

Has Satan Hacked Into Your Spiritual Bank Account? Part 1

Has the devil hacked into your spiritual bank account? Has he stolen the heavenly benefits given to you by Jesus? I guess before we can rightly answer these questions we need to remind ourselves just what our spiritual benefits are. Let's look to Psalm 103: 2-5 to find out. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's." This is quite the list; let's examine the first three today.

1. He forgives our iniquities. Iniquities means perversity, depravity or sin. How could the enemy steal your forgiveness? First, he can't steal your forgiveness, but he will twist God's promise to forgive to get you to believe you are not forgiven or cannot be forgiven. How does he do this? By whispering falsehoods to your mind until you accept his lies that God holds confessed sins against you. But according to 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." How do we take back what Satan has hacked from our account concerning forgiveness? We have to make a quality decision to rightly judge God's character—He does not lie—and correctly divide the Word of God and call Satan what he truly is: a liar, and then make the all-important choice to believe God is truth.

"You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in

him. When he lies, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44).

"God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He spoken, and will He not it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" (Num. 23:19).

2. He heals all our diseases. "To heal" means to cure, repair or to make whole. And Jesus healed us from all disease when He shed His blood for us at the whipping post. "Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:4-5).

How does Satan steal our healing from us? There are many ways he does this, but it is always through the way of doubt and unbelief. And what does James 1:6-8 say regarding doubt? "But let him ask in faith, without wavering. For he who wavers is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed with the wind. Let not that man think that he will receive anything from the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."

And do as Sarah does in Hebrews 11:11, "By faith Sarah herself also received the ability to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised."

There comes a point in each of our lives when we have to face the facts: We either believe or we don't. Some people have hearts that are very soft and pliable to the ways of the Lord and therefore, they readily believe the promise of God for healing and immediately receive, while others have issues that need to be worked through in order for them to believe and receive their miracle from God. But either way, God is patient and long-suffering with us, and is willing to work with us wherever we are spiritually. So I encourage you to work on

your faith level; study God's healing promises until His promise to heal is more real to you than the disease attacking your being.

3. He redeems our life from destruction. "Destruction" means corruption, the grave and the pit of hell. And "redeem" means to avenge and to pay ransom. To avenge is to inflict harm on behalf of (oneself or someone else previously wronged or harmed). And Jesus definitely did so for us at Calvary. And He paid ransom with His blood to redeem us from the clutches of the enemy.

How can the enemy steal this redemption from people? By causing them not to believe and receive this plan of redemption that He so richly gave to us.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly I say to you, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

"The Lord does not delay [as though He were unable to act] and is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is [extraordinarily] patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9, AMP).

The Bible tells us in Romans 10:9-10 that, "If you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved, for with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

"I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God. This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we

ask anything according to His will, He hears us" (1 John 5:13-14).

Ultimately, it is your decision to receive or to reject His plan of redemption. I pray you will make the right choice and believe and receive Jesus as your Savior this day.

In closing, in order to prevent Satan from stealing our benefits, or to take back what he has stolen from us we have to make a decision with each of the benefits to believe God's Word and live according to the faith we have in His ways. It's our decision to believe or not, but wisdom tells us that God's ways are best for us and for those around us. We will continue on in activating our spiritual benefits in the next post. For now, make sure you do your part in these first three benefits: believe and receive them. {eoa}

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6 Wonderful Weapons of Warfare You Can Use When the Battle Wears On

How we respond when we go through hard times is very important; just as is our attitude when we are fighting a spiritual battle, and that battle grows long and weary.

It's tempting to allow self-pity to creep in.

To default back to our old thought patterns of, “This is the way it always goes for me. Nothing ever goes right.”

People tend to respond in three ways when the battle grows long and weary.

- They give in to self-pity and negativity
- They tell themselves, “Suck it up. Get over it.” (This, by the way, is not biblical. Nowhere in the Bible do we see that when we encounter hardships we’re just supposed to suck it up and move on.)
- They get out their weapons of warfare and go to battle.

Notice that Paul says in 2 Corinthians 10:4, “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God for the pulling down of strongholds,”

He uses the plural form of weapons, meaning that there is more than just one weapon.

When we think of spiritual weapons, we tend to think only about the Word of God being our sword, but we tend to forget that Scripture gives us more defensive weapons to use, and we need all the weapons in our arsenal.

No soldier goes to battle with only one weapon.

6 Spiritual Weapons to Use When the Battle Wears On

When the battle wears on, we may feel weary, we may be tempted to give up, but these are the moments when we must remember that we don’t fight in our own strength.

The weapons we fight with are not carnal weapons, and we don’t dare fight in our own strength.

Our weapons are spiritual weapons; they are mighty through God, in His strength—not ours. And as we learn to tap into the strength of the Holy Spirit, enabling us to do what we

otherwise couldn't do, we will begin to see victory in our lives!

1. The Word of God

"... and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17).

This is the first defensive weapon we read about in Paul's passage on the armor of God. Jesus used this weapon in the desert when Satan came to tempt Him.

Satan, at times using Scripture to tempt Jesus, twisted the meaning but Jesus came back at him each time using Scripture in its proper context to defeat him and eventually Satan left.

We will not defeat Satan by reasoning with him.

We will not defeat Satan by negotiating with him.

We will not defeat Satan by just telling him to get out.

We defeat Satan by using the weapons of our warfare that are mighty through God, and one of the most powerful weapons is the Word of God.

2. Prayer

"Praying in the Spirit always with all kinds of prayer and supplication" (Eph. 6:18a).

Many people don't recognize prayer as part of the armor of God passage in Ephesians 6. They get to the sword of the Spirit and stop, but there is not a period there.

The passage carries on talking about prayer, which is a powerful and often neglected weapon!

But notice that we don't just grab our prayer list and start working through it, "God I need.. ... and I need. ... and would You please. ... and bless. ..."

It says, “prayer and supplication in the Spirit.”

We aren't praying with our mind, with our own intelligence. We are allowing the Holy Spirit to pray through us the will of the Father.

Sometimes, we already know the will of the Father.

If we are earnestly battling for the soul of a lost loved one, we know what the will of the Father is already, because the Bible tells us that the will of the Father is that none should perish.

But there are times when we are not certain. When there is no chapter and verse that clearly tells us what the will of the Father is.

If we're praying for a sick person: should we pray for immediate healing, should we pray that God be glorified through their physical weakness—as we see in Paul's thorn in the flesh, or should we pray for their ultimate healing—for God to take them home?

We see all three can be the will of the Father.

It is in these times that we need to allow the Holy Spirit to pray through us the will of the Father. He may choose to reveal it to us so we can pray in our human language, or He may choose to pray through us with the gift of tongues.

3. Worship

Jehoshaphat was king of Judah and a coalition army came against them to defeat them, and Jehoshaphat was afraid. In that moment, he did what any great leader should do—he called a prayer assembly and a fast.

During this prayer assembly, God gave the battle plans and assured them that they wouldn't need to fight because God would go before them and defeat the enemy.

Early in the morning they began to prepare, and Jehoshaphat did something very odd.

Ahead of the army marched worshipers who sang and praised God. They began to say, "Praise the Lord, for His mercy endures forever."

And then they began to sing and praise the Lord.

And Scripture says, "When they began singing and praising, the Lord set ambushes against Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; so they were defeated. Then the Ammonites and Moabites stood up against those dwelling from Mount Seir to destroy and finish them. Then when they made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, each man attacked his companion to destroy each other" (2 Chron. 20:22-23).

Worship is a powerful weapon to destroy the enemy.

But we must make an important distinction! Worship isn't just music. Worship isn't just playing your favorite worship CD.

Worship is a condition of the heart. It is purposeful and intentional elevation of God above everything else.

We can worship God by singing songs of praise written by other people, but worship can also be spontaneously singing words of adoration and exaltation to God that come from our own heart that no one has ever written before.

4. The Name of Jesus

"Therefore God highly exalted Him and gave Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,

of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11).

Did you catch what this verse is saying? The name of Jesus is

above every other name.

Have you ever noticed that in many circles, while it is acceptable to use the name God or Lord, you will get a reaction if you use the name of Jesus?

There are many gods. Every religion acknowledges a god, and they usually call their god "god". The term "lord" is still used today in many contexts.

But Jesus? There is only one Jesus, and there is only one context in which we use the name of Jesus.

This is what makes using the name of Jesus Christ in vain so insulting. Many Christians who routinely break the third commandment and speak God's name in vain will not use Jesus Christ's name the same way.

This doesn't diminish the power of God's name, but Paul was clear when he said that God gave Jesus the name above every name. And in that name is incredible power. At Jesus' name every knee will bow and confess that He is Lord.

5. Our Testimony

"They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death" (Rev. 12:11).

Skeptics may refute something you believe. They may even present their own set of facts or talking points that seem to call into question the Bible, creation and the existence of God altogether.

This doesn't negate the power of God's Word; rather, it confirms for us that we're living in an age of incredible deception and delusion. However, something that cannot be refuted is a first-hand testimony. This is why first-hand testimony is allowed in a court of law.

The enemy may come at you with lies and deception, but he cannot convince you that what God has done for you didn't really happen.

It's your testimony, and it has great power! It *is* the final word.

This is a weapon that is so often neglected, because if the enemy can get us to focus on the negative, on what we *don't* have, on the bad things going on in our life right now, he can cause us to forget all the good things God has done for us in the past.

All the ways God has come through for us. All the miracles God has done in our life. All the ways God has provided for us when we had nothing. The healing God has done in our heart and in our body.

Because while he can't refute our testimony, he can cause us to forget our testimony—knowing that if we use our testimony, we will be victorious. Because we will have the power to stand in faith that God will come through for us again!

6. Thanksgiving

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with gratitude, make your requests known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will protect your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6-7).

There is nothing the enemy wants more than for you to be riddled with discontentment, anxiety, worry, depression, envy, covetousness, gossip, complaining, slander...

All things that destroy us from the inside out and poison our relationships with others.

I clearly remember as a young adult working at a particular job where I was unhappy and frustrated, coming home each night

gripping and complaining about my coworkers and all of the annoying things they did.

One morning, my dad sat me down. I knew this was going to be a “talking to,” something I desperately needed but really didn’t want to listen to. He explained how my complaining was growing chronic, and a little annoying itself.

And then he gave me the antidote. It was a challenge, and it worked.

Each day I was to sit down with my journal and write down five positive things about each co-worker. And I wasn’t allowed to repeat anything I’d written before.

At first, it was really hard. In fact, for some of them, nothing came to mind at all. I was so focused on the negative that I couldn’t see anything positive at all.

But I managed something like, “They have pretty eyes” or “They have perfectly straight teeth.”

But the more I did it, the easier it became. And in no time at all, I stopped complaining, and actually started liking my job again.

Does this seem like a self-help exercise?

Maybe this feels way too simplistic to you, but it’s actually scriptural. Check out this verse just below the one above:

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will protect your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think on these things (Phil. 4:7-8).

This is a great place to start in using thanksgiving as a weapon of warfare.

I still do this exercise.

Sometimes in a journal, sometimes just in my heart. But it's become a habit.

Through thankfulness, God is able to adjust our heart so our prayers will no longer be selfish prayers but prayers He can answer.

We are able to pray according to His will because our own selfish ambitions are out of the way.

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Finding Spirit-Led Significance in Your 50s and

Beyond

“Go over into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to Me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord has need of them.’” (Matt. 21:2-3).

In Jesus’ time, a donkey was a valuable possession for the ordinary middle-class family. On the day of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Jesus instructed His disciples to head into the city, untie a colt from its post outside a certain house and then bring it to Jesus for His use. The only explanation the disciples were to give to the owner was that “the Lord has need of them.”

Many folks, much like the untied donkey in Matthew’s gospel, feel as though they have come to the end of the road. Waiting. Never really discovering what for. I have found it even more common for those of us in our 50s, 60s and 70s to play the conversations over and over, asking ourselves, *What’s next? What now?*

As ones who have absorbed life’s blows, endured the wounds of failure, enjoyed our accomplishments and relished in our successes, we find that we still wonder. We converse with friends, we seek counsel, we pray, and we search for that which matters. We long to know about our significance. If this is you, I have good news. The human spirit will always cry out for more—God created us this way. And because of this, He calls out to us and draws us to Himself. He is coming after us.

We are certainly not donkeys, but I’d like to submit that our relationship to this story may be this: Many of us are tied up. And like the untied donkey in the story in the Gospel of Matthew, one of the hardest things to come to terms with when we face transition is our usefulness.

Allow me to pose these questions: Have you accepted the lie, agreed with the argument, that life is over and there is nothing left? Do you hear the whisper, "I'm too old, too much time has been lost"? Do you wonder where to start? Do thoughts of starting over overwhelm you?

Jesus knows this, beloved one, and as the anointed one in your life, He comes to untie the ropes that are holding you back, to break every yoke and to declare to you that your life is not over. There is still much to be done. The Lord has need of you! He is in the business of untying donkeys—of breaking people free from that which holds them back.

You were not created to stay tied up on the post of the city gate. If you feel ordinary and insignificant, I submit to you that He uses ordinary people, strengthening them in the significance of relationship with Him—all for the advancement of His kingdom.

My friend, the Master is waiting for you, and the time to flourish has just begun. Don't you see you have been untied from interruptions, work duties, deadlines and obligations?

Or are you tired? Run down? To you I say, "Have you not known? Have you not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, does not faint, nor is He weary? His understanding is inscrutable" (Isa. 40:28).

You no longer must bear the burden; the time has come to meet the burden-bearer Himself.

Father God who made us has planned a wonderful future beyond the certainty of growing old and ending our days on earth doing nothing. His purposeful, significant plan is just ahead—eternity with Him. But for it to be accomplished, He has need of you.

He is looking for men and women who will stand in the gap as intercessory catalysts, people who proclaim His promise, whose

lives are patterns to be followed, who pave the way for younger generations, whose prayers invoke His presence and cry out for His return. He is calling those of us who are in our 50s, 60s and 70s, proclaiming there is yet much to be done, "I, The Lord, have need of you! Will you partner with me?"

You don't have to spend your latter years in the shadows of yesterday's accomplishments—there are many new and glorious ones ahead. Indeed, the Lord has need of you!

"They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be filled with vitality and foliage" (Ps. 92:14).

"And even to your old age I am He, and even to your graying years I will carry you; I have done it, and I will bear you; even I will carry, and will deliver you" (Isa. 46:4).

Yes, the Lord has need of you for there is yet another triumphal entry He has planned—one that will not happen until "the spirit and the bride say come."

May your heart be stirred like Simeon in Luke 2:35-45, and may you hear and answer the call to partner with Him in your latter years. Join a generation that is crying out for the glorious return of Christ! {eoa}

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Closing the Gap Between What You Know and What You Do

Maybe if blogs had scent, you could have smelled how hard I worked on Saturday. The landscaping pavers that circled my mother-in-law's tree had slowly shifted with time, so I determined to pull them all out, level the ground with sand, and put them back. Backbreaking, but not all that complicated.

I finished replacing the last stone, only to see something horrible.

"Are you okay?" Matt popped his head out of the house to ask. We both fixed our eyes on the four-inch gap in my circle.

How was that even possible? Take the stones out. Level the ground. Put the stones back. I guess pavers can gain extra girth around the midline, without even trying, just like a 49-year-old woman can.

I lifted tired eyes to that man and asked him what I should do. The answer was to work my way back around the circle, tightening the pavers together one at a time, until I made up the difference and the two ends met.

Now imagine my thoughts when I was reading the next morning, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit*, by James K. A. Smith, and he said this: Sanctification is closing the gap between what I know and what I do.

Ah, cursed gap.

Especially lately I've felt like I know so much about how to act but can't quite pull it off in real life. I've been a woman sitting in the grass all sweaty, looking at a space that shouldn't exist, and wondering how in the world I'm going to get rid of that. It's discouraging, I tell you, to work so

hard and still come up short.

Paul tells us: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).

That means we’re a whole world full of people who have a circle where the ends don’t meet. So embarrassing. So humiliating to want to be good but come just four inches too short. But James Smith says, “The Spirit of God meets us in that gap.”

Who does that? I mean, who wants to come right where your huge mistake is and help you fix it?

Feel the relief this kindness brings.

And pray with me, “Come, Lord Jesus, and rework all the pieces of my life, until there’s a tight fit between what I *know* to be right and what I actually *do*.” {eoa}

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This Life-Changing Truth Will Help You Escape Addiction’s Evil Grip

Built in the '70s, the wooden exterior was old and weathered. The rails were splintery. Long narrow steps led down to a dark room filled with people I didn’t know. It was the kick off of the Harmful Life Patterns group. I knew those there had some prevailing issues in their lives, such as alcohol, drugs, smoking, pornography, gambling, food and other things. Little did I know, this place would house the birth of my unexpected

transformation.

I told myself I had come to support a friend who had issues with food. Truth be told, I was the one who needed help. I had been gaining weight after losing quite a bit.

Modus Operandi

It was my *modus operandi*—lose, gain it all back plus more, then lose again. More than five years before, I weighed over 430 pounds and had been told if I didn't lose at least 100 pounds and keep it off, I would be dead in five years.

My heart was never designed to pump blood through a body of my size. It would give out, and that would be the end of my story.

I had lost weight, but I also had been kicking mad about having to give up sugar, realizing it would be for the rest of my life. Now, after going back to the white stuff, I had a good start on gaining most of the weight back. I knew living in denial would cost me my life. Hey, though, I was still alive. I could still eat sugar, so what's the problem?

It was as if part of me craved finding the help I needed to get healthy. The other part was stubbornly rebelling against giving up what I felt was my only friend—sugar and lots of it, anytime I wanted it.

The Story

The leader began telling his story. At that time, he was over 20 years sober from alcohol. While his story was interesting, I was halfway listening. Alcohol had never been my problem. My dad had drilled into me to stay away from alcohol. My paternal grandfather died from diseases related to alcoholism.

I remember saying at one time in my life that I wish alcohol was my problem because then I could just stop drinking alcohol. With food issues, though, one can't just stop eating.

I heard most of what Russ said about how alcohol had compromised his life, how he knew overindulgence of alcohol had the possibility of making him bed-ridden and dependent on his family, how he wanted to be an effective role model to his seven children and the generations to come, how as a counselor he wanted to have integrity in his chosen career.

Words That Changed My Life

Then, almost out of the blue, his next words slammed into my heart. "Alcohol is one molecule away from sugar. Alcohol is liquid sugar."

With those few words, my entire world came to a screeching halt.

In my mind, all the pieces of my life snapped together like a magnetic puzzle. I saw how I would eat all the leftovers when cleaning up after eating a full meal. I saw how sugar-laden desserts seemed to call my name if they were anywhere in the house, even in box form. I'd be compelled to whip up a pan of brownies, banana bread, cinnamon rolls or cookies and consume them all. Then wash the dishes so no one would know.

I saw how I felt the sugar helped me get rid of negative emotions. I also saw how it numbed every emotion even the positive ones, so that love, joy and peace had become foreign experiences.

Diets

I saw all the times I had gone on diets where I didn't eat sugar and greatly limited my choices to chicken breasts, squash and salads.

I am a really good dieter. I'd lose my goal of 100 pounds and immediately celebrate with Mammaw's oatmeal cake. Then I'd go back to the way I'd always eaten and gain the weight back plus more. That's because for me, or any food addict, diets are a

short-term fix for a long-term problem.

This had happened at least five times during my life. What was clear to me, as the movie of my life played out in my mind, was that not eating sugar had worked, but rewarding myself with the white stuff didn't. It always backfired on me.

Could I Be A Sugar Addict?

I was listening to Russ' story at a time well before hearing anything about sugar addiction. All the information we hear today was not common knowledge back then.

I didn't know if a person could be addicted to sugar. So at the end of his talk, I asked, "Is it possible to be addicted to sugar?"

The answer was critical for me. "I don't know the physical nature of it exactly," he said, "but I know this. You can be addicted to anything that controls you."

That was it. My weakness had been unmasked.

Sugar controlled me. It told me what to eat, when to eat it and that I could eat it, and anything else I loved, in unlimited quantities.

That day was a pivotal moment in my life. All the pieces were there to quantify my findings.

There in that dark, outdated, dusty basement, I owned the realization that I knew would define and change the rest of my life.

I am a sugar addict.

Walking Out the Journey

From then on I began to learn how to walk out my personal journey, to act against my weakness and tap into God's strength.

It has only been by God's grace that today I have lost more than 250 pounds. On my Facebook page, in my free group, in my coaching groups, every time I speak and even when I am exercising by walking in the pool, people ask this one question in many different ways. "Why can't I stop eating? It's like I'm weak around food."

There are many ways to answer that question that sound more logical and professional, but it all starts with this one foundational Scripture.

"So I take pleasure in weaknesses, in reproaches, in hardships, in persecutions, and in distresses for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:10).

I Am No One Special

I can't do it. I can't stop eating. That was what I told myself and I proved it time and time again. So how did I do it?

I owned my weakness and I allowed God's grace-power to propel me forward.

I am no one special. What God did for me, He will do for you. My transformation is still hard for me to believe. It was unexpected. I was acting against it in every way. But God had a plan to get my attention and then take me to the place I am now. It's from the experience of losing weight and keeping it off that I am privileged to lead you to discover God's plan for your own transformation.

You may not have 250 pounds to lose. You may be like I was back in 1977 when God plainly told me to stop eating sugar and I ignored Him. You may only have 50 or less pounds to lose. Or you may have more to lose than I have lost.

It doesn't matter. God cares about you and your situation. He knows you feel stuck, and more than anything, He wants you to

get unstuck. {eoa}

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Using the Gift of Tongues to Pray People out of the Fiery Pit

Hell is an actual place—an eternal land of inconceivable loneliness, suffering and torment. It is reserved for those who refuse to receive Jesus as their Savior. And God does not desire for anyone to spend their eternity there, but He allows us the choice of a free will. Where will we choose to spend our eternity?

The closer we are to the Lord's return, the harder the enemy is at war against people to keep them from the loving arms of our heavenly Father and an eternity in heaven with our Savior. The demonic forces are out in full force to lead people astray from the truth that will set them free and into a living hell on this earth full of filthy bondage.

This week, my husband and I and our ministry partner and family friend, Palma, were called upon to make an emergency

house call to a brother in the Lord who has opened himself up to the suffering and torment of Satan and his demons. He got caught up in the sin of pornography, which has led him to utter bondage and misery. He's been in a demonic state of mind, emotionally and physically. His wife and family have been fighting for his life as this demon has declared it will not leave until he and his family are destroyed.

The man is not himself anymore. He has become possessed and violent towards his wife, and screaming lies at her, blaming her for his sinful choices. The demon has had the man at the point of death, collapsing to the ground, barely able to breathe. He has been taken to the hospital numerous times over the past week, and the doctors are unable to help him. Why? Because even though this attack is manifesting in the natural realm and harming him physically, the problem is spiritual and must be dealt with spiritually.

We are called to go and minister reconciliation over him. We arrive, find him lying on his bed as if he were dead, lay our healing hands upon him and immediately, while unresponsive to normal interaction with other people, his fists clench tightly around his covers. We continue to pray in the Spirit (in tongues), and the demon within him awakens and starts to violently scream at his wife. I shield his wife and usher her out of the room. We continue to pray in our supernatural languages, and the man is now standing, unaware of what is going on, leaning upon my husband. The demon is very angry, but we just keep on praying in tongues. And then comes the breakthrough this man is in need of—deliverance through repentance.

So from now on we do not regard anyone according to the flesh. Yes, though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet we do not regard Him as such from now on. Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things have passed away. Look, all things have become new. All this is from God, who has reconciled us to Himself

through Jesus Christ and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their sins against them, and has entrusted to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us. We implore you in Christ's stead: Be reconciled to God. God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:16-21).

We lead the man in a prayer of repentance to God, to asking his wife to forgive him, even though the man is physically weak, he is at peace, he is calm. We lay him down on his bed; he sleeps. Later that evening, he calls my husband for further counsel and prayer.

"For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved by His life" (Rom. 5:10).

While we were praying in the Spirit, the Lord showed me a vision of what was taking place during this time of deliverance. I was shown a pit of fire; the flames were very large and hot. As we continued to minister over the man by praying in tongues, I saw hands reach down into the fiery pit of hell and lift him by the scruff of his neck out of the flames.

Use the gift of tongues that the Lord has so richly given to His people and pray your loved ones out of the fiery pit of hell. {eoa}

Becky Dvorak is a prophetic healing evangelist and the author of DARE to Believe, Greater Than Magic and The Healing Creed. Visit her at .

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How These Friends Brought God Back Into the Dating Conversation

Three friends in San Diego, California, were discouraged seeing that people within the church were either not dating or were dating poorly. Seeing many of their peers applying worldly principles to their dating lives and dealing with the repercussions made these friends stop and think about what could be done to help.

Looking at the current dating culture within the church, they saw that people were either not dating at all, just hanging out, or they were not dating well. There seemed to be a disconnect in Christian culture about dating with few Christian dating resources offered. And some of those only offered extremes. These three friends couldn't find anything providing a middle ground on dating.

But Danece Van Soelen, DeAngelo Moss and Monica Morales wanted to help bring a biblical and relevant balance to the dating culture. Practical dating advice needed to be coupled with spiritual wisdom. God is supposed to be in the center of healthy relationships, and He needs to be in the center of dating. With these things in mind, the Dating Project was launched.

Danece said, "We wanted to provide principles that are easy to apply to dating. We wholeheartedly believe that healthy dating relationships lead to healthy marriages. And healthy marriages lead to healthy families. We began the Dating Project to bring God back into the conversation."

As a group of friends, they formed the Dating Project as an organization that is on mission to connect and educate Christians for the purpose of developing healthy dating relationships. They want to offer biblically balanced and culturally relevant curriculum that provide the practical how-tos of dating, "God's way." They also wanted to show a positive Christian approach to dating while revealing God's design for relationships.

The Dating Project currently offers video based curriculum called "The Dating Challenge." When you subscribe to the Dating Challenge on their website, you'll receive an email with a short video and worksheet every day for five days. The Dating Challenge tackles dating topics such as who pays on your first date, physical boundaries and best practices in dating. They also expand on the "three-date rule" and "when to call it quits."

Danece also acknowledged that dating is not just a journey for two people. It is also a path of self-discovery. She said when each person knows and follows the godly advice given by The Dating Project, they will grow in their spiritual walk and be more assured of who God has created them to be.

The Dating Project is currently developing more curriculum to expand on developing healthy dating habits that they believe will ensure healthy marriages. Some curriculum will be more specialized, such as how to prepare for marriage, which will dig deeper into personal and spiritual growth.

Dating doesn't have to be complicated if you're a Christian. And Christians don't have to settle for worldly advice anymore. The Dating Project offers trendy videos with practical and relevant dating advice. If you are single and needing a fresh start to dating, the Dating Project will help you bring God into the center of your relationships.

For more information or to sign up for the free Dating

Challenge course, go to or @TheDatingProjectOfficial on Instagram and Facebook. {eoa}

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Singles, Here's How to Let Go of those 'Married-With-Children' Dreams

As a child, I developed a fantasy of being married with children. I kept this with me up until now. This is my season for deliverance. In my head, I thought I could create such a life for myself. I thought it would make me happy and fulfill many voids.

Throughout my journey with God, my experience has been a lot of peeling away layers of disappointments, hurt and pain. I often wondered why God wouldn't just cut it all out of me in one setting. If I knew how to get to it, I would have cut it out myself. Yet, I'm still standing, trusting God for my complete deliverance.

God wants to fill my voids. He wants to be my everything. He wants to get all of the glory in every area of my life. I had to come to the end of my desires and surrender them all to God. What desires have you placed before God?

Every day, when I think of loneliness, I surrender it to God. Anything I have concerns about, I have learned to surrender it to God. I have chosen not to place anything of me before God. It is not always easy. The battle with your flesh is real. I understand this completely. The devil comes to kill, steal and destroy, but God gave us Jesus so we would have life (see John 10:10).

There is nothing we can or have gone through Jesus has not conquered (1 Cor. 15:55-57). Whom the Son has set free is free indeed (John 8:36). So whenever loneliness or fear of being alone comes knocking at my thoughts. I fight! I have chosen to run to Jesus and not stand there in the devil's lies. I believe God. I want to walk fulfilled with His glory. Maybe today you have been challenged by God to let go?

Take it from me, He won't force you, but He will continue to love on you until you give in. His Word over your life will not return to Him void (Isa. 56:11).

He will complete the good work He has started in you (see Phil. 1:6). {eoa}

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Your Divine Declaration for

Holy Healing

I will not be dismayed.

I will not be afraid, for the Lord my God is with me.

No matter what the report says, no matter what manifests upon my body, I believe in the healing report of my Lord.

And by His healing stripes, my body is healed and made whole.

I pick up my shield of faith, and the fiery darts of the enemy will not harm me.

I sharpen my sword of the Spirit, and I declare only the report of the Lord.

I will no longer utter man's report that is full of death and suffering.

My feet are firmly planted in the Word of God, and no storm of the enemy will wash me away from this earth.

I keep a clean turban wrapped around my head, the mind of Christ. The Holy Bible keeps my thoughts pure and undefiled and protects my life.

I tighten up the belt of truth and it sets me free.

My feet are shod with the gospel of peace that does not come from this world, but from the throne of God.

The joy of the Lord is my strength, and I take of dose of medicine often and laugh loud and strong in the name of the Lord in the face of my adversary.

Greater is Jesus in me, than he, Satan, that is in this world.

I declare and adhere to all the healing promises found in God's Word, amen. {eoa}

Becky Dvorak is a prophetic healing evangelist and the author of DARE to Believe, Greater Than Magic and The Healing Creed. Visit her at .

This article originally appeared at .

Your War-Room Strategy for Vibrant Victory in Long-Term Battle

Are you battle-weary?

Do you feel as though you've been living on this battlefield for a long time, and that you'll never see the end of this trial; that it all feels so hopeless?

Maybe the enemy is looming over you, larger than life, and you see no way out, no plan for victory.

I've been there. Recently, in fact.

I've heard those pat answers and easy cliches that were meant to encourage me, but really just left me feeling not only empty, but now condemned for my lack of faith and weak-kneed discipleship.

Here's the thing we need to know: All Christians have moments where their knees shake and rattle.

All Christians have times when they have wielded the sword so long that their arms are crying out for a break and their bodies are screaming for rest.

There is no Christian in all of history who hasn't had such a

moment.

When you read biographies of great men and women of God, the common thread that runs through all of them are great ongoing battles, some of which were waged until their dying breath.

But there's another thread we see in their stories—they didn't give up. They didn't give into the discouragement and despondency the enemy sought to plague them with.

They didn't give in to self-pity.

They didn't give in to the spiritual fatigue they faced.

The difference between a defeated warrior and a victorious warrior is their strategy in the war room. When we go to war without a strategy

- We have no direction
- We have no goal
- We have no plan for victory

A few weeks ago, following some intense prayer over a long, ongoing battle in my own life, God sent pastor from South Africa to our church in Zagreb, Pastor Michael Carson from Kingdom Citizens Assembly International, to share a word in season that so directly spoke to me, that I am convinced that it was an answer to prayer.

It is with his permission that I share with you today points from his message and how they spoke to my own life and situation.

5 Strategic Ways to Maintain Faith When the Battle Is Long

David didn't defeat Goliath with man-made war strategies, he didn't defeat Goliath with an army ... he defeated Goliath on his own. This was a battle that had to be waged one-on-one.

My friend, there are times when God calls us to go one-on-one with our enemy. Our pastor can't defeat our enemy for us. Our friends can't defeat our enemy for us. Our husband can't defeat our enemy for us

It is time to get on our knees and go to war, one-on-one, in the power and might of the Holy Spirit and see the salvation of God for ourselves first-hand.

1. If the situation you are facing right now is not good, it is not from God.

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no change or shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

- Many Christians unfortunately mistake God's will for fatalism.

When things don't go a certain way, we immediately attribute the outcome to "God's will" without realizing that there is an enemy out there with a strategy to defeat you and destroy us!

One of his tools is to trick you into accepting whatever comes your way as God's will.

Let's not forget that Daniel prayed day and night for 21 days, he refused to throw up his hands say, "Well, it must be God's will."

He continued to battle until he had a clear answer, and the angel delivering the answer had encountered heavy demonic attack.

How would this story have been altered if Daniel had given in to fatalism, looking at earthly circumstances to determine what God's will should be?

James clearly says that God only gives good gifts. Jesus

affirms this when He told the multitudes that if they, as carnal men, give good gifts to their children how much more does our perfect, loving, heavenly Father give good things to His children who ask?

God cannot give us bad gifts. It is against His divine nature to give us bad gifts. If what you are facing right now in your life isn't ultimately for your good, it is time to go to war against the enemy, against that roaring lion seeking whom he may devour! Against that enemy who comes to steal, kill and destroy!

2. If you have ever had a testimony of a divine intervention, you have a strategy to defeat the enemy.

Jesus said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

If God has come through for you before, He isn't going to forsake you now! In 1 Samuel 30, Saul's troops are worn out and tired. They are sent home after a long battle, but when they arrive at Ziklag, their city was burned and their women and children are taken captive.

Out of grief, the men with David turn on him and started plotting to kill him—the very people who, in chapter 29, were singing his praises.

Verse 6 says, "But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God" (1 Sam. 30:6c, NASB).

Throughout the Psalms, we read accounts of how God delivered the Israelites from their enemies; recounted testimonies of God did for them.

Revelation 12:11 says, "And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death."

There is great power in our testimony!

When we are battle-weary and tempted to lie down in defeat is the very time when we need to rise up and begin declaring what the Lord has done for us.

When we run out of things God has done for us personally, we turn to the Bible and begin declaring the mighty acts of God.

With each declaration of God's power, we drive the enemy back. We will overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of our testimony.

3. Life and death are in the power of your tongue.

- "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit" (Prov. 18:21, MEV).

David said to Goliath, "and I will strike you and take your head from you." What was he going to cut Goliath's head off with when all he had was a slingshot and five stones?

He didn't know how he would win the victory over Goliath, but he chose not to speak fear as the rest of the army had. He was going to speak in faith (see Phil. 5:8).

This isn't a magic pill. This isn't mysticism repackaged as fringe-Christianity.

This is an exercise in faith building; very much like the way strength training builds our muscles so that the rest of our body is healthy and strong, and in preparation for the day when we'll need to rely on those muscles for action.

- Speaking faith-building words to our situation isn't a mystical way to change our situation; it is speaking life to our hearts and building our faith so that our heart believes what our head already knows about God!

Our bodies may be sick, but God is Jehovah Rapha—God our healer. Therefore, I am healed in Jesus' name.

Our bank account may be empty, but God is Jehovah Jireh, God our provider! Therefore, let the poor say, "I am rich!"

4. There is power in the name of Jesus.

"There is no salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). I don't know what your situation is:

- How hopeless it seems
- How dire it seems

Maybe someone you love has only weeks to live. Maybe your child has received a diagnosis for which there is no cure. Perhaps the bank is foreclosing on your home.

Maybe you are powerless against it. Perhaps you don't have the physical, earthly resources to fight against it and win, but you have the name of Jesus.

You have the name in whose power is life, salvation and victory!

We sing, "There is power in the name of Jesus..." but when face significant reversals, we cower in fear, we turn to doctors and banks; we turn to Google and books by philosophers and psychologists, its only when we've exhausted every earthly resource and we've come to the end of ourselves that we turn to Jesus.

Jesus should be our first and only option!

He is our only hope.

5. Faith is the opposite of fear

This is where I want to camp out for the next couple of weeks.

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Faith.

I'll be honest, I've faced things in the past few weeks that have left me shaking ... sleepless for nights, weeping. If you are a subscriber to my newsletter, you know the ongoing struggle our children have had with language delay, cognitive delay and perhaps some other issues that may require ongoing therapy.

It's never easy as a parent to watch your children struggle.

Especially when there is nothing you can do to fix it.

This has taken me on a journey of faith and trust in God that I never knew I'd have to take, but I'm thankful for the journey.

I'm thankful for the broken road, because it's shown me that what I thought I knew about faith had nothing to do with what faith really is.

It's easy to have faith when things are going right, but when you are sitting across from your child's speech therapist and she is explaining to you that your child has significant cognitive delays and starts naming off the doctors and therapists your child needs to see. Suddenly, your faith looks really small in proportion to the giant looming in front of you, taunting you, yelling insults at God's name and reminding you of how small you really are.

But here's the thing. Are you going to listen to your giant, or are you going to listen to your God?

1 John 4:18 reminds us that as children of God, we have the love of God. And if we have the love of God, it casts out all fear.

Love and fear cannot exist together. Just as in 1 John we read that light and darkness cannot exist together. Why?

God is love and Satan is the author of fear. God and Satan cannot coexist.

Who are you going to listen to? God, who is love, who is all-powerful, all-knowing, ever-present, who spoke into existence our universe and everything in it, who, in His book, wrote every detail about you and your life? Whose thoughts of you are to give you a future and a hope?

Or will you listen to fear, Satan, the lion who roams about seeking whom he may devour, whose strategy is to steal from you, kill you and destroy you?

If God is for you, who can be against you?

Though the battle be long and hard, in the strength and might of the Lord, we will be victorious!

Rosilind Jukic, a Pacific Northwest native, is a missionary living in Croatia and married to her Bosnian hero. Together, they live with their two active boys, and she enjoys fruity candles, good coffee and a hot cup of herbal tea on a blustery fall evening. Her passion for writing led her to author her best-selling book *The Missional Handbook*. At *A Little R & R* she encourages women to find contentment in what God created them to be. You can also find her at *Missional Call*, where she shares her passion for local and global missions. You can follow her on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Google +.

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