warning Signs You're About to Make a Terrible Decision

Need to make a difficult decision? Do you feel as if you are backed into a corner and you just don't know what you should do? We've all been in this place one time or another, and

although it's not pleasant, there is an answer.

James 1:5 encourages us with these words, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men liberally and without criticism, and it will be given to him." This word "wisdom", *sophía*, G4678 in *Strong's Concordance*, means either worldly or spiritual wisdom and skill in the management of affairs.

This is a bit of good news for those who are in a tough spot or feel as though they are pressed between a rock and a hard place. God desires to lead us in our decision-making process. We just need to remember to take the time to ask Him to show us the way. And He also gives to us His Holy Spirit as our guide. "But when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. For He will not speak on His own authority. But he will speak whatever He hears, and He will tell you things that are to come" (John 16:13).

This Scripture clearly states the Holy Spirit will guide you. It doesn't say the Holy Spirit will push or force you into a decision but that He will show you the way. He does not use fear tactics but leads you into all truth, not just a bit of the truth concerning a matter but all truth pertaining to the situation. But the main point is that He does not push. He leads you, guides you, woos you and shepherds you into all truth.

For example, your doctor tells you if you do not take a certain medicine you won't get well, but the warning label on the medicine bottle clearly states this medicine will make you sick. Or worse yet, your doctor tells you the medicine or treatment you are taking is not working, but if you stop taking it, you will die. This is a difficult situation to find yourself in, and it demands that you make a quality decision, and fast.

Your doctor is giving it to you straight as he or she sees it.

And in the natural realm, the diagnosis could be correct, but does it include the ultimate option of faith? Elohim, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are omniscient, all-knowing. They understand the problem, and they know how to heal it. God is also omnipotent, all-powerful and has the ability to make you whole again. Trust and allow the Holy Spirit to guide you into all truth concerning healing. Remember, God isn't moved by time but by faith. And He only needs one moment to reveal all the truth you need to heal.

Then there are other types of decisions that are not urgent, such as making a large purchase in which you need to borrow more money than you should or would like. What do you do? An old pastor of mine once told the congregation concerning these types of decisions, "If it can't wait two weeks, it probably is not of God." This is so true.

I remember when my husband and I were newly married and had a salesman come to our home trying to sell us cemetery plots. We politely listened to his sales pitch and told him that even though there was wisdom in what he shared, we couldn't make an immediate decision but needed time to think. The man was so upset he began shouting at us, thinking his nasty tone and meanness would insure him a quick sale. It did not. We activated the godly golden nugget of the two-week waiting period for matters like this, given to us by our pastor by the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Hasty decisions are usually ones you will regret, and they can cause serious family, relationship, financial and even health problems. While I was growing up, my grandma had a plaque hanging on her kitchen wall that said, "The hurrieder I go, the behinder I get." I often remind myself with those old words of wisdom. I also take to heart what Moses says to the people in Numbers 9:8, "Stand still, and I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you." In other words, "Stop, drop to your knees, pray and find out what God has to say about the matter before calling out your decision."

If you feel any confusion in your heart concerning the matter, don't ignore it. This is probably a signal from God that something is not right. Take the time needed to pray through to His peace, because God is not the author of confusion. (See 1 Cor. 14:33.)

And again I reiterate: the Holy Spirit leads us. He does not force us into a decision as our enemy, Satan does. You will save yourself from a lot of heartache and negative consequences if you will learn to follow God's leading and not respond hastily to the enemy pushing you into a bad decision.
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Becky Dvorak is a prophetic healing evangelist and the author of *DARE to Believe*, *Greater Than Magic* and *The Healing Creed*. Visit her at .

10 Spectacular Reasons to Be Grateful for Your Intimacy With Holy Spirit

"When can we start listening to Christmas music?" a student asked.

"After Thanksgiving and not a day before!" I barked. (*Wow, don't ask the teacher that question again.*)

No holiday jumping in this house, people. (Although my husband would like to point out that I will demand a trip to the forest for a Christmas tree the day after Thanksgiving.)

But this is the season set aside to give thanks out loud, and I like that. We should be thankful as often as we breathe in

and out, but it's nice to lift the action of gratitude to an official position: "Oh, give thanks unto the LORD; for *He is good*" (1 Chronicles 16:34a).

Why I Love Following Jesus

He allows me to come to him in all of my stormy weather patterns.

He offers hope that I can and will become a better woman every day.

He's awake in the night when my fears are huge monsters.

He loves me and proved it.

If I ask for encouragement, He gives it to me.

He has resurrected my father and my grandparents from the grave, and I will get to see them again.

He is a straight line when so much in my culture has gone crooked.

He kindly shows me when I'm doing something wrong and how to fix it.

He invites me to serve Him when we both know I'm unworthy.

He makes beautiful things like sunflowers, pumpkins and coffee beans.

OK, dear friends, add your own thankfulness in the comment section. Let me hear why you love following Jesus.

Revive Your War Room With These 5 Practical Battle Tactics

My heart pounded as I stared at the rolling credits to *War Room* on my screen.

My prayer life wasn't bad per se. It just wasn't good.

It wasn't effective.

It wasn't bold enough to scare away a baby demon, much less one brandishing a weapon bent on taking out my family and me!

The next day I woke up, marched out to my living room and declared war.

I grabbed every verse I knew on spiritual warfare and copied them out by hand. I reached for quotes on prayer by great men of God, and gathering my war room supplies, I created a meeting place for God and me.

Grab this 30 day prayer challenge on spiritual warfare today!

But just as with any exciting plan, eventually our hearts return to a normal rhythm and the excitement of the newness wears off.

I have found one of five things have occurred to those of us who have created a war room:

- We find another new, exciting activity to take its place.
- We set it aside and forget about it altogether.
- We keep going, half-hearted and apathetic.
- We enshrine our war rooms or war room journals, and they become the focus instead of prayer, spiritual warfare

and communion with God.

- We take time to revive our war rooms so that our strategies are sharp, our focus is laser-beamed, and our boldness is supernatural.

How to Revive Your War Room

How well do you think our military would function if they were constantly distracted with every new idea that was presented to them, got bored with military life and decided to play video games instead or approached conflict with boredom and apathy. How well would our soldiers function if they enshrined their war rooms by decorating them with pretty maps and famous strategies?

Not very well!

A good general studies his enemy, studies war and studies historical strategies with the purpose of developing a custom-fit strategy for the war he is currently engaged in.

He knows his opponent well, and he anticipates his opponent's every move.

He understands the risk and danger of war, but he also understands the risk and danger of passivity. He won't be passive!

He is engaged.

Sharp.

Attentive.

Concentrated.

He can't be distracted.

5 Ways You Can Revive Your War Room Today

1. Evaluate your greatest battle. You can't fight every battle

right now, just as our military cannot engage in every conflict going on in the world right now. It's just not wise.

You are more likely to win a war when you focus all of your energy, strength and concentration on one battle at a time.

2. Search for Scripture. Jesus fought and defeated His enemy with Scripture. Not reasoning. Not philosophy. Not psychology. Nothing is as powerful as God's Word at defeating the enemy. You have only two weapons in your arsenal, and you need only two: God's Word and prayer.

Take some time and write down every verse that has to do with your greatest battle right now. Read them. Memorize them. Meditate on them until they are your very life blood!

3. Write out prayer strategy. When you are at your weakest moment, what is your plan to stay strong? When the enemy tempts you to pull back and take the easy street, when he tells you your battle isn't as serious as you think it is, that you're over reacting and that you can kick back and relax, what will your strategy be to combat him and his lies?

4. Make a meeting time with God. Some may argue that making an appointment with God is religious; I call it wisdom. You won't "find time" for God, you have to make time. And you make time by setting an appointment.

When do you plan to meet with God everyday? Including Saturdays and vacations. Set a time and stick to it.

5. Get accountable. Find a friend who will keep you accountable. Make it a priority to text or message each other every day and ask if you've kept your appointment with God. You can even take it a step further and ask each other where you've been reading, if you're staying faithful to your battle plan and if you've stumbled lately.

Dear friends, our war room is just a tool to help us maintain

our focus where it should be.

If we look at it as our novelty or hobby, we'll either get bored with it or enshrine it; but if we continue to look at it as a tool to help us keep our prayer life sharp and engaged, we'll find it to be incredibly useful in our daily quiet times. {eoa}

Rosilind Jukic, a Pacific Northwest native, is a missionary living in Croatia and married to her Bosnian hero. Together they live with their two active boys where she enjoys fruity candles, good coffee and a hot cup of herbal tea on a blustery fall evening. Her passion for writing led her to author her best-selling book *The Missional Handbook*. At *A Little R & R* she encourages women to find contentment in what God created them to be. You can also find her at *Missional Call* where she shares her passion for local and global missions. She can also be found at on a regular basis. You can follow her on Facebook, Pinterest and Google +.

Could This Fatal Attitude Be Blocking Your Miracle?

Your situation may seem too difficult for a miracle. Perhaps there is no medical cure, or it has been a lifelong condition to which you have grown accustomed. Your five senses, human reasoning and medical reports shout, "This is impossible." Even though you know the Scriptures say that with God all things are possible, you still struggle with doubt and unbelief.

There was a woman named Sarai (her name was later changed to Sarah) who faced an impossible situation. She was barren, and

even though God promised her she would birth a son, she could not see herself ever having a child. Like her husband, Abram (his name was later changed to Abraham), she had no hope of having a child of her own. Instead of seeing God as her hope, she blamed Him for her barrenness. Sizing up the situation in the natural and using her five senses and human understanding as her guide, she came up with a plan of her own. Abram agreed and conceived a child with her maidservant, Hagar (see Gen. 16). Her meddling plan was not God's; it was conceived of the flesh, not by faith, and it gave no glory to God. Sarai had a hard lesson to learn, for she was now despised in the eyes of her maidservant. She made a mess of the situation, and God's promise did not come to pass.

In order to have a miracle, you must first have an impossible situation. And it is important to remember that God's promise for a miracle cannot be brought to fruition via your human plan or reasoning. You need to submit to God's supernatural means: faith. And faith is how you can obtain your miracle.

As I said, this woman of God, Sarai, made a mess out of the situation and made matters worse because she chose not to trust God by faith, coming up with a reasonable solution to a supernatural promise. But God is merciful, and 13 years later, He visited the couple again and said if they would listen and do it His way this time, she would bear a son within one year.

In order for this miraculous promise to come to pass, Sarah had a decision to make. Would she believe or not? When God's messengers first gave her the prophetic word that she would bear a child, she laughed with doubt and unbelief. After all, she was 89 years of age, past the age of childbearing, and she had been barren all her life. When the messengers asked why she laughed at God's promise, she lied and denied her laughter, but they corrected her. And just as with Sarah, God knows what's in your heart. It needs to be cleansed of all doubt and unbelief for your miracle to come to pass.

Hebrews 11:11 tells us what Sarah had decided. "By faith Sarah herself also received the ability to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised."

She made the right decision, and it was a tough decision to make. All human reasoning along with her five senses screamed this was impossible, but because she judged God faithful to keep His promise, she received strength to conceive and bear Abraham's son, Isaac, at the age of 90. What an amazing woman of faith she became. Will you be like her and judge our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, faithful to keep His promise and conceive the strength to receive your healing and miracle?

Becky Dvorak *is a prophetic healing evangelist and the author of DARE to Believe, Greater Than Magic and, soon to be released, The Healing Creed. Visit her at .*