

RT Kendall: Christian, Stop Playing God

I could take you to the very spot—a table in the Duke Humphrey wing of the Bodleian Library in Oxford. I was in the process of discovering the works of the great William Perkins (1558-1602), an Elizabethan Puritan. I came in that day feeling very discouraged, an inferior compared with the other students at Oxford University. Here I was from the hills of Kentucky, a place not exactly known for its centers of academic excellence. *You don't belong here*, my mind suggested—and at that moment, my eyes fell on the words of William Perkins:

“Don't believe the devil even when he tells the truth.”

Criticism that is uncalled-for, unfair or unjust—even *if it is true*—should not be uttered. The fact that what you say is true does not necessarily make it right to say. Often Satan's accusations are true: He is an expert at being a judge. He is even called “the accuser of our brothers and sisters” (Rev. 12:10). You may be pointing your finger and speaking words of truth, but you may unwittingly be an instrument of the devil as you speak.

This kind of uncalled-for criticism is what Jesus means by judging when He says, “Do not judge.” He is not telling us to ignore what is wrong: He is saying not to administer any uncalled-for criticism—that is, criticism that is unfair or unjustified.

The word “judge” comes from the Greek word *krino*, which basically means “to distinguish.” Making a distinction between two things is often a good thing to do. Being discriminate can be prudent, and it can be wise. The apostle Paul said “The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things” (1

Cor. 2:15, NIV). We are told to make righteous judgments. But what Jesus is talking about here is judging *people* and unfairly criticizing them. It is our way of playing God.

One acrostic I have found helpful is built on the word "NEED.": When speaking to or about another person, ask yourself if what you are about to say will meet the person's need.

Necessary—Is it necessary to say this?

Encourage—Will this encourage the person? Will it make him or her feel better?

Edify—Will it edify? Will what you say build the person up and make him or her stronger?

Dignify—Will it dignify that person? Jesus treated other people with a sense of dignity.

For years I have read Luke 6:37a every day; it says, "Do not judge, and you will not be judged." I made the decision many years ago to read it every day, and I still do. Every single day. Why have I chosen this particular verse to focus on? Because judging is probably my greatest weakness.

Judging other people is almost always counterproductive. When I judge someone else, I may be thinking, *What I want to do to change this person, straighten this person out.* But it has the opposite effect almost every time! Sooner or later it will backfire. The other person will become offended, and the situation will not be resolved.

The degree to which we resist the temptation to judge will be the degree to which we ourselves are largely spared of being judged: "Do not judge, or you too will be judged" (Matt. 7:1). In Matthew this statement is given as a warning, but in Luke it is given as a promise.

"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven"

(Luke 6:37).

Judging people is the next result of unforgiveness, and it entails elbowing in on God's exclusive territory. Deuteronomy 32:35a ("It is mine to avenge; I will repay") is quoted twice in the New Testament (Rom. 12:19; Heb. 10:30). That means it's not *your* job! Judging is God's prerogative, nobody else's. To move in on the territory of the eternal judge will get His attention—but not the kind of attention you want!

Read Matthew 7, and you'll realize that Jesus will not allow you to play God. He is the ultimate judge, and you must be extremely careful not to trespass into His territory. {eoa}

✘ *Adapted from 40 Days to Total Forgiveness By R. T. Kendall, copyright 2019, published by Charisma House. Learn how forgiving others will not only give you peace, but will lead you to a greater anointing of the Spirit. To order your copy, click on this link.*

For more of Dr. R.T. Kendall's teaching, listen to the podcasts included here.

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Christian Actress Explains the Real-Life Story Behind

Her New Multigen Film

Catching Faith actress and writer Alexandra Boylan wanted to do something a bit different for her new project, *Catching Faith 2*, which releases on DVD Sept. 3, 2019. For Boylan, a multi-generational story seemed to connect with her because of her past and her passion for caring for others.

“I think a lot of people can relate; a lot of people are caring for their parents while they’re still trying to care for their kids, you know, [the] elderly,” Boylan said.

The first *Catching Faith* movie follows the Taylor family and their daily ups and downs. After debating on starting the sequel with a new family, Boylan felt prompted to continue the Taylor family’s narrative.

“[My team] really look[s] at it like a three-woman generation story,” Boylan explained. “‘Where would Alexa Taylor be four years later while her kids have gone to college, and she’s caring for her mother?’ We were like, ‘What if she’s caring for her mother, who now has dementia, and then her daughter comes home and wants to get married?’ That was where the heart of [the movie] started, with [a] three-women generation, a woman trying to care for her mother and also be a mother to her daughter at the same time.”

Boylan’s mother painted a great picture of what it means to have a servant attitude to those in different generations.

“My mother took care of my grandfather with dementia for 10 years in our home.” Boylan finds that not enough people talk about the changes in life’s seasons, so she wanted the camera and script to reflect that. “We wanted to show that people are not alone,” she added.

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

How to Take Back What the Enemy Has Stolen From You (and More)

Are you hurting, overwhelmed, stressed-out? Psychologist and author Dr. Barbara Lowe wants you to know you're not alone—or hopeless.

In “Dr. Barbara’s Whole Life Podcast” on the Charisma Podcast Network, Dr. Lowe asks: “Do you have broken relationships? Are you tired of feeling down and out? Are you tired of feeling stressed and overwhelmed? Are you tired of feeling nothing? Do you have traumas from your life that you can’t seem to get over?” She has clients who deal with all of these and more, she says.

And Lowe understands through her own life experience. “When I became a Christian [at age 19], I was a mess,” she says. “I had been drinking too much I was trying to quit drinking. I had used drugs. I had eating disorders. And I had grown up in an abusive home environment, a neglectful home environment by two individuals who were also themselves addicts of many different kinds.”

But God has turned all of this for good, she says, by giving her divine insights into the healing process. “My whole life has become about seeing others healed,” she says. A part of the process, she says, is giving ourselves back some of what we missed while growing up. “Why? Because the Lord gives double for your trouble, my friend! Have you read Isaiah 40 through the end?... He wants to give you so, so much double for your trouble. He wants to bless you a hundredfold where the

enemy has taken from you.”

To learn more about Dr. Lowe’s healing process and hear about her Hearts Returning home course, designed to deal these issues and more, listen to the podcast.

When You’re Sick, Cling to These 4 Truths About Healing

Being sick is so horrible on so many levels.

And sometimes it seems even worse for Christians who believe in healing, because we *know* our covenant rights: We *know* Jesus Himself took our infirmities and bore our sickness (Matt. 8:17), and we know that by His stripes we are healed (2 Pet. 2:24), but we’re still sick!

If that’s you, I want to encourage you today and remind you of these four things:

1. God is, and always has been, a healing God. Under the Old Covenant, your Heavenly Father said, “I am your healer” (). Under our new and better covenant, Jesus bore all sickness for you and healed you on the cross 2000 years ago. You could say God sealed His promise of healing in Jesus. Healing is His nature—it’s *always* His will for you. You are not “the sick trying to get well”—your covenant, bought by the blood of Jesus, says you *are* the healed, just the same are you *are* the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21). You’re not waiting to be healed. To God it’s a done deal, already bought and paid for.

2. It's easy for God to heal you, whether from a cold or cancer. What's hopeless or incurable to humans is never hopeless or incurable to Him; He knows exactly how to heal, and He always wants to do it. Settle this in your spirit once and for all.

3. He just wants you to believe Him. Healing is appropriated by faith (by believing what He has said in His Word). That's the fight of faith: to believe what He has said more than what you see or feel. It's not hard, but it requires more Word than circumstances. Symptoms don't change the Word of God or your covenant of healing.

4. You have the power! It's so easy to "talk sick" when you feel horrible or you're facing a scary diagnosis. But you can choose your words, right here, right now! The Bible says your tongue is a mighty force (Prov. 18:21, James 3:5-6), that you can have what you say (Mark 11:23), and that you can call for what God has promised (Romans 4:17). Start saying what you want, not what you have! This is how to release your faith for healing—you must agree with God by *saying* what God says. I have written a new Declaration Series book to help you do just that: *Speaking God's Word Over Your Health & Healing*.

Be encouraged today—you are not even close to being defeated! In all these things you are more than a conqueror through Him who loves you and paid for your healing (Rom. 8:37). Greater is He that's in you than all the symptoms in the world! (1 John 4:4).

Today's situation is temporary—keep believing God. Do everything you can in the natural to rest and fortify your body, but that's not the only arsenal you have. You have a healing covenant, and you have faith in God. Today I called you healed, in Jesus' name! {eoa}

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College, she is currently an itinerant minister and author of several books. Connect with her on her website, , on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter.

This article originally appeared at .

For more on God's healing power, listen to the podcasts included here!

How a Heavenly Perspective Transforms Your Life on Earth

When it comes to our emotions, says Bible teacher and author Carol McLeod, we all have a choice to make: "Do our emotions reveal self, or do our emotions reveal Jesus? Do our emotions show and tell past pain, or do they reveal the healing work of Jesus Christ? It's time for you to make up your mind."

In her Holy Estrogen series, Lesson 12, of the "Jolt of Joy" podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network, McLeod says "regardless of your emotional history, you can change. And the reason you can change is because of what Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has done for you."

McLeod dives deep into the new Greek words Paul used in Ephesians 2 to describe Christ's transforming work. One of these, she says, is *synchothiso*, which refers to our being seated with Christ in heavenly places (Eph. 2:6). "As we travel through life, we have His perspective and His point of

view. We will see what He sees, and it's a seat of revelation," she explains.

When you fly on an airplane, McLeod tells listeners, you now have the opportunity to watch TV from several thousand feet in the air. "My favorite channel was the one that tracked where you were going. It showed how fast the airplane was going, what the current altitude was ... And I knew the exact moment that I was over Scranton, Pennsylvania, even though I couldn't see it as I looked out the window. ... Now that's what *synchothiso* does for you. You have heaven's perspective on earth's situation."

And that heavenly perspective is vital, McLeod says. "You don't take things so personally anymore. But you see God's picture, you see what He's trying to develop in you. And in the world around you, your perspective is no longer so small or so one-dimensional; you can see what's happening all around you, because you have *synchothiso*."

For more of how a heavenly perspective can change how you respond on earth, listen to the podcast!

Hallmark Launches Pro-Family 'When Calls the Heart' Spin-Off on Streaming Channel

Attention, Hearties! Come this Friday, Aug. 30, *When Hope Calls* will hit Hallmark Streaming, giving *When Calls the Heart* fans something to satisfy their appetite for wholesome family content.

“It’s very much in the same world,” WHC actress Jocelyn Hudon, who plays Grace, told Movieguide®. “We have a similar town. We have a Mountie. We have the same kind of values and traditions of *When Calls the Heart*, and a similar storyline.”

When Hope Calls stars Hudon and Morgan Kohan as sisters who run an orphanage. The girls lost their parents as young children. Kohan’s “Lillian” was adopted, while Hudon’s “Grace” was not. Now that the sisters have reconnected, they are learning the nuances of dealing with family history and expectations.

“It’s all about love and commitment, and everyone’s just trying to make the best out of it,” Kohan told Movieguide®.

Hearties first met Lillian and Grace in the *When Calls the Heart* 2018 Christmas special, when the sisters got stranded in Hope Valley with their orphans.

Now, *When Hope Calls* explores Grace and Lillian’s backstory.

Click here to read the rest of this story from our content partners at Movieguide®.

Listen to this interview with *When Calls the Heart* executive producer, Brian Bird, here.

Why You May Not Want to Be at Peace With the World After

ALL

By now, you may have heard about Christian celebrities who have either renounced their faith or are in the process of losing their faith.

The most recent celebrity to do so is Marty Sampson, a lyricist long associated with Hillsong and whose songs many of us have sung in our churches. Sampson wrote:

“I’m genuinely losing my faith, and it doesn’t bother me. Like, what bothers me now is nothing. I am so happy now, so at peace with the world. It’s crazy.”

He has since deleted the comment and qualified it by saying he was “struggling with many parts of the belief system that seem so incoherent with common human morality” and his faith is on “incredibly shaky ground.”

Struggling with doubts and questions is not unusual. Of course, few Christians have the kind of public platforms that people such as Marty Sampson and Josh Harris have.

But as Sampson tries to figure out how to get his spiritual life back on solid ground, it’s worth asking about his goal. Is his goal peace with the world, as he mentioned? Because if it is, then Christianity will never give him what he’s seeking, as these Bible verses attest:

- “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:2).
- “Do you not know that the friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4).
- “Do not marvel, my brothers, if the world hates you” (1

John 3:13).

With growing animosity, our culture has set itself against the God of the Bible. Yes, to the point of hatred, including hatred of those who identify as Christ-followers. Even so, Christians are not to respond with hate in return. We are to love our enemies (Matt. 5:44).

But loving our enemies is not the same as being at peace with the world. For the foundation of a Christian's faith will always put us at odds with a world system that has declared itself too wise to need God and too independent to be accountable to Him. A world which, at best, mocks our faith and, at worst, kills Christians who profess to belief in the God who sent His Son to die for those who hate Him.

Is Sampson, along with others, willing to obtain peace with the world at the cost of compromising or renouncing his Christian beliefs? Does he understand it's those beliefs that engendered the hostility to begin with?

What about you and me?

- Is peace with the world worth losing peace with God (Rom. 5:1)?
- Is acceptance by our culture worth giving up the acceptance we have in Christ (Eph. 1:6)?
- And is the temporary approval of the world worth losing our eternal identity in Christ (Gal. 1:10)?

Peace—real peace—is found in a relationship with the Prince of Peace. A relationship with the world apart from Jesus Christ can only provide a poor imitation.

The Christian life is the sum of more than just singing emotional songs and quoting Bible verses. It includes a willingness to endure suffering and the loss of the approval of others. Jesus Christ showed us what that looks like:

" Let us look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2).

Easier said than done? Yes. But not impossible, by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. Still, the choice is ours to make.

What will you choose? {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 .

For the news stories about Josh Harris and Marty Sampson experiencing faith struggles, listen to the podcasts included here.

How You Can 'Pivot to Prosper' With Holy Spirit's Leading

Prayer brings believers in the business world an incredible advantage, Linda Fields says. The author and marketplace

ministry leader at the International House of Prayer, Kansas City, adds, “When you are a praying man or woman about your work, you have knowledge. God shows you things He doesn’t necessarily show people who aren’t asking.”

“Prayer is the key,” Fields adds on “The Linda Fields Show” podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. “Prayer is the way into purpose. Prayer is our path. Prayer brings you audacious favor!”

But, Fields cautions, “You’re not always on your knees praying. ... You’ll be in a meeting. And you’ll be doing your work or making a presentation or doing whatever you do: baking, cooking, doing hair, selling houses, and you have levels you’re operating on. ... It’s like there’s a current running of the Holy Spirit guide, who will whisper in your ear or give you a nudge: ‘Hey, show this house.’ ‘Hey, change your plan.’

“In the world, we need to be able to pivot quickly,” says Fields. “Those who can quickly pivot based on the wisdom of God and the insight of the Holy Spirit are the ones who prosper.”

Listen to the podcast to learn more from Fields about the “pivot to prosper” concept.

How to Say No to the Hidden, Idolatrous Source of Your

Food Addiction

"I'm sorry." It's a two-word prayer of power that can change everything ... even your weight. Here's the deal, though: It's not your spouse, your kids or friends you need to apologize to. It's not even yourself. No, the issue goes much deeper than that.

We need to apologize to God because not following what He has shown us to do is a spiritual crisis if we are His children. If He's clearly shown us what to do and we haven't done it, it is like a slap in face of God. Sad, but oh so true. I know. I've been there.

Why We Eat

Why do we eat when we aren't hungry? Why do we eat when we already have more than enough fuel for our bodies? It's like continuing to let the gas pump run well after the gauge says full. Our shut-off valve is broken.

Unlike a car where the gas would just spill out in the ground, when we overfill our bodies, we continue to collect the excess fat. It becomes nearly impossible to shed.

The irony of the human condition is although we know this is the reason for our weight gain, we can't seem to stop. We keep on going with self-defeating habits until we destroy ourselves.

Prosper and Be in Good Health

Like the apostle John, I wish that every person prosper, succeed and be in good health physically even as their souls prosper spiritually (see 3 John 2, AMP).

This is a humongous dream, really, especially in today's world where almost 40% of Americans are obese. That's according to the American Medical Association. More than two-thirds of

Americans are overweight and beyond. That's a large majority!

We definitely have a health crisis that some have dubbed "the affluent addiction." We have money, and we spend it on more and more fast food and unhealthy, sugary and carbohydrate-filled snacks.

Wholeness Issue

Unhealthy weight, though, is more than just a physical issue. It's a wholeness issue. It affects every part of us: emotional, mental and spiritual combined with the physical. It is the whole package because we are a whole package.

We are supposed to eat to fuel our bodies physically so we can be in good health. The Bible tells us our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and we should take care of it to glorify God (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

Somewhere along the line we have allowed food to become something to help bolster us up emotionally. We fail to see the health problems associated with additional weight.

Mentally we begin to believe we need this emotional high or calming experience of certain comfort foods to get us through life without going crazy or berserk.

Spiritual Issue

We become clouded to what this is doing to us spiritually. It's hard to listen to what God is saying to us when all we can think about is what, when and how much we can eat again.

Even when God answered my question of how could I lose weight with telling me to stop eating sugar, I rebelled against Him. I did that by saying, "No thanks. I don't need Your rules."

I didn't see it that way at the time, but what else do I call it when I turned my back, walked away and ate in direct opposition to what He had told me. This didn't happen just once. Oh no. It happened at least five times throughout the

years.

Slapping God in the Face

Every time I'd get to the end of my rope where my weight was concerned, having failed yet once again, I'd come to God, hat in hand, asking, "How can I move this mountain of weight from my body?"

He'd give me the same answer. "Stop eating sugar. Eat more meats, fruits and vegetables. Stop eating so much bread." I'd tell Him the same thing. "Thanks, but no thanks. I like my sugar too much." Then, it was like I'd slap Him in the face again and walk off.

Today, I can picture exactly what His response looked like. With a tear in His eye, He turned His other cheek, waiting for the next time, when I would come back and do it again.

Throughout the years, His grace was unrelenting toward me. It pursued me. It would not let me go even though I would have no part of doing what He said.

Truth Invasion

The turn-around moment came for me, though, when I had exhausted every diet, every program, every quick fix I could find, including the Christian ones. I had tried everything and was once again gaining the weight back.

That's when God led me to a meeting where I heard a 25-year sober alcoholic say, "Alcohol is one molecule away from sugar. Alcohol is liquid sugar." That was my come-to-Jesus moment.

It was a truth invasion. I finally saw how I had made foods that contained sugar and high carbohydrate-content the supreme idol in my life. I had put those above God. I would do anything to keep eating what I craved, but it was killing me.

My stomach, my belly, my appetite had become my god (Phil.

3:19). It was a sad day when I understood the complete and total reality of that.

Surrender

From that moment on, I began to walk out my journey. I surrendered my desire for those kinds of foods. I began learning how to totally release myself from the bondage I had willfully entered.

I learned the God is not really interested in the destination, such as the loss of 100 pounds, as we are. He is interested in the journey. That journey has to involve listening to and following Him instead of running after the foods we love and caving into our cravings at every turn.

Today, I've lost more than 250 pounds by fasting sugar and gluten. I give up as unto the Lord the foods that contain those substances. Every time I say no to foods I once craved, I am saying yes to God.

I'm Sorry, God

For me, weight loss has not been about a diet or a quick fix. It's been about walking with God. In the process I've addressed emotional issues, changed my habits, which affect the way I think, and allowed God to transform my life from the inside out (see Rom. 12:2, MSG).

No longer is my walk with God done out of obligation. It is a walk of pure grace. I walk with Him because He is the only one who knows me completely, cares what happens to me and will continue to tell me the truth. Even when I fall flat on my face, He gently dusts me off, picks me back up again, takes my hand and makes sure I am back on the right path.

The day I first clearly saw how God had turned the other cheek for me, fully expecting and allowing me to slap Him time and time again, I sobbed before Him.

In tears, I told Him, "I'm so sorry, God. You always saw what was the best course for me. You knew I was a sugar addict. If I had listened to You when You first told me to stop eating sugar, I would have never gained so much weight. And yet You never gave up on me. You poured Your grace on me, and I will never be the same again. I can't praise You enough for what You've done in my life."

Then, He spoke the most beautiful words I've ever heard.

"Daughter, I forgive you." {eoa}

Teresa Shields Parker is the author of five books and two study guides, including her latest, Sweet Journey to Transformation: Practical Steps to Lose Weight and Live Healthy, and her No. 1 best-seller, Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds. She is also a blogger, spiritual weight loss coach (check out her coaching group, Overcomers Academy) and speaker at .

This article originally appeared at .

Popular YouTube Star Experiences Miraculous Deliverance From Spirit of Suicide

If you, or someone you know, is in distress or crisis, call 800-273-8255. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your

loved ones.

Morgan Olliges of popular Millennial YouTube duo Paul and Morgan (“The Paul and Morgan Show”) is best-known for her bubbly, joyful personality displayed on the couple’s real-life videos about godly “life, love and dating.” But from October through December 2017, she went through a season where life was neither bubbly nor joyful. Experiencing severe depression, she was under regular treatment by a psychiatrist.

That December, Morgan tells host Dr. Barbara Lowe on “Dr. Barbara’s Whole Life Podcast” on the Charisma Podcast Network, she spent an entire day on the couch, planning to end her life. It was then that she sensed the Holy Spirit’s whisper: “‘Just tell someone.’”

“And it sounds so simple. ... and I kind of fought with it,” Morgan says. “I was like, ‘I have told people. I’ve told my mom and Paul ... that I was thinking suicidal thoughts.’”

The Spirit whispered again, “But you haven’t told him everything.”

“And so I just decided that once Paul got home, I was going to tell him ... ‘Unless something changes immediately, I’m going to end my life.’”

“Well then, we’d better change something immediately,” was Paul’s response to his wife’s announcement. But neither of them knew what God had in store.

In just a few days, Morgan says, “God swept in and ripped out the roots of depression, the roots of anxiety, the roots of panic, attacks of suicide. It was just gone. ... After I revealed this stuff, I had some really solid ladies pray over me, and I went to my psychiatrist. I just immediately felt this huge weight lifted.”

What Morgan says she now realizes was “intense spiritual

deliverance” began with the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit. Hear more of her miraculous story when you listen to the podcast below!