

The Joni Eareckson Tada Performance You Won't See at the Oscars

At the Movieguide awards ceremony in Los Angeles Friday night, Joni Eareckson Tada performed the breakout song "**Alone Yet Not Alone**," which has received widespread attention recently because its Oscar nomination was rescinded.

Although the Christian-themed song from the independent film of the same name will no longer be honored as a nominee for **Best Original Song** at the Academy Awards ceremony on March 2, Tada's performance of the controversial, hymn-like song at the Movieguide awards will air nationally on the Reelz cable channel during Oscar weekend, March 1-3.

"The Academy's rescinding of the nomination for this song sends a sad message to Christian audiences," said Tada while on the red carpet prior to the Movieguide awards ceremony. "But it doesn't change the fact that so many people voted for it."

Her song, which was written by Bruce Broughton and Dustin Spiegel, reportedly edged out the likes of Beyoncé and Taylor Swift for the Best Original Song nomination, according to the *Los Angeles Times*.

The dubious, behind-the-scenes efforts of disgruntled individuals that led to the revoking of the Oscar nomination of Tada's song are still mired in controversy and mystery worthy of a Hollywood movie twist.

Tada admits that she doesn't quite understand the "inner workings" of Hollywood, but she perceives that "Hollywood believed this low budget, Christian film, *Alone Yet Not Alone*, did not deserve to be elevated to the global stage through the

Oscar nomination.”

It will be up to Christian audiences to support the song and film and send a message back to Hollywood.

Tada says she believes an increasing number of people are “tired and weary of entertainment that degrades the human spirit.” She believes there is a growing demand for movies and songs that are “uplifting and full of valor and courage and faith.”

“No matter the tragedies in life, God has promised to never leave us or forsake us,” Tada said on the Movieguide red carpet. “The song is about how God will never forsake us.”

She added, “God’s power always shows up in weakness.”

Tada acknowledges that she is not a professionally trained singer.

“Isn’t it just like God to pick an ill-equipped, untrained singer to be part of something great like this [song]?” she said.

Tada is a disability advocate who was paralyzed from the neck down after a diving accident as a teenager. She is well-known for her Joni and Friends ministry. She has also authored more than 40 books.

Along with Tada’s performance, another notable musical performance expected to air during the Reelz channel broadcast of the Movieguide awards in early March is Billy Ray Cyrus’ performance of his new song, “Hope Is Just Ahead.”

For more information about the Movieguide awards, go to movieguideawards.com.

What to Do When People Reject Your Prophetic Gift

There are two sides to **prophecy**: the one who delivers the word and the one who receives it. Last week we talked about [receiving personal prophecies](#) that just don't make any sense at all to the natural mind—or even necessarily bear witness with your spirit. Indeed, some **prophetic** promises are so exceedingly, abundantly above all you could ask or think that it's tempting to dismiss them without even **praying** it through.

Now, let's flip things around. Have you ever delivered a **prophecy** that someone flat-out refused to receive even though you were convinced it was from God? The **prophecy** was pure. It didn't breed fear, seek to control or violate Scripture. The **prophecy** exalted Jesus and was delivered in a spirit of **humility**. Nevertheless, it wasn't received—and maybe you were even harshly criticized or labeled a **false prophet** for delivering it.

I'll repeat what I said last week: I believe in **judging prophecy** before receiving it as Holy Spirit-inspired truth, but as I explain in my book [Did the Spirit of God Say That? judging prophecy](#) isn't always an exact science. That means you could be delivering a perfectly accurate **prophetic word** that's perfectly passed over as false. What's a **prophet** to do?

Don't Get a Rejection Complex

Don't take the rejection personally. If you are delivering a true word from the Lord, the people aren't rejecting you. They are rejecting the word of the Lord. That was the case with Samuel. Consider Samuel's **prophetic** reputation: "So Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall

to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the Lord” (1 Sam. 3:19-20).

Nevertheless, Saul did not receive Samuel’s **prophetic word**. Samuel told Saul, “The Lord sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt. Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey’” (1 Sam. 15:1-3).

Again, Saul did not receive Samuel’s **prophetic word**. Not because it was false. Not because it bred fear. Not because it was seeking to control. But because Saul was self-willed. Saul fulfilled part of the **prophecy**. He waged war against the Amalekites, but he did not utterly destroy everything. Saul “spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed” (v. 9).

Rejecting the Word of the Lord

Not only that, Saul actually set up a monument for himself before declaring he had performed the commandment of the Lord. Samuel rebuked him, noting, “You have rejected the **word of the Lord**, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel” (v. 26).

Now, let’s be clear. I’m not giving you license to rebuke people who don’t receive the **prophetic words** you deliver. I am demonstrating that it wasn’t the **prophet** Samuel that Saul rejected—it was the **word of the Lord**. And there’s always a price to pay for rejecting the word of the Lord, when you know that you know that you know that God has give you a **prophetic**

word for someone—and you know, too, that He wants you to actually deliver it, speak it forth boldly with humility, not fearing the consequences, not fearing rejection.

And if the person rejects the word—or rejects you—don't respond in kind. Instead, go into **intercession** for them. This is the spirit of a true **prophet**: “Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul. And Samuel went no more to see Saul until the day of his death. Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul” (v. 34-35). True prophets have a mercy gift and are intercessors. When folks reject the **prophetic word** you deliver, remember Samuel. Amen.

You can download a sample chapter of Jennifer's new book, *The Making of a Prophet*, by [clicking here](#).

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Pastor Bayless Conley Seeing 'Amazing Progress' After Boating Accident

New details have emerged about pastor Bayless Conley's boating fiasco. After [reports of an accident](#) that left the host of *Answers With Bayless Conley* in critical condition, his ministry is reporting “amazing progress” with his recovery.

According to his official [Facebook page](#), Conley, senior pastor

of Cottonwood Church in Los Alamitos, Calif., along with pastor Jeff Perry, senior pastor of St. Louis Family Church in St. Louis, and Cottonwood member Keith Johnson, were in a fishing boat off the coast of Southern California when the boating accident occurred.

“On Monday night, Pastor Bayless underwent surgery because of soft tissue injuries sustained to his neck and throat area. After surgery his doctors reported that all of his vital organs and his spinal cord are fully intact and without injury,” the report says.

“Yesterday, a second procedure was performed to examine the injuries to Pastor Bayless’ neck and throat areas. According to his doctors, neither his vocal cords nor his voice box was damaged. Presently, he is resting well, making amazing progress, and his medical condition is improving. according to his doctors.”

Johnson sustained facial injuries and possible broken ribs and remains in the hospital. Perry suffered a fractured sternum and cuts and bruises. According to Perry’s family, he in good sprits and doing well, the report notes, and they expect him to be released from the hospital soon.

“The Conley, Perry, and Johnson families want to express their deepest thanks and appreciation to those first responders and the medical professionals for their outstanding efforts on behalf of their family members following the accident,” the post says. “The Conley, Perry, and Johnson families thank you for your continued prayers.”

Why It May Be Time to Dig Out Those Old Prophetic Words

Have you ever received **personal prophecy** that just didn't make any sense at all to your natural mind? Maybe it didn't even bear witness to your spirit. Perhaps the prophetic promise was so exceedingly, abundantly above all you could ask or think that you dismissed it without even **praying** it through.

I believe in **judging prophecy** before receiving it as Holy Spirit-inspired truth, but as I explain in my book [*Did the Spirit of God Say That?*](#) **judging prophecy** isn't always an exact science. Sure, if it violates Scripture, you should immediately toss it out the window. But sometimes you should just put your **prophetic word** in a drawer, so to speak, because it might begin to ring true years—maybe even decades—later.

That was certainly the case with Sarah, who laughed out loud—and then denied it—when she heard the Lord **prophecy** to Abraham that she would have a son (Gen. 18:10-12). It was also the case when Jacob heard Joseph's **prophetic dreams**. Jacob actually rebuked Joseph for sharing a dream in which his brothers bowed down to the young lad.

When Wild Prophecies Are True

But sometimes even the wildest **prophecies** can be God's truth. We know that despite Abraham and Sarah's old age—and despite the fact that she was barren even in her younger years—the couple had their son of promise: Isaac. And we know that despite Jacob's rebuke of his favorite son, his brothers bowed down to the young lad—eventually.

Here's the scene: Joseph was 17 years old. Apparently he was a bit of a tattletale because the **Bible** says he brought a bad report of his brothers to Jacob (Gen. 37:2). Joseph's brothers resented him because he was Dad's favorite and he had his

father's special gift—a coat of many colors—to prove it. But it turns out Joseph was also **prophetic**. He had two **prophetic dreams**, both of which indicated that his brothers would bow down to him:

“So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, ‘What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?’ And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind” (vv. 10-11).

Dig Out Those Old Prophetic Words

Did you catch that? Even though Jacob rebuked Joseph, the **Bible** says he kept the matter in mind. In other words, he didn't dismiss the **prophecy** as false. Jacob didn't start warring with the **prophetic word** or **praying** it through or praising God for it. But he didn't toss it in the circular file, either. He didn't completely dismiss it.

So what does that mean for you? It may be time to dig some of those old **prophetic words** out of a drawer. And if you aren't keeping a record of your **prophetic words**, you should start. When you receive a **personal prophecy** from a **prophet**—or when the Lord speaks to your heart or gives you a **prophetic dream** or vision—you should record it.

Unless you can judge it to be an erroneous **prophecy**—and many times you can, because if a **prophecy** breeds fear, seeks to control or manipulate you, or otherwise violates Scripture, you should bind the words spoken over you—then you should save the word because it may bring clarity later.

Do What Jacob Did

Some **prophecies** are like a heads up from God. It may not make any sense at the time, but later, when certain events begin to unfold in your life, that **prophecy** can serve as a confirmation that you are smack-dab in the middle of God's will. When you

first hear the **prophecy**, you may not be in a place to receive it or comprehend it. But it may bring assurance and comfort later in life.

Joseph went through horrible trials before his **prophetic dreams** came to pass. But when the famine hit Egypt and he was able to save the sons of Israel—which would become the nation of Israel—from perishing, it made perfect sense to Joseph.

Although his brothers eventually came to realize the **prophecies** were true, condemnation set in and they thought Joseph would repay the evil they did by selling him as a slave to the Ishmaelites and telling Jacob he was dead. But Joseph saw Romans 8:28 manifesting. He told his brothers, “Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive” (Gen. 50:19-20).

If God can take a tattletale boy who was sold as a slave and imprisoned for a crime he didn't commit and raise him up as second to pharaoh in a prosperous land, then God can do anything. Nothing is impossible with God (Luke 1:37). So next time you receive a **personal prophecy** or a word, dream or vision directly from the Lord that's not clearly false, do what Jacob did: Keep the saying in mind. Amen.

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After '5 Months of Hell' Carman Declares Cancer Will Leave in 3 Weeks

After posting an "[emergency update](#)" on Sunday sharing that he was "worried—really worried" about a "fatal infection," legendary Christian singer **Carman** on Tuesday offered a sign of relief.

"It looks like the sun may have just popped his head out to say hello," he wrote on his [Facebook page](#). "The doctors were just in my room and we had a long talk. They assured me that what I'm going through as a cancer patient is something most all patients go through at some point. It's part of the process."

Carman went on to explain the problem: He developed a virus doctors couldn't identify until the fever broke. He was admitted to the hospital on Sunday with a 104-degree temperature, shaking, and chills, and pecked out a Facebook update in the midst of the illness because he knew when the "prayer savages" read his request, "the devil was facing a series New Jersey beat down."

"They could not stop the fevers," **Carman** wrote. "The lowest they would go was 102. So I put on my 3 time UFC Champion and friend 'Royce Gracie' T-shirt I got for Christmas, just for attitude. I must have slept 15 hours and when I woke up I was soaking wet. My pillows, clothes blankets were drenched. I called the nurse cause I thought I knocked over a pitcher of water that I always have within reach."

At that point, **Carman** reports, medical personnel scrambled to

redress everything and check his vital signs. When they did, his temperature was normal.

“I guess God put me in a deep sleep like Adam and pulled out a surprise,” **Carman** wrote. “Personally, I would have rather woke up next to Eve than a sweaty T-shirt, but the fever was more important at the time (ugh). The doctor told me I will be released on Thursday and home in time to watch the UFC Championship on Saturday.”

Carman described the event as the most difficult trial over the last eight months of myeloma cancer treatment. He described the experience as “5 months of hell” but said he’d be back in the gym lifting weights and running the treadmill in three weeks because, he proclaimed, “the cancer will be gone.”

“Thank you all once again. In more ways than one this is your tour, your record, your outreach,” **Carman** says. “I was down for the count and preparing my personal affairs when you came flooding in with your encouraging posts, your finances and your prayers. You all were the ones who ‘willed’ me back to life. So will I be on stage, on tour in the best shape of my life? As Rocky would say ‘absolutely.’”

Do Dogs Go to Heaven or Just Seeker-Friendly Churches?

Over the years, I’ve had a number of people ask me if dogs go to heaven. That’s the subject of hot debate, but it turns out some dogs do go to church.

I’m not sure if it’s a publicity stunt or **seeker-friendly**

church strategies gone to the dogs, but a Methodist church in Maryland is inviting canine congregants to dress up in their Sunday morning best and listen to the **gospel**.

According to an Associated Press article, Rev. Al Deal plans to bark out a sermon to churchgoers and their four-legged friends. Deal figures, "For those who love their pets ... they are part of the family." Maybe so, but what redeeming value is there in inviting loyal Spot to Sunday morning service? Here's Deal's reasoning, as the AP reports it:

"Not only do many pet owners love their animals like children, he said, 'There are some folks who don't like leaving their pets, especially dogs, at home alone. I thought it would be nice if they could be provided with a warm, welcoming and comforting place to worship with their canine companions. And Mt. Zion United Methodist Church is just the place. I refer to Mt. Zion as the little church with the big heart.'"

And maybe a few big dogs?

The AP reports that, depending on how the service goes, Deal envisions having a Sunday school for folks with their dogs. He's also considering allowing cats to attend future pet-friendly services. As Deal sees it, "It is very important for the church to recognize the deep connection between people and their pets if they want to minister to the whole person and to what makes that person whole."

What? C'mon now. This is seeker-friendliness in an extreme form! It goes right along with [pastors who drink beer in pub-based Bible study](#) and other clever church-growth gimmicks pastors have dreamed up in years past. Just because God instructed Noah to bring animals into the ark—and just because **God** cares for animals—doesn't mean He wants them in His holy sanctuary.

I suppose this is a take-off on "Bring Your Dog to Work Day," but what about the faithful **church** members who are allergic to

doggy dander or scared senseless of Spot and fearful of Fido? What about the cleaning staff that gets to scrub urine off the carpet, pick up doggy doo-doo and vacuum the trail of shedding fur from long-hair breeds? What about the distraction it causes for those who truly need a life-changing word and only hear barking, whining or pet owners trying to settle their pawed friends in the pews?

As it turns out, Deal is not alone in his beliefs—and he's not the first to employ this seeker-friendly strategy. "Take Your Pet to Church Day" appears to be catching on—but at what cost? Has anyone thought about how the experience might stress the animals? Bringing in pets to sit in pews isn't practically ministering to the animal—they can't understand the message—and Spot may not enjoy being confined in the building with a bunch of strangers and loud music.

Before you send your hate mail, please consider that I have nothing against animals. I once had a Dalmatian I really loved, and my daughter has a cute little critter even now. (Of course, her wise youth pastors won't allow her to bring it into the church!)

If the **church** wanted to have a picnic and let folks bring their pets, that would be a wonderful way for pet lovers to fellowship together. But do we really want to start opening our churches to parishioners' personal pets in the name of ministering to the whole person? Do we really, as Deal contends, need to minister to both people and their pets? Would Jesus bring a pet poodle to the temple? Did the apostle Paul invite cats to the church at Ephesus? What do these types of services really say about the state of the church? Sound off.

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Jennifer on [Facebook](#) or follow her on [Twitter](#).

Why You Should Remind God of Your Prophetic Words

Remember how excited you were when you got that **prophetic word** five, 10 or even 15 years ago? You set your heart to prepare yourself to walk it out. You confessed it out of your mouth. You declared it shall come to pass. You prayed it through.

You did everything you were supposed to do, but that prophetic word still hasn't come to pass. In fact, it may even look like the exact opposite is happening in your life. It may look like the enemy has already robbed your **prophecy**. It may seem like the prophetic word will never come to pass.

Now is your moment of decision. Will you give up on that tried-and-tested **prophetic word** that you know that you know that you know is from God? Or will you go back to the author of that prophecy—Jesus—and remind Him of the prophetic word?

Jacob's Vow at Bethel

Jacob got a **prophetic word** from God while he was fleeing his angry brother, Esau, whom he cheated out of his birthright. Imagine the scene: Jacob was traveling alone from Beersheba toward Haran, and when the sun started setting, he decided to rest. He used a rock for a pillow and had **prophetic dreams** of "a ladder that was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it" (Gen. 28:12). Next came a **prophecy** that was exceedingly abundantly above all he could ask or think:

“I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you” (vv. 13-15).

Jacob believed the **prophetic word**, set up a pillar to God, poured oil upon it and made a vow to give a tenth to God if He kept him safe during his journey, gave him food and clothing, and allowed him to reach his father’s house in peace. Of course, God kept up His part of the covenant. Despite being cheated by his uncle Laban for more than a decade, Jacob prospered wildly in every respect in Haran. He had exceeding abundant children, livestock and favor with God.

Wrestling With God

Finally fed up with Laban’s dishonesty, Jacob decided to return to his country. Laban pursued him, and Jacob boldly confronted his uncle—but when Jacob learned that Esau was coming out to meet him, fear struck his heart. Jacob did what we need to do when it looks like our **prophetic word** can’t possibly come to pass—when it looks like the devil is devouring our prophetic dreams. When the enemy comes in with fear that what God said will never happen, we need to take the **prophetic word** back to its author in **prayer**.

“Then Jacob said, ‘O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the Lord who said to me, “Return to your country and to your family, and I will deal well with you”: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies. Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand

of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me and the mother with the children. For You said, "I will surely treat you well, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude"" (Gen. 32:9-12).

But Jacob didn't stop there. Jacob wrestled with God over the issue until the break of day. You'll recall the determined words of Jacob's mouth: "I will not let You go until You bless me!" (v. 26). Jacob got his blessing, but he walked away with a limp.

Of course, God always intended to keep his **prophetic word** to Jacob. There was never a question in God's mind that He would watch over His word to perform it (Jer. 1:12). And the same holds true for you. Although some **prophecies** are conditional, some are set in stone—no man on earth or devil in hell can stop what God has planned. But we can stop it with our doubt, unbelief, fearful mindset, complacency and apathy.

So if you've been waiting for months, years or decades for a **prophecy** to come to pass—and when you're afraid people and circumstances are going to kill your promise—do what Jacob did. Pray. Remind God of His **prophetic word**. Wrestle with God in prayer until you have the faith to get up and run toward His perfect will despite what things look like—even if you have to run with a limp. Amen.

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Demon Possession: The New Confession of Modern Youth

I don't listen to secular radio. I haven't listened to secular radio on purpose since I was saved and tossed thousands of dollars of secular CDs in the garbage.

As dark as secular music was back then, mainstream music has taken on a whole new level of **demonic** influence, as popular radio songs work to get our youth to confess they are demon-inspired, if not **demon possessed**.

This **revelation** came as I was driving across the state of Florida with my teenaged daughter recently and decided to take a listen to what type of music today's youth finds appealing. I heard the typical Miley Cyrus and Katy Perry hits that were hardly wholesome but not especially wicked. But I also heard tunes from "artists" like Eminem, Rihanna and Imagine Dragons that shocked me.

Consider the hook in Eminem's "The Monster," which features Rihanna: "I'm friends with the monster that's under my bed/Get along with the voices inside of my head/You're trying to save me, stop holding your breath/And you think I'm crazy, yeah, you think I'm crazy."

Then there's Imagine Dragons, with its "Demons" hit that talks about the "beast inside" and proclaims, "No matter what we breed/We still are made of greed/This is my kingdom come/This is my kingdom come," and then goes on to declare, "When you feel my heat/Look into my eyes/It's where my **demons** hide/It's where my **demons** hide/Don't get too close/It's dark inside/It's where my **demons** hide/It's where my **demons** hide."

And this is what much of today's youth are listening to—rock stars confessing and glorifying their struggles with voices in their heads and **demons** in their souls. Even church kids are listening to this demon-inspired drivel, singing right along with Rihanna and Imagine Dragons, agreeing they have voices in their heads and demons in their souls when they should be agreeing with the **voice of God** and the **Holy Spirit** about who He is.

You might say to me, “Jennifer, this is nothing new.” Maybe not. But the beats and lyrics of modern secular music are growing darker. We've moved from “Amazing grace, how sweet the sound” to Electric Hellfire Club with songs like “Kiss the Goat.” I know there's plenty of satanic underground heavy metal music that never makes it onto the radio, but clearly Satan, who once led **worship** in heaven, or his demons are dropping lyrics in the minds of pop stars who have a mainstream radio platform. The key word is *mainstream*. This isn't some dark underground music I'm talking about. These are top hits.

What's the danger? According to an Illinois State University study, male undergraduates behaved with more hostility toward women and were more likely to view aggressive behavior positively after viewing music videos that featured violent acts. And an Emory University study reveals black girls between 14 and 18 who viewed hardcore rap videos for 14 hours a week or more were 3 times more likely to hit a teacher, 2.5 times more likely to get arrested and 1.5 times more likely to get a sexually transmitted disease, use drugs or drink alcohol.

Of course, there's no particular study about what happens to teens who confess there are voices inside their heads and **demons** hiding inside them. But a spiritually minded person can connect the dots, and the final picture is disturbing. The power of death and life are in the tongue (Prov. 18:21). A generation of youth is confessing insanity and demon-

possession over their lives.

Again, you're probably saying, "Jennifer, this is nothing new." Maybe not. And maybe there's nothing we can do to stop today's youth from confessing they have voices inside of their head and **demons** inside while they are riding in the car with their friends or even sitting in their rooms with an iPod and headphones, blaring the demonic messages in their ears.

But that doesn't mean we shouldn't be vigilant. That doesn't mean we shouldn't teach our youth the spiritual implications of singing along with their favorite heathen rapper. That doesn't mean we should allow it in our homes and cars. That doesn't mean we should bury our heads in the sand while a generation of youth is confessing **demon possession** and insanity, does it?

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Dealing With Church Hurt God's Way

We expect to be mistreated in the world, but we're often blindsided—and get our feelings hurt—when brothers and sisters in Christ don't invite us to the party, talk behind our backs, or aren't there for us in a time of need.

I wrote a short article with some **prophetic** insight on [overcoming hurt feeling's God's way](#) some years ago and it's

consistently one of the most visited articles on my site. And on Sunday I was a guest on Love and Life Radio, where I discussed the topic of “church hurt” with Coach Steph. Although some would argue that we need to die to self, overcoming hurt feelings—dealing with **offense**—remains a relevant topic in the church today.

Have you been hurt in **church**? What are you supposed to do? How do you handle it? Leave the church? Confront the issue? Bury it? Lash out at the person who hurt you? When people are hurt by a church or church member, how can this conflict be resolved? What does this **Bible** say about this and how do you practically walk that out?

Take it to God

When a pastor or a parishioner hurts you, the very first action to take is **prayer**. The hurt you feel is real and pretending like you aren't hurt isn't going to bring healing. Sometimes when we get hurt in **church** folks like to tell us that we have no reason to feel bad and we just need to get over it. Half of that statement is true. We do need to get over it, but it's not always true that we have no reason to feel bad. If someone is spewing malicious gossip behind your back and you find out about it, it stings.

No matter what kind of hurt you're dealing with, don't rush into a confrontation with the offender. Take it to God in **prayer**. Psalm 50:15 says, “Call upon me in the day of trouble.” That works for a troubled soul just as well as it does any other trouble. Tell Him how you feel and ask Him to heal your wounds. It may be that the Lord is going to deal with the offender directly and anything you say would just make matters worse.

Or, it could be that the Lord will give you a graceful way to explain why you feel hurt. If you take it to God, He can give you the very words to say to your offender (Luke 12:12). And

He can bring conviction to that person's heart when you approach them with a spirit of **humility** (John 16:8).

Don't Retaliate

Whatever you do, don't retaliate. In His Sermon on the Mount, **Jesus** teaches us to turn the other cheek (Matt. 5:38) and to love our enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you (Matt. 5:44).

With that in mind, don't go around telling everybody what someone did to hurt your feelings. And don't make accusations against those who hurt you if you decide to confront the matter. Instead of saying, "You hurt my feelings!" say, "When you did that I felt hurt" or "When you talk to me like that I feel upset." Own your feelings because they are your feelings. It's very possible that your offender has no idea that what they said or did hurt you—and never meant to hurt you. If you approach them in **humility** seeing reconciliation, your offender may be quick to apologize.

Let the Lord Work

Peter exhorts us to "above all things, have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins" (1 Pet. 4:8). Again, be led by the **Holy Spirit**. It's not always necessary to go to someone who hurt you every time they do something you don't like.

It could be that the Lord is working something out in you. Maybe you're too sensitive. We always need to check our hearts. Is the person really being hurtful or are we looking at it through filters of past hurts or **rejection** or anger that cloud the truth? Ask the Lord. Or it could be that the **Holy Spirit** will bring conviction—maybe even heap coals of fire on their head—as you bless them outwardly with a heart of love.

You Can't Heal Until You Forgive

The bottom line is this: It doesn't matter how wrong your offender is, you have to forgive. **Forgiveness** is not for the other person—it's for you. Forgiveness doesn't justify what someone did that was wrong, nor does it necessarily mean that the relationship goes right back to where it was.

If you don't forgive, you end up bitter and resentful and before too long you'll end up hurting other people. The healing process can't really begin until you spit out the bait of offense. I'll leave you with this **prophetic** insight the Holy Spirit gave me once when I was extremely hurt in church:

“When the feeling of hurt arises, the spirit of offense comes on the scene to fortify the pain, tempting you to hold on to the grudge in your heart. Therefore, the proper response to emotional pain of the soul is always an immediate confession of forgiveness from the heart. The alternative to forgiveness from the heart is the ongoing torment of the soul. So if you want to be free from your hurts and wounds, take thoughts of forgiveness, meditate on them and confess them rather than taking thoughts of the hurt, meditating on them and confessing them. This is God's way—and it's the only way that brings true healing. And, while you are at it, pray for those who have hurt you. This process will cleanse your heart and renew your mind. And you will walk free from the pain of your past.”
Amen.

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Pastor MacArthur, What Are You Afraid Of?

Pastor **John MacArthur** issues scathing indictments against all things charismatic in his book *Strange Fire*. But the cessationist flat out refuses to sit down with respected leaders from any camp in the body of Christ that disagrees with him.

Pastor MacArthur is a distinguished man of God. Why won't he sit down with his brothers in Christ and seek understanding? He has said things that have angered some and hurt others—and I believe it comes from a lack of understanding rather than a mean-spirited crusade to tear down what the **Holy Spirit** is doing.

Before going further, let's consider some of the heavy-handed accusations he's launched against an entire movement:

"The **charismatic movement** as such has made no contribution to biblical clarity, no contribution to interpretation, no contribution to sound doctrine."

"If the **charismatic movement** was being produced by the **Holy Spirit**, the glory of Christ would prevail everywhere. It would be Christ-dominated and everyone in the movement would be bowing the knee to the true Christ in belief of the true gospel."

"The actual source from which they obtained their fire is not recorded. Nor is it important. The point is they used something other than the fire God Himself had ignited. This is a sobering and terrifying account, and it has obvious implications for the church in our time."

"If Scripture alone were truly their final authority, **charismatic** Christians would never tolerate patently

unbiblical practices—like mumbling in nonsensical prayer languages, uttering fallible prophecies, worshipping in disorderly ways, or being knocked senseless by the supposed power of the **Holy Spirit**.”

“Those who have had a **charismatic** experience have been baptized with the Spirit, they say—and that supernaturally empowers obedience, fosters holiness, and produces the fruit of the Spirit. If their claims were true, **charismatics** ought to be producing leaders renowned for Christlikeness rather than flamboyance. Moral failures, financial chicanery, and public scandals would be comparatively rare in their movement.”

“The movement itself has brought nothing that enriches true worship.”

Dr. Michael Brown and R.T. Kendall have both invited MacArthur to sit down and discuss his concerns and accusations against the **charismatic movement** with civility and brotherly love. But the controversial pastor is not willing to listen to what they have to say.

How can MacArthur make such sweeping accusations against a move of God and refuse to sit down with any number of godly men who want to bring unity to the body of Christ?

In a [letter sent directly to MacArthur](#), Kendall, who recently released the book [Holy Fire](#) that deals, in part, with what Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones believed regarding the gifts, the baptism and the immediate witness of the Spirit, wrote:

“I hope you will consider reading my book. It will do you no harm and, just maybe, you might hear God speak to you in a way you never thought possible. I only pray with all my heart that you have not gone too far already. In the second panel discussion at your conference you actually said, ‘I know I am wrong somewhere.’ If so, who would you listen to? Would you not want to know as soon as possible if you have got it wrong

on those matters you are so dogmatic about?

“If I knew for sure it would be honoring to God—for the sake of sincere Christians who are fence-straddling on cessationism, I would ask that you and I have a civil debate (presidential style) on the issue of cessationism. Could we pray about this?”

Kendall got no response from MacArthur.

Brown has been making appeals to MacArthur for months, beginning before the “Strange Fire” conference. Brown recently released [Authentic Fire](#) to address, point-by-point, MacArthur’s accusations against the **charismatic movement**. Brown has been requesting a face-to-face meeting or public debate for the last six months but reports MacArthur refuses to respond. Two months ago, MacArthur’s book publicist scheduled him to join Brown on his [In the Line of Fire](#) radio broadcast, and she confirmed the interview was set, but when MacArthur learned of it he cancelled the interview.

There’s nothing wrong with having strong opinions. I read (and write) strong opinions every day. God has strong opinions! But when one who has the influence of a **John MacArthur** makes statements like the ones I listed (and others that are just as scathing) that completely demonize a **Holy Spirit**-inspired movement, it’s troubling. And it’s more troubling when one who has the influence of a John MacArthur won’t sit down with men of God like R.T. Kendall and Dr. Michael Brown to work toward understanding and peace in Christ.

MacArthur’s stance: “I’ll start believing the truth prevails in the **charismatic movement** when its leaders start looking more like Jesus Christ.”

Pastor MacArthur, Pentecostal and **charismatic** leaders are forgiving people. We want unity. We want peace. We want understanding. We want to see God glorified through this controversy that you ignited with your books and conferences.

Isn't that what you want, sir? Please, sit down with Dr. Brown or R.T. Kendall. Read their books with an open mind. After all, wasn't it Jesus Christ who said, "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Matt. 5:9)?

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