

# How to Combat Betrayal in the Church

Betrayal—we've all been hurt in the church and among the body of Christ. Betrayal comes in several forms like people abandoning us, not believing in us, hurting us, speaking behind our backs and not valuing what we have to bring to the Kingdom.

Betrayal originates from both others' and our inner hurts and wounds. Inner hurts and wounds from past experiences and relationships left unhealed can and do affect the church, the body of Christ.

Psalm 51:10 says, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." When we are hurt or wounded, we need to look inside ourselves and discover where healing needs to take place. There is a saying: "Hurting people hurt people." Hurting people do hurt people inside and outside the church.

It seems as though church betrayal is all around. People come in and try to take control, prompting some to leave the church. Many feel they have so much to offer the church, but when things don't go their way they start causing trouble for the pastor and the congregation.

Conflict arises among leaders when this happens and people begin to argue, disagree and get offended. When offense sets in it leads the way to betrayal and division and people in the church get upset, quit committees and commitments and start leaving the church.

What is the answer to hurt and betrayal in the church and how do we get it to stop? I believe it first starts with prayer and discernment about who should be in church leadership. In the body of Christ in general, 20 percent of the people do 80

percent of the work. This puts pressure on the volunteers and leaders to do more, work harder and pick up the slack of those who don't want to volunteer.

Due to the limited amount of volunteers when a new person comes into the church a pastor is seldom left options than to hurry and put them in a leadership position or a main volunteer role. The pastor sees good qualities in the person and implements them without the proper amount of prayer and discernment out of desperation.

The person volunteers, gets involved and soon when their character is revealed, we discover that there are emotional and spiritual issues that need healing. This often causes more harm than help to the church in the long run.

Waiting to implement people in certain positions until relationships have been formed and characters have been revealed would be an asset to the church that would bring unity and cooperation instead of division and dissension.

The next thing we need to do is properly train our volunteers, leaders and people in our church and ministry. Proper training comes from leadership having a set action in plan ahead of time and being on the offense and not the defense. What is required to volunteer in your church or ministry?

We have two mandatory resources that help fight against church division and disunity and are required reading for our ministry volunteers.

*The Bait of Satan* by John Bevere is a great book on the spirit of offense. It identifies offense and helps you heal from offense. I can still remember a time someone suggested it to us while we were in a church conflict. We had never heard of the book or study that comes with it, and my husband's small group did a study on it that changed our lives.

We now recommend it to everyone as preventative measures and

not defensive measures. It is required reading within the first three months of being in our ministry having a desire to serve.

I have found that Perry Stone's book *The Judas Goat* is another great book and a must-have for all ministries. This book on betrayal exposes the enemy's tactics of how people can come in and destroy the church. It makes the reader aware and educated on relationships and how to protect what God has given you.

I strongly suggest again that all leaders read this as preventative measures to church conflict. There are also benefits in this book for people who have been hurt from the church in discovering what went wrong and how to prevent such things from happening again.

As leaders of the church we need to be responsible for the hurt that is going on in our churches. If we can provide our congregation and volunteers with reasonable guidelines and suggestions on how to prevent hurt, than it certainly is our responsibility.

Ultimately, we need to teach forgiveness and we need to model love. The latter truly covers a multitude of sins. When we extend love to each other, healing begins.

**Kathy DeGraw** is the founder of DeGraw Ministries a ministry releasing the love and power of God. She is a prophetic deliverance minister who travels hosting conferences, teaching schools and evangelistic love tours. Kathy enjoys writing and is the author of several books that educate, empower and equip people. For more information visit .

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# What's Next After You Have Been Slain in the Spirit?

I've fallen in the Spirit – What do I do next?

What happens when we fall in the spirit and what should be our reaction?

Our first reaction when we have fallen in the spirit and aren't familiar with this can be, "Oh great I have fallen in the spirit and everyone is looking at me. What do I do next?" What happens when we fall in the spirit and what should be our reaction?

The best explanation I've heard of falling in the spirit is that when the supernatural (God) meets the natural (us) something has to give and it is us that gives. What should be our response? We should embrace it and discover what God has for us.

When we fall in the spirit there can be many reactions such as:

- Why is this happening to me?
- What just happened?
- Why did I feel woozy and fall?
- Did the person praying over me push me?
- Everyone is looking at me.
- That hurt.
- I feel/look silly.
- What do I do next?

These can be some of the realistic thoughts that go through your mind. The first thing you should do is just relax and rest in the presence of the Lord, after all you just fell under the power of God. If you fell under the power of God, obviously there is a reason. Relax and enjoy the state of rest

you are in and most of all don't be in a hurry to get up. Stay on the floor and focus on the Lord. Try not to think about what to do next or what is happening and most of all don't worry and concern yourself with what people around you are thinking.

While we are in the presence of the Lord there can be many things that are happening:

- We can be in a place of rest.
- Receiving impartation.
- Receiving healing and deliverance.
- Receiving instruction, revelation and knowledge
- Receiving something, but we don't know what.
- Having a vision or encounter with Jesus.
- Receiving the answer to a prayer.

The most important thing is not to get up until you feel the presence lift off of you or until you feel released by the Spirit of the Lord. When we fall in the Spirit sometimes God just plain needs to get our attention, because we have been too busy to slow down and listen to him. This is a way he communicates with us. We may get up and feel as if we received nothing, it is in those times rest and impartations happens. We can't explain it at the moment, but we know we were in the presence of the Lord.

I remember a time I had prayer for a tooth that needed a root canal and crown. I went down in the spirit and laid there and didn't really feel anything. I didn't receive revelation, but as I stood up all of a sudden I felt the power of God on me so strong I had to be assisted walking to my vehicle. I went home and continued to be in the presence for hours. At my surgeon's appointment the dentist said, "What are you doing here, there is nothing wrong with your tooth, go home." The reaction wasn't at that moment, but subsequent, I basked in the presence of the Lord until I felt released to get up. You don't always know what you get at the moment, but you need to

trust God that you are getting something and He knows best.

As you are prayed for and as the Spirit comes upon you, don't be scared or hesitant to be in the presence of the Lord it is wonderful. Focus on the Lord and remember for that moment of time it's just you and him and nothing else matters.

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## **Believers Should Lay This Aside and Simply Reflect Love**

Love doesn't manifest in us as it should because we feel we are due respect. We aren't owed anything.

Jesus didn't go around demanding respect. It is pride that brings forth the attitude that we are owed respect. Think about it. Why do we have dissension and offense in the church? Because people (both leaders and members) feel they are owed something. We are to be love and give love, with humility, not with a debt that needs to be paid.

In the New Testament Jesus said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another," (John 13:34, MEV).

Jesus commands us to love one another. How does love manifest in you and through you? Love should manifest through the fruits of the Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control; against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22-23).

If we are demanding respect and behaving as if we are better than the person next to us, then how are we manifesting love? Love manifests through putting other people ahead of ourselves and making them feel like they are the most important person in the world.

Every person alive is created in the image of God. We should be treating each person as special as God would treat them. God loves each human and values their life. He cares about their opinions, feelings, and the things that are affecting them. If we desire to be the kind of love that Jesus was shouldn't we think of everyone as equally if not more important than ourselves? But too often we think of ourselves too highly and that is where pride, offense, dissension and disunity affect our churches, communities, homes and workplaces.

What if we looked at the grocery store clerk as a child of God instead of someone who needs to hurry up and check out our purchases? What about the waiter in the restaurant? Demands are put on them to make sure our order is hot, right and doesn't take too long to cook.

What about when the food order doesn't turn out like it should? Do we yell, get upset or rude, or do we represent the God of love and have understanding that they didn't cook the order and it wasn't their fault? Instead of looking at them as a son of God people usually reduce their tip because their meal isn't what they hoped for.

Did you ever think of representing the kingdom properly when

something didn't turn out your way and bless the waiter anyway? Think about how that would impact them with God's love. They might say something like, "Oh wow! I was in a bad mood, I ordered wrong, the kitchen messed up their order and they gave me the same amount of tip." That might really impact the waiter and make him think, "Why did they do that?"

We go through life feeling we are owed something, whether it is respect, fast and perfect service or a place and position of prominence. Do we always give those things? Of course, we don't! We aren't perfect in all we do. We aren't always respectful and allowing loving thoughts to come out of our mouth, holding our tongue and being love to the person. We don't always elevate other people ahead of ourselves and give them a position of prominence.

When we feel we are owed respect it causes dissension and disunity within the church. The complaint I hear more than anything else is, "My pastor didn't respect my anointing," "He didn't let me minister or release that prophetic word," or "He didn't implement my idea." What are those statements filled with? They are filled with I and self, self-exaltation and pride.

Statements such as these are filled with exalt me and give me a position of visibility, so people can see what you are doing. These are not humble statements. Statements of humility don't care if you are recognized. True humility will extend love and not self.

As we go forward in ministry and in the commission God has given all of us individually, we need to self-examine and destroy the feelings within us that desire this respect so badly. We should be kind, nice and exude the fruits of the spirit. But when we feel we are owed something or someone disrespects us we need to ask ourselves why we feel that way to begin with.

After all the Bible says, “Create in me a clean heart” (Ps. 51:10). Let’s look inward before we look outward.

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## **Walking in God’s Love: A Heart for the Homeless**

God’s Word says that He is love, (1 John 4:8 and 4:16). If He is love and we are to be like Him, then we should be love.

It isn’t always easy for us to be love to strangers, the homeless and people who are not like us. However, God’s word says to be love.

Love. The Bible instructs, in 1 Cor. 13:13, “And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” The greatest of these is love. The Bible instructs us to love, but how do we abide in love to those we don’t know and can’t relate? We need to “put on” love. There are times loving doesn’t come naturally and we simply need to put on Christ’s character and His character was one of love.

The Bible tells us to put on the armor of God. “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil,” (Eph. 6:11). For years pastors have taught us about girding up and putting on the different pieces of the armor. The Bible and our leaders have instructed us to

put on the shoes of peace, the helmet of salvation and the breastplate of righteousness and the other pieces of the armor. Why should love be any different?

We have agape love, (Strong's No. 26). This is the love of the will, where we love all men and women with the love of Christ. It is not a love of the emotion that we are attached to the person or circumstance.

Agape love is great, but it is not all. We also have phileo love, (Strong's No. 5368). Phileo love cares for affectionately, takes pleasure in and has personal attachment.

I believe as we grow in our walk with Christ and love with our heavenly Father that we should be walking in both agape and phileo love. But what about the people we don't know such as the homeless and strangers? Should we love them with agape love or phileo love? I believe as we grow in the love of God we will be able to love those we don't know with both agape and phileo love.

As we begin to understand the depths of God's love and how Jesus had compassion and passion for people on earth, shouldn't we learn to put on love and love as Jesus did with both agape and phileo love? Jesus was compassionate toward others. We too have compassion for people and that compassion turns into passion.

We end up serving in an area we are compassionate and passionate about. What happens when God calls us to an area of ministry and we don't have a passion for it? What is missing? Love is missing. When we know God's love, truly know God's love how can we not be compassionate for His people; all His people, including the strangers, homeless and those unlike us.

If we are so full of God's love, that love both agape and phileo should be expanding to reach every person we know. If we truly know the love of God how can we not love all people

with the love of the emotions with phileo love.

I remember God calling us to the streets of Ferguson and St. Louis, Missouri to help in breaking down the walls of racism and bringing healing to the region. As an ice-breaker and a way of ministering to the people we brought protein bars to distribute on the streets, because the conflict was in the streets.

During our time here we saw many homeless people in the park. The first day we would simply hand them a protein bar and move on, no conversation, perhaps a simple God loves you, can we pray for you? Over the course of 3 days, each time we went out God grew our love for His people. We started asking them, "What is your story." We would talk to them and love on them. What happened?

Not only did we reach out with God's agape love, the love of the will, but it ignited that phileo love inside of us. The love of the emotion activated! We were given Jesus's heart and compassion for the homeless! We got to know these people by name and went back two more times to visit with them, pray with them and provide for them.

When we acted out in obedience to God's agape love it activated the phileo love within us. But so many people don't think that's their ministry or feel out of their comfort zone. When we have the heart of Jesus shouldn't every ministry be one we are called?

Shouldn't we be called out of our comfort zone to reach people for the Kingdom? Should there be anything we cannot do with God's love? We need to look at everyone we come in contact with as a son or daughter of God because they are. He created them in His image and we should love them as a brother or sister in Christ.

As I looked at the homeless over the course of time, I have noticed one common thing. They all have a story and all of

them aren't so different than a lot of us. The difference I find is that when most of us had a hard time in our life we had parents, family or a friend who took us in and took care of us. I know there are many different stories and many homeless make choices for themselves.

However, I also know there are many of us that could be homeless if we didn't have someone to help us out. They unfortunately didn't have someone to give us the same chance we had.

Instead of being afraid, thinking it's not your ministry, or judging their circumstances, decisions and choices of what got them there; why don't you ask God to give you His heart for His people and try reaching out to someone you don't think you can relate.

Who knows? You may be just like our teams now. We can't go by a homeless person or a person in need without stopping, offering assistance, hearing their story and offering up a prayer, after all doing that is being love, God's love, and we are all called to be love.

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## **Are You Speaking Generational**

# Curses or Blessings?

We've all been raised with the comments by our parents, "Be careful when driving so you don't get in an accident," or "Watch out the roads are going to be icy or slippery today," or "You better not go near that person; they are sick and you might catch it too."

We have been filled with concern that creates negativity in our minds. Worrisome parents who think they are doing good and warning us what to do and not to do. The problem is it causes us to have negative thoughts, worry and put those some kind of remarks on our children.

When we have those negative words instilled in us all our lives how can we not out of habit speak the same thing into our children? When those thoughts are spoken into our lives we can take them and have them become who we are over a period of time. We can become negative things like worry warts, paranoid we will get in an accident or afraid to go to a hospital or sick person's house because they may be contagious.

These negative facts over years build strongholds in our minds so that when it is cold, snowy and rainy we will be scared instead of cautious to drive on the road.

I am 47 and I recently received another one of those texts from my mom about the weather condition. She means well. She loves me and desires me to be safe, but I have chosen to not live in fear of the storms, but have faith that God will guard and protect me and that the blood of Jesus covers me.

I remember several years ago as my children were starting to drive I had to hold my tongue back so many times. I knew I did not want the same fear instilled on my children that I was raised in about driving. I made a choice then to turn those generational curses of words and emotional turmoil into blessings and you can too.

When your children are going out the door, instead of the drive careful and "Watch out for deer or animals running out in front of you," "Be careful it will be getting dark and rainy," or "Make sure the kids in the car aren't goofing off and distracting you," why not say a blessing over them.

I have turned the generational curses into blessings by speaking out loud over their lives and into the spiritual atmosphere prayers such as, "Goodbye, have a good time, I love you, may the blood of Jesus cover you," "Love you honey, I dispatch angels to guard and protect you tonight," Or "Have a great time, the Lord our God goes with you and before you and no weapon formed against you shall prosper."

By taking a few Scriptures and incorporating them into the natural things you say when your child leaves your home you can build their faith instead of imparting fear or concern. When you are speaking life and love into your children that raises their faith, makes them feel protected and assures them they can trust God to have their backside.

We can speak life and protection instead of worry.

When we speak these things we have just brought forth generational blessings and proper word choices that they can in return speak to their children. As you go forth in parenting what are you going to speak, generational curses of negativity or generational prayers of blessing?

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# Why It's Crucial to Make God's Word a Priority in Life

A question I recently have pondered is how can people label themselves as a 'MATURE' Christian and not be reading their Bible.

The Bible is the bread of life, the authoritative Word of God. We can't simply choose when to pick it up and read it and when to set it down for months at a time. Yes, months at a time and even up to a year is what I am hearing from Christians as I travel the U.S. These are leaders, volunteers, evangelists and some of them the very people that are teaching and instructing our youth, but not in the Word themselves.

I am continually surprised by the number of Christians I speak to that are not reading their Bibles. The excuses are just that, excuses! I invite them to think about how much they read in a day. You read the newspaper, magazine headlines as you stand in the grocery checkout, the texts on your phone and Yahoo news every time you fire up the internet which is several times a day.

Your favorite book is often read before your Bible and devotions at the breakfast table are often counted as Bible reading and are being used as a substitute to truly get into the Word of God. God never meant for devotions and Christian books to be a substitute to the Word of God. They are supposed to enhance it, co-labor with it.

In the day of Internet mania our social media posts could be the only Bible someone reads. How concerning is that? The Bible instructs us in end times many false teachers will arise and lead us astray. How easily we can be led astray if we are relying on social media to be the only Bible we read. How do we know the Scripture was typed right or interpreted

correctly?

Bible reading is imperative. We are so entirely blessed that we live in the U.S., a country where we can freely open our Bibles every day and read the written Word of God. Yet so many Christians seldom open up the Word of God. Is the Bible always easy to understand? No, it's not. However, as a believer desiring to live a life worthy of the King we must attempt to read the Word of God. To make no attempt to read what the Holy Spirit has inspired to be put on paper is simply complacency and laziness. The devil loves it when Christians are complacent and lazy.

I know there are days that the excuse is that we are too busy to read our Bibles, but really, were we too busy to eat, go to the bathroom, brush our teeth, comb our hair and shower? It needs to be a priority and a desire. If it is not a desire why not pray and ask the Heavenly Father to make it a desire, to stir up the desire within you.

What we do in a day is where our heart is or is not. It is our choice. Did you have time to check email, social media, but cannot check the Word of God? It is all a choice. The choice I want to make is to follow God. To saturate my soul and spirit with the authoritative Word of God every chance I get. Why not make that Bible app on your phone a priority?

To read and understand the Bible takes effort, but we studied for a college exam and we research on the Internet what is important to us. What can be more important than taking in the Word of God? When we studied for college we got out our books laid them out on the table and studied and cross referenced. We too must cross reference our Bibles.

We must study, dig in deep and pull the understanding out of it. A great way to do this is by trying a new or different Bible or have two or three together side by side. I love the new MEV Bible by Charisma. It takes something you have read

several times before and makes it come to life inside of you, it really brings the meaning and interpretation home to you. We can't simply read the Bible to gain understanding, we must study it!

If people are going to rely on you and social media to get their word do you have enough in you to sustain them? If all our Bibles and phone apps were taken away or if you were stranded on an island do you have enough of the Word of God in you to sustain you?

When are we going to start living the very Bible we read and when are we going to make reading it a priority? Times are coming to a close quickly where Jesus will be returning. Darkness is invading the earth and we need to know what the Word of God says to live in these perilous times. We need to know what it says about false teachers, righteous living and everything else. We need to rely on the Holy Spirit to be our teacher and instructor.

The Bible is full of hope for your situation, answers to your problems, comfort for your broken lonely heart. What is holding you back from making Bible reading a priority in your life? Whatever is holding you back, realize it's an excuse.

You make time for what is important to you. Today I pray you will make time to read your Bible and then go out and apply it to your circumstance. You just may discover you are on the way to the victory that you had been hoping for.

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# What To Do When a Prophetic Word Doesn't Make Sense To You

You receive a prophetic word, and most of the time, it should be a confirmation of something you already know. Your prophetic word should have the "up factor."

It should build up, train up, encourage up and edify up. It should leave you hopeful for something that is coming to pass in the future.

What happens when it doesn't do the thing it is intended? What do you do with a prophetic word that doesn't make sense? There are choices to make when a prophetic word doesn't make sense.

- We can throw it out because it is in no way witnessing with our soul and spirit, and we think the person who delivered it is way off in left field.
- We can pray into it and see if the Holy Spirit confirms the word to us.
- We can shelve it. We can put it up on the shelf and see if the Holy Spirit ever brings it down or if a situation happens and all of a sudden we remember this word we put on the shelf because we were unsure if it was for us.

Occasionally, when we receive a prophetic word, we can be unsure and unsettled if the word was for us. We can react in different ways to the prophetic word that was spoken in our lives. We can become caught up in attempting to discern the word or we can dismiss the word altogether. Both options can have adverse effects on us.

When we receive a prophetic word it should witness to us. There should be some kind of affirmation within us that it is a word from the Lord. When a word is from the Lord and resonates within us we should pray into it, cover it with the blood of Christ and call it forth according to the word of God and will of God in prayer and declarations.

When a prophetic word is not witnessing to us at that moment we should shelve it. What I mean is just that, put it up on the shelf in the spiritual realm or in your mind. Don't let it consume you and don't try to figure it out. Take the word and put it in your memory bank and then move on.

Keep doing what you are doing for that season. When and if the word is for you God will bring it back to remembrance, confirm it in His Word, the Bible, or bring another person to prophesy a similar word to confirm it to you.

There was a time I received a very long prophetic word from a well-known prophet. Part of the prophetic word was, "My daughter you have a desire for prayer. Lord I feel like church has forgotten about prayer. I wish someone would reinstitute prayer in the house. Guess who I am going to use? Going to use you to rally men and women to seek me, seek me, seek me, like they have never before. Find yourself in at least one 24-hour vigil."

As I received this word I thought, "I don't feel that way, and I have been in charge of several 72-hour prayer vigils." As I dissected the prophetic word given to me that night I put this part of the word up on the shelf because it didn't make sense to me; I thought it was off and not for me. I did not throw it away. I put it in my memory bank.

A year later, I found myself teaching people around me how to pray differently, but I still did not realize that this word was manifesting in my life. One day as I was writing one of my books, I still can remember it as clear as day, the Holy

Spirit shot through me. I was sitting at my desk typing and I was allowing the Holy Spirit to move through me to write.

I started writing about prayer and thinking that people don't know how to pray. That is when I felt the Holy Spirit come upon me. It felt like a bolt of lightning shot through my body. I looked up and in the spiritual realm I saw the shelf and the prophetic word. I had misinterpreted the word. I was looking at the church as a building when the church is the people.

The church is the body of Christ and that prophetic word was right! I had been complaining for months that people didn't know how to pray effectively. I took what I was seeing and hearing and started teaching people how to really pray!

The word was for me all along, but I didn't recognize it. How many words are people waiting for that they think are not coming to pass because they totally dismissed them or did not recognize them? We need to be open to how the Holy Spirit wants to move through us. We need to make sure in our pride or arrogance we are not dismissing a word or assuming it's not for us.

The most important thing is keeping our minds and will open to the Holy Spirit, so in that moment He desires to remind us of a word from long ago, we understand and hear His voice. Even though I dissected the prophetic word I still did not get the full meaning out of it. I should have looked further into every word, but that's OK because now I can use it as a testimony to you.

Stay open to the Spirit. Don't totally dismiss what you don't understand. Dissect your prophetic words and most of all don't give up in the waiting. Who knows perhaps the Holy Spirit will get hold of you like He did me and pretty soon you will see things manifesting in your life that were spoken long ago.

Be encouraged, God has a plan for you. Be diligent! Seek His

presence and His word! Worship Him in freedom and truth and discover how the kingdom of God will manifest in your life and use you to manifest His kingdom in others!

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## How Do You Begin Your Prayer or Worship Time?

God doesn't only want to hear our grocery list or prayer list when we go into our secret place or prayer and worship time with Him.

God desires us to, "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name, (Ps. 100:4). How do we enter into His gates with thanksgiving? It seems as if we can thank Him for the natural things like food, health and provision, but then we soon find ourselves running out of thankful words and entering into our prayer time or asking for our needs or starting our worship time without truly entering into His presence.

By the time the songs start, shouldn't we already have had some time of thanksgiving from our lips and in our heart? As we start singing the song, we should already be focused on Him and not the busyness of what we did before we were attempting to settle down and enter into His presence.

Looking at Psalm 100:4, we discover He wants us to enter in with thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is giving an expression of gratitude to God. What are you thankful for? I remember my mother-in-law was always thankful for all the different shades of green and all the different kinds of trees. When you think of God's creativity, there is plenty to be thankful for.

When we arrive in our church services we should be bringing a spiritual offering of thanksgiving. On the way to the service or as we sit down and are waiting for services to start we need to be focusing our hearts and minds on what is about to happen and who (God) we are about to encounter. By releasing some prayers of thanksgiving from our lips, we can focus our mind, attitudes and spirit on the Living God. When we do this we are contributing to our services and the atmosphere that is manifesting in our church.

We can do the same thing in our personal prayer and worship time with the Lord in our homes. Instead of expecting to change the laundry, take care of the kids and doing your chores and then running into your prayer closet, slow down and focus your attentions and affections on the One you love and are coming to pray and worship.

When approaching your secret place, take a moment and simply breathe. Breathe in the presence of God and then as you focus and settle down speak out words of thanksgiving to Him. Don't try to think about what you are thankful for, you don't want to get your mind going, you are trying to get your mind settled down so you can enter into the presence of God.

You could start your prayer time with some of these thoughts:

- I bless You, Lord.
- I thank You for this day.
- Marvelous are the works of Your hands.
- How great are Your ways.
- You've searched me and know me.

- I open up my heart to You.
- Favor is my portion.
- I exalt You Lord.
- I lift Your name up high.
- How magnificent is Your name.
- I love You, Lord.

Think about how our prayer and worship time could change and be elevated if we would start by words of affirmation and prayer to our Father prior to praying and worshiping. Speaking out words to our Father will help us still our heart and soul before the Father so we can connect with Him Spirit to spirit.

We tend to lead busy and hurried lives and then we expect to all of a sudden sit down and pray or stand up and sing when there are so many other things running through our mind. One of the main things Christians can complain about is that they can't hear from God. When we settle ourselves down and enter in with thanksgiving and speak words of praise, we will hear from God. We have stilled ourselves and put ourselves in a posture of receiving.

Try starting your prayer and praise time differently, with thanksgiving and discover how it will enhance and increase the rest of your spiritual life. God longs to hear from you and His ears are open to you. Open your mouth now and speak praises to His ears and bless His holy name!

**Kathy DeGraw** is the founder of DeGraw Ministries, (). She is a prophetic deliverance minister who is passionate about releasing the love and power of God. She travels hosting conferences, teaching schools and evangelistic love tours. Kathy enjoys empowering and equipping people through writing and is the author of five books, including FLESH, SATAN OR GOD-Who are you hearing from and A Worship Woven Life—Learning to Live a Life of Praise.

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# Have You Made the Holy Spirit Your Friend?

Do you know the Holy Spirit as your friend?

We know Jesus as the Son of God who died on a cross to save us from our sins. We know the Heavenly Father, our God, who created us and formed us in our mother's womb. Do we know the Holy Spirit, the One who came to comfort us and be our friend, (John 14:26)?

A relationship with each of the Trinity is important, but often the Holy Spirit gets overlooked.

The Holy Spirit has always been present from the beginning of time He has existed. In Genesis 1:2 it says, "The earth was empty and had no form. Darkness covered the ocean, and God's Spirit was moving over the water." And in Genesis 2:7, "He breathed the breath of life into the man's nose, and the man became a living person." There are several passages concerning the breath and the Spirit of God throughout the Bible, which are one in the same.

In John 14 Jesus said, "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth. Notice Christ's words here, He says, "The Helper will be with you forever and that He abides with you and will be in you." The Greek word for abide is men'-o, and literally means to stay in a given place, state, relation or expectancy, to continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, and tarry for. The Holy Spirit is here for us, He abides, dwells with in us! Shouldn't we get to know the One who is within us? You get to know Him by spending time in the Father's presence and reading what the scriptures say about

the Holy Spirit.

Jesus further explains in John 16 and says, "I will ask the Father and He will give you another Helper that He may be with you forever, that is the Spirit of truth. He dwells with you and will be in you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin, righteousness and judgement.

But when He, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to Me by taking from what is Mine and making it known to you.

When we know the Holy Spirit as our friend, He will lead and guide us. He will convict us. Conviction is good and leads us to be more like Jesus. The Holy Spirit doesn't want to leave us where we are at in sin and unrighteousness, but He wants to lead us to righteousness in Christ Jesus.

He is a great teacher, companion, instructor and comforter. He is there for us. Jesus knew He couldn't be in all places at all times. He loved us so much to leave us, so that the Holy Spirit could come and be with each one of us individually at all times.

He has often been thought about us a ghost or invisible force of the trinity, instead of a vital person of the God head. As we have gotten to know Jesus as our personal Savior, we too should get to know the Holy Spirit. What are His aspects, His characteristics and how can we spend time with Him?

The Holy Spirit brings power and boldness upon us. "But when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power and will tell people about me everywhere, (Acts 1:8). The Holy Spirit in us and flowing through us will help us to testify,

evangelize and be bold. It is Him working through us that equips us to minister.

When they were assembled together the Holy Spirit came upon them through prayer and filled them to speak the word of God with boldness, (Acts 4:31). So many people want the boldness to speak out the word of God and it is our friend the Holy Spirit that gives us that boldness when we invite Him in to fill us, (Acts. 2:38, Acts 9:17, Acts 10:44).

The Holy Spirit will speak to you in your spirit and teach you what to say and testify. In John 14:26 "But the Counselor, the Ruach Ha'Kodesh, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything; that is, he will remind you of everything I have said to you." He is a Counselor. We can go to Him for advice, receive biblical revelation and direction. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead and guide you in your Bible study and to assist you in bringing forth more revelation of the scriptures.

In the Bible in Romans 8 He also helps us in our prayer time.

"So too the [Holy] Spirit comes to our aid and bears us up in our weakness; for we do not know what prayer to offer nor how to offer it worthily as we ought, but the Spirit Himself goes to meet our supplication and pleads in our behalf with unspeakable yearnings and groanings too deep for utterance. And He Who searches the hearts of men knows what is in the mind of the [Holy] Spirit [what His intent is], because the Spirit intercedes and pleads [before God] in behalf of the saints according to and in harmony with God's will. (Rom. 8:26-27). When we don't know how to pray for our friend's mom or are too stressed to pray for our own problems as we pray the Holy Spirit co-laborers with us. How wonderful we have a friend, a person of the God head, to co-labor in prayer with us.

The Holy Spirit is many things to us. This is such a short

portion of who He is and what He does for us. I encourage you to read through Acts, 1 Corinthians 12 and other places in the Bible to learn more about the Holy Spirit, your friend and Comforter.

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## Entry Level Evangelism: It's Not That Hard

There are people who will never get inside the four walls of the church until we get outside of the four walls of the church and show them God's love. When we mention the words evangelist or prophetic evangelism, people often respond with, "I am not an evangelist," "I am not interested in doing that," or "I don't know how to evangelize."

People think of going out and getting people saved and into a right relationship with Jesus Christ. Inadequacy of not knowing the Scriptures and how to answer tough questions concerns people. Fear rises up and prevents people from going out into the streets and drawing people into the love of God and the light of Christ.

Let's take a moment and simplify evangelism. Evangelism is going out and sharing the love of God. We can break it down even further and say that evangelism is going out and being nice, and it is. Evangelism doesn't have to be preaching a

gospel full of words the other person doesn't understand.

We should know the word of God and be well versed in it, but when you venture out and begin to evangelize, you need to look at how you can set a more obtainable goal for yourself. Let's start with something inside your comfort zone and, as you progress, allow God to pull you outside of your comfort zone.

That being said, how can a person who has never evangelized start, and how can they allow the prophetic evangelism part to release? First and foremost, simply be nice. Say hi to people; open the door for people; compliment them and try to strike up a conversation in the natural.

And how does this look? Address the clerk or waitress by name when saying hi or thank you. It shows you cared enough to read their name badge and address them by name. It shows love. Do it at the store with a cashier when you are checking out. They are serving you. This is the best environment because they can't run away from you. Compliment something you like about their clothes, smile or appearance. Compliment them and get their attention. Be God's love while being nice.

If you can't think of a compliment, think of a one-line casual God sentence you can say to bless them with before you get there. In your quiet God time, think or rely on the Holy Spirit to give you a sentence with which you would be comfortable speaking to them.

Some of the sentences I've used are:

- You are special to God.
- God wants you to know you are loved.
- You are a daughter or son of a Most High King. God loves you.
- Bless you. (You can use this instead of saying thank you.)
- You are a princess in the Kingdom of God, (of course for ladies only).

- Your smile is contagious I bet it blesses a lot of people.
- Your eyes sparkle with the light of Christ.
- You were so nice to me today, thanks so much for your help.

After you speak a sentence that the Holy Spirit imparts to you, or one of the above sentences, I encourage you to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit. When you begin to be nice and show love, you'll find that sharing these simple sentences and compliments is a great way to get yourself in the practice for looking for prophetic appointments.

However, the longer you share and the more you stir up your giftings, the more God will use use words out of your spirit man to encourage and minister to these people. If you are hearing God tell you to continue to talk to them, it will be easier.

Speaking the light and love of Christ to people is evangelism. It is showing people we can be the body of Christ outside the walls of the church.

People have been hurt from the church and some people haven't been in a church. If we can show love outside the walls of the church and share God with them, it may open the doors for that person to find their way to church. It can give them a glimmer of hope that they are seeking.

It starts with us. It starts with us not being afraid. It begins when we climb out of our comfort zones. It begins with us being cordial and showing love.

Paul said to Timothy, "Do the work of an evangelist." The problem with doing the work of an evangelist is it can be scary. Don't think of it as going out and preaching the gospel on the street. In the beginning, go out and be love, be nice and lead them to a church or a ministry that can preach the gospel effectively to them.

People don't evangelize because they have a fear of man or fear of rejection. If someone does not receive what you are saying, simply brush it off and try it again.

Unfortunately, we live in a fast-paced society where people don't take the time to be nice anymore. While waiting in lines or in stores, restaurants, etc., people are on their smartphones checking email, social media and text messaging; it's because of this that we have become more focused on our phones than people. Therefore, people aren't expecting people to put their phones aside and show interest in them.

People will be shocked when you strike up a conversation with them. It's OK; do it anyway. You just added value and importance to a person to let them know they were special enough to be blessed with whatever words you spoke. Believe me, most will be blessed and they will light up.

It's worth us coming out of our comfort zone and trying something different to make an impact in a person's life. We have all come out of our comfort zone to do this. It doesn't come naturally.

It is a gradual progression, but you will never progress if you don't try. So pray, get bold, come out of your comfort zone, grow in your faith and stir the gift that is within you. Love on people. Start in your everyday life, in your everyday walk, wherever you are, wherever you go, to make every action an action of sharing God's love.

**Kathy DeGraw** is the founder of DeGraw Ministries, (). She is passionate about releasing the love and power of God and equipping people to do the same. She travels teaching the Word of God at events and takes the love of God to the streets with her prophetic evangelism and love tours.