

Living Miraculously

Chris Overstreet gives principles to developing a lifestyle of the miraculous.

Symptoms of Demonic Operation

The subject of mental illness is very controversial in Christian circles. Inside the extreme schools of thought, we find balance and a scriptural viewpoint.

First, let me say clearly: All mental illness is not the result of demonic attack. Further, good psychological care from Christian professionals is vital and in order when an individual is struggling.

Also, professionally administered medication may be necessary when chemical imbalances occur. But when normal medicine and therapy do not result in a cure, then it is possible that these symptoms could point to demonic operation.

Let me list for you 14 symptoms of demonic operation. As these symptoms are listed, realize that some of them could also be caused by something other than demonic oppression. The first six symptoms on this list are extreme and are drawn from the account of the demoniac of Gadara in Mark 5. This man had been chained in a cemetery because of his erratic and violent behavior. When you look at Mark 5:1-15, you can see clear symptoms of demonic activity.

Symptom 1: Incapacity for normal living (Mark 5:1-5)

Just as the actions of Legion made the man unsuitable for normal social interaction with friends and family, an unusual

desire for solitude, accompanied by a deep loneliness, will often set in. The person will often become very passive with no desire to change.

Symptom 2: Extreme behavior (Mark 5:4)

Violence will often be evident in the victim's life. An explosive temper and extreme, uncontrollable anger are dangerous behaviors that control the individual and the people who love him or her.

Symptom 3: Personality changes (Mark 5:9, 12)

Multiple personalities exist in some of the most serious cases of demonic control. This man had a "legion" of spirits within his life. All cases of multiple personality may not be demonic, but in most cases demon activity is involved. Changes in personality, extreme or mild, may be evidence of demonic activity.

Symptom 4: Restlessness and insomnia (Mark 5:5)

In verse 5, we see this man crying in the tombs "night and day." He could not sleep. Insomnia can be a sign of a physical problem or a sign of a spiritual problem. God has gifted His children with sleep (Ps. 127:2). So when you cannot sleep night after night and there is no medical reason for this disturbance, the devil maybe tormenting you. Don't forget: You have the right to rest in Jesus!

In Psalm 3, we see a picture of warfare. Here David was hounded by his enemies. In verse 3, he cried to the Lord, "You ... are a shield for me." In verses 5 and 6, he cried, "I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the Lord sustained me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around." He also said in Psalm 4:8, "I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; for You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety." Sleep is God's gift to all who trust in Him.

Symptom 5: A terrible inner anguish (Mark 5:5)

This man was deeply tormented in mind and heart. Various levels of anguish are evident in those who are afflicted by demons. Grief and anguish are normal emotions for us all. Yet persistent, unresolved anguish that will not leave after normal therapies of counseling, encouragement and prayer could well be demonic.

Symptom 6: Self-inflicted injury and suicide (Mark 5:5)

Here we see the demonic man cutting himself. If you read Mark 9:14-29, you will see the story of the man whose son was both deaf and mute because of a demon: "Wherever it [the evil spirit] seizes him, it throws him down ... Often he [the demon] has thrown him [the boy] both into the fire and into the water to destroy him" (vv. 18, 22). Jesus cast out the demon: "The spirit cried out, convulsed him [the boy] greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead ... But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose" (vv. 26-27). Demons can cause people to injure themselves. They even incite suicide.

Symptom 7: Unexplained illness with no obvious medical cause

When medical testing produces no physical cause for an illness, then we should look to the mind and spirit for answers. Sometimes illnesses are psychological, and good counseling can result in a cure. Other times the battle is with demons. A scriptural example of this is found in Luke 13:11-16, the story of a woman afflicted by a "spirit of infirmity" (v. 11). Jesus called her "a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound" (v. 16). Obviously she was a child of God and faithful to her synagogue, with a desire to know more about the Lord. Then, "Jesus ... said to her, 'Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.' And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God" (vv. 12-13). There are physical illnesses caused by a class of demons known as "spirits of infirmity."

Symptom 8: Addictive behavior

Addiction to alcohol, drugs, sex, food, gambling and other things opens the door to demonic influence and control. I am not saying demons cause all of these problems; certainly people are responsible for their own wrong choices. But anything that causes one to be out of control opens that person to infernal control.

Symptom 9: Abnormal sexual behavior

When Jezebel's son inquired about peace, Jehu responded, "What peace, as long as the harlotries of your mother Jezebel and her witchcraft are so many?" (2 Kings 9:22). In Ezekiel 16:20-51, the spirit of harlotry is mentioned several times. This spirit infected the nation of Israel with the sins of Sodom (vv. 49-50). They even sacrificed their own children (vv. 20-21).

Homosexuality, adultery, fornication and even infanticide are all inspired by the spirit of harlotry. Hosea 4:12 says, "The spirit of harlotry has caused them to stray, and they have played the harlot against their God." Look at Hosea 5:4: "They do not direct their deeds toward turning to their God, for the spirit of harlotry is in their midst, and they do not know the Lord."

A nation and a people given over to sexual sins and abominations is governed by this spirit of harlotry. Look at Nahum 3:4: "Because of the multitude of harlotries of the seductive harlot, the mistress of sorceries, who sells nations through her harlotries, and families through her sorceries."

Nations and families are sold into spiritual bondage by the witchcraft of the spirit of harlotry. When we play around with sexual sin, we open ourselves to this demonic spirit. We must battle this principality that dominates our nation.

Symptom 10: Defeat, failure, and depression in the Christian life

Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 2:14, "Now thanks be to God who

always leads us in triumph in Christ.” Notice this verse is preceded by an exhortation from Paul to forgive others “lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices” (vv. 10-11). It is Satan’s purpose to take advantage of our situations and to rob us of the victorious life that is ours in Christ. The psalmist cried out, “By this I know that You are well pleased with me, because my enemy does not triumph over me” (Ps. 41:11).

This symptom is often manifested by an inability to praise and worship. Psalm 92:1-4 is a testimony to the power of praise. It culminates in verse 4, where David said, “For You, Lord, have made me glad through Your work; I will triumph in the works of Your hands.” Again he said, “Save us, O Lord our God ... to give thanks ... [and] to triumph in Your praise” (Ps. 106:47).

Symptom 11: Occult involvement and behavior

Deuteronomy 18:9-12 catalogs the works of the occult and witchcraft, including child sacrifice; fortune-telling; soothsaying; interpreting omens; sorcery; and the work of those who conjure spells, mediums, spiritists and those who call up the dead. Then verse 15 instructs the people to hear the word of God from the prophet of God and order their lives accordingly. Occult involvement is clearly a symptom of demonic control.

Symptom 12: Speech difficulties

In Matthew 9:32-33, Jesus rebuked a demon, and the mute man was able to speak. Speech difficulties may be physical, emotional, mental and, in some cases, demonic. Extreme language and cursing may be prompted by the enemy.

Symptom 13: Doctrinal error

In 1 Timothy 4:1 we receive a warning that in the last days, deceiving spirits will teach the “doctrines of demons.” Today, religious cults and charlatans abound. The reason these deceivers draw many people is the power of the demonic that

teaches them.

Symptom 14: Religious legalism

Galatians 3:1 says to the believer who is in danger of going back under the Law, "Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth?" The church at Galatia had forsaken a faith ministry that resulted in the miraculous (v. 5) for a law ministry of rules and regulations. Paul classified this error as witchcraft.

Some deeply religious people are under the bondage of tradition, man-made rules and outward appearances. Demons thrive in this kind of environment, especially demons of control. It is a lot easier to keep a ritual or list of rules than it is to walk by faith. Wherever there is any substitute for faith in the finished work of Christ, it is a doctrine of demons.

Adapted from Demons & Spiritual Warfare by Ron Phillips, ., copyright 2010, published by Charisma House. Since 1979, Phillips has been senior pastor of Central Baptist Church, now Abba's House, near Chattanooga, Tenn. He hosts a daily online radio program, CenterPoint, and is the author of more than 20 books, including Our Invisible Allies (Charisma House).

Christian Rapper Calls Out, Names Prosperity Preachers

A Christian rapper recently released a song that calls out prosperity gospel teachers by name, including Joel Osteen, Joyce Meyer, T.D. Jakes, Benny Hinn, Creflo Dollar and the entire Trinity Broadcasting Network.

“I ain’t really trying to start beef, but some who claim to be part of His sheep got some sharp teeth. (They’re wolves),” Shai Linne raps in the song “False Teacher\$” before referencing Matthew 7:16.

The song—from Linne’s album *Lyrical Theology Part 1: Theology*, which released April 9—has caused buzz among Christian bloggers, especially with the song’s naming of 12 pastors, each name followed by “is a false teacher!”

The rapper explains in a video posted by his record company, Lamp Mode Recordings, that he wrote the song to address an issue in the American church that is now spreading overseas—not to cause controversy. He said he addressed the issue in “Faulty Doctrine,” a 2003 song with fellow rapper Timothy Brindle, and he wanted to write another song as the movement has grown—especially in African countries Malawi, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya and Zimbabwe.

“You have these rallies where literally over 100,000 people will come to hear these guys talk about prosperity,” Linne told Wade-0 Radio. “The people who are coming are impoverished like crazy and they’re buying into it thinking that this false theology is going to be their way out of poverty. They figure, ‘Hey, it must work because it’s working for these guys in America.’”

The rapper realizes that many true believers follow these preachers, so he took care in his approach, while also aiming to speak the truth about men and women he believes are preaching a false gospel. He knew his lyrics would make some people upset but said, “God forbid that for the love of some fans, I keep quiet and watch them die with their blood on my hands.”

In the video interview, Linne said he listened to recent teachings from the pastors he mentioned in the song while he prepared to write it and found a pattern: The preachers would

reference a Bible passage and speak about the good things God wants for His people, which “always centered on self as though God existed for us, not the other way around,” he noticed. They would then get the crowd worked up and ask them to donate money, claiming that God would multiply their giving by “sowing this seed.”

He raps: “Do you wanna know what all false teachers have in common? It’s called selfism, the fastest growing religion; they just dress it up and call it ‘Christian.’”

His full list of false teachers calls out Osteen, Meyer, Jakes, Dollar, Hinn, Paula White, Fred Price, Kenneth Copland, Robert Tilton, Eddie Long, Juanita Bynum and Paul Crouch.

“Jesus is not a means to an end,” he says in the song. “The gospel is He came to redeem us from sin, and that is the message forever I’ll yell. If you’re living your best life now, you’re heading for hell.”

Listen to the song, here:

The Difference Between God’s Good Will and His Perfect Will

God has a wonderful plan for our lives. But because He has given us the freedom to choose whether or not we are going to follow His will, there are four possibilities for discovering and responding to it.

1. We could be content to remain ignorant of God’s will. This

is not you because if it were, you wouldn't be reading this article right now. You obviously have a deep desire in your heart to discover God's will for your life, and you are going to make that discovery.

2. We could know what God wants us to do but choose to disobey Him and do things our own way instead. This is disobedience, and it is the head-on collision between God's will and the stubborn rebellion of human flesh.

3. We could know God's will and follow it in part but settle for less than what God had in mind. This is the biggest challenge most people face. You wouldn't be reading this article if you weren't interested in finding God's will. But settling for less than God's best for our lives is often the easy road, and good things are often the greatest enemy of the best things.

4. We can choose to contend for nothing less than God's best in our lives. This is the big challenge for many people, because impatience is a powerful force, especially when it comes to getting what we want. But if we really believe God has a perfect will for us and that His will is always better than ours, we will keep waiting for it and will fight for it if necessary.

There is a perpetual conflict in the Christian life between what is good and what is God. For example, I have seen Christians marry the wrong spouse because they were unwilling to wait for God to bring the right one along. God allowed them to do what they wanted—and in some cases even turned bad situations around for His glory.

Yet whenever we choose to disobey and do things our own way, something is lost that can never be restored. God will forgive and heal, but He will not turn back the hands of time. I wonder sometimes if one day the Lord will show us what our lives would have been like and how He would have blessed

us if only we had obeyed.

A well-known poem written by an unknown author says:

When I stand at the judgment seat of Christ,
and He shows me His plan for me—
The plan of my life as it might have been
had He had His way—and I see
How I blocked Him here, and checked Him there
and would not yield my will,
Shall I see grief in my Savior's eyes;
grief, though He loves me still?
He would have me rich, but I stand there poor,
stripped of all but His grace—
While my memory runs like a hunted thing,
down the paths I can't retrace.
Then my desolate heart will well nigh break
with tears that I cannot shed.
I'll cover my face with my empty hands
and bow my uncrowned head.
Now, Lord of the life that's left to me,
I yield it to Thy hand.
Take me, make me, mold me,
to the pattern Thou hast planned.

God has a "good" will for your life, but He also has a "perfect" will. His perfect will and the blessings that accompany it are reserved for those who are willing to be radically obedient and to wait when necessary. Those who are slow to learn this lesson will make many trips through the wilderness and endure much unnecessary hurt and loss.

There are moments when God's way will seem so difficult, so prolonged and so unrewarding, while our idea will seem much easier, much quicker and so much more enjoyable. But that is only an illusion. Looking back, we will always find that God's plan was so much better than ours. There will never be an exception to this rule, so you might as well decide from now

on to yield to God's will, to do it God's way and to wait for God's best.

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Jackie Robinson's Biopic '42' Knocks It Out of the Park

Baseball movies are a special breed. Either a film has "it," or it doesn't.

Example: *Field of Dreams*, *Eight Men Out*, *The Natural*, *The Rookie*, *Major League*, *61 and Bull Durham* all have it. *Fever Pitch*, *Little Big League*, *Mr. Baseball*, *The Scout*, *Angels in the Outfield* and *Rookie of the Year*, simply do not.

42, a new film by Warner Brothers about the early years of Jackie Robinson's baseball career, has "it."

The life and saga of Jackie Robinson—the first black man to play in the Major Leagues—is compelling enough. Anyone who is a fan of the game is well aware of the racial and human injustices he had to endure in the Brooklyn Dodgers' minor league system and his first couple of years in the majors.

That includes the time during spring training when he literally was run out of Sanford, Fla., due to bigotry.

But, much more than the *Jackie Robinson Story* in 1950, *42* goes

beyond the baseball field to reveal the extraordinary character and integrity Robinson possessed as a man. Not only did he break the color barrier in baseball, but he also helped to change the hearts and attitudes of his teammates and fans throughout the league who began to see the man inside, not to mention the talents of an outstanding ballplayer.

Don't think Robinson wasn't human, however. There were times, as the movie showed, when he wanted to vent his anger and take on the entire world. But, he never showed that side of himself in public; only one reason that members of the Brooklyn Dodgers organization and the fans began to slowly embrace him.

It was the beginning of a methodical process—one that took far too long—that has seen life and attitudes completely change in America. First Lady Michelle Obama, who recently viewed the film with her husband, President Barack Obama, during a private screening, told the Associated Press that the Obamas were “struck by how far removed that way of life seems today.”

One of the film's most compelling scenes was when the Dodgers traveled to Cincinnati. The organization was warned that there would be trouble if Robinson traveled with the team, but Robinson made the trip. After taking the field, all types of racial slurs were hurled his way.

It wasn't until Dodgers shortstop Pee Wee Reese, a native of the Cincinnati area, came over and put his arm around Robinson and told him he was proud to have him as a teammate that fans began to see Robinson in a different light.

Robinson's first year might have been rocky, but he was soon joined by other African-American players, including the Dodgers' Roy Campanella in 1948 and Don Newcombe in 1949. In 10 seasons with Brooklyn, Robinson batted .311, hit 137 home runs, drove in 734 runs, stole 197 bases and led the Dodgers to the 1955 World Series championship. He was a six-time all-star and was inducted into the Major League Baseball Hall of

Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y., in 1962 and passed away at the age of 53 in 1972.

Chadwick Boseman, who made his feature film debut in Gary Fleder's 2008 drama *The Express*, captured the essence of Robinson's gentle nature with an outstanding performance as the lead character. Expect to see Boseman in many other major motion pictures in the future.

The role of Dodgers General Manager Branch Rickey was a major departure from the swashbuckling characters such as Han Solo and Indiana Jones that we're used to seeing from Harrison Ford. However, Ford nearly stole the show with a dead-on portrayal of Rickey, including his voice and facial mannerisms that gave the film a very enjoyable humorous side.

The film is rated PG-13 due to some rough language scattered throughout, and a mild bedroom scene involving highly colorful Dodgers manager Leo Durocher. Otherwise, it is a family movie that most non-baseball fans can embrace.

The film is set to release nationwide in theaters on Friday. Major League Baseball will celebrate its annual Jackie Robinson Day on April 15. Every player on every team will wear the No. 42 in honor of Robinson that day.

Gay Agenda's Intimidation Tactics Won't Stop Me From Speaking Truth

The gay agenda paints itself with the brush of tolerance—until you disagree with its moves to flaunt sexual immorality in

every aspect of society.

Indeed, even a mild disagreement with the gay agenda draws vicious accusations of bigotry and hate-mongering. But who's really doing the hate-mongering?

In response to "reports" from CBS that a gay NFL player was about to come out, I wrote an op-ed a couple of weeks ago suggesting that we don't need gay role models in professional sports.

Mind you, I never suggested that gays can't and don't make positive contributions to society. And I have nothing against gay people. God's heart breaks for their lost souls. That said, I don't agree with the gay lifestyle or the gay agenda's determination to glorify a lifestyle that's sending masses to hell.

In my last column, I posed the questions: *Where will the gay agenda go next to recruit kids who are confused about their sexual identity? How should the church respond to youth who need to know who they are in Christ so they can avoid the eternal consequences of homosexual sin?*

The gay agenda swarmed around me like a shark that smelled blood. I received emails that purposed to intimidate me. I was sought out on Facebook and repulsive messages were posted on my wall. I was told I would rot in hell. I've been labeled a bully who wields "clobber verses" despite the fact that my op-ed didn't offer a single Scripture. I've been compared to white slave owners, deemed stubbornly close-minded, and, of course, there's the tired old homophobe line. One email simply said, "f**k you." I'll stop there because to further expound on the evil that the gay agenda unleashed against me is not edifying.

What was my crime? Telling the truth. God's truth is love, and it doesn't always feel good or sound pretty. But the response from the gay agenda to God's truth is often hate. Still,

despite the persecution, I stand in prayer for those the enemy has captured. Like God's heart, my heart breaks for their lost souls. I am contending for light to flood in, deception to break and repentance to come.

It may be working. And that may be why I got so much backlash. There's an old saying that goes something like this, "Throw a rock at a group of people and the one that yells is the one that got hit." Could it be possible that God's truth is pricking the hearts of those yelling loudest? Could it be possible that conviction is trying to settle in on the hearts of the ones who make the loudest threats? I pray that's the case because the alternative is that they are flowing in a reprobate mind.

I imagine this column will drive more hateful comments against me. But God's love in me will not bow down to the threats and name-calling. There is a gay agenda and it's working overtime to send millions to hell. I will not remain silent. I stand in hope that God will use my words to prick the hearts of some who may find freedom in Christ and work to help set others free. Amen.

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John Bevere: Partial

Obedience Is Disobedience

King Saul's life exemplifies this concept. God sent Saul a command through the prophet Samuel. Saul was instructed to gather his army and attack Amalek, utterly destroying everything that breathed—every man, woman, child, and animal.

Saul didn't refuse Samuel's instructions with, "Absolutely not!" and stomp off in the opposite direction. That would be obvious disobedience. Rather, Saul listened, gathered his army, and attacked Amalek. In this attack, tens of thousands of men, women, and children were killed. Saul spared only the Amalekite king. Perhaps he wanted another king as a trophy to serve in his palace.

Most likely thousands of animals were killed as well. Saul saved only a few of the best sheep, lambs, and oxen. He reasoned that the people could sacrifice these to the Lord, and even that it was "scriptural." To an observer who had not heard the prophet's word, Saul might have appeared to be a godly king. "Look, he sacrifices only the very best to the Lord!"

After this campaign God spoke to Samuel: "I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments" (1 Sam. 15:11). The next day Samuel went to confront Saul.

When Saul saw Samuel coming, he greeted him excitedly with the salutation, "Blessed are you of the Lord! I have performed the commandment of the Lord" (v. 13).

Wait a minute! That was definitely not God's impression! We just read His opinion. What has happened here? How could there be such differing views of the same incident? Saul really believed he obeyed God. How could there be such a variance? James explains it: But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. —James 1:22

When we hear God's Word and do not do it, we deceive our own hearts! This is how someone can really believe they are obedient to God when in reality they are acting in disobedience.

This is both a fearful and sobering revelation! Deception veils the heart and obstructs the truth. The more a person disobeys, the thicker and more obstructive the veil becomes, making it harder to remove.

Allow me to reiterate some important points. First, Saul did not stomp off and refuse to do as he was told. He went. Second, he killed tens of thousands of people, sparing only one. He killed all but a few of the thousands of animals.

He probably did 99 percent of what he was told to do. Yet God called his nearly complete obedience—rebellion (1 Sam. 15:23)!

Today we would say, "That's all right; it was a good effort." We may even defend Saul, pointing out, "After all, he did do almost everything. Give him credit for what he did do right! Why point out the one thing he didn't do? Look at all he did! Don't be so hard on poor Saul!"

In God's eyes, partial or selective obedience is the same as rebellion to His authority. It is the evidence of a lack of the fear of God!

Once I was in Canada preparing to minister. We were in the middle of praise and worship when the Spirit of the Lord posed this question: "Do you know what a religious spirit is?"

Although I have written and preached on religious spirits and how they operate, I knew right away that my information must have been limited at best. I have learned that anytime God asks a question, He is not looking for information. I answered, "No, Lord—please tell me."

He quickly responded, "A person with a religious spirit is one

who uses My Word to execute his own will!" In other words, it is when we take what the Lord has said and work our own desires into it.

I stood in awe of the wisdom imparted by the Spirit of God. I applied this to the situation with Saul. I could see how Saul had done what he was told, yet worked his own desires into it.

God's heart was not his focus. Saul had seen an opportunity to benefit himself and strengthen his position with the people, and he seized it. Is that lordship? Is that trembling at God's Word?

The fear of the Lord will keep us from compromising God's truth for the pursuit of personal gain. Then we will obey God's Word, no matter the cost.

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Why God Likes Your Prayers

The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. –Exodus 33:11

Evangelist J. John told me about a trip he made to India a few years ago. Shortly after he arrived, he heard about a saintly lady called Sister Theresa (not Mother Teresa) and that she had a powerful gift of the word of knowledge. J. John was able to meet her, and he said to her, "If you have a word for me, I would be so grateful."

He said that she turned around and left. He feared he had offended her. But she came back to him an hour or so later with a list of thirteen items (some of which almost bowled him over they were so accurate), ending with these words, which he will never forget: "God likes your company and asks that you give Him two hours of your time every day.

That's all. Good-bye." Wow!

J. John took her seriously, and I can tell you—he has told me more than once—he was never to be the same again. I personally think it explains, at least in part, why J. John is one of the greatest evangelists today, not just in Britain but also throughout the world.

What does prayer do for God? For one thing, He likes your company.

I cannot imagine a greater motivation to pray than that God enjoys having me in His presence. He enjoys my company. He delights in listening to me! He doesn't get bored with my repeated requests. He doesn't moralize me if I get it wrong in what I ask for. He doesn't laugh at me if I put out silly, even impertinent, requests. He never makes me feel stupid. There is no rejection, only total acceptance.

It doesn't get better than that. Said David: How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you. —Psalm 139:17–18

When God speaks to us face-to-face, as He did with Moses, it is impossible to say who enjoys it most—God or us. I am moved to know that God spoke to Moses face-to-face, "as a man speaks with his friend" (Exod. 33:11).

God loved Moses's company. He loved Abraham's company, also calling him His friend (Isa. 41:8; James 2:23). What a compliment to the disciples that Jesus would say, "I have

called you friends” (John 15:15). Friendship is developed by spending time with another person.

The thought that God likes my company thrills me more than I can explain to you. And if He likes my company, He likes yours too—He is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34; 1 Pet. 1:17). The same blood that purchased Peter’s and Paul’s salvation bought yours and mine. Moreover, it is that blood that gives all of us equal access into God’s presence (Heb. 10:19). Therefore, I can put out of my mind the thought that some people are more acceptable to God than others. One’s profile in the church has nothing to do with being accepted by Him—or loved . . . or enjoyed. We are all on level ground. No one is at the head of the line just because he or she has a higher profile in the church, has been a Christian a longer time, has been on a forty-day fast, or has fame in the world. Being a head of state gives you no leverage.

As St. Augustine put it, “God loves every person as if there were no one else to love.”

I hate the thought of being a bore. I hate wasting people’s time. I can sometimes tell by the look on their face if they are not happy to see me. I fear rejection. And if I’m not careful, I can carry this fear of rejection right into the presence of God, assuming I am boring Him too. Why should God care about me? Why should He listen to what I have to say?

And why would He like my company? It is such a dazzling thought, that the same God who has countless billions of angels worshiping Him sixty seconds a minute, day and night, to whom the nations are but a drop in the bucket, and who knows all about every leaf on every tree in the world, also welcomes my company—because I am very important to Him.

Indeed, I can think of no more amazing thought than this: “God loves me as much as He loves Jesus.” That’s right! You and I are coheirs with Jesus (Rom. 8:17). Jesus even prayed that we

would grasp the fact that the Father loves us just as much as He loves Jesus (John 17:26).

If there is anything that will make us blush in heaven, it will be the realization of how much we were loved on this earth—but didn't appreciate it.

And if we knew how much God welcomes us when we turn to Him, we would almost certainly pray more than we do. God likes our company.

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A Line Has Been Drawn in the Sand

One of the most consistent ways the Lord speaks to me is through the avenue of *dreams*. Many of my writing and speaking assignments are given to me in such a manner. Prayer assignments over the years have almost always come in the forms of visitations and visions. This is especially true if it is a strategic assignment.

While ministering in Brazil in July 2012, I was seeking the Lord for His mind and thoughts concerning future movements of the Holy Spirit. I went to sleep in my hotel room in Belo Horizonte and woke up out of a “stunner of a dream.” The manifested presence of God was riveting on my body as an after effect of this dream encounter. It shook me.

I have yet to tell the full dream experience publicly, but I have been directed to present portions of it to you now. Perhaps I will be released at a later date and the proper setting to actually proclaim the message. For now, I am going to steer away from my craft of interpreting and just bring you the raw message.

I Saw Southern California as a Womb for the Body of Christ!

Like an eagle in flight, I was hovering over the globe in search of a place to land. Suddenly the entire West Coast of the United States came before me. I was zoomed in upon the state of California and with the eye of an eagle I saw glimpses of redemptive purposes and plans. I then turned in flight over portions of Southern California and I saw something that seemed unusual. Southern California was a womb for the Body of Christ. She had been used to conceive the Word and the Spirit over the last one hundred years of the Church and to bring forth different movements of God.

My “knower” was on high alert as I flew over Los Angeles and Orange County—that this womb had already received another word implanted at least a year earlier and that another long-term, almost overdue, birth was imminent. I then soared over Pasadena and the next thing I knew, the eagle suddenly flew into the historic Mott Auditorium on the hallowed grounds of William Carey University.

I Saw John Wimber Standing on the Platform!

Suddenly on the wings of an eagle, I was taken into Mott Auditorium in Pasadena, Calif. The place was packed with worshipping believers with standing room only. The atmosphere was electric with the presence of God. Rabid worship was happening with occasional authoritative declarations by various leaders. I noticed a few desperate pastors I knew crying out with anguish for God to visit them once again. Then things suddenly shifted.

All of a sudden, the late John Wimber, former leader of the

Vineyard Movement and voice for the Third Wave, was firmly standing on the newly purple-carpeted platform. The cultural atmosphere was now pregnant with a realm of the glory and the thick majesty of God. Then I heard and felt the voice of John Wimber echo an invitation that rattled the entire place. He simply declared, **“COME AGAIN HOLY SPIRIT!”**

People started crashing to the floor en masse under the impact of the power and authority that resonated in those simple words. Once again another sound wave was released, **“COME AGAIN HOLY SPIRIT.”** It was not gentle Jesus showing up, or the comforting dove of God manifesting. It was not just another renewal or revival meeting, though it seemed to include all of those qualities. It was the violent invasion of Heaven entering a time and space world. It was a Church quake.

I felt the reverberation coming off the sound waves of the voice of the invitation. It shook the very building, the grounds and all those present. The fear of the Lord fell and an earthquake of a 5.7 magnitude resulted. The quake resulted in an anointing resting on Psalm 57: “Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me. For my soul takes refuge in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge until destruction passes by. I will cry to God Most High, to God who accomplishes all things for me. He will send from Heaven and save me” (NASB).

People screamed in terror as the entire grounds and buildings were rattled by the sound of God’s voice being heard and felt once again. Signs and wonders broke out but it appeared as an aftereffect, not the primary goal. Then a third time I heard the pronouncement from John Wimber, **“COME AGAIN HOLY SPIRIT!”** People crashed onto the floor in droves.

As I pen this, I just now realized some things I had forgotten. They just flashed suddenly within me as I compose this. I also saw the late Jill Austin, one of the fieriest prophetesses of the last decade, gazing in upon the happening

and smiling. I heard her laugh echo over the occurrence as to say, "I told you He was coming!" I saw a great cloud of witnesses including Aimee Semple McPherson and others gathering around to peer in upon this strange outbreak. The convergence of old anointings still seemingly resident upon California was now colliding.

Suddenly I Was Awakened!

My senses were heightened. It was July and I was ministering in Brazil—a land pregnant with revival—but suddenly it appeared to be another season and it was fall, right at the time of the Jewish New Year of Rosh Hashanah. Then pages of a book flipped quickly from one chapter of time to another and suddenly it was 40 days and nights later. I smelled smoke in Mott Auditorium as the place had been filled with the burning fiery sacrifices of violent praise and worship. I smelled burnt flesh. I smelled aromas of life and death simultaneously at work.

Short messages from different anointed vessels were a part of this new sound wave but again it was not the main thing. Miracles happened. They suddenly occurred. But again, this was not the aim. It was not why the people even assembled. Yes, there were even short passionate pleas and desperate cries for help! But even that was not the central focus. This move of God centered on the radical worship of the One—Christ Jesus the Lord and the abandoned welcoming of the Third Person of the Godhead—the Holy Spirit! The jealousy of God permeated the experience.

It was not a conference. It was not even polished. It was not even 24/7 as we presently know it. It was raw and overpowering. It was not rehearsed. It was an invasion of the Holy Spirit Himself.

A window of opportunity had opened and this uncontrollable surging sound wave jumped spontaneously around the globe. A man appeared on a pogo stick gleefully jumping from city to

city and nation to nation. The man on the stick was William Seymour of the historic Azusa Street Revival. He leapt across the nations and everywhere his pogo stick landed, light came for a brief moment! The nations were in an uproar—and fire and light were falling around the globe.

Then I heard one last word:

“A Line Has Been Drawn in the Sand.”

Terror gripped me. I shook. I honestly did not know what was coming next. I still do not know having pondered deeply on this experience. Was it Days of Glory or impending societal chaos? Was it times of economic collapse or reformation where a new order was created out of tumultuous uncertainty? I honestly was left not knowing what the outcome or the result was or would be.

But this I knew: **Hope for the fragmented Body of Christ and the nations was being released. An invitation was being sent from Heaven to earth and a line was being drawn in the sand.**

The word went in me. The word penetrated me. The word has disturbed me. But this I know, Heaven has a word that must be heard in the earth realm, **“COME AGAIN HOLY SPIRIT!”** And the invitation must have an urgent and appropriate response.

Dr. James W. Goll is the President of Encounters Network, Director of Prayer Storm, and coordinates Encounters Alliance, a coalition of leaders. He is Director of God Encounters Training—an e-school of the heart, and is a member of the Harvest International Ministries apostolic team. He has shared Jesus in more than 50 nations worldwide, teaching and imparting the power of intercession, prophetic ministry and life in the Spirit. James is the prolific author of numerous books and has also produced multiple study guides and hundreds of audio and video messages. James was married to Michal Ann for 32 years before her graduation to Heaven in the fall of 2008. James has four adult children who all love Jesus, and

continues to make his home in the rolling hills of Franklin, Tennessee.

Rick Warren Was Reading Tragically Prophetic Book Before Son's Suicide

Rick Warren wasn't scheduled to preach the day his 27-year-old son, Matthew, took his own life. He was recovering from pneumonia and asked his teaching pastor, Tom Holladay, to speak about a book he was reading.

The title of that book was tragically prophetic: *What to Do on the Worst Day of Your Life* by Brian Zahnd. Indeed, news of his son's suicide had to be the worst day of Warren's life.

"Even before they knew what was happening, all of what was happening, this is the message that he wanted to be passed along to us this weekend," Holladay said.

The examples and principles in Zahnd's book may console Warren and others facing personal tragedies. Basing his book on the biblical story of King David and the disaster at Ziklag, Zahnd shares how to draw strength from the actions of the king known in Scripture as a "man after God's own heart."

"Today a lot of people are going through a hard time," says Zahnd, senior pastor of Word of Life Church in St. Joseph, Mo. "It's for these people that the story of David's calamity at Ziklag and how he eventually recovered is so relevant. God's great work in David's life was not an odd, one-off miracle, but a pattern of faith for all."

Please continue to pray for the Warren family.