

2 Truths About Worship That Could Revolutionize Your Walk With God

Worship is our highest calling as believers.

Our highest calling isn't being a pastor or an evangelist. Not even being a missionary. Our highest calling isn't our husband or children, it's not the Bible study we lead or anything else we do.

At the end of our life it won't matter if we were successful at anything else, even at leading people to Jesus.

Our highest calling and the most important thing we'll ever do in this life is to worship Jesus.

It stands to reason, then, that Satan will do all he can to distract us from our highest calling ... or distort that calling in some way.

Worship shouldn't just be a part of our daily devotion, as believers, it should be what we do 24/7. But in order for us to this, there are two things we need to know.

Here are two things we need to know about worship.

1. We need to redefine worship.

This culture has distorted the word worship. What the Bible calls worship and what we call worship are two very different things. The Bible's definition of worship is broad and all encompassing of everything and anything we do in and through our lives that brings Christ worth and value.

This culture's definition of worship is that 20-30 minute period of music before the sermon, or a marketed style of popular Christian music.

The fact is that we have cheapened the word worship in our culture and made it almost worthless. Worship has become more about me and how it makes me feel than it is about God and Him being glorified.

The very word worship means to attribute worth to. But so often when we talk about worship we say how it made us feel ... as if somehow worship exists to make us feel good, and not to exalt Jesus Christ on the earth.

We've elevated worship leaders and their bands to a celebrity status so that every week they take front and center stage, complete with light shows and state-of-the-art sound equipment, so that their professional sounds are well-amplified.

What we've defined as worship today is idolatry. We worship the music, the atmosphere, the band, the songs and our feelings. We've cheapened the word worship to be made something for our own consumption.

It's time we redefine worship; or rather, it's time we return to the original meaning of worship.

Worship should be all about God.

100% God and 0% us. It shouldn't concern us at all how worship makes us feel. What should be our number one concern is that God is exalted and glorified, that He is front and center, that He is made famous and that our name is all but obliterated from the show.

But we need to do something more...

2. We need to remove the labels from our lives.

So many Christians live their lives with labels on everything they do.

- I get up in the morning and have devotions, that is spiritual
- I take my kid to hockey practice, that is secular
- I play my favorite Christian CD in the car, that is spiritual
- I go to coffee with my unsaved neighbor and talk about gardening, that is secular

You get the picture.

We use these labels for our spiritual and secular activities, when in fact anything the child of God does should be spiritual and everything an unsaved person does is secular.

God didn't create our lives to be compartmentalized.

When we received Christ as our Savior, the Holy Spirit didn't come in our life to occupy a compartment. He came in our life to take the whole thing over!

So everything we do—whether singing a Christian song, playing softball, grocery shopping or praying with a dear friend—is all worship because it all glorifies Jesus!

But this means one very serious thing for all believers: It means that if we are currently participating in an activity that **doesn't** glorify Jesus, we need to stop.

If our ultimate calling is to glorify Jesus, then we need to take care that we don't do those things that steal His glory. We need to be sure that what we're doing doesn't defame His name.

Over the past two months we've looked at the elements of worship:

Reading our Bibles

Studying our Bibles

Praying

Memorizing Scripture

Meditating on Scripture

and now we see that the most important thing we'll ever do in life is worship God.

I don't know about you, but at the end of my life I don't want people saying, "Rosilind was a great _____ (wife, mom, daughter, blogger, writer, Bible study leader...) I want them to say, "Rosilind was a great worshipper of Jesus." That's what I want people to know about me, that everything I say and do exalts Christ and Christ alone!

Here is one more article on worship I wrote recently that still sits heavy on my heart:



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, Twitter, Pinterest and Google +.

Easing Your Child's Fears in the Midst of Chaos

This is very timely, and recorded for you now. Dr. Kathy offers suggestions that will help you help your children process tragedies. She suggests three things to talk about and one source to use. Based on some quick feedback we received, we think her second and fourth ideas will be very interesting for many adults, too. We truly hope this is helpful. If it is, please share it with your friend. Thanks.

Dr. Kathy Koch is the author of *Screens & Teens: Connecting With Our Kids in a Wireless World*.

Combating the Enemy's Plan to Choke the Life Out of You

Life is made of shadows and light. If we didn't have shadows, we wouldn't know what light is. Light dispels shadows for sure. However, the converse is also true.

Shadows can dispel light. When the Light fades and becomes less in our life, shadows become more pronounced.

Until one day, the shadows have taken over and all we see in darkness.

Just one drop of the Light begins to dispel that darkness. If we take all the barriers away, the walls behind which shadows fall, the Light will completely flood our life again.

Fears

The walls and barriers can be comprised of anything, but their foundation is always the same—fear.

The little girl cowering in the corner of the attic in fear of what an emotionally ill parent will do next.

The child being used by an older boy for games that arouse him, but leave her feeling only shame and guilt for something she didn't do and wasn't her fault.

The pre-adolescent girl staying far away from a trusted family friend everyone loves and yet he “loves” her so much she is afraid.

The teenager fearing the crazy young man who stalks her even at her work place and charms her mother so she must hide out at a friend's house.

The married woman protecting herself from supposedly “godly” men with straying eyes and looks of evil intent.

The mother afraid of losing her first-born due to her lack of caring for her body during pregnancy

The middle-aged woman losing both her mother and grandmother within six months of each other, leaving her the oldest matriarch to carry on family traditions.

The woman finally realizing she could lose her life if she does not get a handle on her addiction, even if it is “just” food.

Walls

Each difficulty adds walls that have cast fearful shadows on

my life, for each of these situations happened to me.

Your shadows may be cast from different events that add barriers in your life.

Each dark moment is connected to a person or circumstance. Each one needs forgiveness, even if the person being forgiven couldn't help what happened, or even if they could help what happened.

My mother and grandmother died when I was an adult. This is a normal life process but, I had to forgive them for leaving me bereft of knowing how to fill their shoes.

A family friend molested me as a child right in the sanctuary of my grandmother's house. If I wanted to go forward with life I had to forgive him as well. It didn't matter that it happened years earlier. Those emotions cast shadows on my life that governed me until I willfully chose to forgive him.

It doesn't matter if the person is living or already deceased. The emotions of a child still remember what happened and still, in many ways, govern how we do life, until we forgive.

Forgiveness knows no bond of time, place or disposition as to the life or death of the person being forgiven.

There are things for which I had to forgive myself. There were things for which I had to forgive others. These were things I had to remove in order for the light to flood my life once again and help me breathe once again.

Choking

Without forgiveness, shadows will choke the life out of me and you.

The woman's husband leaves her. She loses her job. Her children fall in with the wrong crowd. Illness threatens to take her life or that of a child or spouse.

Death, divorce, debt, deceit, disaster, disease, depression, despair—the list of difficulties¹ never seem to stop.

We would live in the shadows of our circumstances if not for the Light of the World² available to bring goodness, hope, purpose and life abundant.³

I can live afraid of the shadows or I can release them through forgiveness. I can stop clutching them to my chest as if I can't live without them. In reality, I can't live, really truly live, with them.

Clinging to Jesus

It is only when I release the shadows that I can grab Jesus tightly with both hands, clinging to Him and never letting go.

Jesus is always holding on to me. Through the darkest times of my life, He has consistently, lovingly, patiently guided me, nudged me back on the path.

No matter what shadows cross my path, He is the light that dispels them completely. I have decided. I have reached up and grabbed hold of Him. I will never let Him go.

“Again, Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life.’”²

Action Step

Write down every shadowy difficulty in your life that you can't seem to forget about, those that may still plague you and those you have tried to stuff into a closet somewhere trying to forget. Now take that paper you wrote them and and tear it into tiny pieces. Then throw them away or better still, burn them. As you tear up these difficulties or as you watch the smoke rise into the sky, release them to Jesus.

Ask Him, “Jesus, what do you give me in exchange for all of these difficulties?” Write down what He says. Write it where you will see and remember it. This is a present word for you to use, a direction for your life.

¹ John 16:33

² John 8:12

³ John 10:10

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, 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.

6 Reasons This Popular Meditation Trend Is Dangerous for Christians

We live in a very stressed-out culture that is constantly looking for ways to unwind and destress. Just about any doctor or health expert will tell you to do one thing: meditate.

By meditate they mean an Eastern form of meditation: Zen meditation, transcendental meditation, yoga, Chinese or Hindu meditation, guided meditation, all of which have their origins

in new age and Eastern religions.

The meditation God was talking about in Joshua 1:8 differs greatly from Eastern meditation. In fact, I'll go so far as to say that participating in any form of meditation, apart from biblical meditation, is opening the door wide to the enemy.

I shared a little about this in my earlier post, *Will God Protect You From Adult Coloring Books*, in which we looked at the adult coloring books with Mandalas and why this is a dangerous practice for Christians.

Any time we mix Christian discipline with any other religious practice, we anger God.

In the Old Testament God said this:

When the Lord your God shall cut off the nations from before you, where you go to possess them, and you dispossess them, and dwell in their land, take heed to yourself so that you are not ensnared by following them, after they have been destroyed before you, and that you not inquire after their gods, saying, "How did these nations serve their gods? Even so I will do likewise." You shall not do so to the Lord your God, for every abomination to the Lord, which He hates, they have done to their gods. They have even burned their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods. Whatever I command you, be careful to do it. You shall not add to it or take away from it (Deut. 12:29-32).

Throughout the Bible He calls Himself jealous.

He has commanded us to keep our worship pure and undefiled by the worship of other gods. You may argue, "But I'm not using these other forms of meditation for worship." However, as Christians whatever we do in our life *should* be to glorify God, and if anything we're doing does *not* glorify God—but, in

fact, is used to glorify another god—we should immediately reject it and eliminate it from our lives!

This includes yoga, which many Christians engage in as a stress-relieving form of exercise. When you examine its origins and meaning, you can easily see why yoga has no place in the life of the believer.

However, like any other Christian discipline, biblical meditation should be part of our daily practice: speaking the Word, muttering it to ourselves, mulling over it, and imagining how our lives should fit in its context.

This takes the Word to a much deeper level than reading, studying, praying and even memorizing, as we contemplate deeply what each passage actually means for us personally and speaking it over and over to ourselves.

How does Eastern meditation differ from biblical meditation?

1. Eastern meditation empties the mind. Biblical meditation fills the mind and spirit with God's Word. Emptying our mind is actually a very dangerous thing because it gives the enemy room to fill it with his deception. However the Hebrew word for meditation actually means to speak or mutter, a practice that actually does the opposite of Eastern meditation. It fills our mind with God's Word and builds our spirit.

2. Eastern meditation focuses on self: centering yourself, your inner self, self actualization, your breathing, physical feelings and emotions. The enemy will do anything to get us to stop focusing on Christ. Furthermore, his ultimate deception is pride or elevation of self. Biblical meditation takes our focus off of ourselves and places our focus on Jesus Christ.

3. Eastern meditation seeks to relieve stress. The problem with our culture isn't stress. Stress is only a symptom of a

deeper problem: pride. Worry, fear, perfectionism ... these all have their root in pride and all result in stress. But God wants us to daily walk in faith that brings us peace no matter our circumstance. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

Christians absolutely shouldn't turn to anything other than Jesus Christ for the peace that will help to ease whatever it is that has brought stress on in their lives!

4. Eastern meditation focuses on man being in control. Eastern meditation practices rely on self as the agent to bring peace, tranquility and oneness with deity—the original lie: "You can become like God." Biblical meditation reminds us God is almighty and when He is in control we can be at complete peace knowing that His purposes will prevail. Eastern meditation dethrones God and puts fallen man in His place.

5. Eastern meditation is only escapism. By seeking higher levels of consciousness or altered states of consciousness you can escape your stress and enter new realms of oneness with deity. But the fact remains that once we have returned to our usual state of consciousness whatever it was that brought on the stress is still there. Biblical meditation doesn't give us an escape from reality, it gives us supernatural strength through the Holy Spirit to walk through the "fire and flood" at peace, knowing that God is in control of every situation. We don't need to escape our troubles; by faith we walk through them, counting it all joy, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

6. Eastern meditation manipulates circumstances to bring peace. By using atmosphere, objects, silence, breathing techniques and more, people are able to enter a meditative state. It's a manipulation of circumstances and atmosphere.

However, the child of God can meditate on God's Word whenever, wherever, no matter the situation or circumstance because we have direct access to the throne of God. Indeed, we are the temple of God and His Holy Spirit dwells within us. We never need to manipulate any situation to experience peace; we simply recall the precious promises of the Word of God and place our faith and trust in Him!

How to engage in biblical meditation

The Lord spoke to Joshua and said this:

This Book of the Law must not depart from your mouth. Meditate on it day and night, that you may act carefully according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way successful, and you will be wise. Have not I commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (Josh. 1:8-9).

The Hebrew word for meditate used here is *hagah*, meaning to speak, mutter, muse, imagine or plot.

Biblical meditation is the repeated speaking of the Word of God. It also involves imagining and using the mind to plan ways that we can implement the Word of God in our lives.

You do this by taking a passage of the Word and repeating it over to yourself, examining each word and imagining how it applies to your personal life.

As we begin to make biblical meditation a part of our daily Christian discipline, speaking, muttering the Word of God and imagining how we can mold our lives in concordance with it, we will see our lives transformed and the Lord promises that our "way will prosperous" and that we will "have good success."

Do we believe the Word in this?

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, Twitter, Pinterest and Google +.

Can Demons Possess a Born-Again Christian?

While I was ministering in Malawi, East Africa during a healing campaign a demon-possessed lady came to me on bended knee. I reached out to touch her when all of a sudden the demonic spirits within her began to scream obscenities at me.

I rapidly sized up the situation, activated my authority in Christ and commanded these demons to be silenced in Jesus' name. I started to quote from the Bible scriptures of the future destination of Satan and his demons. The demons pleaded with me to stop and allow them to stay. I said no, and within minutes this woman was set free.

3 Verses that Torment the Enemy:

“Then He will say to those at the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the eternal fire, prepared for the devil and

his angels” (Matt. 25:41, MEV).

“Likewise, the angels who did not keep to their first domain, but forsook their own dwelling, He has kept in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6).

“For if God did not spare the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness to be kept for judgment” (2 Pet. 2:4).

While at another outdoor evangelistic healing crusade in Northern Tanzania, a group of pastors tried to minister deliverance over a woman. They shouted, but nothing happened. They mistakenly thought that volume equaled authority. The demonic spirits knew that these pastors did not understand who they were in Christ, or the authority they had over these demons. My husband walked over and commanded the demonic spirits to leave and they left immediately.

Demonic activity is even running rampant in Christian homes and churches and it needs to be addressed openly so that God’s people can be delivered and set free. Wrong doctrine has taught us that this is not possible, but I can testify that I come into contact with demon-oppressed and demon-possessed Christians over and over, especially in these times that we are living in today.

This is not a popular subject—it’s like hanging our dirty laundry out for everyone to see. But it is time to expose the darkness that is lurking among the body of Christ. Shine the light of God’s truth so that people can be free and healed in spirit, soul and body. I believe this is one reason why Christians are hurting needlessly.

Years ago, as a Christian, I was under great physical attack. I struggled to be free from sickness. Then one night while praying in the Spirit, I felt led to lay my hands on my body and I renounced a spirit of death that was over my body. As I

spoke out these words, I almost vomited as I felt something literally come out of me. And I was free from the attacks of the enemy in this area.

Perhaps, you just can't seem to get free from death, sickness and disease. Lay your hand on your body and renounce this spirit of death coming against you with the authority that comes from the active blood of Jesus Christ.

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

3 Ways to End the Workaholic Cycle

We live and work in a culture that glamorizes “busy.”

We idolize workaholics as superhuman and glorify an approach to measuring success that often leads to burnout and broken lives.

Yes, there are times when we need to burn the midnight oil, but it should not be the norm or pattern for how we live and work.

“God didn’t call us to be busy,” says Joyce Meyer, “He called us to be fruitful.” I agree.

I found a shift was required in my understanding of God’s ways and how to decide what the fruitful work would be for me in each season of building my career. Family discussions helped my husband and I protect our relationships in crunch time and still accomplish our goals.

The path to a more fruitful work life begins with seeking God first. When we do, He adds blessings without sorrow (Matt. 6:33; Prov. 10:22).

Busy or Fruitful?

Here are three keys to navigate seasons requiring increased activity so that we are not just busy, but fruitful:

(1) Define a fruitful destination.

Identify how to recognize and measure the results you desire to produce in your life and work. Use practical terms keeping it simple. For example, "I want to make ten client calls a day and be home in time for dinner every night by 6 p.m."

(2) Align your calendar with your vision.

Use your vision as a roadmap to decide what goes on your calendar and stick with it. When you enter an exceptionally full season of work, meet with your family or close friends to clarify the boundaries and roles in this time. Recalibrate every six weeks to stay focused on your priorities.

(3) Pay attention to the road.

Know your capacity and the warning signs when you are "running out of gas." When you recognize the signals, refuel to continue at a good pace. Make sure you enjoy and harness the right opportunities.

While God loves order, He is also the God of adventure and new horizons. The future is not entirely predictable, and you don't want to plan the excitement and activity out of your life. Give yourself the freedom to encounter God in new ways in seasons requiring more activity. Recognize when God is showing up in the moment. He is a creative God and loves to expand our thinking while keeping us on course.

He invites you to be fruitful for His glory in your assignment today.

Enjoy getting to know Him in the process.

God loves the journey with you now and forever.

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When God Miraculously Heals Dying AIDS Patients

As the Holy Spirit taught me about the authority of the believer, He also taught me to put it into action at the same time. He wants His children to understand how to use our supernatural weapons of warfare. He really wants us to live in victory every day.

One day I went to visit a hospital to encourage and pray for

people dying from AIDS. When I arrived, I asked the nurse how the patients were doing that day. He looked at me and replied, "Sister Becky, they are not doing well. Two men are going to die within a few hours. You need to pray with them." I knew that what he said to me was just a religious response to a difficult situation, and that he didn't believe any good would come from prayer, but that didn't matter. I received it as an assignment for the Holy Spirit.

So I walked into the room where these two men were dying. They were lying in separate beds, side by side. To my dismay there were no family members or even medical personnel with them.

I walked over to the first bed where a man was lying in a coma, unable to move or to respond to anyone. While I was standing next to him, I looked directly into his eyes that were fixed on the ceiling. I calmly told him that I was a Christian and that I believed in healing. I read the redemptive passages from Isaiah 53:4-5 to the man. I looked him in the eye and asked him if I could pray for him. I saw his eye twitch. I told him that I saw his eye twitch and that I was going to take that as a "yes!" I laid my hands upon his head and rebuked premature death, HIV/AIDS and everything that was attacking his body in the name of Jesus. I commanded the spirit of life back into his body. Immediately, the man jumped out of bed and started to shout, "I'm healed! I'm healed!" He then started to tell me that he was a Christian, but had not been walking right with Jesus, but he was now healed and going home to tell everyone. And he left the room.

Now, there was another man lying in the other bed. And even though he was in a coma and could not respond, I knew in my spirit that he had just witnessed a miracle, and he was already primed to receive a healing touch from the Lord. I laid my hand on him told him to wake up in Jesus' name, and he immediately sat up, and began to breathe normal as if he had never been sick. I invited him to receive Jesus as his Savior, and he did.

While I was talking to this man, the nurse walked in. He looked at me, looked at the empty bed, and this other man sitting up in his bed and with a bit of panic he asked, "Where is he?" I responded, "You told me to pray for him I did, he got out of bed and left the room." The nurse said, "What?" and ran out of the room.

While I was still ministering to this second man, the first man walked in. I said to him that the nurse was looking for him. He responded, "I know, he found me in the cafeteria. I was so hungry!" The man continued to talk to me and told me that he was going to go back to his home. I never saw him in that place again.

I have a question for you, "Are you willing to visit the sick and dying and release the power of the Holy Spirit so they can be healed and live? God is able and willing to use you to release healing and miracles to release his people from the bondage of sickness and disease and to win the lost for Christ. Again I ask you, "Will you allow Him to use you for His glory?" {eoa}

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

Why You're Tired All the Time

Over a drinking fountain at church, a friend asked me if I was enjoying the summer break from teaching. I had a newly formulated answer for her, after much thought these last few months.

"I love teaching, but I am enjoying the rest from the

complexities of the job," I said.

Truth was, I was very sad for the year to come to a close. My students make me smile, and I am driven by my daily goal of becoming an excellent teacher.

But teaching is exhausting work—so difficult. It requires my own mastery of the subject, classroom organization, behavior management, building rapport with students, challenging the high achievers, engaging the students who are bored, setting goals, writing curriculum, creating engaging activities one can't find in a textbook, keeping a long range vision while presenting information in chewable chunks, doing administrative assignments and caring about colleagues.

It is a difficult job, to say the least.

I love it.

It makes me weary and stressed. (And I think it makes my husband weary and stressed.)

But I've been chewing on Malcolm Gladwell's words since I read them last summer, in *Outliers: The Story of Success*. He wrote a fascinating chapter about rice farming. Did you know rice farms put in 3,000 hours a year? Malcolm uses the word "staggering" to describe the amount of work they do. But the whole chapter is about success, and part of rice farming success is because the work is extremely complex and exacting.

My new discovery: There is a deep satisfaction to be found in doing a complex job.

I think that when we run into something that is exhausting because of its complexity, we feel the fatigue and often react with complaining and longing for the weekend. But toward the end of the year, when I felt worn out by the challenges in my classroom, I stepped back and thought about how rewarding teaching is *because* it is so hard.

Enough about Spanish, though. What I really want you to think about is the complexities of your life. Maybe your job is extremely exacting. For sure your relationships are. Have you ever thought about what a complex task we undertake when we get married? When we parent children? What about when we have more than one child, and each child has their own personality? If you're a homemaker, think about what an incredibly complex job it is to maintain a home and all the relationships within it.

That's why we're tired.

But isn't it awesome? Isn't there deep satisfaction when you start mastering the intricate details of whatever it is you do all day long?

Rice farmers spend 3,000 hours a year to be successful at something that is rewarding—what do you think of that? Moms with little kids are saying, “Try 3,000 hours a week, sister!”

We are instructed in God's word to be thankful people, so I encourage you to look at your challenging job, whatever that is, and thank the Lord when it wears you out. Thank Him for the intricacies of the work He has put in front of you, because in conquering this complex job, you will find a rewarding satisfaction. It's a good kind of tired, don't you think?

The Selfish Spirit That's Destroying Relationships

If I asked you to reflect on our culture and observations you've made about people, what would you tell me you noticed?

You might comment on how judgmental you've noticed people have become. That's not all though. You might continue by sharing your curiosity about why people think they need to share their opinions and judgments with everyone. Maybe you'd voice your frustration over so many people's need to convince others that their opinions are right.

Maybe you would talk about how many people are on their phones texting, gaming or scrolling Facebook, even when they're with others.

Maybe the quick pace concerns you, and you wonder if anyone goes to the park anymore. Maybe you just went, had a blast and realize slowing down and spending quality time with family is good for everyone. You wonder if others would agree.

People have told me selfishness concerns them. Entitlement. Lack of respect. Few positive role models of strong and healthy leadership. Terrorism. Selfishness.

Yes, yes and yes. I would agree with you.

Chances are, if you've read one or more of my books or heard me speak, you're aware that I believe being other-centered is important. In fact, could other-centeredness be an antidote for much of what's wrong?

If we were other-centered, would we not be so demanding if others don't agree with our opinions? Would we respect their right to disagree? Would we put our phones down to more fully engage with others? Would we slow down and pay more attention to people than to tasks? Would we be more grateful and less entitled? More respectful? Better leaders, truly looking out for what's best for others? Less selfish?

Getting our eyes off ourselves and onto others would do us all a world of good! Maybe making a list of advantages with our children would be a valuable dinner-time conversation.

When reading Eric Metaxas' new book, *If You Can Keep It: The Forgotten Promise of American Liberty*, I discovered another reason to raise children to be other-centered. Or maybe I didn't "discover" it as much as he gave words to what I've known to be true. I think you'll also agree that this reason, too, is important. At this time in our country, I'd say it's very important.

Here are some quotes, from pages 43-44, that I highlighted in yellow, starred in the margin, and am determined to remember:

Don't we as voters bear a serious responsibility to think about the whole country and about its future? We have to voluntarily balance that weighty responsibility with pure self-interest.

For democracy to truly work, not just for one or two elections but for dozens and for hundreds, requires much more than people merely voting. The ordered liberties given to us by the founders work together as part of a fragile mechanism. People must understand that their responsibilities as citizens are so serious as to be vital to the democracy itself. If the voter is not voluntarily selfless to some extent, and does not merely think of himself but of others, and if he does not think just about the present, but about the future, it all falls apart over time. Self-government will not work unless the citizens bear the responsibility to vote in such a way that continues their freedoms and their ability to have free elections, and that continues their economic prosperity. They have to vote in a way that does not trade the future for the present.

What do you think? Is our country in trouble partly because of the self-centeredness that's increased over the past 10 years or so? Is this a conversation we can have with those we influence? I think so.

Dr. Kathy Koch is the author of *Screens & Teens: Connecting*

Is It Mental Illness or Demonic Oppression?

Karen writes and asks, "How do you know if a person has an evil spirit or if they are biologically ill or, in the case of a Christian, walking in the flesh rather than the Spirit?" Karen, this is a great question, and an important one for us to understand.

Now, when you are referring to someone having an evil spirit I think we need to clarify what could be happening. 1. Someone could be oppressed by an evil spirit, meaning they are being attacked as in the personal testimony I shared about being attacked by a spirit of death. I was being attacked, pursued by a spirit of death. It was clear the enemy was after my life. That's an attack, a heavy attack. 2. Then there is demon possession. When someone is controlled by an evil spirit, their behavior, their character is altered and controlled by a demon or demons.

Concerning your question, "How do you know if someone is biologically ill or walking in the flesh?" I'm not saying that we are to be demon-focused, but we do need to be fully aware of the attacks of the enemy. The enemy, Satan comes to steal, to kill, and to destroy (John 10:10), and his weapon of sickness steals, it kills and it destroys in every way.

Now, having said this, we need to be mature in our faith and realize that we live in a fallen world. Just because someone is sick does not mean they are demon possessed. Jesus warns us John 16:33, "I have told you these things so that in Me you

may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But be of good cheer. I have overcome the world." We live in a fallen world. Sickness and disease entered into our world when Adam and Eve willingly fell into sin. This was a consequence of their willful disobedience.

Sickness and disease are tiny, microscopic living organisms that enter into the body and make people sick. But according to Genesis 1:28, we have been given dominion over everything that moves, including these living creatures that we cannot see with the naked eye.

So, to repeat myself, when someone is sick it does not mean they are possessed by a demon, but they can be oppressed—pursued by a demon that attacks with sickness and disease.

But there are times when people are possessed with demons. Here are some common behaviors to discern demon-possession:

1. Is the person violent?
2. Do they hurl insults and obscenities at others without being provoked?
3. Do you hear strange voices or sounds such as growling, hissing, or clicking with their tongues coming from them?
4. Do they flip back and forth into different personalities?
5. Do their ears flap, do they slither like a snake or display other bodily movements that are not humanly possible otherwise?
6. Is there a darkness in their eyes that was not there before?
7. Are they riveted with an unnatural fear that wasn't there before?

8. Do they cut themselves or try to harm themselves? Are they preoccupied with blood, horror movies, death or suicide?

These are some common behaviors of someone who is demon possessed.

The last part of this question is equally important. How do we know if sickness is caused because someone is walking in the flesh rather than the Spirit? This is a matter that the Church doesn't want to address either, but needs to.

People can be sick because of irresponsible behaviors, such as smoking which can cause cancer; indulging in a diet high in sugar can be a cause of diabetes; eating too much salt can cause high blood pressure; and the list can go on and on. But the reason remains the same: When people are controlled by the flesh, rather than by the Spirit of God which exercises moderation or abstinence, it can cause sickness and disease to manifest in the human body.

But the good news is found also in John 10:10, where Jesus says of Himself, "I came that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." And healing and divine health are part of the abundant life that He offers us by His redemptive blood.

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