

# Deliverance vs Mental Health: How Christians Can Discern the Difference

An NBA controversy surrounding Jaden Ivey is igniting a much deeper conversation than basketball. It is forcing believers to confront a question many would rather avoid: What happens when following Jesus collides with cultural expectations?

On a recent episode of his podcast, Pastor Josh Howerton addressed the situation head-on, framing it as a real-world test of Christian conviction in an increasingly hostile culture.

Ivey reportedly faced swift consequences after speaking out against the league's Pride Month celebrations, calling them unrighteous. Within hours, he was gone. The speed of the fallout sent a clear message that in today's environment, certain convictions are no longer tolerated in the public square.

Howerton pointed to the deeper issue behind the headlines. This is not just about one player or one comment. It is about a growing expectation that believers must not only tolerate cultural values but actively affirm them.

That is where the tension becomes unavoidable.



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Across industries, not just in the NBA, Christians are being asked to participate in messaging that directly conflicts with Scripture. For many, that moment becomes a line in the sand. It is no longer about staying quiet. It is about whether we

will compromise.

And that is why this moment resonates far beyond sports.

Howerton also highlighted what many see as a clear double standard. Public figures have been given space for a wide range of expressions, political stances and even serious personal failures. Yet when a historic Christian belief about sexuality is voiced, the consequences come swiftly and decisively.

For believers, this should not come as a surprise.

Scripture has always prepared us for this reality. Faithfulness to Christ has never been measured by cultural approval. It has been measured by obedience. When the early church faced pressure to conform, their response was clear: obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29).

That same tension now shows up in workplaces, schools and even professional sports.

Howerton urged Christians to approach these moments with both courage and wisdom. Believers are called to speak truth with grace, not hostility. But there is a difference between being wise and remaining silent. There is a difference between showing compassion and abandoning conviction.

At some point, every believer faces a moment where faith is no longer theoretical.

Ivey's situation is a reminder that standing for biblical truth may come with a cost. But it is also a reminder of something greater. Approval from culture is temporary. Faithfulness to Christ is eternal.

This is bigger than one player. It is a glimpse of what many believers are already navigating every day.

**James Lasher**, a seasoned writer and editor at Charisma Media,

*combines faith and storytelling with a background in journalism from Otterbein University and ministry experience in Guatemala and the LA Dream Center. A Marine Corps and Air Force veteran, he is the author of The Revelation of Jesus: A Common Man's Commentary and a contributor to Charisma magazine. For interviews and media inquiries, please contact media@.*

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## **How Holding a Grudge Is Destroying Your Health and Blocking God's Peace**

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## **10 End-Times Signs Christians**

# Cannot Ignore Happening Right Now

A steady voice is rising in the middle of growing tension surrounding Israel, calling believers back to clarity, prayer and spiritual discernment.

As conversations around anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism intensify across the world and within the church, prophetic minister Mike Thompson is urging Christians to return to what God has already revealed and to stand firm without confusion.

Thompson, known for his measured and prayerful delivery, shared that after weeks of seeking the Lord, he received a simple but direct instruction. "Lean to the prophetic. Lean to your gift. And those who have ears to hear will receive what the Spirit is saying." With that, he set aside a traditional teaching approach and instead began sharing what he has seen and heard in the Spirit.

## God's Hand Remains on Israel

At the center of Thompson's message is a clear conviction. "The hand of the Lord is still on Israel. He is protecting Israel." He points back to a foundational truth that continues to guide his understanding. "Those who bless Israel will be blessed and those who curse Israel will be cursed."

Rather than framing this only through Scripture, Thompson opened up about personal encounters that have shaped his perspective over the years.

## A Prophetic Encounter: Protection

# Over Israel

He recalled a moment from October 2014 while praying in the Spirit. “Suddenly, He brought me into the spiritual realm.” During that encounter, he said the Lord spoke about the importance of intercessory prayer and ongoing spiritual conflict involving both Israel and the United States.

In that same experience, Thompson said he was shown the archangel Michael. “I observed him positioned in the atmosphere over Israel protecting it.” He then heard the Lord say, “He will protect Israel by defeating its enemies, even those who are in political office in the United States.”

That moment established a connection between spiritual activity, prayer and real-world events that continues to unfold.

## A Call to Prayer in a Time of Spiritual Conflict

Thompson emphasized that believers are not passive observers. He pointed to what he describes as “third heaven authority” and urged Christians to remain active in prayer. “If you will do your job in third heaven authority and in prayer, Michael will do his job in protecting Israel.”

He also warned of spiritual deception clouding discernment in the United States. Referring to a previous vision, he said, “The fog machine that is in America still needs to be destroyed.”

# Four Warnings for the Church

## 1. **False prophetic voices**

“This anti-Zionism doctrine that’s going around right now is a false voice of prophecy.”

Thompson warns that this movement is not simply a difference in opinion but a spiritual influence introducing doctrinal error into the church. He identifies it as a deceptive voice that sounds spiritual while leading believers away from truth.

## 2. **Jezebel’s influence**

“Jezebel will operate anywhere, but she is most comfortable in the prophetic.”

He explains that this spirit seeks to manipulate, control and distort spiritual understanding, often targeting prophetic environments where sensitivity to the Spirit can be exploited if believers are not grounded.

## 3. **The necessity of knowing the Word**

“If you don’t study the word of God for yourself and walk in truth, deception waits around the next corner for you.”

Thompson emphasizes that a lack of personal engagement with Scripture leaves believers vulnerable. Knowing the Word provides stability and acts as a safeguard against spiritual confusion.

## 4. **The importance of discernment**

“Discerning of spirits is one of the most important but least sought-after gifts.”

He highlights discernment as essential for recognizing the true source behind spiritual activity. Without it, believers may mistake deception for truth or fail to recognize the work of God.

He explained that discernment goes beyond identifying evil. It involves understanding the origin and operation of what is

happening in the spiritual realm, whether demonic, angelic or the work of the Holy Spirit.

## **Discerning the Times We Are In**

Thompson's message consistently returns to the need for clarity in a time of competing voices. He cautioned that deception often targets those who are not grounded in truth and encouraged believers to remain anchored in both the Word of God and the leading of the Spirit.

"We must reject the false voice of prophecy. We must reject Jezebel's deception. We must study the word of God and walk in truth."

## **A Call to Stand, Pray and Expect God's Glory**

In closing, Thompson called believers to take an active role in what is unfolding. "We must be ardent supporters of Israel and bless Israel. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem."

He also pointed to a larger picture that extends beyond present conflict. "This is about the glory of God. The glory of God coming upon both nations. The glory of God coming into the earth."

With a calm but unwavering confidence, Thompson left listeners with a forward-looking hope rooted in God's movement. "The greatest revival and spiritual awakening that planet earth has ever seen. God is moving. Don't be deceived."

As Christians, we are invited into that moment not with fear or confusion, but with clarity, prayer and a renewed commitment to walk in truth.

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# **Wars, Oil and Prophecy: The True Meaning Behind Today's Global Conflict**

For many Christians, praying in tongues feels distant, inconsistent or even confusing. Some experience only a few repeated syllables, while others seem to flow freely. Scripture makes it clear this gift is meant to build us up, yet many never move beyond the starting point.

Pastor Vlad Savchuk of HungryGen Ministries lays out a clear, practical path rooted in the Word of God. His teaching cuts through the confusion and brings the focus back to what actually produces growth in a believer's prayer life.

## **1. Start with Scripture so your faith has a foundation**

Savchuk emphasizes that growth begins with the Word. "If you want to grow in your prayer language, feed your faith with what God already said."

He points to passages like 1 Corinthians 14 and Jude 20, explaining that faith becomes active when Scripture moves from

concept to conviction. Before trying to feel anything, we must choose to believe what God has already spoken.

## **2. Create a private place and a predictable time**

Consistency is not optional. "If the only time you practice your prayer language is at church, it will be inconsistent."

Savchuk urges believers to build a daily rhythm, even if it starts with just five minutes. A repeated time and place trains both the spirit and the habits, turning something occasional into something steady.



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## **3. Begin with worship, then shift into tongues**

Many struggle because they jump in cold. Savchuk offers a simple pattern. "Worship in your language that you understand for 60 seconds... and then shift praying into tongues."

Worship stirs the spirit, creating a natural flow into tongues. He also highlights that tongues can magnify God, even becoming a form of singing.

## **4. Yield your mouth**

One of the biggest misunderstandings is passivity. "The Holy Spirit gives us the utterance, but we have to speak."

Savchuk challenges believers to stop waiting for a dramatic takeover. Whether it begins with a few syllables or a soft flow, the key is yielding your voice in faith and letting it grow from there.

## **5. Pray in tongues through pressure, not just peace**

Tongues are not reserved for calm moments. They are most powerful in the middle of pressure. “Your weakness... is not a disqualifier, it’s an invitation.”

When the mind is overwhelmed, Savchuk says to keep praying. Instead of retreating into anxious thoughts, we step into the Spirit and allow prayer to stabilize what feels chaotic.

## **6. Mix tongues with understanding**

Savchuk follows Paul’s model of balance. “I will pray with the spirit and I will also pray with the understanding.”

Rather than separating the two, he encourages a rhythm. Pray in tongues, then pray in your known language, then return again. This keeps both the spirit and the mind engaged in a healthy, active prayer life.

## **7. Ask God for interpretation and write what comes**

Growth deepens when we listen as well as speak. “Let him who prays in a tongue pray that he may interpret.”

Savchuk teaches believers to pause after praying in tongues and ask the Holy Spirit what is being emphasized. Writing down impressions, Scriptures or names helps develop sensitivity to God’s leading.

Savchuk’s message is deeply needed. Tongues are not a performance or a spiritual badge. They are a gift meant to build us from the inside out. When we stop treating this as something occasional and begin to cultivate it in the secret place, everything changes.

What feels small and uncertain at first can grow into a steady, powerful current that shapes how we pray, how we think and how we walk with God every day.

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