

# The Bridge Between Politics and Discipleship

My journey into the realm of [politics](#) began as a young mother shuttling my boys to and from their Christian school every day. Having returned from the mission field and forgoing my initial plan to join Youth with a Mission, I found myself unexpectedly engaged to my best friend, Tim. In those early days of our marriage, Tim ran a pest control company, and I joined him in managing the business, determined to support him and avoid the Dallas traffic while anticipating the possibility of starting a family.

Between 1996 and 2001, Tim and I successfully expanded our Bluebonnet Pest Control business to nine trucks and 15 employees. Balancing business growth with the joys of raising our energetic boys, we eventually decided to sell, feeling the strain of continually doubling our enterprise year after year. Following a period of recovery, during which we indulged in a five-week skiing adventure across Colorado, we found ourselves contemplating our next venture—the restaurant business.

**[Bunni Pounds will be LIVE on Charisma Magazine Online YouTube and social media channels TOMORROW, February 6th at 4 p.m.](#)**

Embarking on the ownership of two small, semi-fast-food establishments called Roly Poly, Tim and I navigated the challenges of a new industry. Managing one of the restaurants in the affluent Preston Center of Dallas, I juggled my responsibilities with parenting, shuttling the kids to and from school. It was during this time that I stumbled upon talk radio and discovered Laura Ingraham, whose intelligence and background intrigued me. Listening to her broadcasts on my daily commute, I became increasingly aware of the issues facing [America](#).

Inspired by biblical teachings on the impact of individual lives on a nation, I began to question the traditional confines of ministry within church walls. Ephesians 4:11-12 and Matthew 5:13-16 prompted a paradigm shift within me, making me realize that ministry extended beyond the church, calling believers to be salt and light in the world. Politics, I concluded, was not inherently evil but a necessary avenue for certain people to influence government decisions.

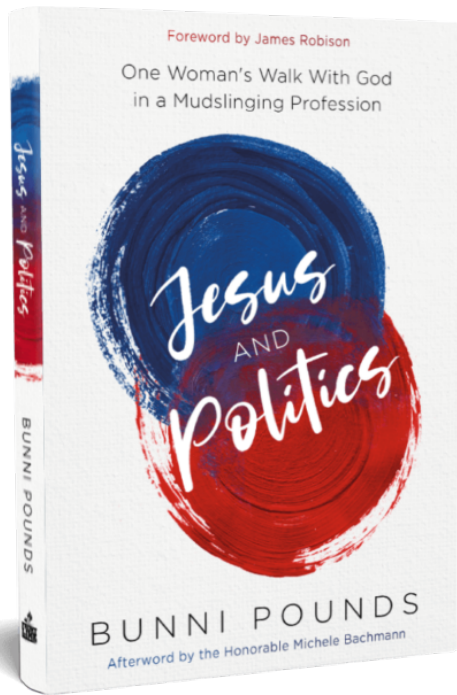
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As I delved deeper into political awareness, I recognized the importance of the church's voice in matters such as marriage, the sanctity of life and fiscal responsibility. I learned how Christians are called to be ambassadors for Christ, tasked with bringing reconciliation and righteousness to the world.

Acknowledging the godly struggle inherent in politics, I saw the need for the church to speak out against societal injustices. However, I believe political engagement should not overshadow our primary duty—sharing the transformative story of Jesus. We are called to make disciples.

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As I reflected on the early disciples, I noted their weaknesses and the empowering presence of Jesus through the Holy Spirit that enabled them to spread the message of His [resurrection](#). Today, as believers engage in politics, we must recognize our dependence on God's wisdom and strength. Our efforts in government must be driven by a desire for discipleship, understanding that changing the world starts with transforming individual lives.



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## The Call for the Faithful in Government

Seeing the heart of the nation's capital of Washington, D.C., I find myself grappling with the profound complexities of a consuming atmosphere where the gods of [power and prestige](#) take

center stage. Reflecting on the visions of our nation's founders during those early colonial years, it's clear they could never have foreseen the reality we face within the Capital Beltway today.

Members of Congress and their staff engage in a constant exchange, hurling these talking points laden with their charged words across 24-hour news sources, social media platforms and the venerable chambers of the House of Representatives and the Senate. The disconnection between representatives and their constituents is palpable, as they jet into the epicenter of activity on Mondays only to depart after the last votes on Thursday evenings.

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Within this labyrinth, federal bureaucrats wield influence across executive branch departments, often operating with minimal oversight from our busy legislators. The media exacerbates the situation, amplifying fear, worry and lies, while corporate interests and well-paid lobbyists navigate the intricate dance on Capitol Hill, hindering the progress of sound public policy decisions.

My heart bears the increasing burden for those serving in the federal government, striving to make a difference within systems that seem to have a life of their own. Over the years, I've seen many strong individuals work tirelessly to reform and improve the lives of ordinary Americans in this challenging and dysfunctional place, only to eventually leave.

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In the midst of the tumult, I come across fellow Christians who, much like myself, sense a calling to Washington, D.C. We navigate the complexities of politics and government, walking

hand in hand with God, immersing ourselves in His Word, and seeking the guidance of His Spirit. However, our presence is scarce. The need for more individuals answering this call is evident, and it's a responsibility we must wholeheartedly embrace.

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The essence of government, whether federal, state, or local, lies in its people. Institutions, systems, and bureaucracies are mere components of the larger tapestry. Proverbs 29:2 rings true, revealing the direct correlation between righteous leadership and the rejoicing of the people.

It is crucial to understand that the call to people of faith is not to establish a theocracy but to elect more individuals who walk with Jesus into positions of authority. The promise is a nation experiencing more liberty and peace as faith-influenced policies shape our trajectory.

I believe that real change begins with one person's obedience, one step at a time. By aligning our faith with our actions, we can witness hearts changing and the transformation of our nation, impacting thousands and millions of lives.

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# Adopt a Candidate: 10 Powerful Steps to Impact the Primaries

Iowa and New Hampshire have happened, and people are mouthing off all over the internet and social media about the primaries and [the presidential candidates](#). But how can an ordinary Christian in America really impact the primaries? This season goes beyond a presidential race. Though that is important, remember we are electing U.S. state representatives, county officials and more.

Do you want to be a doer in this primary, not just a talker?

[Do you want to affect a race and attempt to elect righteous leaders?](#) Do you want to hold your representatives accountable for their votes and actions?

Would you like to make an impact on a candidate or elected official's life, or serve their family to make their lives a little easier during a turbulent time?

When I ran for Congress, no one meant more to me during that season than my staff and volunteers.

If you really want to make an impact on the primaries—stop talking and adopt a candidate.

Here is a simple guide to help you do just that.

**Step 1: Look Up Your Elected Officials:** This means your U.S. Congressman, your state representative or state senator and your county officials. You can't choose a candidate to help if you don't know who your elected officials or candidates are. The first step is simple education. See what precinct you live in and locate the district lines for your state representative

or state senator. It is fascinating to look up the political landscape of where you live.

**Step 2: Pick a Candidate:** You can do this step a couple of different ways. You can pick an incumbent if you really like their record and what they are doing in office. Just look on your ballot or search online to see if they have an opponent in the primary. If they do, then help them against that challenger.

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Another way to pick a candidate is to see if there is an elected official that you are not happy with. Now is the time, during the primaries, to respectfully push back on them. Not yelling at them on social media (that has no effect and only hurts your witness) but supporting their opponent or recruiting an opponent to run against them.

Lastly, you can pick a candidate running for a smaller position in your county, or a race that you think people aren't paying attention to, and help their campaign, educating your family and friends along the way on the importance of local government.

**Step 3: Sign up with the campaign.** Once you have picked your candidate to adopt for the primaries, look up their campaign website, sign up for their email alerts, sign up to be a volunteer and then call or email their staff letting them know that you really want to help them as a volunteer. (Sometimes if it is a small campaign, they don't pay enough attention to the volunteer forms, so make your voice heard multiple ways. Remember, campaigns have limited funds and help, which is why they need you.)

**Step 4: Give them money.** Go to their campaign website and give them a contribution. Support them with as much as you can or

are legally allowed to give. My friend Terri Hasdorff, in her book "Running Into the Fire," points out that only 1% of the American public nationally gives to campaigns. This statistic is a tragedy, especially when we have brothers and sisters in Christ putting themselves out on the front lines of the political battlefield. Good people running for office need support, and if you give a little bit of your treasure, your heart will follow. Jesus said in Matthew 6:21 (NIV), "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." This is the truth for our civic engagement also, not just our charitable giving.

**Step 5: Knock on doors and talk to people.** Put on your walking shoes to talk to voters or use your pen to help write handwritten notes.

If you do step No. 3 correctly, the campaign should reach out and invite you to knock on some doors with them (it is not as scary as it sounds). On behalf of the campaign, you could write some handwritten notes or letters to those who have given money to the candidate, to people they want to invite to a fundraiser or to a neighborhood they want to reach with a special touch.

Go out on a Saturday and use some door-knocking sheets or a simple app, which the campaign will train you to use, and "hit" a few doors. This simple task that campaigns call "canvassing" or "block walking" is not hard. You just ask the person at the door a few simple questions to see if they might be interested in your candidate or leave a door hanger if they aren't home. It is not difficult, and an ordinary person can do it and do it well. You don't have to be a salesperson or know everything about the campaign you represent—you just must have a willing heart and smile a lot. The campaign staff will train you. Take a buddy and go have a fun time being a part of the process.

**Step 6: Identify voters through phone calls.** If you don't like

to walk or drive around, think about making some phone calls for the campaign to identify voters who will vote for your candidate. Make “Get Out the Vote” calls to help them push identified voters to the polls during early voting, chase down ballots (making sure they mailed them in) or push them to the polls on Election Day. It is easy and quick, and you might make some new friends on the phone.

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**Step 7: Gather people.** Open your home for a meet-and-greet or fundraiser for the candidate. Gathering people is a lot of work, but it is really rewarding, especially if it blesses someone else or furthers a cause you believe in. There are not enough people who are willing to open their homes and invite their friends to come and make a difference for the nation. Whether you raised \$50,000, \$10,000 or \$2,500, you could make a huge impact on a campaign. Also, you are using the opportunity to stir up others in your life to do something for the nation as well. Be an example to a larger audience.

**Step 8: Work the polls.** Volunteer to stand at the polls, poll watch for the candidate or be an election judge. Have you ever seen people standing at the polls holding signs and talking to voters? Those volunteers can make a huge difference because many people walk into their polling places and might not know who they are voting for in every race. Unfortunately, most people haven't researched their ballot. That's why at [Christians Engaged](#), we try to teach believers how to prepare for every election. Also, the campaign always needs volunteers in places of influence as election judges or poll watchers to make sure the process is followed in the way it is supposed to be. Watching over and guarding the elections is extremely important, and it's a critical job that any citizen can help with.

**Step 9: Pray.** Prayer has lasting impact. Pray for the candidate and their family. The power of prayer cannot be

minimized. Your daily intercession and covering of that candidate and their family in prayer can make a huge difference. When we pray, God speaks to us. I have seen Christians throughout my political career and ministry pray for a candidate, then get direction from the Lord for them. I have also seen believers humbly pray for them and their family in critical times and bring great comfort during races. Don't underestimate the power of your faith to impact candidates' lives.

**Step 10: Be present in their life.** Be there for the candidate on election night and afterwards. Most campaigns will have a party or a small gathering at a restaurant or a home for their key supporters and volunteers while the results are coming in. Find out what the campaign is doing and be there. Being there for that candidate on one of the biggest nights of their lives or being present at a high point for an incumbent means a lot to them. Bringing encouragement and comfort whether they win or lose (winning can be just as traumatic) shows them that people care about them personally amid success or failure.

Also please remember the candidate after the race. If a candidate loses, they often feel as though everyone has forgotten them. After coming off the high of talking to people nonstop during the race, their phone stops ringing, and the emails stop flooding their inbox. Reach out to them. Call them. Pray over them. Don't forget about them if they lose, and don't forget about them if they win. They still need you in their lives, even as their schedule gets busier in success and service.

### **Make a Lasting Difference in the Primaries**

The primaries can be an emotional time for people who care about their nation or communities, but putting our energies into a specific candidate or campaign can make an impactful difference for years to come, not just for that race, but for that specific person and family. It will also show you in

black and white, through your own experience, how one person or one family can make a difference in our nation.

The founders of our nation gave us a priceless gift: the ability to elect our representatives. Let's use our freedom and this gift to elect people to office who have servant hearts and share our biblical values. By simply taking steps to adopt one candidate, we can disciple the nation one heart at a time and one campaign at a time.

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✘ **Bunni Pounds** is president and founder of [Christians Engaged](#)—a ministry activating the body of Christ to pray, vote and engage regularly. Formerly a congressional candidate and 16-year political consultant, she is a motivational speaker, author and Bible teacher. Her book—[Jesus and Politics: One Woman's Walk with God in a Mudslinging Profession](#)—comes out nationally on Feb. 6. [Read all the endorsements and pre-order it now.](#)

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## Politics Taught Me How to Surrender to Jesus

Just before the 2018 Texas primary run-off I told a friend, "I don't think you have lived until you have had almost a million dollars in negative advertising thrown at you."

I was raw and vulnerable in that moment.

Almost five years later, I can still say that while I may never understand the pain that Coptic Christians in Egypt feel

as they are murdered for their faith, or the depths of rejection that former Muslims experience when coming to faith in Jesus; I do, however, understand suffering through years of working in a mudslinging political profession as a consultant and later becoming a congressional candidate myself. These are my decades of laboring for America that I will never regret and have shaped who I am today.

At the beginning of 2018, I spent my days driving around East Texas, going non-stop through seven counties, speaking and campaigning, all while using my cellphone to raise money everyday. I was on a mission with destiny, and I knew it.

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My former employer, U.S. Congressman Jeb Hensarling, had announced his retirement from representing the 5th district of Texas in Washington DC. I was now running for his seat. This shift in my life had come out of nowhere. I had never considered running for anything in my life—let alone for Congress. I was completely fulfilled working behind the scenes as a political consultant for 32 candidates and elected officials.

Then, in a flash, I had gone from desperately trying to find another candidate to run for my former boss's congressional spot, to now sacrificing my own life, career, consulting firm and even my own house, in order to run in an eight-candidate primary. This was crazy!

I was running for Congress myself!

There were days during that season when I felt incredibly brave. On other days I felt a little stupid, yet I knew I was on a mission. After having served as Congressman Jeb Hensarling's campaign manager for over a decade, I knew

everyone in that district, including all the volunteers and donors. I had deep relationships inside the D.C. Beltway and around Texas. I understood federal public policy. I had small business know-how after having run three companies (a pest control company and two restaurants), together with my husband Tim. But most importantly, I cared for the people of the district. I cared for them deeply.

This was my daily prayer during that turbulent season:

God, I just want to be where You are. In those intense months of my life, I continually told the Lord, "I am willing to go anywhere You

lead me, Jesus—even Washington DC,"—though the latter was said with a bit of reluctance. "God, I am willing to go to the darkest place on the planet." At that point, I had worked in politics for 10 years. To me, Washington D.C. was extreme darkness.

I knew in that season that there was no way I could operate in my own strength and do this work successfully. Studying policy papers, listening to people's detailed problems with the federal government and dealing with the media was intense. Forced by the circumstances of the race to raise more money than I had ever done before for any of my clients, and in the shortest amount

of time, I meant to walk with Jesus through it. I had no other option but to walk in His peace and joy, or I would not survive.

Let me just say—you have not lived until you have lived on the frontlines of a battle far from the place where your own abilities can make something happen. I was now living there in an adventure of complete dependence on God.

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# **Billy Graham: A Star, a Song and a Savior**

[Christmas is a special time](#). It is a family celebration. Other holidays are different. Good Friday and Easter are usually celebrated in church. National days are honored with speeches, parades and the ceremonies of government. But Christmas is glorified in the home because it is the celebration of a birthday.

[Yet there is irony in the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ](#). He was born away from home, on a journey that symbolized the restless and the wandering nature of the world into which He came. He was born in the insecurity of a barn, a symbol of the fact that during His public ministry, He would have very little home life. He roamed the roads and towns of ancient Palestine. He died, taking the ordeal of the cross so that out of His suffering and His victorious resurrection mankind could find redemption.

Christmas means different things to different people. To some, Christmas is merely a means to make more money. People vie with each other in their preparation for the celebration of the occasion. Some of them do not believe in Christ; they may even hate Him. But Christmas has become big business. People are more concerned to hear about their profit from Christmas than to hear about the prophet from Bethlehem. The clinking sound of money is sweeter to some than the announcement of Jesus' birth by the angels to the shepherds.

Many people cannot hear Christmas carols today because their ears are attuned to different sounds. Their minds are riveted to Wall Street, and their eyes are focused on reports about the stock market going up or down.

Pleasure-seeking consumes the time and the thoughts of many people. Some try to find a merry Christmas in what they call entertainment and fun. Instead of imbibing the spirit of Christmas, they choose to imbibe spirits at Christmas. For many people the holiday is an opportunity to celebrate in the wrong way.

The apostle Paul once said, "I discipline my body and bring it into subjection" (1 Corinthians 9:27, NKJV). He meant that he conquered his appetites and kept his passions and desires under control. We, too, need to conquer our hatreds, our fears, our doubts, our anxieties. We need to conquer selfishness—even the desire for special Christmas gifts for ourselves.

We cannot have a merry Christmas or a happy New Year when we have become slaves to the passions and vices that hound us. These things—materialism, money, artificial pleasure—are crowding Christ out of Christmas for multitudes. They are so busy with a thousand and one other things that they have no time to consider the message of the Baby of Bethlehem.

On that first Christmas, 2,000 years ago, the world experienced three phenomena:

First, the star. Many stars shone in the sky, but none like this one. This one shone with aura and brilliance! It was as though God had taken a lamp from the ceiling of heaven and hung it in the dark sky over a troubled world.

Second, a new song in the air. A world that had lost its song learned to sing again. With the coming of God in the flesh, hope sprang up in the hearts of people. Led by angelic beings, we can now take up the refrain, "Glory to God in the highest,

and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (Luke 2:14).

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And third, good news—the Good News that at last a Savior had come to save men and women from sin: “You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). Jesus was the central theme of that first Christmas. The star, the song, the gifts, the kneeling, the joy, the hope, the excitement—all were because of Him.

God’s star promised peace to the world if we will believe and trust Him. But having rejected Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, we have no peace in the world. Too often our synthetic stars bring only fear, anxiety and even more war.

In our world today are self-proclaimed saviors, people who claim to be God’s gift to the world. How different they are from Jesus, who “was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9).

The Scriptures say, “There is born to you this day ... a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11). Heaven and Earth joined together! God and mankind reconciled. Hope for the hopeless, pardon for the guilty, forgiveness for the conscience-stricken, peace for those who knew no peace, Good News for those who have had nothing but bad news!

Yes, Jesus Christ can save us from despair. I have talked with many leaders, and one thing that most of them have in common is pessimism. The tensions, conflicts and seemingly insoluble problems of this world tend to make them cynical and doubtful.

Many cynics will blame God for the troubles of the world. We should blame ourselves. We have a spiritual disease, and that disease is called sin. Until sin is conquered, the world will

not be a better place in which to live.

When people willfully reject the Prince of Peace, they pay a terrible price. A secular and materialistic society that has rejected the Prince of Peace yields to pessimism and despair. The blighting cynicism that has come as a result of our rejection of God is reflected in our literature, our art, our films, our television programs and even our pulpits.

Christmas should be a time of renewed hope—not hope in a particular political concept, but Christmas hope; Christian hope; hope in Jesus Christ; hope that, despite our tangled bungling, God will bring order out of chaos.

But Christmas is even more personal. The angel who said, “He will save His people from their sins,” was touching the very heart of your need.

People today would rather not talk about sin. They don’t want to face the reality of their spiritual disease. I heard of a man who found conversation about cancer distasteful. When the subject came up, he would walk away. He would not consent to periodic examination.

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He would permit no X-rays. But one day, having experienced a loss of weight and appetite, he was persuaded to have a physical examination. The doctors found a cancer of massive proportions.

So it is with sin. Our reluctance to discuss it, our tendency to ignore it, our resentment of anyone’s talking about it, may be a revelation of our secret fear that we may be sin-filled.

Jesus Christ has a great deal to say about sin. He came on that first Christmas night to “save His people from their sins.” No doctor in the world can treat sin. No psychiatrist in the world can cure sin. They can work on symptoms, they can

help the sinner to live with his sin, but they cannot get rid of the disease. Only Jesus Christ can heal the disease of sin.

This is what the cross and the resurrection are all about. And Christmas is not Christmas without the message of the death and resurrection of Christ. This is why He was born. This was the message of the first Christmas night: "You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." The Christmas message says that God's grace is greater than our sin. It says that the sin question was answered at the cross. Christmas says that the cross went as deep as our needs. The cross was the cure—offered, paid for and administered by a loving God in His beloved Son.

I never come to Christmas without thinking of the thousands of people who are lonely, diseased and troubled at this time of year. Christmas is a reminder from God Himself that we are not alone. The prophet Isaiah said that His name would be called *Immanuel*, which means God with us (See Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23). God revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus a reconciling love that rescues us from separation and loneliness.

At this Christmas season you can be assured that Jesus Christ is here. He is here to give us hope, to forgive our sins, to give us a new song, to impart faith and to heal our spiritual wounds, if only we will let Him.

The Christmas message has not changed after 2,000 years. Christmas still reminds us that God is with us.

In spite of all the pessimism and cynicism, in spite of all the headlines about murders, assassinations, riots, demonstrations and war, Jesus Christ is alive. He is alive to conquer despair, to impart hope, to forgive sins and to take away our loneliness. He is alive to reconcile us to God.

This Christmas, accept Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. Give Him the gift that He wants—your heart, your soul, your

life.

*For the original article, please visit our content partners at the [Billy Graham Evangelistic Association](#). ©1969, 1993 (revised 1999), BGEA*

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# Why Thanksgiving Is a National Treasure

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/g4Bmrt6RFss>

Thanksgiving is more than a family holiday or a mindset; it's a national treasure.

Public acknowledgments of the providence of God have been part of the history and traditions of this nation—from the Pilgrims to the founding era, from the Civil War to today—and it's important to share the true meaning of Thanksgiving. It's an important part of our Judeo-Christian heritage. To this day, during Thanksgiving week, Congress honors National Bible Week and the Bible's impact on America to ensure these timeless traditions remain the lifeblood of America.

The tradition of sharing a meal and [giving thanks for family and freedom](#) dates back to 1620 when the 52 survivors of the Mayflower landed in Massachusetts and enjoyed a three-day meal with Native Americans.

Interestingly, a plantation nestled in the beautiful countryside of Virginia, famously called the Berkeley Plantation, is one of America's best-kept secrets. The former home of a signer of the Declaration of Independence, Benjamin

Harrison, and the birthplace of the ninth president of the United States, William Henry Harrison, it is also the location of the actual first Thanksgiving on Dec. 4, 1619. When a ship sailing from England, the Margaret, landed, the first act of business by those aboard was to pray. Written orders given by the Berkeley Company to Captain Woodlief declared that their arrival must “be yearly and perpetually kept holy as a day of Thanksgiving to Almighty God.” And that’s exactly what they did—for two years. Lawmakers have worked to ensure this history is recorded, and now this tradition of prayer during the Virginia Thanksgiving Festival has been revived and is an annual commemorative event.

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America’s founders intentionally encouraged public thanksgiving to God for His enumerated blessings. On Sept. 25, 1789, the Bill of Rights was ratified by the Senate. The First Amendment was approved by Congress and sent to the states for final approval. However, after the framers completed the Bill of Rights, Elias Boudinot, a member of the House of Representatives, said he could not think of letting the session pass without offering an opportunity to all U.S. citizens to return thanks to God for His many blessings. That same day, the U.S. House passed the following [resolution](#):

“Resolved, that a joint committee of both Houses be directed to wait upon the President of the United States, to request that he would recommend to the people of the United States, a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed, by acknowledging, with grateful hearts, the many signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a Constitution of Government for their safety and happiness.”

On Oct. 3, 1789, President George Washington declared Nov. 26,

1789, a National Day of Thanksgiving to thank God for the Constitution and our new American government:

“Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor—and whereas both Houses of Congress have by their joint Committee requested me to recommend to the People of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness.”

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That same year, the Protestant Episcopal Church, of which President Washington was a member, announced that the first Thursday in November would become the regular day for giving thanks, “unless another day be appointed by the civil authorities.” In fact, by 1815, the various state governments had issued at least 1,400 official prayer proclamations, almost half for times of thanksgiving and prayer and the other half for times of fasting and prayer.

Mrs. Sarah Josepha Hale, editor of “Godey’s Lady’s Book,” deserves much of the credit for the adoption of Thanksgiving as an annual national holiday. For two decades, Hale contacted presidents trying to promote the idea. Finally, in 1863, during the darkest days of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln responded. Lincoln issued a formal proclamation, passed by an act of Congress, that set aside the last Thursday of that November as the first annual National Day of Thanksgiving and Praise.

The Thanksgiving proclamation called Americans to prayer with optimism and genuine thankfulness, noting that: “No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these

great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, Who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy.”

As we gather with loved ones this holiday season, we must remember freedom is not free. Give thanks to God for the men and women who pioneered this great nation into a beacon of freedom, as well as for those on the front lines who lay their lives on the line every day to preserve it.

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## **Thanksgiving Is Not a Holiday Tradition, but a Heart That Sees God in Everything**

Thanksgiving is not a spiritual exercise. It's not just a commandment to be obeyed or a duty and obligation. It is not a worldly holiday tradition or religious activity, but it is the outflow of a heart that is filled with God's goodness and has learned to see God in every circumstance of life.

Although contrary to human nature, thanksgiving is to be the song of believers. And the true test of whether it is more of a duty or obligation than a lifestyle is evidenced in the hard times.

“In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Thess. 5:18).

We are not to give thanks for bad things happening to us, but we are to be thankful regardless of the circumstances. A heart full of gratitude frees us from strife and stress and allows the Lord to intervene and engage in our affairs. Supernatural forces are activated and unleashed on our behalf when we remain grateful in all circumstances, especially in hardship and in adversity.

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Most people’s lifestyles rule them to such an extent that they have no focus toward God. They live so much in the flesh and in the natural realm that they become a very soulless and mechanical person who may even quote the Word, but they never learn to abide in the Lord. A grateful heart helps you to abide in the Lord and to sanctify Him in your heart (1 Pet. 3:15).

### **The Key to a Life of Thanksgiving**

What does that mean? It means that you’ve got to cultivate an ability to see God in everything. Most Christians only see God in the good things, but not the bad. This greatly affects the condition of their hearts and their thanksgiving. It’s a compartment mentality.

In other words, many believers recognize that God wants them to have a full, abundant and prosperous life (John 10:10). When good things are not happening in their lives, God is there, but in difficult moments, they can’t see Him. It has to be the devil. The problem with that mentality is that it stops you from being able to see God in every circumstance. Most believers’ ability to see God has to do with their environment and their circumstances, so their faith is very limited. We as

believers have to grow past that.

Like every believer does, I've always rejoiced in the Lord when everything was calm and good. And I might rejoice in the Lord when things were not so good, but I used to do it from a heady knowledge because I knew I should. It was more mechanical than a natural outflow from the heart, because it did not include the ability to see God at that moment. I saw the kingdom of darkness, and I saw the kingdom of light. It was almost as if God appears one day and then all hell breaks loose, and in my mind, He's not there anymore. It's the devil and me having a fist fight. The devil got in, and I had to get him out. And in my thinking I had to break through that hell to find God again.

Then I started thinking differently in that God is always present, and He doesn't change. Yes, life and circumstances change, but God is still omnipresent. God is still immutable. When your faith becomes developed to such an extent that you're able to recognize that God is here—He's always here—you'll start looking for Him even in difficult moments.

When I say "looking for Him in difficult moments," I'm not talking about looking for Him to get you out of difficult moments. Of course, you don't expect difficult moments, but the Lord makes it very clear that we're going to have trials, and we're going to have hardships.

I don't expect difficult moments, but I'm not going to set myself up for false expectations to believe that the day is going to be absent of potential trials. I already have an understanding that I'm going to experience those things perhaps today, tomorrow, or a week or a year from now. Those things are going to come my way, but the great news is that God is with me. Again, it's developing a moment by moment consciousness and awareness of God, and learning to abide in Him even in rough times.

Most believers are always looking for God to resolve their problems. And of course we want God to resolve our problems, but we've got to learn to love God even in the midst of them. I want to learn to enjoy God in the midst of my problems and difficult circumstances.

When I enjoy God in my circumstances, the circumstances become different. They have a whole different flavor. They no longer represent defeat. They no longer represent fear. This fresh perspective can help many believers learn to abide in the Lord and to stay full of thanksgiving.

Most Christians rightly believe that God is good and the devil is bad, so they fight the bad and believe for the good. But we rarely ever have any rest in the bad, do we? And the reason we don't have rest in the bad is because we don't have the kind of faith we need in the bad.

The faith we need to enjoy life is to see Him. The real faith is when we see God in everything. It's not so much what He does for us, which is wonderful and worthy of praise. Thank God, He is forever taking care of us, but it goes beyond that. When I can see Him, and when my faith is developed to see Him in all circumstances, it brings me to a great place of rest and thanksgiving.

"Let the peace of God, to which also you are called in one body, rule in your hearts. And be thankful" (Col. 3:15).

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# Priority Thanksgiving Prayers Most Christians Have Never Prayed

What is the greatest gift you've ever received? Is there one blessing above all others that has ignited your heart with undying gratitude? Is there any work of God's grace toward you that fills your daily prayers with appreciation and praise?

Christians know from Scripture, there's only one answer to all three questions: our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul tells us so in 2 Corinthians 9:15. Here it is in four translations (with emphasis added):

Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift! (RSV)

Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! (NIV)

Thank God for this gift too wonderful for words! (NLT)

Thank God for this gift, his gift. No language can praise it enough! (MSG)

In the context, Paul is speaking of Jesus and all the blessings that come to us through him. For example, the apostle reflects in the previous chapter:

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

Jesus is the greatest gift any of us will ever receive. All other gifts—in fact, all the promises of God—are showered on us through him.

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Yet we're told in verse 15, he's the one gift that is inexpressible, indescribable, beyond human description—unspeakable.

So, how can any Thanksgiving Day prayer be shaped by something—by someone—so lofty, so profound, so amazing that current vocabulary fails to do him justice?

Moreover, Paul increases the difficulty of our challenge in Ephesians 3:8 when he adds that in God's Son are found "riches" that are "inexhaustible" (MSG), "boundless" (NIV) and "endless" (NLT).

So, even if I'm able to come up with words to express gratitude for how we have "received grace upon grace out of Christ's fullness" (John 1), there will never be an end to my discoveries of all the treasures found in my Savior!

No wonder the Bible declares that our Father "has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3b, MEV). "Heavenly" means we have topics for prayers of thanksgiving defined by eternal, cosmic, angelic realities beyond this world—and defined by who Jesus is, where he sits, and what his current saving reign means for me.

Still, as impossible as it may seem, Christians are called to take hold of words and declare with their tongues heartfelt thanks to God the best we know how. We are to "rejoice always" and "in everything give thanks" (1 Thess. 5:16, 18, NKJV)—most of all, as we give thanks for Jesus, the one gift that subsumes all others—including in 2018.

Let Me Help You Create a New Way to Pray at Your Thanksgiving Table This Year

What I want to do for the remainder of this blog post is give you seven facets of this one grand gift, suggesting a few key

questions for you to answer about each.

Then, your answers can be used to compose seven one-paragraph prayers—basically by turning each separate answer for each main topic into an expression of thanksgiving to the Father for the Son, based on what your answers inspire for you.

Finally, I suggest that you type up your seven single thanksgiving paragraphs on seven separate sheets of paper. At your Thanksgiving Day celebration distribute each written prayer to seven guests. Before the meal begins, ask each person to read the prayer out loud, asking everyone else to pray along silently.

Encourage everyone to see each prayer as a new kind of Thanksgiving prayer that most of them have never prayed before. Also, remind them that all seven prayers are really one prayer—all about the one Person who is the greatest blessing any of us could possibly celebrate in the past year.

NOTE: The seven topics for these seven prayers are based on the seven groundbreaking keys explored in over 600 pages in my latest book, *Christ Is Now!*—in case you would like to explore any of this in more depth for yourself.

### **Thanks for the gift of who Christ is to us**

Prompts to help you shape your prayer:

What is one insight Jesus helped you to see more clearly about the nature and ways of God this past year?

What is one new truth about Jesus' majesty and supremacy you discovered in your study of the Bible this past year?

What is one name or title for Jesus (out of over 300 in Scripture) that brought special joy and meaning at some point in your life this past year?

In 2018, what was one time your identity as one who belongs to

God's Son blessed you?

Compose Thanksgiving Prayer No. 1. Drawing on your four answers, create a one-paragraph prayer thanking the Father for the gift of who Christ is to us.

### **Thanks for the gift of who Christ is for us**

Prompts to help you shape your prayer:

What blesses you about knowing Jesus can fully understand you in whatever you're going through because for our sakes, He became one of us?

At what one specific moment in 2018 did Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for your sins take on a deeper meaning for you, filling you with gratitude for all He suffered for you?

What does it mean to you that Jesus conquered death forever? This past year how has this truth brought you comfort or filled you with renewed hope?

Are you thankful for a moment this past year when the truth about Jesus victorious reign today increased your confidence to face a challenge?

Compose Thanksgiving Prayer #2. Drawing on your four answers, create a one-paragraph prayer thanking the Father for the gift of who Christ is for us.

### **Thanks for the gift of who Christ is over us**

Prompts to help you shape your prayer:

Was there one time this past year when the truth that Jesus reigns over the workings of creation filled you with praise?

Was there a time this past year when the truth that Jesus overrules in the unfolding of world history gave you new reasons to celebrate?

Was there a time this past year when the truth that Jesus is in full control of the design of global leaders brought you a measure of reassurance and hope?

Was there a time this past year when the truth that Jesus is advancing his kingdom among earth's people fill you with renewed excitement about what lies ahead for the gospel?

Was there a time this past year when you witnessed Jesus reigning over the forces of darkness in a way that removed fear from you and ignited bold faith in you?

Compose Thanksgiving Prayer No. 3. Drawing on your five answers, create a one-paragraph prayer thanking the Father for the gift of who Christ is over us.

### **Thanks for the gift of who Christ is before us**

Prompts to help you shape your prayer:

Christ has gone before us into the future to bring it back to us right now. What is one way you've seen him do that for you this past year?

Jesus has gone before us into the heavens to take us there with him right now. What is one way this reality has encouraged you this past year?

Christ has gone before us into the promises of God to make them ours too, right now. Is there one promise of Scripture you've had fulfilled in your life this past year through Christ?

Jesus has gone before us into the world to open up a way for us to serve him right now. What is one way this past year our Savior opened a new way to share him with someone else?

Compose Thanksgiving Prayer No. 4. Drawing on your four answers, create a one-paragraph prayer thanking the Father for the gift of who Christ is BEFORE us.

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# The Phineas Factor

*The Stunning Bible Connection Between The Overturning of Abortion, COVID, and Revival in America*

Could an act performed in a middle eastern desert three thousand years ago provide the key to a modern phenomenon that changed our lives?

Could a Scripture that appeared to Jonathan Cahn while waiting for a plane at an airport provide the missing key to the fate of a plague?

Could the righteous action of an ancient biblical priest be mirrored in modern times by a Supreme Court Justice, and bring about profound change in American policy?

The amazing answers to these questions and more are addressed in Jonathan Cahn's new blockbuster bestseller [The Josiah Manifesto](#) published by Frontline Charisma Media.

"This book opens up the stunning mysteries that lie behind the events that are unfolding right now," Cahn says. "And it gives the key to unlocking the answer, how to stand and prevail in this hour, and in light of what is yet to come. It's a guide for the end times."

## **A MYSTERY VERSE APPEARS**

The mystery began when Cahn heard the news of the overturning of *Roe v Wade* in an airport in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

“As I passed through security to the gate, I pondered the news,” he recalls. “Though it had been expected for over a month, it was still stunning. As I waited for my flight, I took out my cell phone and pressed the power button and Psalm 106:35 appeared on the screen.”

*But they got involved with the nations and learned their practices, and served their idols, which became a snare to them. They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons, and shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and their daughters whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan. And the land was defiled with the blood.*

“It took me a moment to realize how the verse had gotten onto my phone. It was because of a web search I had done while writing [The Return of the Gods](#),” Cahn says. “Still, why it appeared at that moment remained a mystery.”

The verse was an indictment of a nation that had abandoned God and was sacrificing their sons and daughters on the altars of the gods. It spoke of ancient Israel, but the words now stood as an indictment against America. “The fact that it had appeared just then on my cell phone right after hearing the news was all the more striking.”

## **PHINEHAS AND THE PLAGUE**

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*They joined themselves also to Baal of Peor, and ate sacrifices made to the dead. Thus they provoked Him to anger with their deeds, and the plague broke out among them. Then Phinehas stood up and intervened, and the plague was stopped. (Psalm 106:28-30)*

“Baal of Peor was connected to child sacrifice. They turned away from God to worship a god of child sacrifice, and a plague broke out among them. I thought of COVID, the plague that had come upon America.”

Cahn points out that Phinehas was a priest at the time of the Exodus, a man zealous for the ways of God. “As the result of his nation’s apostasy, a plague broke out among the Israelites,” says Cahn. “Phinehas intervened to stop the apostasy and because of his act of righteousness, the plague was lifted.”

## **IN AMERICA**

On Friday morning, June 24, 2022, the Supreme Court handed down its decision in the case of *Dobbs v. Jackson*—the ruling that not only upheld the Mississippi law banning abortion

after fifteen weeks, but overturned *Roe v. Wade*, the ruling that had made abortion on demand the law of the land.

“In that ruling, the majority of Supreme Court justices were likewise seeking to turn back the nation’s sin,” says Cahn. “Their act – like that of Phinehas – was a righteous one and would likewise lead to the saving of life.

“As the words of a nation’s apostasy—of child sacrifice, the coming of a plague, an act of righteousness, and the lifting of the plague—appeared on my cell phone that morning, I wondered if the court’s decision could be linked to a subsiding of the plague that had overtaken America. It would seem to follow that if abortion was rolled back, so too might be the plague.”

## **ALITO’S PAPER**

In January of 2022, COVID was beginning its third year, as potent and as deadly as ever. By the end of the month, the weekly death toll had almost doubled what it had been at the start, and there was no end in sight.

“The Supreme Court heard the case of *Dobbs v. Jackson* on December 1, 2021,” Cahn recalls. “The man entrusted with the task of writing the majority opinion and ruling by which *Roe v. Wade* would be struck down was Justice Samuel Alito. It is standard procedure that once a paper is finished, it is circulated in confidence among the Supreme Court justices.”

Alito had been working on the paper throughout the month of January 2022—the same month in which the plague’s impact was raging across America. “The paper was completed in the early days of February and circulated on February 10. It was the first appearance of the opinion and ruling that would bring *Roe v. Wade* to an end.”

## **THE QUESTION**

So Cahn asks the question: If the Supreme Court ruling in the form of Judge Alito's paper represented the turning back of a nation's sin, could it also—as did Phinehas' intervention — lead to the plague's subsiding? Was there any sign of a change, a turning? Was there any subsiding of the plague?

There was. And the change would be sudden and dramatic. "In January of 2022, the plague's infection rate was higher than it had ever been since first entering the nation," recalls Cahn. "And then something happened."

A dramatic and sudden change took place. "The numbers of those struck by the plague suddenly began to plunge," says Cahn. "Every week saw another dramatic decrease in COVID cases. The descent was so dramatic that by the first half of February, the time when Alito's paper was finished and then circulated in the Supreme Court, the plague's infection rate had plunged to almost one-eighth of what it had been in January."

The plague had subsided.

"And it was more than that," says Cahn. "Not only had the rate of infections dramatically plunged, but it would continue to plunge through the spring, into the summer when the Supreme Court decision was announced, into the autumn and winter, and into the following year. It represented the plague's most pronounced, substantial, and sustained subsiding since entering the country in January 2020. It was unprecedented."

## **GOD HAS HEARD**

Judge Alito had been the American Phinehas. "Alito sought to roll back the sin and, by so doing, rolled back the plague," says Cahn. "The decision he drafted represented the answer to the prayers of fifty years. The answer would bear his name—his name was foremost in the ruling. His name, Samuel, is Hebrew and comes from the Bible. Samuel means God has heard."

*Jonathan Cahn is known as a prophetic voice to our times. He*

leads Hope of the World ministry and Beth Israel/the Jerusalem Center, his ministry base and worship center in Wayne, New Jersey. He is a much-sought-after speaker and appears throughout America and the world. For more information go to [HopeoftheWorld.com](http://HopeoftheWorld.com)

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## The Mystery of Sivan 23

***Jonathan Cahn's Latest Book Opens Up Crucial Answers for the End Times***

In today's world, so many believers are asking, "What's going on? What do we do?"

What if there was a 3,000-year-old mystery behind the events that we have all witnessed—the Covid-19 pandemic, the storming of the US Capitol, the changing of the Supreme Court—that gives answers?

What if God is giving us a message in the events of our times?

These are the stunning questions asked and answered in Jonathan Cahn's latest blockbuster bestseller [\*The Josiah Manifesto: The Ancient Mystery and Guide for the End Times\*](#), released in September by Frontline Charisma Media.

"What if there was a mystery so precise from the Bible that ordains the exact times these events happened, and where it's going?" asks Cahn. "In *The Josiah Manifesto*, all these things converge together to open up a key about what we need to know for what's coming in the days ahead."

Although Cahn has written seven other bestsellers including *The Harbinger*, *The Paradigm* and *The Return of the Gods*, he says this book is like no other he has written before. "In

this book, almost all the other mysteries that began in my other books are coming together for an answer,” he says. “I felt very strongly that I had to write this book now, for God’s people. It’s a guide for the end times.”

## TWO MYSTERIES



One of the mysteries that Cahn opens up draws a parallel between

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Mordecai's plan was an ordinance of nullification that was given on the 23rd day of the Hebrew month of Sivan.

"There are actually two mysteries here," says Cahn. "One is when Haman makes his decree that brought death and destruction to the Jews. That decree is linked to the Hebrew date Adar 13, which is the 13th day of the 12th month on the Bible's calendar. In modern times, *Roe versus Wade* (the court decision that ushered in abortion on demand in America) received its hearing in the Supreme Court on December 13<sup>th</sup>—the 13th day of

the 12th month. It was a decree of death and destruction, on exactly the same day as Haman's decree."

The second mystery, says Cahn, has to do with the Supreme Court case of *Dobbs verses Jackson*, the ruling that upheld the Mississippi law banning abortion after fifteen weeks, and overturned *Roe verses Wade*.

"The second decree—Mordecai's decree (Esther 8:8-12)—was issued to nullify the first decree of death and destruction. The Bible gives a date when that decree of nullification went forth—it was the Hebrew date of Sivan 23. *Dobbs versus Jackson* went forth to the Supreme Court in the summer of 2020, one Jubilee, 50 years after *Roe versus Wade* went forth to the Supreme Court in the summer of 1970.

"But on the Hebrew calendar, the day that *Dobbs versus Jackson* went forth to the Supreme Court was Sivan 23, the day of Mordecai's decree to nullify the decree of death and destruction. In fact, on Sivan 23, Jewish people all over the world are in prayer praying for God to nullify all evil decrees. So as they were praying, the very decree went forth to nullify *Roe versus Wade*. So as Jewish people were praying around the world for God to "nullify the evil decree," the case went forth to the Supreme Court that would nullify *Roe versus Wade*.

## **THE JOSIAH CONNECTION**

"The most colossal and brazen altar of American civilization," says Cahn, "was *Roe versus Wade*. On that altar, we sacrificed over 60 million children. On June 24, 2022, that altar was broken. It was the sign of the broken altar—one of the most powerful signs given in the Bible. It tells us that America is at the "*Josiah Moment*." And more than anyone else, it points to the man in the Bible known as Josiah. According to Cahn, the broken altar points to one man in the Bible more than any other, and that man is King Josiah.

“The last part of this book is literally the manifesto of Josiah, showing us what we need to do. In the days of Josiah, they were engaging in sexual immorality, confusing gender, and offering up their children as sacrifices to foreign gods. We’re living under the exact same time.”

And the time is late, Cahn says. “Josiah was born into an evil time. His father was evil, his grandfather was evil, most of the culture was evil. But Josiah stood for God and changed the course of Israel for an entire generation. Judgment was coming, but God said, ‘I’m going to hold the entire judgment off of the nation because of this one man.’”

### **WHAT LIES AHEAD AND GOD’S CALL**

Cahn believes the same can happen in America. “I believe God is saying we have to be like Josiah now. He lived in a late time, near judgment. We are in a late time in America. But there was revival then, and there can be now.”

*The Josiah Manifesto* ends on a note of hope. “God is never finished,” says Cahn. “There is a purpose for us, and we are still to be lights to this world, to this nation. Our job is still ahead of us. That is what [The Josiah Manifesto](#) is saying. It tells us how to stand when everything looks dark, how to overcome, how to prevail and how to be a light to change our world.”

*Jonathan Cahn is known as a prophetic voice to our times. He leads Hope of the World ministry and Beth Israel/the Jerusalem Center, his ministry base and worship center in Wayne, New Jersey. He is a much-sought-after speaker and appears throughout America and the world. For more information go to [HopeoftheWorld.com](http://HopeoftheWorld.com)*