

Longing to Be Closer to God? Here's the One Thing You Must Do

Does your heart long to be closer to God? The good news is that He wants to be closer to you—He loves you so much!

In my own life, I've discovered that the way to get closer to Him is to spend time with Him. When I feel out of sorts and disconnected from God, I ask myself, "Are you spending time with Him?"

Because that's how we avail ourselves to miracles, how we put ourselves in a position of peace and rest so we can clearly hear His perfect guidance for our life. Putting God first, sitting at His feet, reading His words and listening to His voice gets us closer and closer to Him, and it does us so much good!

But here's the deal: God leaves it up to us.

He's always available, but He's waiting for us to draw near. He's not going to come rudely barreling into our life, telling us what to do or how He can help—He's a gentleman. It's up to *us* how much time we spend—in His Word, in prayer, in meditating. It's up to us how close we want to get. Isn't that marvelous? We get to decide how close we want to be to God!

Who Moved?

It reminds me of a story I heard once. Once upon a time, a young man was dating a young woman. If you happened to be driving behind his pick-up truck when the two of them were on a date, you'd see the young lady sitting so close to her beloved on the seat that from your car behind they almost looked like one person.

Fast forward several years—the two got married, had a couple of children, and now if you drove behind them, you’d see the young woman sitting over on the passenger side of the pick-up next to the door and him sitting behind the wheel.

One day, she looks over at her husband and says, “Honey, I feel like we’ve grown apart.”

Her husband looks at her, then looks at the steering wheel—looks at her again and looks at the steering wheel again. Finally he says, “Who moved?”

It’s like that in your relationship with God. He is always the same—He never moves. He is always available, always loving you, always ready to help, always ready to draw near. You are the one who moved away. Most of the time it happens gradually—as it probably did for that young couple. You get busy with life, and other things take up your attention and time.

But one day you look around and realize you’re not as close to God as you used to be, or you want to be. He’s still in the same place, waiting for you, but you’ve scooted away. The good news is, you can scoot back! He’s not mad or even resentful toward you. He won’t say, “What took you so long?” or cast any disparaging looks at you.

No, He’s waiting with open arms to welcome you back to the closeness! Or maybe to welcome you to that kind of closeness for the first time. {eoa}

Karen Jensen Salisbury has been in ministry over 30 years. Formerly a lead pastor, then an instructor at Rhema Bible College, she is currently an itinerant minister and author of several books. Connect with her on her website, [;](#) and on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter.

This article originally appeared at [and](#) is an excerpt from her book, Closer Than You Ever Imagined: Experiencing the Deep

Relationship With God You Always Wanted. *You can read the first part FREE and/or order your own copy by clicking here.*

How an Open Vision Helped Move This Woman Into True Forgiveness

Many of us struggle with forgiveness, yet giving and receiving it are important components of wholeness. That's why this topic was addressed during the recent World Women's Wholeness Summit sponsored by Dr. Barbara Lowe and her husband, Pastor Tim Sauvé.

Linda Fields shares her own message of forgiveness, given at that conference, on *The Linda Fields Show* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. In the midst of a difficult business situation, Fields says that for two or three years, "I spent all my energy trying to make this work. ... Because I'm a can-do girl. I'm the oldest child, and if there's a way to do it, I'll find it."

But what happened during that time, Fields says, is that "I started to kind of lose myself, because I was putting so much energy on trying to say yes with my whole heart. And God revealed to me over time a couple of very salient points, points that I hope people can understand for themselves because none of us can live wholeheartedly if we are carrying offense. Offense will shut us down. And there came a day where

I just sat up in my bed and said, 'God, do I have some type of huge rejection problem over my life that is causing all this to crater?'

"And it's as though in His tenderness, The Lord said, 'You don't have rejection over your life. You have a single wound of rejection,'" Fields explains. "And He took me back in an instant replay to an earlier conversation when I'd ... taken an arrow to the heart. And I'd walked around with this arrow in my heart, you know, for two or three years trying to just like outlast what I hope was a discrepancy at the end of that encounter. ... In 15 minutes, we had the conversation, and the Lord gave me the instant replay. And in the next breath, He said, 'And I am the repairer of the breach.'

"And I had a little open vision in my bedroom," Fields says. "And I heard little footsteps just going down the staircase down into my heart. And the picture I saw was of excavation workers who were with all their little tools, like you might see on TV on an excavation site. ... And they were bringing out all of the infection, the rubbish, the pain. And it was just the most amazing thing once the Lord invited me into this experience, and I was able to release the offense, and forgive and let it go. I had myself back."

For more from Linda Fields and Dr. Barbara Lowe about the healing power of forgiveness, check out this podcast.

As a Christian, Should You

Seek Good Luck?

We're into the month of St. Patrick's Day and four-leaf clovers. The month when green milk is fun (maybe not). And the month when everyone is a wee bit Irish because we're hoping for a bit o' luck to rub off on us.

Luck. We hope for good luck and bemoan bad luck.

But for Christians, is luck what we should be seeking?

I find it curious that some people are uncomfortable trusting the sovereignty of God. Yet these same people have no qualms about trusting in the capriciousness of Lady Luck. Is it because they think they can influence their future circumstances? Rabbits' feet, four-leaf clovers and horseshoes nailed to a door are just a few ways people try to attract good luck.

The belief that we can attract luck is not a new idea. The "Law of Attraction" has been around for years. Adherents say "it brings to each person the conditions and experiences that they predominantly think about, or which they desire or expect." They declare that thoughts sent out into the universe attract like things on the same frequency. Authors such as Rhonda Byrne claim the ultimate result is "Everything sent out returns to the source, and that source is you."

But we don't find the answer in magnetic thoughts, good luck charms or ourselves as the source of blessings. We find the answer in the Creator and sustainer of the universe. The one who loves us and sent His Son to die for us. And God is not just the Creator—He is also sovereign over His creation, including you and me.

God's attribute of sovereignty means He is in control. Nothing surprises Him and nothing can prevent Him from accomplishing His plans and purposes. We don't need good luck charms to

manipulate events. Does this give you a sense of comfort and security? If not, it may be because you lack an intimate relationship with Him—a relationship that yields trust despite the situation, good or bad.

Because of my relationship with God through Jesus Christ, I can trust God's care. Regardless of my circumstances, I know my heavenly Father is always at work for my ultimate good and His eternal glory.

The apostle Paul understood this when he described God as the one who “is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we ask or imagine, according to the power that works in us” (Eph. 3:20b).

Good-luck charms? I don't need them. Still, in keeping with the St. Patrick's Day tradition of giving everything a touch of green, I'll forgo green milk. Instead, I'll celebrate the day with a small dish of mint chocolate chip ice cream! {eoa}

Ava Pennington is a writer, speaker and Bible teacher. She writes for nationally circulated magazines and is published in 32 anthologies, including 25 “Chicken Soup for the Soul” books. She also authored Daily Reflections on the Names of God: A Devotional, endorsed by Kay Arthur. Learn more at .

This article originally appeared at .

Anne Graham Lotz Prays Over Coronavirus: ‘Father, Forgive

Our Sin. Heal Our Land'

In light of the coronavirus pandemic, President Trump declared March 15 as a National Day of Prayer, saying, "We are a country that, throughout our history, has looked to God for protection and strength in times like these. ... No matter where you may be, I encourage you to turn toward prayer in an act of faith."

I thank God for the president's timely declaration, and I respond with the following prayer:

Father God,

In a world of famine, floods and fire; disease, death and the disruption of our everyday activities, on this day when the president has called for a National Day of Prayer, we choose to look up ... from our knees. We see You seated on the throne of glory, in control of all things (Isa. 6:1). *All things*. We know that You are a God of mercy, of grace, of faithfulness, of loving-kindness (Ex. 34:6, Eph. 2:4, 2 Cor. 9:14). So we reject fear of the coronavirus and its impact on our lives, and instead place our faith in You. You have said that Your ears are open to our cry (Ps. 4:3), that Your eyes are upon us (Ps. 33:18), and that Your arms are long enough to reach us (Isa. 59:1) and strong enough to hold us (Ps. 139:7-10). Hold us now. Hold us close. Quiet our racing hearts. Breathe Your Spirit of peace into the fear and turmoil within us.

Even as I pray for Your peace, I wonder ... could this wicked, insidious, evil virus be the trigger that sparks a spiritual awakening in our beloved nation? Are You trying to get our attention, demanding that we wake up in our relationship with You? I know we desperately need to wake up.

We have legalized defiance of Your institution of marriage; we celebrate relationships that contradict Your instructions; we exterminate life that You created and that bears Your image ...

for our own convenience; we have become so secularized we don't even acknowledge You exist, much less reverence or obey You.

You have my attention. Therefore, like the prophet Daniel of old, I turn to You in humility and shame as I confess on behalf of America some of the national sins that come to mind (Dan. 9:1-19):

–I confess national addiction to sex. To money. To pleasure. To entertainment. To pornography. To technology. To drugs. To alcohol. To food. To television. To popularity. To ourselves.

–I confess our foolishness of denying You as the one, true, living God, our Creator to whom we are accountable, living as though our lives are a cosmic accident with no eternal significance, purpose or meaning.

–I confess our greed that has run up trillions of dollars of national debt.

–I confess our arrogance and pride that have led us to think we are sufficient in ourselves.

–I confess to believing that the prosperity of our nation is because we are great, while refusing to acknowledge that all blessings come from Your hand.

–I confess that we depend upon our military might and our weapons systems to protect us from harm and danger while denying, defying and ignoring You.

–I confess that we have succumbed to the pressure of pluralism in our desire to be inclusive so that we honor other gods as though You are just one of many.

–I confess that we have allowed the material blessings You have given us to deceive us into thinking we don't need You.

–I confess that we live as though material wealth and

prosperity will bring happiness.

–I confess that we have marginalized truth and mainstreamed lies.

–I confess that we have become one nation under many gods, divided and polarized, with license to sin and justice that no longer follows the rule of law.

Holy Spirit of the living God, remind us of the need to turn away from our sin and get right with You (John 16:8).

Lord God, have mercy on us! As we repent of our sin and return to You, return to us! There is no one like You to help the powerless against this mighty disease. Help us, O Lord our God, for we rely on You and in Your name we come against this vast, invisible enemy (2 Chr. 14:11).

Once again, we hold You to the promise You gave to King Solomon. You said, “When I shut up the heaven and there is no rain, or when I command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence on My people, if My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayer of this place” (2 Chr. 7:13-15).

We hold You to Your word as we plead with You. Hear our prayer. Forgive our sin. Heal our land. We are standing in the gap for our nation.

We pray in the name of the one who is our deliverer. Our beautiful and only Savior. Lord of the nations. Son of God and Son of Man. The living, reigning, soon to return Lord of lords and King of kings, Jesus Christ.

In His name and for His glory we pray, amen. {eoa}

Anne Graham Lotz, *second child of Billy and Ruth Graham, is*

the founder of AnGeL Ministries and former chairman for the National Day of Prayer Task Force. She has authored 15 books, including her new release, Jesus in Me: Experiencing the Holy Spirit as a Constant Companion,

This article originally appeared at .

RT Kendall: Keep This One Timeless Truth in Mind, and It Will Change Your Life

I never will forget a story I heard years ago. A young prodigy—a pianist—gave his first concert at the Royal Festival Hall in London. His reputation preceded him; the concert was sold out on the day tickets were first available. His brilliance at the piano exceeded all expectancy. When he finished his last piece, the audience went wild. They stood to their feet spontaneously and shouted and cheered.

The young pianist bowed quickly and hurried off stage. But the audience was begging for him to come back. The stage manager whispered to him, “Go quickly—they are yelling for you.”

But the young man wasn’t moving. Instead, he peered through a crack in the curtain, anxiously scanning the audience. “No, I can’t go out there,” he said.

The stage manager was bordering on annoyance: “Look, son, they

are on their feet. Trust me; they don't do this for everybody—go out and enjoy it.”

The boy continued to scan the audience.

Finally, the stage manager cracked; he shouted, “Get out there—they are standing for you!”

The young pianist looked at him and whispered, “They are not all standing. Do you see the old man in the last row from the back? He is still seated.”

“Who cares about one old man?” said the stage manager.

The boy answered with steely determination. ““I care. That's my teacher. When he stands, I can take that bow.'”

The crowds were still cheering, 2,000 people applauding his skill, his brilliance and the sheer magic of his music. But the young musician knew in his heart that none of that mattered unless his teacher—his mentor—approved.

In truth, he was playing for an audience of one.

The humility of this young prodigy is in contrast to a scene at London's Heathrow Airport. There was a man in a hurry, but he was 10th in line at Heathrow. For some reason, there was no agent working at the business desk. This man was used to special treatment, used to being in the priority line. He also took himself very seriously. He seethed that he had to wait his turn. He suddenly broke all the rules of etiquette and fair play: He jumped to the front of the line. He said to the check-in person: “Madam, *do you know who I am?*” The shrewd lady immediately picked up a phone and made an announcement that came over the loudspeaker: “There's a man at Desk 14 who does not know his name. So if you know who this might be, would you please come and help him?”

As it happens, that man was not me, but I'm afraid it could have been. I have done the equivalent of that more times than

I care to admit. If I could only remember that God in heaven is watching my very move and listening to every word!

Malachi speaks of a scroll of remembrance: “Then those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honored his name” (Mal. 3:16).

Think of these words: *The Lord listened and heard.*

If you and I could keep this in mind, that the Lord God of heaven and earth—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—is listening to each word we say, I think it would change our lives.

If we could intentionally imagine an audience of one—Jesus Himself—is eavesdropping on our every conversation, it would save us from a lot of regret and stress.

✘ *Adapted from For an Audience of One by R.T. Kendall, copyright 2020, published by Charisma House. Many Christians seek the approval of people as much as they seek the approval of God. Don't let the fear of peoples' opinion dominate your life. Learn to seek honor and praise from God alone and not people. To order your copy, click on this link.*

Prayer Power for the Week of March 15, 2020

This week, increase your devotion to God—and God alone—by increasing your time in personal and private worship and adoration. As your love increases, so will your obedience and motivation to honor Him without the fear of man's opinion. Continue to pray for worldwide revival as well as against the pandemic of coronavirus as it affects individuals, our nation and the world. Stand in faith against fear while heeding advice from experts fighting the disease. Exercise your faith for healing by using the Word, maintain spiritual and physical cleanliness, and continue to pray for our leaders. Read: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Proverbs 4:7-9 and Malachi 3:16.

Have You Fallen for This Pervasive ‘Authority’ Myth About Women in the Church?

For many churches, “authority” is the central issue that determines a woman’s role in her congregation. One megachurch, for example, allows female pastors but only male elders. On its website, the church explains that the governing body for their church is the board of elders, and since women cannot exercise governing authority, all elders must be men.

This “authority” myth is pervasive. The popular *Spirit Filled Life Bible*, for example, without a shred of evidence, explains the prohibition toward women in 1 Timothy 2:12 as referring to “the authoritative office of apostolic teacher in the church.” We will confront this myth in the following lesson.

Understanding New Testament Authority

The New Testament Greek word for “authority” is *exousia*, and it carries the meaning of “authority” and “the right to act.” *Exousia* is found 102 times in the Greek New Testament, plus several times in its verb and cognate forms. Here are several examples of the use of *exousia* in the New Testament.

“They were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having *authority* and not as the scribes” (Mark 1:22).

“Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should be sharp, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction” (2 Cor. 13:10).

“Nevertheless, we have not used this *right*, but suffer all things, lest we might hinder the gospel of Christ” (1 Cor. 9:12b, author’s emphasis).

“The wife does not have *authority* over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise, the husband does not have *authority* over his own body, but the wife does” (1 Cor. 7:4). This is the only passage where Paul uses the word “authority” regarding the marriage relationship, and he gives the same authority to the wife as to the husband.

It must be made clear that nowhere in the New Testament is a woman ever told that she cannot exercise *exousia* (authority).

Jesus Shifts the Focus from Authority to Service

There is obviously a place for *exousia* (authority) in the New Testament. That being said, Jesus made it clear that leadership in His church was to be defined not by *exousia* (authority), but by *diakonos* (servanthood).

Yes, Jesus completely blew apart the “authority myth” when James and John requested the two most prominent seats in the kingdom. This, in turn, provoked an argument among the 12 concerning who would be the greatest in the kingdom. They obviously had visions of authority, status and importance.

The 12 must have been shocked when Jesus told them they were to function as *diakonoi*, a Greek word that referred to a lowly “servant” with no connotations of status, importance or power. After pointing out that their preoccupation with authority and power is how the Gentiles think, Jesus said to them:

“But it shall not be so among you. Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever among you would be greatest must be servant of all” (Mark 10:43-44).

Women Leaders in the First Century Church

During the first century, when “service” was the chief

characteristic of a Christian leader, women functioned freely in leadership as evidenced even by Paul. For example, in Romans 16:1-2, Phoebe is described by Paul as a *diakonos*, the word Jesus said should characterize His leaders.

In 23 places in the New Testament where *diakonos* was used in reference to men, it was translated as “minister.” Showing translators’ bias, some translations have translated the word as “helper” when it was used here of a woman. That Phoebe was a minister and leader of the church in Cenchrea is confirmed by the well-known theologian, E. Earle Ellis, who said:

Diakonos is used frequently in the Pauline letters for those who exercise ministries of teaching and preaching. The title is given to Paul and to a number of his associates who are active on a continuing basis as traveling missionaries or as coworkers in local congregations. In terms of modern function, it best corresponds to the modern designation “minister” (Hyatt, Paul, Women and Church, 27).

Paul also said that Phoebe had been a *prostatis* to many, “and of myself as well” (Rom. 16:2b). The KJV and NKJV translate the word as “helper,” but *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon* says that *prostatis* refers to “a woman set over others” and that it describes Phoebe as a “guardian, protector and benefactor.” *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* says that *prostatis* is a word of “dignity” and indicates the high esteem with which she was regarded.

Paul greets Priscilla and Aquila and the church that is in their house. Priscilla and Aquila are always mentioned together, and here, Paul went against the accepted protocol and mentioned Priscilla first, leading many New Testament scholars to believe that she was the spiritually gifted one and the pastor of the church that met in their home (Rom. 16:3-5).

Paul greets Andronicus and Junia, whom he says, “are

noteworthy among the apostles" (Rom. 16:7). *Junia* is a feminine name, and every ancient Greek manuscript has the feminine form. The early church fathers recognized *Junia* as feminine, as did every early English translation.

1. Based on the overwhelming textual and historical evidence, every early English translation opted for the feminine name, *Junia*. These include Tyndale's New Testament (1526), the Coverdale Bible (1535), the Great Bible (1539), the Geneva Bible (1560), the Bishop's Bible (1568) and the King James Version (1611).
2. We only find the male name "Junias" appearing in modern translations beginning with the Revised Version in 1881 and followed by the RSV, the NASB, the TEV, the MSG and the 1984 NIV. Newer translations, such as the NRSV, NLT and NKJV, have returned to the original understanding of the word as *Junia*. Faced with the overwhelming evidence, the translators of the NIV changed the name to *Junia* in their 2011 edition.

In Philippians 4:3b, Paul acknowledges the women whom he says, "labored with me in the gospel." Gerald F. Hawthorne, in the *Word Biblical Commentary*, says that Paul, in this passage, uses a metaphor, which means "to fight together side by side with," clearly indicating that Paul sees these women not as peons under him, but as highly esteemed members of his team who have labored at his side in the cause of Christ.

Considering the many examples of female leaders in Scripture, it is no wonder that the noted British New Testament scholar, the late F.F. Bruce, declared, "The mainstream churches of Christendom, as they inch along towards a worthier recognition of the ministry of women, have some way to go yet before they come abreast of Paul" (Hyatt, *Paul, Women and Church*, 31).

The Truth About 1 Timothy 2:11-12

Many, no doubt, are anxious to call my attention to 1 Timothy

2:12a where Paul said, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to usurp authority over a man, but to be silent." Yes, Paul said this, but there is a *big* difference in this verse and all the others concerning authority.

The word "authority" in 1 Timothy 2:12 is *not* translated from *exousia*. It is translated from a strange Greek word, *authentain*, that is found only here in the entire New Testament. This, in and of itself, is a clear indication that Paul is not addressing the normal exercise of authority in the church. If that had been the case, he would have used the word *exousia*, which he and all other New Testament writers use.

Authentein is a negative word meaning to control or domineer and at least once was used in the ancient world regarding a murder. Because *authentain* is found only here, in this personal letter to Timothy, Paul's directive that women are not to teach or to *authentain* a man must be understood as applying to the unique situation Timothy is facing in the city of Ephesus where he is confronting heretical teaching (see 1 Tim. 1:3). Paul would be shocked to see how his words to Timothy have been used to silence all women everywhere.

When Women Were Marginalized

After Paul and the first generation of Christians passed off the scene, the church began to institutionalize, putting more and more emphases on outward forms of order and structure. As part of this institutionalizing process, Christian leaders began to think of ministry no longer in terms of service, but in terms of "office" and "authority" (to read an account of this institutionalizing process in Christian history, see my books, *2000 Years of Charismatic Christianity* and *Pursuing Power*).

This authoritarian approach to church and ministry reached its crescendo with Constantine and the emergence of a form of Christianity that is predicated on power and authority. It was

after the church institutionalized and began to think of leadership in terms of “office” and “authority” that women began to be excluded from leadership roles in the church and passages such as 1 Timothy 2:11-12 used to justify their exclusion.

The fact that so much of the church still makes “authority” the criterion for excluding women from leadership is an indication that we have not fully recovered from the Constantinian form of church where authority is the central issue.

We Must Return to Jesus and the New Testament

Let us pray and be bold to declare God’s truth to this generation. Pray that our authority-laden church structures will be transformed into centers of service where women as well as men are free to exercise their leadership gifts and callings. This, I believe, will help position us to see another great, worldwide, spiritual awakening where both sons and daughters are free to speak and act as moved by the Spirit.

*This article is derived from a message delivered by **Dr. Eddie Hyatt** at a special event honoring International Women’s Day at the International Christian Women’s Hall of Fame in Grapevine, Texas. This message is available at the God’s Word to Women YouTube channel by clicking [this link](#). The truths of this article may be found in more detail in Dr. Hyatt’s book, Paul, Women and Church, available from Amazon and his website at [. The article originally appeared at .](#)*

What This Unusual Anniversary Gift Can Teach You About Having a Healthy Marriage

We all know the standard gifts for a wedding anniversary: flowers, candy and perhaps even jewelry or a weekend away. But pastor, bestselling author and speaker Dave Harvey begins one of the chapters of his new book, *I Still Do*, with the story of a much more unusual anniversary gift.

“It’s a couple sitting at a table, and of course this is an imaginary scene, but they are celebrating an anniversary ... the husband is somewhat detached, and the wife is trying to rally him, and he’s talking about what’s going on at work and how well he’s doing at work,” Harvey tells host Marti Pieper on the “Hope for Your Marriage” series on the *Charisma News* podcast.

“And the next thing they know, there are two boxes that somebody has dropped off: small boxes, little ... ring-sized boxes, and it kind of stops their conversation. And then they open them up, and there’s a thorn in each one,” Harvey explains. “And there’s a little note attached to it and it’s from Jesus, and the note says, ‘To help you be strong and your marriage to last long.’ And they’re sitting there trying to figure out, ‘What in the world does a thorn have to do with a healthy marriage?’”

But shortly after that, Harvey says, “He actually loses his job. And they go through this really difficult time, and it ends up being an entire worldview shift as he encounters life from the side of weakness, not from the side of strength ...

he's humbled. He's had to suffer, and life begins to look different; marriage begins to look different. He starts to get grounded by the reality of that. And the Savior becomes bigger because he truly understands how much he needs a Savior; before, he almost felt like he was his own savior.

"Now, he realizes that he needs Jesus desperately, and the marriage is saved and endures as a result of the thorn," Harvey says. "And of course this is keying off 2 Corinthians 12. But I don't think ... a lot of people go into marriage thinking, *One of the things God wants to do through this marriage is to reveal my weaknesses.* ... I went into marriage thinking it was basically to portray my strengths, never realizing that it was ordained by God to reveal my weaknesses."

For more about how God wants to use times of weaknesses and defining moments to showcase His glory and strengthen our marriage relationships, [click here](#).

When God Calls You to a New Season, Here's How You Must Respond

We've all seen stagnant water and recognized the smell of death within. But could such a scene point to a vital spiritual truth?

"When you walk by that body of water that doesn't have any life, that isn't flowing, there's a stench that goes with it—there's a smell, because water has to keep moving," says

pastor and author Ruth Hendrickson on the *Real Truth With Ruth* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. “I want to say this to us as believers, as followers of Jesus Christ: We have to keep moving.

“Scripture tells us that we were created to go from glory to glory. Psalm 23 says we journey through the ‘valley of the shadow of death.’ It doesn’t say that we sit there,” Hendrickson adds. “And so we have to understand that life, a walk with the Lord and walking with Jesus Christ always involves movement, and that movement also needs to be going forward.”

Hendrickson points out that spiritual stagnancy can lead to more than ineffectiveness for the kingdom, though. “We’re also going to get ourselves into trouble,” she says. “So just ... tell yourself to keep moving, because that’s part of walking with the Lord.”

Hendrickson finds the biblical foundation for this principle in 1 Kings 19:19-21, the call of Elisha. “Elijah, the prophet, comes to Elisha out in the field,” Hendrickson says, explaining that Elisha was plowing with 12 teams of oxen and asked to tell his parents goodbye before he went with Elijah. But, she adds, “Because the number 12 in Scripture usually refers to leadership or government, God was calling Elisha into a new season. But to enter that new season, he had to leave something behind.”

To learn more about Elijah’s story and how we should respond when God calls us to something new, [click here](#).

How a Prophetic Word Launched Demi Lovato's Entertainment Career

Pop singer and songwriter Demi Lovato opened up to supermodel Ashley Graham about her experience with the prophetic in her life. Ashley featured Demi in a recent episode of her podcast *Pretty Big Deal*. The duo also talked about self-love, eating disorders and the impacts of social media. But this is an interview like no other because we get to see a side of Lovato not often talked about—her spiritual life.

“You’re not supposed to do this,” said Demi. “But I made this pact with God, I was much younger and I was just like look, ‘God, if You make me famous, if You make me a singer and give me Grammys and stuff, I will do Your work.’”

She continued, “It’s just like, ‘OK, you gotta hold up your end of the bargain. What difference are you going to make in this world? What change are you going to make?’ The first thing that I ever spoke out about was bullying. And I think as time went on, I started speaking about more and more things that I felt passionate about.”

Ashley later asked the singer, “What does your faith look like for you walking through this chapter of life?”

Demi recounted, “My faith has been renewed a lot over the past year and a half of my life. I have never experienced miracles firsthand, like I’ve only heard about them. I think when you go through something that is so life-altering and when the end result is something that no one was expecting, that’s a miracle.

“And I think it’s a miracle I’m sitting here today; my faith

was so renewed by everything that I went through. I also just had a trip where I went to Israel and I got baptized in the River Jordan.”

“Ohhh chills!” Ashley exclaimed. Demi continued by sharing, “Yeah, where Jesus got baptized! And it was all these places where I just grew up reading about in the Bible.”

Demi went on to explain when her faith journey started. “My Aunt Kathy and my Uncle Jason took me to this church convention—this Pentecostal church convention—when I was a preteen.”

Demi found herself in the youth services, standing in the back. She remembered that a woman started speaking in tongues and came over to her to lay hands on her head. “This woman prophesied over me; the translation was, ‘You’re gonna be a hero to thousands of people someday through *art!*’ The woman looks at me and says, ‘Are you ready?’” Demi exclaimed, “‘Yes! Yes! I am ready!’”

Ashley finishes this portion of the video by saying, “This is a miracle; that is what that is! This is God shining His light and saying, ‘I got your back, sister, no matter what!’” Ashley shares how she, too, is a woman of faith who asks God for signs and wonders to make sure she is on the right path.

A few years after that prophetic word, Demi booked the biggest roles of her life on Disney Channel. The phrase “Are you ready?” has always followed her in life. She has remembered that prophetic moment throughout the years and is often encouraged by the word God spoke to her.

We admire Demi’s bravery and openness with her faith. As she continues to lean into rehabilitation and recovery, she is inspiring a generation. Besides being crazy talented, she continues to be a role model to millions with her mental

health journey. {eoa}

LightWorkers' mission is to create engaging, uplifting and inspirational content that breaks through the clutter, building a community of sharing and igniting a movement in the real world that motivates people to celebrate and share the good all around them. Learn more at .

Despite Painful Losses, Carrie Underwood Continues to Give God the Glory

Country star Carrie Underwood thanked God during a surprise presentation as her 2018 album *Cry Pretty* was certified Platinum by the RIAA, according to Nash Country Daily.

“This means a lot, because I feel like this is the project that I’ve done, and the album that I’ve done, that is the most ‘me.’ I’m honored and I’m humbled, and God is good,” said Underwood.

Underwood is open about her faith and doesn’t shy away from talking about God.

In a new interview with *Women’s Health*, Underwood opened up about the pain of suffering miscarriages.

“For my body to not be doing something it was ‘supposed to do’ was a tough pill to swallow. It reminded me I’m not in control of everything,” said Underwood.

Her *Women’s Health* interview is not the first time the starlet

has opened up about her infertility struggles. In previous interviews, she mentioned how her faith played a role in processing through the trauma.

“In the beginning it was like, ‘OK, God, we know this just wasn’t Your timing. And that is all right. We will bounce back and figure our way through it.’ And I got pregnant again in the spring, and it didn’t work out.”

Read the rest of this article at [Movieguide®](#). Find out what God is doing in Hollywood!