

# Your Divine Secret to Facing COVID-19 Losses

COVID-19 is a season of loss: lost income, lost jobs and, of course, lost family members and friends. So how do we cope both now and in the times to come?

Dr. Sharon Mancha has some wise counsel to share from her personal experience as well as from the Word of God. Just four months ago, she lost her husband of 38 years to a sudden heart attack. But God has shown Himself strong in her life, she says on *The Power of Intimacy With Christ* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network.

“He’s so intimate with the believer that when you are in difficult times and in a low moment, He will be there to comfort you. But that only happens when you have an intimate relationship with Him,” she explains.

“The Scripture says that He’s a strong tower, and that the righteous run into Him and they are safe. And I want to say that I have run into God, and I am still in there. I am still nestled ... hidden inside the strong tower of God,” Mancha says. “I am finding my safety to carry me through this difficult season ... and to find the comfort and the wisdom and the grace of God to take me through this season in my life.

“And as these new seasons happen in the trials that come into our lives and the difficulty and transitions of things like this, we find ourselves really trying to discover the next chapter in our lives,” Mancha says. “You know, where are we going to go from here? What is my future going to look like?”

To learn more about how true intimacy with Christ can prepare you to face life’s challenges no matter how they come, listen to this podcast.

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# How You Can Recognize Today's False Prophets

In Matthew 7:15, Jesus tells us to beware of false prophets. But how can we know who they are? How can we recognize a false prophet?

Pastor Jim Kibler, host of the *Receiving From God* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network, has some answers for these questions. "If you don't recognize these wolves, they will destroy you. And pastors, they will destroy your church," he says.

During the last year, Kibler says, he had a false prophet at his own church who wanted a ministry there. "'God sent me,' she said," explains Kibler. "You know, in Bible college, they told us that when somebody says, 'God sent me to help you,' that is the red flag. ... And so that's exactly what she said, because they all operate the same way. So many pastors ... who are gullible will fall for that."

But there's another critical way to recognize a false prophet, Kibler explains. "The people who are actually accusing everybody of being false prophets are actually false prophets themselves. And nobody ever says anything. Well, I'm saying something," he says.

"Here's how to recognize these false prophets. False prophets are people who deny the power of the Holy Spirit right away. If they deny the power of the Holy Spirit, you know they're a false prophet. And they do," Kibler says. "They believe the power of the Holy Spirit left here when the apostles left this earth, that the power of the Holy Spirit was only for the book of Acts just to initially build up the church, and then we

don't need it anymore because we have a Bible. That's what they say: 'We don't need miracles anymore; we have a Bible.'

"Well, in the Bible, it doesn't say we don't need miracles anymore. [False prophets] deny the power of the Holy Spirit," he says. "They deny the gifts of the Holy Spirit."

To learn more about false prophets and how you can identify their evil work, [click here to listen](#).

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## **What Believers Misunderstand About Matthew 11**

Popular women's author and speaker Shaunti Feldhahn is blowing the myth of rest wide open, starting with the touchstone verse of Matthew 11:29: "Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me. For I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

Popular women's author and speaker Shaunti Feldhahn is blowing the myth of rest wide open, starting with the touchstone verse of Matthew 11:29: "Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me. For I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

"I realize there's something really crucial here," Feldhahn says. "It won't always be rest for your body. But even when you're busy, you cannot be stressed by it. You can feel rested; you don't have to be frazzled and worried and have that feeling of craziness, because look at the imagery that He gives us."

Despite what Christians may think, this verse is not about stopping work and going to the barn for a nap.”

What He says is, ‘No, while you’re plowing the field in the heat of the day, you can find rest for your soul,’” Feldhahn says. “And to me, that was profound to realize I can be busy and find rest.”

Feldhahn says one practical way to avoid stress and live a peaceful life is to build only on rock, which means basing decisions on the Word of God rather than emotions.

“It’s so easy to make decisions based on our feelings, for example, and our feelings are going to change,” she says. “Our feelings can betray us. Scripture [warns repeatedly] that you can’t follow your feelings. Instead, make those decisions based on what you know is true and unchanging, no matter how you feel that day.”

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## **Prosper and Be in Health**

Though Benny Hinn’s demeanor was calm, his incendiary words sparked a firestorm in Pentecostal circles. It was the day Billy Graham died, and followers tuned in to hear Hinn ostensibly eulogize Graham over Facebook Live. But many were surprised to hear Hinn casually remark that some prosperity gospel teaching, including his own, had “gone beyond” the

Bible.

“We get attacked for teaching prosperity. Well, it’s in the Bible, but I think some have gone to the extreme with it, sadly,” Hinn said. “And it’s not God’s Word [that] is taught. I think I’m as guilty as others.”

He then clarified, “The more you know the Bible, the more you become biblically based and balanced in your opinions and thoughts, because we’re influenced. When I was younger, I was influenced by the preachers who taught whatever they taught. But as I’ve lived longer, I think, ‘Wait a minute. This doesn’t really fit totally with the Bible. It doesn’t fit with reality.’

“What is prosperity? No lack. I’ve said this before. Did Elijah the prophet have a car? No. He did not even have a bicycle. But he had no lack. What about the Lord? Did Jesus drive a car or live in a mansion? No. He had no lack. How about the apostles? No lack. No lack among them. Today the idea is abundance and palatial homes and cars and bank accounts. They’ve gone beyond. ... The focus is wrong.”

Hinn has been a longtime advocate for prosperity, so his remarks stunned many. Frenzied reports said Hinn had renounced the prosperity gospel. Yet Hinn tells *Charisma* he still believes prosperity is a biblical idea; it just needs clarification. He sets the record straight here, explaining how his views have changed, what true biblical prosperity is and why it matters for the future of evangelism.

### **Prosperity and the Bible**

Prosperity means “no lack,” Hinn says, or having all of one’s needs met in every area of life. But that doesn’t necessarily require money or possessions. The evangelist bases his updated view on the Bible, specifically early church practice cited in Acts 4:34.

“In the book of Acts, we read that the New Testament church had no lack,” Hinn says. “Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Luke specifically wrote, ‘Nor was there anyone among them who lacked.’ Obviously, from time to time, there were people in the early church who had needs while others were blessed more abundantly, but because of the faithfulness of God’s people, the saints who ‘had lack’ immediately had their needs met and experienced no lack.”

However, Hinn says “no lack” doesn’t mean “no problems.”

“Throughout the ages, heroes of the faith have experienced tremendous hardships,” Hinn says. “Many, such as Abraham, David and Solomon, were men of wealth, social stature and influence. Others, such as Elijah, Elisha and John the Baptist, were not known to own possessions and land, yet time after time, they experienced abundance and had no lack because their needs were met supernaturally.”

Because of this, Hinn believes that focusing on what God has given one person or another is fruitless, since prosperity is more than material goods.

“Prosperity is, above all, the abundant, abiding presence of the Lord Jesus in our lives,” Hinn says. “That is why the late Kathryn Kuhlman so wisely said, ‘The poorest man with Jesus is rich, and the richest man without Him is poor.’ Knowing Him and having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ are the greatest blessings a person can know.”

Yet while we may not control how God blesses us, we can control how we bless others. Hinn says that’s because God often uses the local church and individual believers as bringers of blessing.

“When we are obedient in the area of giving toward the spread and establishment of the gospel of Jesus Christ, God is faithful to meet the needs of His children and thus ensure that we have no lack,” he says. “God wants to bless believers

so each can, in turn, be a blessing to others. But the Lord doesn't expect us to become mere pipelines with blessings flowing through us to other people without our experiencing the blessing ourselves. When we are obedient to the Lord in blessing others, the Father delights in blessing us."

### **Prosperity and the Prosperity Gospel**

Whether such comments will help turn the tide against prosperity extremes remains to be seen. But charismatic pastor Mike Shreve says Hinn's influence makes his remarks "extremely significant." Shreve says that when recognized leaders of Hinn's stature choose to walk in honesty, humility and transparency, it causes a ripple effect throughout the body of Christ. As a result, he hopes Hinn's comments will encourage other believers to view prosperity through a biblical rather than monetary lens.

"For instance, Joseph was described in Scripture as a 'prosperous man,' yet at the time he was a slave in Egypt," Shreve says. "He owned no material things; he wasn't rich. He simply achieved excellence and fruitfulness in his endeavors, responsibilities and influence over others."

Bishop Doug Beacham, leader of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church, echoes Hinn's remarks. He says God's blessings are not meant to be hoarded for our good; they're meant to be shared for others' good.

"Regarding the prosperity message, I prefer to approach it from the perspective of stewardship," Beacham says. "The Wesleyan revival brought salvation that led to social and economic lift for many families. The Protestant or Puritan ethic did the same. The addition of resources in one's life means additional responsibility. God blesses us, often in ways that are beyond the material, so that we are a blessing to others."

Charles Self, a professor of history at Assembly of God

Theological Seminary, says Hinn's evolving beliefs fit into a larger pattern of prosperity gospel advocates maturing over time.

"I'm thrilled with how the prosperity gospel, in many cases, is maturing into something far more than prayer formula or miraculous mailbox moments," Self says. "I'm watching prosperity leaders look at the whole picture and realize God does want people to flourish and economics to grow, but it takes divine wisdom to put it together. There's still a lot of personality cults and abuse in certain segments of the world, but in general, there's a great maturation going on."

Self's background in history gives him a special perspective on this issue. He says the church oscillates between praising poverty and asceticism and praising wealth and abundance. Yet he's hopeful that today's church is finding a healthy balance.

For instance, Self says, one church that's embracing this balance is Bethel Church in Redding, California. Bethel leaders have spoken about the necessity of Spirit-filled believers contributing to the prosperity of their community and influencing society. But dealing with both prosperity and pain means embracing a nuanced worldview, one which acknowledges not everything is black and white.

"I don't go around rebuking everyone who talks about prosperity, but it has to take into account the reality of a fallen world," Self says. " ... With the more gullible, saying, 'Sow your seed and God will bless it 10 times' is easier than facing the pain of your situation. But there are groups who are helping people get out of payday-lending traps. We went wrong in not considering the complexity of life."

This movement toward a more biblically balanced view of prosperity and working together to build God's kingdom is timely, especially in light of Hinn's forecast of persecution touching the church in America.

## Prosperity and Evangelism's Future

Almost lost in the prosperity controversy was Hinn's prediction of a coming, concurrent wave of evangelism and persecution. On Facebook, the evangelist recalled that in 1989, while he was pastor of Orlando Christian Center in Orlando, Florida, he heard God say the deaths of Oral Roberts (who died in December 2009) and Billy Graham (who died this February) would mark the beginning of the greatest revival in church history.

Hinn noted that evangelism followed the Spirit's outpouring on the day of Pentecost, as did miracles, healing and prosperity. In the video, he encouraged people to prepare for seeing children and loved ones coming to Christ "in a big way."

Months later, Hinn stands by that prediction: "God clearly is doing something amazing as we enter new frontiers of ministry. ... We are entering into a bold new future, and souls hang in the balance."

Yet Hinn also says Americans may not be spared from persecution much longer.

"If you look at what's happening in the world, people are under persecution in most nations in Asia, the Arab world and beyond the Arab world—India, Pakistan, North Korea and so forth," Hinn said. "Men are getting killed in many parts of the world, but we've been spared up to now. I don't know if we'll be spared much longer."

For Hinn, these two predictions are not contradictory. He believes that, like the early believers of Acts 4:34, the church's "greatest victories" are yet to come, but it may have to undergo persecution first.

"Persecution takes many forms," Hinn says. "The Bible contains vivid illustrations of discrimination and oppression, both subtle and overt. Every believer today should read *Foxe's Book*

*of Martyrs, The Hiding Place, Tortured for Christ* and so many other powerful books that detail what real persecution is. Persecution continues today, and according to the latest World Watch List from the Christian human rights advocate group Open Doors, at least 215 million Christians face significant levels of persecution in the world today, from harassment to abduction, rape and murder. Churches are being attacked and destroyed.”

He also says, while comparatively mild to persecution in other countries, political correctness represents an attempt to remove Christianity from culture.

“Couched in such positive-sounding concepts as ‘tolerance’ and ‘diversity,’ the forces of this world have been successful in their social engineering attempts to eradicate any vestige of Christianity from society,” Hinn says. “Court cases and news headlines prove, our First Amendment rights of religious freedom are under widespread assault. Will persecution of this degree come to America? Prayerfully not, but what we can do now is be aware of what is happening in the world. We must stand up for those who are persecuted and intercede for the oppressed.”

Hinn says he’s asked God to let him do five more things before his death: proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, bring souls to the cross, share the Holy Spirit’s miracle-working power, strengthen the body of Christ and equip the next generation of Spirit-filled leaders.

He says, “What happens to the multitudes of lost men, women and children for all eternity largely depends upon what we do with the amazing opportunities and sobering responsibilities in front of us.”

Because of that, Hinn says it’s important now more than ever to declare God’s promises of ultimate prosperity. He recommends 1 Chronicles 7:14, Zechariah 4:6 and even 1 John

4:4: “You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”

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*Ken Walker is a writer and book editor from Huntington, West Virginia, and a longtime contributor to Charisma.*

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Watch the original video in which Benny Hinn explains his new perspective on biblical prosperity at .

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## **The Holy Spirit Is Raising Up a Holy Remnant to Fight This Blood-Saturated Injustice**

During the civil rights movement of the 1960s, just as in the days of slavery in America, a remnant of whites and blacks labored together. Dr. Martin Luther King addressed this unity in his “I Have a Dream” speech: “I have a dream ... that one day the sons of former slaves, and the sons of former slave owners, will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.”

In the days of slavery, former slave Richard Allen preached the gospel as a Methodist circuit-riding companion of former slave owner Freeborn Garrettson. Today, members of a new united remnant are realizing we are inextricably bound to each other in our desire for spiritual awakening and justice for all.

This month, designated Black History Month, moves my heart in a profound way because of a kettle passed down in my family, and a Virginia farmhouse that unites me with my friend in ministry Matt Lockett, a house that once stood between foes in a divided nation. Today, God is using our profound story and shared inheritance to unite the church for spiritual awakening and healing in America.

It takes a book (which Matt and I are working on) to convey all the providential history and layers of meaning in our story. What I am sharing here is just the tip of the iceberg.

### **Risking Their Lives to Pray**

Our story begins with a 200-year-old black kettle, used by my Christian slave forebears in Lake Providence, Louisiana. Used for cooking and washing clothes during the day, this kettle was secretly used for prayer at night. Forbidden to pray by their slave master, my ancestors were beaten unmercifully if found doing so. However, in spite of their master's cruelty and because of their love for Jesus, they prayed anyway. Sneaking into a barn at night, they carried this cast-iron pot into their secret prayer meeting. As others looked out and kept watch, those inside prayed.

Turning the pot upside down on the barn floor, they propped it up with rocks—suspending the pot a few inches above the ground. Then, while lying prostrate or kneeling on the ground, they prayed in a whisper underneath the kettle to muffle their voices. The story passed down with the kettle is that they risked their lives to pray for ensuing generations.

One day, freedom came. A teenage girl, whose name is lost to history, decided to keep this pot and pass it down along with the story of how others prayed for our freedom. She passed the story and kettle down to Harriet Lockett, who then passed it on to Nora Lockett, who then passed it on to William Ford Sr., then to William Ford Jr.—who then gave it to me, William Ford

### III.

Though my forefathers only used this kettle to keep their prayers from being heard outside the meeting, it became symbolically—probably without their knowing it—their bowl of intercession.

It is important to understand the dynamics of what happened in the spirit realm. Revelation 5:8b speaks of “bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints” before the throne of God. Zechariah 14:20b (NASB) says, “And the cooking pots in the Lord’s house will be like the bowls before the altar.” This kettle, or “prayer bowl,” caught the muffled prayers on earth, just as bowls in heaven caught their prayers as incense.

And in Revelation 8 when these bowls are released, one of the manifestations upon the earth is voices. White Christian abolitionists/revivalists like Francis Asbury and Charles Finney became voices for the voiceless. Their sermons, spoken in public, became answers to prayers whispered in private. Along with black revivalists and abolitionists like Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth, the white Christian abolitionists awakened the conscience of America to the value of human life, equality and justice. Revelation 8 also says that at some future point, God will add His incense and fire to these prayers, which manifest His judgment or justice on earth. And that is just what He did.

In 1857, many felt a U.S. Supreme Court decision sealed the fate of enslaved African-Americans. In *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, the Supreme Court justices ruled by a 7-2 decision that slaves were the property of their masters—with no human rights or representation in court. But because of prayer and acts of obedience, hearts were changed, and eventually this demonic decree over America was broken. Revival was released, and justice came, setting slaves free. Both prayer and action comforted God’s heart.

Today, our generation is also being called to prayer and action, to be voices for the voiceless, releasing revival and justice. Dr. King said in his "I Have a Dream" speech: "for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone." Just as God raised up a unified remnant of black and white during slavery and the civil rights movement, today, He is connecting the past with the future in more ways than one.

### **Discovering a Divine Connection**

As God would have it, as my Lockett forefathers in Lake Providence prayed for years for slavery to end, the last major battle of the Civil War happened at a property called Lockett Farm just north of Farmville, Virginia. I didn't know about this until about four years ago, when one of my best friends, Matt Lockett, director of Bound4LIFE and JHOP DC, discovered he is a direct descendant of this Lockett family. In other words, since he is a direct descendant, it could be said that over 150 years ago, the Civil War ended in his family's front yard. History records that Lockett Farm was the site of the last battle before Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered three days later—April 9, 1865—at the Appomattox Court House in Virginia.

As friends, we were amazed by our uncanny "Lockett" coincidence. But as more was revealed in the months to come, we discovered we are connected to the same Lockett family.

You read that correctly. We've learned that several ancestors in Matt's family owned many, many slaves. After a year and a half of research, empirical evidence reveals that Matt's family of Locketts in Virginia owned my family of Locketts in Louisiana, who, according to U.S. Census records, originated in Virginia.

As this profound history unfolded, we wept together. This revelation blew our minds! Our connection is more than a coincidence, and the prayers of my slave forefathers were literally answered in the front yard of the same Lockett family who owned them—the same Lockett family of one of my friends, Matt Lockett. Though we've served in a national ministry together—I was one of the first Bound4LIFE board members 13 years ago—none of this was revealed to us until Matt's discovery of Lockett Farm four years ago. I've always known I was a son of former slaves, but it wasn't until 2013 that Matt learned he was a son of former slave owners.

About a year after this initial discovery, we learned that God was answering prayers for freedom and the ending of slavery on Matt's side of the Lockett family as well. Matt found out that another Lockett in his family line was one of Francis Asbury's circuit-riding preachers—a revivalist and abolitionist who stood against slavery. In light of Matt's ministry and impact today, it is no coincidence this Methodist revivalist is part of his family heritage. Nor do I consider it a coincidence that for 13 years, I've been friends with a descendant of those same Locketts—contending together for revival as a new breed of abolitionist.

What's even more astounding is that we first met on Jan. 17, 2005, Martin Luther King Day, at a prayer meeting at the Lincoln Memorial, where Dr. King said, "I have a dream ... that one day the sons of former slaves, and the sons of former slave owners, will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood." We have wondered if Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech wasn't merely poetic, but rather prophetic. Perhaps God had my family kettle come from a town called Lake Providence to show that all our destinies are more tied together than we realize, and the lake of His providence is way deeper and wider than we know.

When God gets this detailed in revealing history, you can't help but notice His signs and begin to wonder—and ponder. One

question we've been pondering is: Why was this hidden from us until now? Perhaps it is because God knew racial tension and unrest would be rife in our nation now. Ferguson, Missouri; Charlottesville, Virginia; and other hotspots are only manifestations of the wounds God wants to heal—and will heal—through a unified godly remnant.

Another key question is “What is God saying to us all in this?” I don't have all the answers, but I believe He is saying He is serious about us connecting with the past to empower an awakening that will shape our nation's future. He also is revealing that life is precious, nothing “just happens” and no one is a mistake. Just as God addressed innocent bloodshed during slavery, He also wants us to deal with the issue today, which is the injustice that connected Matt and me years ago. On MLK celebration day in 2005, Matt heard me speak for the first time about a new revival and justice movement, which included the unborn, and ever since, we've been praying for a revival that will end abortion, before we even knew our shared family history.

### **Uniting as One Voice**

The God who wept over Walter Scott and Philando Castile is the same God who shed tears over five police officers killed in Dallas, Heather Heyer killed in Charlottesville and more than 60 million babies aborted in America. Will ending abortion fix all of our social ills? No, but can we truly solve any problem in our communities while abortion still exists? When we devalue people we cannot see and make them optional, inevitably it is easier to devalue some of the people we can see until they become marginal.

The answers, of course, lie in the church. The church was also the answer during slavery and the civil rights movement. A new remnant of Christians of all races working together on abortion and other issues, such as systemic poverty, education and mass incarceration, must pray for spiritual awakening. We

must be voices for the voiceless in our day.

In God's irony, Lockett's farmhouse, the same house that unites Matt and me, is the same house that stood between a divided nation. History records that the Confederate Army was in the front of Lockett's farmhouse, and the Union Army was in the back. The house stood between these armies, and though riddled with bullets, it is still standing today. Historians say that after the Southern army surrendered, the Lockett house was set up the next day as a hospital for both Confederate and Union soldiers. Its floorboards were stained with the mingled blood of both sides, as former black slaves worked with white nurses to heal the wounds of brothers who had been fighting each other.

It is a picture of intercession, a house of prayer, standing in the gap for the nation in the middle of conflicts where brothers are still divided along class, ideological, political and racial lines. Once again, God is raising up a house that stands between the living and the dead, to use our intercession to stop the plagues of culture (see Num. 16:46-48).

Matt and I believe it's no mistake that we met first in a prayer meeting on MLK celebration day at the Lincoln Memorial and have been sitting at the table of brotherhood ever since. Today, he and I endeavor to stand united in the house of prayer, to heal a divided nation once again. Now God is using us to call believers of all races to join in prayer and intercession, because only a united church can heal a divided nation.

In December 2017, Charlottesville clergy asked us to participate in a prayer meeting for healing the community. Not far from there stands Lockett Farm, which has a memorial stone in the front yard that reads: "April 6th, 1865, Here Lee Fought His Last Battle." Our families' 200-year-old kettle in hand, we went back to the spot where the prayers underneath

the pot were answered. We built an altar there and prayed. Though we prayed tears of joy in thankfulness, we also prayed for another laying down of arms. Our earnest prayer is that America would unconditionally surrender to the God of providence.

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*Will Ford III shares a prophetic dream that stresses racial reconciliation in the church and in the nation. Check it out at .*

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## **Mike Bickle: Igniting a Generation in Day-and-Night Prayer**

Mike Bickle planned to practice medicine—but the Holy Spirit planned to use him to ignite a generation with a passion for Jesus that fuels day-and-night prayer.

“I wanted to like be J. Hudson Taylor, the missionary doctor from England who went to China in the 1800s,” Mike tells *Charisma*. “He was my hero. I read three biographies of his life in high school. When I got accepted into medical school, a man asked me if I had asked the Lord about it. How could it not be the Lord?”

With less than 100 of about 8,000 applicants accepted, that

was the big question. Nevertheless, Mike pressed in to pursue the Lord's will and was surprised to discover Christ the Healer had a different destiny in mind for him—a destiny that would see thousands of youths impacted in his generation.

Despite Mike's choice to pursue God's call to raise up a generation of youth instead of his medical missionary dreams, he's still seen lives saved and bodies healed in the name of Jesus—the Bridegroom King—through his ministry. And he's contending in prayer to see God heal our land.

### **How Mike Bickle Discovered Enjoyable Prayer**

That's the story Mike never tells. The storyline most people know starts in 1982, when he launched a church that would become known as Metro Christian Fellowship and joined the Association of Vineyard Churches led by John Wimber.

Prophetic ministers like Bob Jones, Paul Cain and John Paul Jackson were part of that church, which grew to over 3,000 members. After 17 years, Mike resigned to birth a new missions organization centered on 24/7 prayer with live worship known globally as the International House of Prayer of Kansas City, or IHOP.

IHOP officially launched May 7, 1999, and went 24/7 on Sept. 19, 1999. This was no small miracle, considering Mike admits he once found prayer boring. He often tells the story of his determination to pray one hour every night in his college apartment—and struggling through the entire 60 minutes until he stumbled upon a promise in Isaiah 56:7 about enjoyable prayer.

“My journey to discovering enjoying prayer started when I began to see God in a different way—to see the tenderness of the Father's heart along with His generosity and kindness and to see Jesus as One who delighted in His people and who actually enjoyed relating to them. In my college years, I had seen God more like a well-meaning but stern football coach,

and if we obeyed Him, then we would win,” says Mike, who played college football at the University of Missouri. He actually committed his life to Christ in 1971 after hearing Dallas Cowboys great Roger Staubach share a personal testimony about his relationship with Jesus.

Mike enjoyed prayer more as he discovered what he calls “prayer-reading the Word”—taking Scripture and turning it into a conversation with Jesus. Praying in a room filled with anointed worship music, he says, also makes prayer more enjoyable. He does that every day at IHOP, which celebrates 17 years of 24/7 prayer in September 2016.

### **Intercessory Prayer Ministry Is Not Always Easy**

Building a 24/7 prayer-and-missions base wasn't as easy as Mike makes it look. After visiting IHOP or watching the 24/7 live stream, many intercessors have romantic notions of replicating what Mike has pioneered in Kansas City only to discover unexpected obstacles, like people who commit to prayer with a zealous heart but flame out when spiritual opposition rises.

Even in the IHOP community with so many skilled musicians and singers to inspire “intercessory missionaries”—people who commit to regular hours in the prayer room—there are challenges. Financing a 24/7 prayer-and-missions base is an expected challenge, but IHOP faces obstacles most churches never experience.

“Because of our size with 700 staff members, we have people from many different theological traditions in the body of Christ,” Mike explains. “We have Pentecostals, Presbyterians, Baptists, Lutherans, Nazarenes, Jews and nondenominationals along with some charismatic Catholics. Some have intense approaches to prayer and ministry while others are much more mellow. Some have a strong Calvinist background, and others an Arminian perspective—and some of them end up serving in the

same ministry department.”

Another challenge is turnover. Intercessory missionaries stay at IHOP for about five years, on average. Over 17 years, IHOP has had 16,000 full-time staffers, students and interns. That means 15,000 have returned home or started houses of prayer around the world.

Despite the IHOP model’s success, Mike urges people not to launch a 24/7 prayer ministry in one building. He encourages intercessors to work with the many different ministries in their city to develop 24/7 prayer chains in different buildings. His prayer is to see the Holy Spirit help ministries work together in every nation to raise 24/7 prayer with worship in every tribe and tongue on the Earth before the Lord returns.

Practical challenges aside, Mike admits his life at IHOP looks different than he thought it would. He anticipated spending eight or 10 hours a day in prayer when he launched the ministry, but he spends much more of his time pastoring young adults than he initially expected.

Misty Edwards, senior worship leader at IHOP, has been with Mike from the beginning. She has watched him lead with what she calls a “true shepherd’s heart” and calls him “one of the most consistent men I’ve ever seen.”

“I believe the impact that day-and-night prayer will have on the body of Christ is huge, and God chose a man like Mike who he refuses to quit because that’s the kind of tenacity it takes to keep it going,” Misty tells *Charisma*. “I believe Mike has been used by God to stir up prayer across the Earth and to call the body of Christ to love the Lord with all their hearts—the First Commandment—and to blow a trumpet concerning the need for urgency in seeking the Lord in a wholehearted way. He is one of the clear voices of our generation.”

Mike has needed tenacity over the years. While he’s one of the

nicest guys you could ever meet, he has endured false accusations over the years. Of course, this was not totally unexpected, as Jones gave Mike a prophetic heads-up over 30 years ago. In fact, when Mike met Jones in 1983, he shared significant prophetic visions for his life and ministry—and Mike admits that he didn't believe any of them at that time.

“Bob told me there are going to be thousands of young people,” Mike says. “He told me there's going to be full manifestations of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in God's time. He said there's going to be controversy that'll rise up against you—and the Lord said don't answer it, but let the Lord answer it on your behalf.

“We've had various accusers over the last 33 years. I do not answer accusers, and by the grace of God, I never will, no matter what they say. At the end of the day, I have learned that accusations against God's people cannot not stop God's purpose in their lives. I want to focus on the big picture of God's story and His plan for the church as well as for my individual life.

### **The Big God Story**

One of the biggest God stories at IHOP has been 24/7 prayer with worship for nearly two decades. Some wonder if it makes a difference, but Mike argues you can't measure the effectiveness of intercession for revival for a city or nation by days or weeks. National shifts are not easy to measure over months—it often takes decades to see the true effectiveness of prayer. That long-term view of prayer throws some people off, but Mike is sure of the impact of persevering prayer.

Prayer releases the blessing and favor of God and the activity of the Spirit. He compares intercession to a divine magnet being dropped in the midst of a people—you cannot see the actual power of a magnet, as it is invisible, but you can see its effect on the metal objects around it. The Lord draws

people and resources and shifts things by His invisible hand.

“In 10, 20 and 30 years, you look back and the power or reality of the Lord’s invisible hand drawing things together becomes much clearer,” Mike says. “We can see many things have been pulled together with greater resources, and we see the impact is far bigger than anything that human personalities or gifting could have achieved. But it takes time to see it.”

Over the last 17 years, IHOP has birthed and facilitated many ministries, including Hope City, an inner city outreach that feeds the poor and disciples young believers from the street; the Orphan Justice Center, to serve orphans and children at risk; Exodus Cry, to help victims of human trafficking; the Lukel8 Project, to encourage prayer furnaces on about 1,000 college campuses; and the Israel Mandate, to mobilize many in the church to pray for the restoration of Israel, along with evangelism teams and healing rooms that touch many people each week.

“The church today needs to be mobilized with continual prayer and fasting to release the harvest of souls waiting to be garnered from among the nations,” says Jack Hayford, founding pastor of The Church on the Way in Van Nuys, California. “Mike Bickle’s reliable ministry at his missions base in Kansas City is helping to answer a great need in this hour.”

A critical part of God’s big story at IHOP is the next generation. Misty tells *Charisma* that one of Mike’s passions is to invest in youth. He often speaks of the Spirit turning the hearts of fathers to young people in accordance with Malachi 4:5-6.

“Mike loves to see young adults come alive by seeing who they are in Christ and by being engaged in the Holy Spirit’s assignment for their personal lives as well as God’s purposes for America and the nations,” she says. “No matter how much criticism or setbacks that he experiences, at the core, he is

joyful and at peace because he actually believes God is watching him and is pleased with him. His faith and refusal to draw back or quit challenge me regularly.”

### **Not Just an End-Time Bible Teacher**

Mike views himself mostly as an intercessor, pastor and a Bible teacher who offers practical instruction on the book of Romans, the Sermon on the Mount or how to walk in the Spirit and minister to people effectively—but he also zeroes in on what the Holy Spirit is emphasizing in the church in any given season. Many see him as a preacher with a prophetic burden.

Although he also teaches on intimacy with God and the end times, one of his favorite messages is the beauty of Jesus as Bridegroom, King and Judge—fully God and fully man. “Jesus is a King with great power and a Bridegroom with deep desire for relationship with His people as well as a Judge with zeal to confront everything that hinders love,” Mike says. “I want to pray because I want to interact with that glorious Man and partner with His end-time plan to fill the Earth with God’s glory.”

Over the course of the last 30-plus years, thousands of youth have looked to Mike as a spiritual father—and he’s fathered them with a tender heart. “I see the Spirit turning hearts of fathers to young people as was prophesied in Malachi 4:5-6,” Mike says. “This is one of most important expressions of the prophetic spirit in this hour—to see the value of mentoring young people to walk out their future leadership calling. I find joy in seeing young adults come alive by seeing who they are in Christ and by being engaged in the Holy Spirit’s assignment for their personal lives as well as God’s purposes for America and the nations.”

One of Mike’s primary ministry focuses is to equip people to put the First Commandment in first place in their lives. The First Commandment, as Mike describes it, is found in Matthew

22:37-38: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your strength, and with all your mind' and 'your neighbor as yourself." Since God loves us with all His heart and strength, we can boldly ask Him for a greater measure of grace to love Him—and others—with all of our heart and strength. One of the reasons He gave us the Holy Spirit was to pour God's love into our hearts (Rom. 5:5).

Mike prays regularly for God's purposes fulfilled for the nation of Israel and the salvation of the Jewish people. He often asks the Lord to raise up millions of Gentile intercessors across the Earth for Israel's salvation. He's also preparing young adults spiritually to understand the unique dynamics that will occur in the generation of the Lord's return. The greatest revival with the greatest outpouring of the Holy Spirit will occur in the same generation that the greatest increase of sin and darkness will increase. At the time that deep darkness covers the Earth, the glory of God will arise on His people in an unprecedented measure (Is. 60:1). Mike thinks we may be in the beginning of that final generation, but he stresses no one can be absolutely sure.

"Many of the biblical signs of the times are occurring together on a global basis," Mike says. "Therefore, I am alerted that we might be in the early days of that generation. It is time to equip the next generation with understanding of the unique dynamics that will occur when the greatest revival in history occurs at the same time that deep darkness is manifest in the culture, crisis in the economy, marriages and families, in government, with growing racial tensions, terrorist threats and so much more—all this is happening as many preachers are compromising some of the essential gospel truths found in the Scripture. A distorted grace message is currently gaining momentum in many ministries promising blessing and comfort without any reference to the need to obey Jesus' glorious leadership nor to the increasing crisis that

is unfolding in our nation. The crisis is serious and it will continue to intensify spiritually, economically, culturally, politically and more.”

### **What Many Don't Know About Mike Bickle**

What many people don't know about Mike is that he is very zealous about the “Great Commission.” Although some think running a prayer ministry is a form of retreating from the battle for souls, he has come to understand the power of marriage of intercession and missions and how evangelism is more effective in the context of persevering prayer.

Loren Cunningham, founder of Youth With A Mission, confirms this: “The great harvest needs to be supplied by continual prayer and fasting. Intercessory ministries like Mike Bickle's in Kansas City are vital for the fulfillment of the Great Commission.”

Many people do not know Mike taught against the charismatic movement for five years—he actually traveled to various university campus ministries as a guest speaker to expose what he thought were charismatic heresies. Many also don't know he played college ball. At age 60, he is seen throwing a football with young people in IHOP's parking lot and plays touch football games with the students at IHOP's full-time ministry school. He is a family man first and a minister second—and he's not giving up on America in these last days.

“We are in desperate need of revival and a great spiritual awakening for our nation,” Mike says. “The Lord longs for His church to walk close to Him and to be vessels of His manifest power in their cities by developing strong prayer lives individually and corporately as local churches. In the midst of a growing crisis, I am encouraged as I see more and more people responding to the Lord in a wholehearted way. The numbers are still small, but they are increasing. I have great hope in seeing the Lord turn things around, but it will only

happen as a culture of prayer is established in the church and a Third Great Awakening sweeps across America.”

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Mike Bickle teaches how to experience God's love through prayer in your day-to-day life at .

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## **Beware of Satan's Weapons Against Your Spiritual Warfare**

People who live on the sidelines are complacent. Replacing their spiritual armor with a sporty-looking civilian outfit relaxes them. But the trendy look of these sideliners is the primary symptom of what I call “spiritual HIV,” or high indifference virus.

Just as medical HIV weakens a victim's immune system for warding off infections, the spiritual kind of HIV decreases a warrior's instinct and ability to engage in spiritual battles. His soldier instincts have been compromised. Unbeknownst to himself, he's gone AWOL—absent without official leave.

This infected warrior sits listlessly while his virus-stricken

soul weakens from the disease. It breeds further in his soul as the unsuspecting victim adds layers of theological opinion and an assortment of Bible verses to the mix to support his faulty indifference toward spiritual warfare. The more he uses his Bible to shield himself from the war that's raging in the heavenlies, the more the virus takes over his immune system.

The high indifference virus reflects one or more of these four symptoms in its victim: 1) disinterest in the fight, 2) disbelief in the fight, 3) discouragement in the fight and 4) disdain for the fight.

### **Symptom No. 1: Disinterest in the Fight**

The soldier afflicted with spiritual HIV becomes disinterested in and bored with the spiritual fight. He doesn't know he's sick. This virus creates for him a lifestyle of dispassion and disregard, not just for the fight, but also for the outcome of the fight. He feels there's nothing at stake for him in this fight or believes the stakes are too small to pique his interest.

Nothing could be further from the truth. One of the main aspects of the mission of Jesus was to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). This includes removing blinders from the minds of people so they can positively respond to God's call to love and serve Him. Jesus was always engaged in the spiritual war. The stakes have not changed!

Admittedly, war is never pretty. Fighting is not nice. Yet Scripture declares we are to fight the good fight of faith (1 Tim. 6:12). The Bible positions spiritual warfare as a necessary reality Christians must embrace in order to push back the powers of darkness.

But fighting is not just a necessary action. It is a loving action. The stakes are too high to become disinterested. When you participate in the spiritual fight, you join God in loving people into His kingdom. You fight because you love!

## **Symptom No. 2: Disbelief in the Fight**

While some ailing believers are disinterested in the fight, others living with spiritual HIV disbelieve in the fight altogether. The high indifference virus causes their compromised souls not to see or believe there is a spiritual war happening around them. The irony of this view is that many of these spiritual HIV victims hold to the inerrancy of the Bible, which includes teachings such as Ephesians 6:13.

To one who has never fought spiritually, this verse seems like religious chatter. It has little or no meaning to civilians. Only warriors understand warrior language. But since no warrior's uniform is donned on this person, we must conclude they don't truly believe in the existence of a spiritual war.

When spiritual HIV attacks a soul, the diseased warrior—especially one with little or no experience in spiritual warfare—often concludes, “I’m just having a season of bad luck.” He doesn’t put two and two together by looking at how the spirit world impacts circumstances in the natural world. Such a partial view of life keeps the diseased soldier functioning as a nonspiritual being—a civilian oblivious to the struggles of war. This flawed perspective cannot be confused with the Judeo-Christian worldview because it’s contrary to the Scriptures. If disbelief in the fight causes you to forfeit your ground, such a position cannot be held in good conscience.

Jesus clearly taught that Satan and evil spirits are not metaphorical terms representing evil. They are real beings who have the capability and power to get directly involved in the affairs of human beings. If you hold to a disbelief in the fight, you are also saying, then, that Jesus had a mental breakdown in the desert during His 40 days of fasting.

Quite the contrary. Jesus was not having an emotional breakdown. He was dealing with the dreaded foe—Satan. A

disbelief in the fight is a disbelief in Jesus' wilderness experience. You can't have it both ways!

### **Symptom No. 3: Discouragement in the Fight**

Three years ago, I visited the island of Patmos—the place off the Aegean Sea where the apostle John was imprisoned (Rev. 1:9). From a grotto located halfway up the side of a hill on Patmos, John received the vision of the apocalypse. To preserve this historic site, the Coptic Orthodox Church built the Monastery of Saint John around the grotto about A.D. 1088.

While visiting, I encountered a memorable sight when walking into the grotto. A stern-looking Coptic priest stood guard. It was his turn to protect the sanctity of that holy place. Tourists were to be turned away or silenced if they could not honor this sacred space that held an iconic place in history. Photographing the interior of the cave was not allowed.

Although the Coptic priest's duty to preserve that sacred space for coming generations is an extremely important one, he still has to take breaks because fighting is hard work. It demands soldiers function at a constant state of alertness, but if he had to be in high-alert mode constantly, he would feel like a prisoner to the very thing he was guarding. Scheduled breaks refresh him so he can maintain an attitude of alertness over time.

So it is with us. If we had to live in a heightened state of alertness every waking moment, we would easily become discouraged in the fight. Some have. Unlike the Coptic priest, those afflicted with spiritual HIV of this sort did not build seasons of respite into their military routine. This cannot help but lead to discouragement over time.

Some believers are sidelined because they've become discouraged by the fight. They have not learned how to pace themselves when it comes to spiritual warfare. This battle lasts a lifetime. It starts when we're born, and it should

take on a new clarity when we're born again. But it ends when we die. The battle ends when heaven's gates open to us.

Until then, we must find ways to keep ourselves vigilant and engaged without becoming overwhelmed or decommissioned by discouragement at the length of the war. A balanced life must allow for adequate time and attention to be given to relationships, careers and the mental and physical care of our bodies, in addition to our spiritual development. Admittedly, there is tension that exists if we are to build emotionally healthy lives. Yet balance can only be achieved when appropriate care and attention are given to each of these important areas.

A balanced spiritual life must include giving attention to Scripture, prayer, communion with God and fellowship with other believers. Spending time both privately and publicly in the Word enables you to better know your faith, know God and know the hope we have in Christ. When you spend time in prayer, your passion for Christ deepens while you gain answers for the challenges of life. Communing with God happens when you practice the disciplines of meditation, solitude and other biblical habits aimed at keeping your heart pure before God.

A healthy spiritual life cannot happen in isolation. We need to fellowship and hang out with other believers. These social interactions create a keen sense of community—a place where encouragement, comfort and a healthy provocation occur as a means to grow in our relationship with Christ. These four practices are what caused the early church to be so successful evangelistically and in their personal development (Acts 2:42). Committing to this practice will protect you from contracting spiritual HIV.

Not everything is a fight. Satan is not lurking around every corner waiting to grab you. A warrior's constant alertness does not require a sustained adrenaline rush. The Christian life is not a 60-yard dash; it's a marathon. Our pace

determines how we finish. Strive to finish strong!

#### **Symptom No. 4: Disdain for the Fight**

If you meet someone who has disdain for the fight, rest assured he's suffering from spiritual high indifference virus. Having a disdain for the fight means looking on spiritual warfare with contempt and scorn. No one starts off with that kind of attitude. When you ask the question, "Why fight?" in a rhetorical manner, you're creating a perspective of hopelessness. This is a surefire way to contract spiritual HIV. Through a series of painful battles, the soldier's question morphs into the declarative statement, "Don't fight!" The virus takes hold of his soul, and disdain for the fight spreads.

A flawed theological reasoning often brews to support a disdain for the fight. The thinking goes something such as this: If God wants it to happen, it will happen. If it's meant to be, it will be. This faulty view of God, the Scriptures and spiritual warfare is not new. In fact, it falls under the historic term "antinomianism." This is the doctrinal notion that because of our salvation relationship in Christ, we are free from the responsibility of obeying God's laws. But you cannot be a victorious warrior if you believe something along these lines: "If God wants me delivered, He will deliver me right here and now. And if He doesn't want me delivered, I won't be."

Antinomianism strips you from bearing any responsibility to work God's Word. The infected fighter no longer believes fighting makes a difference. His disdain makes him a weaponless warrior, like a dog without teeth. His prayers never lead him into the war room. If blessings are not automatically given to this person, he will not search them out through the weapon of prayer.

Just as some people enroll in the U.S. Army because of the

fringe benefits—a striking uniform, tuition assistance and future veteran’s benefits—God’s army attracts similar inductees. Some people come to Christ only because of the promised salvation and ticket to heaven—which I admit should not be passed over. Yet they have a disdain for fighting.

The calling to be a Christ-follower does not stop with being born again. It progresses to discipleship, which is synonymous with representing Christ on your knees in battle for the souls of men. Paul’s words to Timothy hold true for us today: “Endure hard times as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Tim. 2:3).

Disdain paints a one-sided picture. We welcome God’s help, yet we are unwilling to reciprocate. Allegiance should not be one-sided. We must join God on our knees in His battle against evil and wickedness.

But while spiritual soldiers are not exempt from suffering, as a good general, the Lord accompanies His troops into every battle. He does not leave us alone. That is why David, the warrior king, confidently sang, “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me” (Ps. 23:4). We cannot allow David to sing solo. This verse must be a chorus, your voice harmonizing with David’s to affirm God’s allegiance to His troops.

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To learn more, read this...

Learn how to fight our spiritual enemy skillfully and bring deliverance to captives through Pastor David Ireland's *The Weapon of Prayer: Maximizing Your Greatest Strategy Against the Enemy* (Charisma House). You can find this book at [Amazon](#), or wherever Christian books are sold.

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## **What It Really Means to Walk in the Spirit**

The Scriptures teach that if we walk in the Spirit, we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh (Gal. 5:16). It gives us a beautiful picture of life in Christ and sounds like a simple command: Walk in the Spirit. However, many Christians do not know what it means to walk in the Spirit.

A simple definition of what it means to walk in the Spirit is to allow the Holy Spirit to do the work in us that God sent Him to do. Just before our Lord left this Earth, He said this to His disciples: "I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Counselor, that He may be with you forever: the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, for it does not see Him, neither does it know Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you, and will be in you" (John 14:16-17).

The time must come that we get serious about who the Holy Spirit is and learn why He came to Earth. Then we must choose to cooperate with Him and allow Him to do all that God has sent Him to do. We need to ask Him, "Why did You come?" and "Why did My Father send You to me?" Then as He answers us and reveals to us His divine purposes, we must yield to His work in our lives and churches.

As we begin to discuss what it means to walk in the Spirit, we

need to understand the specific purposes for which God comes to dwell in us.

### **A Place of Spiritual Discernment**

One of the first things He does is make our hearts a place of spiritual discernment. Though all may not operate in the gift of discerning of spirits, when the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts, He brings His divine ability to discern and makes our “temples” a place of spiritual discernment. The Holy Spirit will put a caution in our minds when we hear something that is not quite right. Those checks become safeguards that keep us from error. We need to learn to listen to those impressions and then learn to test them, trying the spirits (1 John 4:1).

### **A Place of Refreshing Rain**

The Holy Spirit makes our hearts ready to receive the refreshing rain that God promises. He knows that, without rain, we can't produce fruit. He knows that, unless we have showers, our hearts will get hard. Have you ever seen rain fall when the ground was so hard the water didn't soak it? That is a picture of people who come to church when the Spirit is moving, and the rain of His presence rolls off like water off a duck's back because their hearts are too hard to receive it. The rain of the Spirit brings repentance. Repentance will break the soil and the fallow ground. He comes in conviction to our temples and prepares them as places where the showers of the latter rain of refreshing can fall.

### **A Place of Healing and Deliverance**

The Holy Spirit has come to make our temples places of healing. Jesus came to bring divine help to the mind, to the will, to the emotions, to any part of us that has been injured or bruised. In whatever way we are lame or crippled—physically, mentally or emotionally—He has come to bring divine enablement. We do not need to wallow in self-pity over our emotional hurts or use the past as an excuse for

present failure. Though we are powerless to heal ourselves, the Holy Spirit brings our healing by His divine power.

### **A Place Where Strongholds of Satan Are Conquered**

I know some say the church is not to be militant, and we are to be lovers of the Lamb, cultivating relationship with our heavenly Bridegroom. I agree we are to be in love with Jesus, but I disagree with the extreme of saying we are never to be involved in spiritual warfare. God gave the church the power over Satan. He deputized us, equipped us and sent us out with authority over devils and diseases. The church is learning both to worship the Lamb and to do warfare—not by our power, but by the power of the Spirit. It is God pulling down strongholds, but He has to do it through the church. If we can stand against the enemy with vessels that are clean and release the Holy Ghost in us, He will pull down the strongholds of the enemy. The Holy Spirit gives us authority to take back what the devil stole.

### **A Place of Soul-Winning and Missionary Zeal**

The Holy Spirit comes to set up a zeal in our hearts for winning the lost to Christ. Jesus promised the disciples, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you shall be My witnesses” (Acts 1:8). Where do we begin to be witnesses? Your world is where you personally touch lives. Jesus commissioned His disciples to go to all the world. A Spirit-led life will have that mandate.

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Fuchsia Pickett, who died in 2004, was miraculously healed of a genetic, life-threatening disease in 1959. She wrote *The Next Move of God* and other classic works.

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To learn more, read this ...

Discover the incomparable power of abiding in the Holy Ghost in Fuchsia Pickett's *Walking in the Spirit: The Power of the Holy Spirit Can Be Yours* (Charisma House). Find this resource on [Amazon](#), or anywhere Christian books are sold.

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## Could a Single Prayer Start a Spiritual Awakening?

There are two main movements in the Earth today—a Holy Spirit-inspired movement and an Antichrist movement. The Holy Spirit wants to shift us into a Third Great Awakening while Antichrist spirits want to shift us into a godless nation where Christians are jailed for preaching the gospel of salvation.

The contrast is stark—and visible. The Antichrist agenda is perverting sexuality, family, religion, education, government and other sectors of society. We're seeing Christians jailed in America for standing on the Word of God, Islamic terror wreaking havoc on our soil and an onslaught of threats coming against our religious liberty.

This demonic movement has gained mass momentum in the last 50 years, but the devil always overplays his hand, and I am witnessing the church—at least a remnant within the church—waking up, praying fervently and taking action to turn a nation back to God. Some of those actions are turning into movements, which Merriam-Webster defines as “a series of organized activities working toward an objective.”

*God's Not Dead* is one example of a movement in the entertainment industry. Who would have thought that a simple film about apologetics produced in 18 days would drive \$9

million its opening weekend to become, at that time, the fourth-biggest film in the U.S. and, ultimately, bring in \$60 million at the box office in its five-month run? Who would have thought the movie's Facebook page would attract over 8 million followers and counting? Not even the filmmakers anticipated this success, but the movie became a movement, and part two is in theaters in April.

At the same time, Dutch Sheets, an internationally recognized author, teacher and conference speaker, inspired by the Holy Spirit, has ignited an Appeal to Heaven Movement that's calling the nation back to prayer for a Third Great Awakening based on a flag George Washington flew over his navy ships. That flag, which is finding its place in churches and rallies today, depicts an evergreen tree with the words "An Appeal to Heaven" across the top. Washington used it to remind the colonists that their only hope against British rule and persecution was an appeal to heaven.

On the political front, Cindy Jacobs, co-founder of Generals International, launched Red Shoe Votes, a company of women fueled by love and committed to justice, willing to speak boldly for truth, life and compassion. The goal is to get spiritually active, governance-engaged conservative women, who are underrepresented at the polls, to register to vote for a candidate who stands for biblical values in the 2016 presidential election. This small movement could make a big impact on our nation.

Meanwhile, the 24/7 prayer movement is crossing denominations to focus on worship and intercession, the pro-life movement is working to see laws and hearts changed, the student missions movement is going strong through organizations like YWAM, and the church is on the edge of seeing another healing movement sweep the nation.

In fact, I believe the Third Great Awakening will be greater than any individual movement we've seen—from the Voice of

Healing to the Word of Faith to the Jesus Movement and so on. I believe we're going to see an outpouring more significant than all the past outpourings put together—and I believe it starts with these smaller movements until we reach a tipping point or, to put it biblically, when prayers of the saints fill the golden, heavenly bowls mentioned in Revelation 5:8, and they finally tip over.

Movements are about mobilizing people in unity around a common cause. If Christians will join—or launch—Holy Spirit-inspired movements that spur people to pray, evangelize and otherwise get engaged in our society, we'll reach a tipping point in this nation. In fact, it will be like the shot heard around the world in the Revolutionary War. Our nation needs a spiritual revolution, and we're getting closer to the tipping point with every prayer we pray.

Malcolm Gladwell, author of the *Tipping Point*, *Blink*, *Outliers* and other best-selling books that caught the nation's attention, explains it this way: The tipping point is a moment when an idea, trend or social behavior crosses a threshold, tips and spreads like wildfire. Just as a single sick person can start a flu epidemic, he reasons, a small but targeted push can bring change. You can be part of the tipping point. Join a movement. Pray without ceasing. Be part of the solution. Together, we can cooperate with the Holy Spirit to usher in the greatest movement the world has ever seen.

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**Jennifer LeClaire** is senior editor of *Charisma*, director of the *Awakening House of Prayer*, a senior leader of the *New Breed Revival Network* and author of many books, including *Jezebel's Puppets: Exposing the Agenda of False Prophets*. Visit her online at .

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# How to Know It's Really God Speaking to You

I know that a lot of Christians get frustrated about the subject of hearing God's voice. I can remember when I was a young Christian and older ministers would say, "The Lord told me this" or "The Lord told me that," and I would think, *What do you mean, 'The Lord told you'? Did He just talk to you? Did you hear Him out loud? How did you know it was the Lord?*

I would get more than a little irritated with them. But I have since come to learn, after walking with the Lord for a while, that He is the still, small voice that speaks inside my spirit—and He wants to speak to me and guide me even more than I want Him to. He wants to do the same for you. I can tell you that it takes a little practice, but now I hear Him all the time, and He leads me on a daily, even hourly, basis. He wants to do the same for you.

## **The Guide on the Inside**

By "practice," I mean that you get into the habit of asking and listening, being aware of His presence in you. When you're on the job, driving your car or walking into a new situation, give ear to the Holy Spirit. Say, "Lord, what shall I do in this situation?" Start by practicing with small things, such as finding something you've misplaced or asking which way to turn while driving, and pretty soon you'll get good at distinguishing His voice.

How can you continue learning to recognize God's voice when you're making decisions? The answer is, look to the inside—to God's Holy Spirit within you. The Holy Spirit is "The Guide on the Inside," and every born-again believer has Him living

within.

The children of God—that means you—are led by the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:14). When Jesus left the earth and went to heaven, He left us His Spirit (aka the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of God) to live in us and guide us. The very Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ dwells in you as a born-again believer: “But you know Him, for He lives with you, and will be in you” (John 14:17). Jesus didn’t leave us here helpless! He left us with a Helper to assist and support us, and to empower us to finish His work on Earth.

Our goal when making decisions should be to recognize and follow the voice of the Holy Spirit. John 10:27 says, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”

Never forget that! He knows you, and you hear His voice. And because you do, you can follow His leading.

In my own life, when I saw that Jesus said, “My sheep hear My voice,” I started believing that I could hear His voice. If a friend of yours calls out to you from across a dark room, “Come this way!” and you hear his or her voice, you can follow the sound until you find your way out. It’s the same with hearing the Lord’s voice, and the Bible says you do hear it.

Too many times I hear Christians saying things such as “I can’t hear the voice of God” or “I don’t know if God is talking to me or not.” But that’s not what the Bible says. It says we do hear His voice! It also says we know Him. Jesus Himself said, “I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Counselor, that He may be with you forever: the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, for it does not see Him, neither does it know Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you, and will be in you” (John 14:16-17).

You know Him! When you know someone, you recognize his voice and you know the intent of his heart. It’s time to start believing the intent of God’s heart toward you is always good

and that you do know Him and hear His voice.

Then you need to listen. By that I mean stop and spend time in God's presence—reading His Word and praying—so He is free to speak to your heart and lead you. Too many times we're so wrapped up in our busy lives that we give God no place to talk with us.

The Holy Spirit is a gentleman. He's not going to force Himself upon you or even interrupt your everyday life unless you give Him permission to. Very often, I think, He's waiting for us to turn aside from all our busyness and seek Him. Hearing Him is really more up to us than it is to Him.

I encourage you, especially when you're facing a decision, to spend more time with the Lord. By that I mean spend more time reading the Bible, meditating, listening and praying. Some of us have a pretty good daily devotional habit. If you don't, you need to establish one. Read the Bible every day!

For many of us, maybe in the morning, we read our one-page devotional and accompanying Scripture, then review our prayer list and pray for five minutes. And that's good. But when you're facing bigger decisions, that might not be enough. Sometimes drastic times call for drastic measures. You might need to put a little more time in if you need to hear the voice of God clearly before you can make your decision.

Instead of reading two or three Scriptures, read an entire chapter. Or find verses that pertain to what you're believing for, and spend time reading them and meditating on them to soak your spirit in God's Word until faith comes.

Be sure you spend time just listening. So many times when we're in need, we do all the talking during prayer. But prayer is two-way conversation between you and God—and He's the one who knows everything! You already know what you know. Instead, you want to know what He knows. So take time to listen.

## **How Do You Know It's God?**

I don't know about you, but I've met many Christians who claim God told them to do something, but the end result of their decision turns out really badly! That tends to make us all nervous because we think, *How then do we know when it's God's voice that's leading us?*

The way to be sure you're hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit, God's voice, is to spend time learning it. How did you get to where you could recognize the voice of your parent, your sweetheart or your children? You spent time with them. If you were never around them, you wouldn't recognize their voices. Well, it's the same with recognizing God's voice. You get familiar with His voice by spending time with Him, and you do that by reading and meditating on His Word because that is Him talking with you.

I once heard a perfect example of this. The way the Department of the Treasury trains its agents to recognize counterfeit U.S. money is by having them spend a lot of time studying real money. They get so familiar with the real thing by handling it, looking at it, smelling it and running it through various tests that a counterfeit bill will jump right out at them because it doesn't react or feel like a real bill.

It's the same for you. If you become so familiar with God through His Word—by studying it and recognizing how He thinks, acts and views you—then when a different voice tries to lead you, you'll recognize it instantly as a counterfeit or a lie.

You and I will never be able to recognize the real-deal voice of God unless we spend time in His Word. That's good news, because it means you are totally in charge of that part! You can decide for yourself how much time you spend in God's Word. Just know that as you do, you'll get more and more familiar with His voice.

## **The Inward Witness**

The main way you and I “hear” the voice of God is not audibly. It’s through what I’ll call the “inward witness.” The Spirit of God will give you promptings in your own spirit, or your inner man (Eph. 3:16), which is the part of you that has been born again and made a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17).

Promptings are inclinations or thoughts. I like to describe a prompting as a “knowing in your knower.” It comes as you’re reading the Word, seeking God in prayer or listening carefully for His guidance. You’ll either begin to feel a peace as you consider the decision or an uneasiness. My spiritual father used to describe the peace as “a smooth, velvety feeling” in your spirit and the uneasiness as a “scratchy” feeling. I think that’s a good way to describe it.

I have been led by the inward witness more times than I can count, in big things and in small ones. I often say out loud, “Holy Spirit, which way should I go?” or “What should I do here?” And then I listen—not for an audible voice, but for that “still, small voice” on the inside, in my spirit (1 Kin. 19:12-13). I listen for His prompting.

I also do this very often when I am counseling someone. As she sits across from me and tells me her problem, I listen to her, but silently I ask the Holy Spirit: “How do I help this person? What should I say? What’s the answer here?” In essence, I have my spiritual antenna up, giving attention to the inward witness that will give me answers about how to best help the person.

Sometimes, when I’ve lost something, I’ll ask the Holy Spirit where it is (because He knows everything, you know!), and I’ll get a thought similar to *Go look under the front seat of the car*. Now, my mind might say, *That’s silly. It couldn’t be there*. But when I look, there it is!

Those may be examples of small things, but it’s good to practice on small things. When I’m making major decisions, I

often will give myself more time to listen for the inward witness. I will let the Lord solidify the word in my spirit, and then I'll "try it on" before making a move one way or the other.

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