

Miracles Happen When She Plays the Violin

When I first heard LaDonna Taylor serenading the Lord with her violin, I discerned a strong anointing on every note as sweet melodies washed over the congregation like rivers of living water. But when I watched Taylor play her violin over people at the altar, I witnessed the anointing that breaks the yoke in action as people were healed and delivered in puddles of tears.

It's been said that music soothes the savage beast—and we know David's harp caused evil spirits to flee from Saul (1 Sam. 16:23). We also know there are sounds that set the captives free. David wrote a Psalm that holds the key to this mystery of heaven: "Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance" (Ps. 32:7, KJV).

Can songs actually come to our rescue? Can music really be an agent of healing? Are there sounds from heaven that usher us into the glory realm of God where all things are possible? Do certain songs compel God to move? What role does faith play in this artistic equation? Can we "soak" our way to freedom? How does this work?

"Psalm 32:7 offers big clues about songs of deliverance: He is your hiding place," says Taylor, a violinist who has played with the San Jose and Knoxville Symphonies and travels around the nation watching God open blind eyes and deaf ears—and perform other miracles against the backdrop of her instrument. "When you are hidden in Him, everything else is insignificant, like the old hymn *It Is Well With My Soul*. When you get to that place in Him, you get to the glory. (Pentecostal revivalist) Ruth Ward Heflin taught me the map to the glory: You praise until the spirit of worship comes, worship until

the glory comes, and you stand in the glory.”

Can Music Really Set the Stage for Miracles?

Beyond David’s harp pushing back darkness around Saul, we see plenty of evidence in Scripture for music setting the stage for miracles. The Holy Spirit came upon Elisha after a musician started playing, and he prophesied provision (2 Kin. 3). God brought miraculous deliverance and victory in war to the children of Israel through singers, musicians and worshippers (2 Chr. 20:22-23). Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises in prison, and God sent an earthquake to free them, bringing deliverance to the jailer and his family (Acts 16:25-34).

“On a spiritual level, music bypasses our mind and goes straight to our heart, soul and spirit,” says Julie True, a musician whose ministry is marked by soaking music. “It touches places that nothing else can reach. When we sing songs of praise and worship, we have the power to defeat the enemy as well. Worship opens up the heavens and moves God’s heart.”

Sid Roth, host of the television program *It’s Supernatural*, has interviewed many musicians and singers through the years about songs that set the captives free. He has discovered that a combination of the Word of God and music that glorifies Him sets the stage for the supernatural. “The spoken word is powerful,” says Roth. “But that same word when sung, is more powerful. When I lay hands on the sick in the name of Jesus, people are healed. But when I sing ‘Be healed in Jesus’ name’ over them, more are healed!”

Even science agrees that music has healing power, and there are at least 5,000 registered “music therapists” in the U.S. who play sounds that set the captives free in hospitals, special needs classrooms, nursing homes and other environments. Harvard University researchers, among others, are reporting that music is a healing balm for stroke,

Alzheimer's disease and the physical stress of premature birth. Harvard scientists have also learned that music can improve surgical outcomes, restore lost speech, reduce side effects of cancer therapy, relieve pain, improve mood and battle depression.

"Music might provide an alternative entry point to the brain because it can unlock so many different doors into an injured or ill brain," Dr. Gottfried Schlaug, a Harvard University neurologist, told the *Los Angeles Times*. Schlaug's research shows that pitch, harmony, melody, rhythm and emotion, which are all components of music, engage different parts of the brain—parts of the brain that are also important for speech, movement and social interaction.

Powerful Sounds That Bring Heaven Down

Music is a powerful force that originated in the heart of God—it has always existed in heaven; it is the language of heaven and plays a role in everything God does. Consider the few glimpses of the throne room we see in Scripture. The four living creatures are shouting "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty," accompanied by the music of heaven as they fall down before God's throne (Rev 4:8, MEV).

"Music is the primary, concentrated and connecting vehicle that joins us between heaven and Earth or hell and Earth," says Maurice Sklar, a musical prodigy who was accepted into world-class arts schools as a youth before launching into full-time ministry. "It is a concentrated expression of expressive power through sound that directly brings us into union from our hearts to God or to Satan. Whenever I play the violin, it speaks perfectly to every heart, no matter what language they speak. That is the greatest blessing of instrumental music—it does not require words."

When God created the world, He did it with words—sound. Sklar, who says he visited heaven and heard its sounds, explains that

all matter started in the form of light, and light and sound travel in spectrums of wave frequencies that are part of the building blocks of our natural world. Light, he says, is the boundary between the Spirit realm and the natural realm. Since sound—and with it, music—is part of light, it connects us to the spirit realm.

“When we worship, we create an open heaven over our lives,” says Janie Duvall, the program producer for the *It’s Supernatural* television program for 23 years who has launched her own music ministry to teach the power of soaking in God’s presence. “Worship changes the atmosphere, invites His manifest presence and sets the stage for encounters with the Father that can change our lives—and heal our bodies.”

Do Certain Sounds Move God’s Heart?

We’ve established that God’s power can travel on sound, but do certain sounds move His heart—or move us into His presence—more than other sounds? Kathryn Kuhlman had her favorite songs, such as “How Great Thou Art,” “Alleluia” and “Spirit of the Living God” that helped the masses enter into the miraculous healing presence of God. But are these personal preferences of healing ministers, or do particular songs attract the tangible manifestation of the Holy Spirit?

“Certain keys seem to take us to different places in the Spirit, and to open up different places inside my heart,” True says. “Also, major keys and minor keys each have their own sound and applications. Different instruments also open up different places in the spirit. For instance, cello always affects me like a ‘wooing’ of the Lord. It draws my heart into the love of God and is able to so beautifully express human emotion through the sound when played with excellence.”

Taylor believes songs set an atmosphere for healing but encourages believers not to overanalyze the concept. Ultimately, healing comes from God—not music that hits certain

frequencies or 650 beats a minute. She knows this all too well because she was on her deathbed after a physician error during a simple surgery. Her colon was deteriorating, and she dwindled down to 89 pounds, having nine surgeries in 90 days before she emerged from the trial.

“I believe healing comes from the stripes on Jesus’ back—that’s it,” Taylor says. “If we go back to Psalm 32:7, it’s simple. He is our hiding place. Just keep worshipping Him, and you’ll find the hiding place. There are not 50 steps to healing. There’s one mysterious secret to getting set free from disease or anything else in your life. You need one good encounter with God. That’s all. Music can set the stage for an encounter with God.”

Soaking in the Presence of God to Rest and Receive

You don’t need to go to a conference and have Taylor play her violin over you to get healed, either. Soaking music—longer, slower versions of worship songs that flow like a river of life—emerged about a decade ago and can be a tool for entering the healing presence of God in your own home.

Scriptures such as Psalm 4:4 (Meditate in your heart on your bed and be still.), Psalm 37:7 (Rest in the Lord and wait patiently.) and Psalm 91:1 (He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.) support the concept of soaking. Soaking is a time to quiet your soul and awaken to His presence, to hear from the Lord and receive what you need.

“Soaking is an interactive experience with God that has no agenda, no limitations on His goodness and is often accompanied by healing,” True says. “Soaking is a time to fix our eyes on Jesus, cease all striving and lay our burdens at His feet. It’s a time to receive fresh healing in our body and soul. Soaking is a time to rest in the shadow of His wings and to know His peace that passes all understanding.”

This next question is vital: Does faith have anything to do with the power of music to heal? Yes and no. Kuhlman once told the story of an unbeliever who walked into one of her meetings thinking it was some sort of convention. With music thundering in the background, the Lord healed him of a hearing disorder—and, at the time, he was still in unbelief.

Music can play a role in healing and so can faith, but God is sovereign and can heal whom He wants when He wants, and we don't have to feel anything in the process. Duvall echoes Roth's comments: "Pairing Scriptures with music helps people put their faith on the Word," she says. "When we worship the Lord, we may not feel anything, but we can believe that when we draw near to Him, He draws near to us and He inhabits the praises of His people—and miracles can happen."

When God Shows Up to Minister Healing Miracles

Healing music is not merely a scientific theory—it's a kingdom reality. Worship unites our spirit, soul—our mind, will and emotions—and body with the Lord, and we create a stairway to heaven, piercing a veil between heaven and Earth and inviting the King of glory to have His way. His way—His will—is always to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers and cast out devils.

Sklar says he's seen thousands of healing miracles while playing his violin and many more salvations in the past 25 years. He tells of a 12-year-old girl in Fort Wayne, Indiana, who was born with a deformed right foot—and the Lord gave her a creative miracle in the form of a new foot. In Canada, Sklar says he watched God heal over 40 people with knee problems—including one man who had been born without kneecaps.

"I was in Tulsa, Oklahoma, at the Prayer Center pastored by Dave Roberson when I saw God create a shoulder joint that was not there before," Sklar says. "This man had never been able to move his arm from birth. As I played the violin over him, he said that he felt his shoulder begin to heat up as God

healed him. He was doing windmills with his arm, jumping and shouting: 'Look, I'm healed! I'm healed!'"

True has seen similar miracles through her soaking music. When people play her CDs, God shows up. She reports improvements in Alzheimer's patients, reduced pain among women laboring to give birth, better sleep and inner healing. "Inner healing, peace and comfort is the type of healing I've seen most with my music, and the way God has uniquely wired me to worship and minister to others," she says.

Taylor can share story after story from over 20 years of playing sounds that set the captives free. She beams when she speaks of Sylvester, a man whose wife made him fill out a card declaring he received his healing even though he felt nothing. After he signed the card, all the pain left his body. Then there's Margie, a middle-aged woman who had lumps in her breast. After Taylor played her violin over Margie, a miracle happened—the lumps disappeared. When she went to the bathroom to check herself, everyone heard her scream: "Thank You, Jesus. Thank You, Jesus. Thank You, Jesus."

So how do you get to this place where the sounds can set you free? How do you embrace songs of deliverance? Sometimes it can be quite by accident. But we shouldn't forget Ruth Ward Heflin's map to the glory: Praise until the spirit of worship comes, worship until the glory comes, and stand in the glory.

"When you want to know what something is worth, you call an appraiser, and you don't want an appraiser unless he's certified—and the certification comes from the book," Taylor says. "The book—the Bible—tells you what God is really worth. So you call God what the Word says He is, and He becomes that to you. Somewhere in your praise, you'll lock eyes with Him and step into worship—and somewhere in that worship, you'll touch Him, and He'll touch you. You'll enter the glory, and that's when deliverance and healing come."

Watch LaDonna Taylor play her violin on *It's Supernatural* and talk about how God heals through her music at .

How to Revitalize Your Body and Spirit in 28 Days

Fasting is an ancient biblical and spiritual tool for cleansing the soul and spirit.

Fasting is a key to genuine and deep spirituality. Throughout the ages, people have used fasting as a tool for entering into deeper spiritual realms and getting to know God better. In the Bible, fasting was considered a key part of entering into and maintaining a powerful and spiritually dynamic walk with God. To fast biblically, you must voluntarily abstain from food—partially or completely—for a period of time for a spiritual purpose.

During a spiritual fast, you deny yourself one of the most basic elements of survival, one that is loved and cherished by your body—food. The reason is that fasting, when accomplished through the direction and enabling of the Holy Spirit, has the power to break the gripping control of our lower nature.

As you develop a life of fasting and prayer, you will find that God will lead and guide you. You will walk in the footsteps of great men and women who have gone before us—men and women who increased in purity of body, mind and spirit and who touched heaven with their prayers and nations with their passions.

Daniel was one of these men. His fasting brought about powerful results. Let's take a look at the Daniel fast for overcoming the flesh.

A Daniel fast is a partial fast based on the way Daniel and three other Hebrew youths fasted when the Jews were taken captive and led away to Babylon. We can also connect the Daniel fast to the time in Daniel 10 when Daniel waited upon the Lord for help from heaven on a critical matter concerning the kingdom he served. Using these references, I have developed the meal plan and spiritual approach.

I believe the Daniel fast was all vegetables and no grains, meat, or wine. The 21-day detox plus seven-day juice fast I've developed incorporate what I call a modified Daniel fast, hence the Daniel detox.

Daniel and the three Hebrew young men lived a fasted life for three years on a vegetarian diet while learning and studying in the king's court, and God honored their partial fast. God tremendously favored their decision to fast and granted them favor, wisdom and insight far above anyone around them.

Like the Daniel fast, the Daniel detox eliminates rich foods that are tempting to the flesh. Today people are so bound to their flesh that they often cannot go one meal without eating some form of meat, something sweet, something fatty or some other type of rich food. We must crucify our flesh daily and take up our cross and follow Christ (Matt. 16:24). What better way to crucify our flesh than to follow Daniel's fasted lifestyle?

The 28-Day Daniel Fast

This is an introduction to my 28-day fasting program.

It will provide you with the information you need to prepare for the actual fasting part of this detoxification and cleansing program. Before you consider fasting, it is

important to follow this uniquely designed nutritional program to strengthen and support your liver, which will prepare it for the increased role of detoxification during your fast.

Your body was uniquely created to handle enormous amounts of toxins, poisons, germs and diseases. Your body's detoxification system, including your liver and GI tract, is astonishingly powerful. With proper nutritional support from you, your body is able to eliminate chemicals and toxins.

The benefits to you of a detoxification system that is functioning at peak efficiency are unending. A properly operating detoxification system in your body will:

- Prevent and even reverse disease
- Provide you with more energy
- Allow you to feel better
- Aid you in losing weight
- Help clear up your skin and complexion

The first system of toxic cleansing is your liver. It's an amazing organ that works day and night to cleanse your blood from chemicals, poisons, bacteria, viruses and any other foreign invader that comes to rob you of your good health.

If you wanted to be an award-winning Olympic athlete, you wouldn't enter the competition without spending months in training, strengthening your muscles, developing your skills and building your body with the best diet and nutrition available. In the same way, you must train your body to compete against the toxic world in which you live.

21-Day Liver Support Program

For the first three weeks of my fasting program, you will follow this diet and regimen of supplements to prepare your body for fasting.

These dietary guidelines will help cleanse and support your

liver while you fast and will continue helping your body to operate at peak efficiency as you begin your health-first lifestyle at the conclusion of my fasting program. The more closely you follow these guidelines, the more benefit you will receive from your fast. It is important that you change your diet and lifestyle to reduce the amount of toxins you are taking in as well as improve your body's ability to eliminate toxins.

The first 21 days of my fasting program will give you the necessary dietary guidelines to cleanse and support your liver before you begin the juice fast part of the program. To get the optimum benefit, be careful to strictly follow these guidelines.

Avoid These Foods

Making the right choices of food for your liver's health is important, especially before you consider detoxification through fasting. Here are some foods—and other products—to avoid:

- Colas and chocolate
- Alcohol (including wine)
- Processed vegetable oils
- Animal skins and meats
- Deep-fried foods
- Microwaved foods
- Hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated fats and oils
- Refined foods and processed foods, including white bread, chips, cereals, instant oatmeal and instant rice
- Simple sugars, including honey, pastries, cookies, candies, cakes and pies
- Fast foods
- Processed juices
- Wheat products, including crackers, bagels, pasta, muffins (Sprouted breads such as Ezekiel or manna bread are OK.)

- Corn products
- Soy products
- Dairy products, including butter, cheese, milk, yogurt, sour cream and ice cream
- Eggs
- Fish and poultry

Individuals with autoimmune diseases such as psoriasis, rheumatoid arthritis and lupus may need to avoid nightshades (tomatoes, potatoes, eggplant and peppers), since these foods may aggravate their condition.

For this detoxification fasting program, I have eliminated all meat, dairy, eggs and other foods that commonly trigger allergic reactions or food-sensitivity reactions, including corn, soy, wheat and processed foods. Sprouted breads such as Ezekiel and manna bread are allowed unless you are sensitive to gluten, which is the protein in wheat.

Eat These Foods Instead

For at least two weeks, in preparation for your fast, eat as many of the following foods as possible. Because certain fruits and vegetables have higher pesticide residues than others, I strongly recommend organic for these:

- Organic fruit: Drink a glass of freshly juiced fruits and vegetables in the morning.
- Organic vegetables: Eat as many raw vegetables as possible. In addition, cruciferous vegetables, such as cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, kale, collard greens, mustard greens and turnips, are very important. Other liver-friendly vegetables include legumes (all types of beans), beets, carrots, dandelion root and greens. You may steam the veggies or lightly stir-fry them in organic extra-virgin coconut, macadamia nut or olive oil.
- Liver-friendly starches: Eat brown rice, wild rice, rice

pasta and brown-rice bread.

- Good fats for your liver and for detoxification: Use organic, extra-virgin olive oil; avocados; raw, fresh nuts such as almonds, macadamia nuts and walnuts (avoid peanuts and cashews); seeds; flaxseed oil (not for cooking); evening primrose oil; black currant seed oil; borage oil; and fish oil.
- Beverages: Drink plenty of pure, clean water with fresh-squeezed lemon or lime (two quarts daily), fresh vegetable and fruit juices, organic green or black tea and other herbal teas. While I don't recommend that you start drinking organic coffee, one cup of organic coffee per day is allowable if you are already a coffee drinker when you begin the program.

Take These Liver Supplements

There are certain supplements that are very important to the liver, which you should take to prepare for a detoxification fast and when ending a fast.

The following is a summary of the important supplements that I recommend you take every day of the first 21 days—the liver support phase—of this fasting program:

- A comprehensive multivitamin and mineral supplement
- Milk thistle (Silybin Phytosome)
- NAC (N-acetyl cysteine)
- Organic green tea, dandelion tea, other herbal teas (available at health food stores)
- Phytonutrient powder/drink
- Balanced rice protein supplement (optional): one scoop in 4 ounces of water, twice a day, for those individuals who are sensitive to fruits or vegetables or who have a sensitive GI tract.

Keep a Positive Attitude

The successful completion of this fasting program requires a

winning attitude and the support of your friends and loved ones! Not only do you need a determined attitude to make necessary lifestyle changes, but it will be very important to maintain a positive and cheerful outlook.

Discuss this part of the fasting program with your family. Whether or not they are joining you in this 28-day program, it is best to discuss the program with them first. This would be an excellent time to sit down together as a family and create the guidelines for your new health-first lifestyle you will launch at the end of the 28 days.

As you begin this phase, it is extremely important now for you to make the decision to eliminate toxins from your life. This should be a permanent decision for you, and it is essential during the 28-day fasting program.

Other Tips and Techniques

- Do not cut or prepare fruits and vegetables before you are ready to eat them. You may be tempted to slice up that melon and carrot just for the convenience of being able to grab them from the refrigerator, but fruits and vegetables lose their nutrients when they are cut and stored. It's best to prepare them when you know they will be immediately eaten.
- Don't deplete your food of nutrients by improper cooking techniques. When you boil vegetables, most of the nutrients leave the vegetables and end up in the water. By the time you eat them, the boiled water has a greater nutrient content than the vegetables themselves! Soups, however, are an exception to this rule because you do consume the broth that contains the nutrients from the vegetables.
- If you must boil vegetables, bring the water to a boil first and then add your veggies to the water for a brief time. Do not allow them to soak in the water. Drain them immediately and then serve them. I strongly recommend

that you steam your vegetables or eat them raw. I also recommend that my patients avoid microwaved foods altogether.

- Don't prepare too much food or prepare it too far ahead of time. Reheating food and leftovers depletes the food of valuable vitamins, minerals and other nutrients—especially if you reheat in the microwave.
- Fruits and vegetables should be eaten unpeeled whenever possible because many vitamins and minerals are actually concentrated just beneath their skin. If you have not purchased organic items, it is imperative that you wash these fruits and vegetables carefully to remove pesticides.
- It is best to use fresh, organically grown produce. However, if fresh produce is not available, choose frozen fruits and vegetables. Rarely should you choose canned fruits and vegetables, making sure the label lists only organic, whole ingredients.

Before You Begin

Before you start, it's important to set the boundaries of your fast. Determine what type of fast you will go on. Check the boxes below that identify the fast or fasts you will be implementing.

- A partial fast to support the liver during detoxification
- A Daniel fast, as in the book of Daniel
- A fruit and vegetable juice fast

Now it's time to get started. I pray that these special days of cleansing and healing will be some of the most rewarding days of your entire life. I pray that you will experience renewed health, energy and vitality. In addition, I pray that your soul and spirit will be refreshed and renewed.

Dr. Don Colbert, M.D., is board-certified in family practice and anti-aging medicine. In addition to speaking at conferences, he is the author of the New York Times best-selling book *The Seven Pillars of Health*, along with the best-sellers *Toxic Relief* and the *Bible Cure* series. He has treated over 50,000 patients in his more than 25 years of practicing medicine.

Watch Dr. Don Colbert explain the reasons why the Daniel Detox cuts out meat temporarily at .

If you liked the article, you'll love the book

Dr. Don Colbert shows you how to cleanse your body in his latest book, *The Daniel Detox: 21 Days to Revitalize Your Body and Spirit* (Siloam). His 21-day meal plan will leave you feeling fresh and ready to conquer the day. You can find this book at , or anywhere Christian books are sold.

John Eckhardt: How to Pray the Benefits of Fasting Over Your Life

The rewards of fasting far outweigh the obstacles of the enemy. Fasting has great rewards. Many believers are unaware

of the great rewards that come through fasting. Understanding the great benefits of fasting will motivate more believers to make it a regular part of their lives.

Matthew 6:17-18 says: "But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you will not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."

God promises rewards to those who fast in secret. Reward is God's favor, abundance and blessing. The open rewards of fasting include blessing, abundance, favor and prosperity. Learn the secret of obtaining God's reward through private fasting.

No one needs to know you are fasting. As the Holy Spirit leads you, make this a personal discipline between you and God and see how He rewards you. "And without faith it is impossible to please God, for he who comes to God must believe that He exists and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6).

Declare these rewards of fasting over your life to break the strongholds of the enemy: "Lord, I believe in the power of Your chosen fast (Isa. 58). Let my fasting destroy the yokes that the enemy has set up against me. Let Your light come into my life. Let health, healing and miracles be released in my life, and let me see breakthroughs of salvation and deliverance in my life through Your chosen fast. Let Your power and authority be released in my life. I drive every stubborn demon out of my life. Let every assignment of hell against me be broken—all pride, rebellion and witchcraft operating in my life will be destroyed through Your chosen fast."

Believers can also declare the blessings of God in their life: "I humble my soul through fasting; let Your favor exalt me. Let Your anointing increase in my life. Let me enjoy

restoration. Let Your covenant blessing and mercy be released on me. Nothing is impossible with You, Lord. Let my impossibilities become possibilities through Your chosen fast. Let my prayers be answered speedily. Guide me and manifest Your glory to me.”

For a slightly different approach, pray and declare the promises God gave his followers in Scripture: “I will fast according to the fast chosen by the Lord (Isa. 58:5). I will set my face toward the Lord God to make requests by prayer and supplication, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes (Dan. 9:3). I will proclaim a fast and humble myself before our God, to seek from Him the right way for my family and all our possessions (Ezra 8:21). I will turn to the Lord with fasting, weeping and mourning (Joel 2:12). I fast to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free and to break every yoke (Isa. 58:6). I will fast in the secret place, and my Father, who sees in secret, will reward me openly (Matt. 6:18). I will not depart from the temple of the Lord but will serve God with fasting and prayers night and day (Luke 2:37).”

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Unqualified: The Messiah's Misfits

God has never asked you to be normal. God has called you to be

different.

What do I mean? Christianity is the greatest adventure you could ever take, and God is the greatest tour guide on this journey called the supernatural life for those of us who are unqualified. The unqualified of God have never been called to fit in anyway. They are the ones man overlooks but God notices and plucks from obscurity.

There is one word that best describes the unqualified, and it is the word “misfit.” In fact, over and over the Bible reminds us that we are “strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Heb. 11:13). We are even referred to as temporary residents who must watch our lives closely (1 Pet. 2:11).

Our identity must not be determined by what the world says about us but by the fact that God dwells in us. If you’re not careful, the inner cry you have for God to use you can fade to a faint whisper of yesterday’s promises. Instead, you must protect that cry and rise up and realize that as the unqualified, you are uniquely qualified to bring life to a lost world. God almost always chooses the one who wouldn’t get picked to be on man’s team to be an all-star on God’s team (Prov. 15:25).

Throughout history, God has always used the least likely and the most unqualified to provoke change. The Bible is full of misfits—those who usually lost out on man’s approval but always won with a God-dreamed vision.

Will They Know You’ve Been With Jesus?

I’ve found that when people don’t understand the supernatural power of God, they always put God’s vessels on trial to defend what they’ve never experienced. Peter and John found themselves in trouble for walking in the miraculous immediately after healing a man. Acts 4:13 says, “When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took

note that these men had been with Jesus.”

What made these unqualified servants of Jesus stand out as they went about preaching the gospel was not who they were but who they knew. The neon sign lit over their lives said these men had been with Jesus. What was it that made these men so special? They understood that without God’s intervention in their lives, they were simply unqualified fools.

Do you know what made these men so feared by the religious and powerful? They never relied on themselves to do anything. Their entire reputation was one that made others sit up and say, “These guys have been with Jesus!” They continually pointed back to Him.

As the unqualified, we must desire that when people walk away from us, they never see us but Jesus. If people see Jesus instead of you, they may actually follow Him and not just you on Twitter and Instagram. The moment we spotlight ourselves, we let people down and tarnish the kingdom of God.

God Uses Quitters Too

When we look at the birth of the New Testament church, it wasn’t the well-dressed, educated and proper religious leaders who led the way from the upper room to rest of the world. No, it was a bunch of fishermen. They hadn’t received any formal training or taken any classes on public etiquette. Really, they were blue-collared rednecks—just a group of guys who would become fishers of men.

God even uses quitters, as the Bible shows through the life and ministry of Peter. God can use people who fail, curse and betray Him. At one point, Peter even gives up ministry and returns to his old profession (John 21:3).

This is why I like Peter so much. I can’t tell you how many times I’ve wanted to quit and walk away too. Yet the next morning I usually saw Jesus on the shore, telling me the same

thing He told Peter: "Feed My sheep" (John 21:17). How can we quit on the Lamb who has called us to feed His lambs?

We cannot quit. We must hold on. Our mantra must be Galatians 6:9: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

If circumstances, people or lack can cause us to quit so easily on a Father who promised to never leave us or forsake us, then we haven't taken the Great Commission seriously enough. Our victory is not found in what we accomplish, but rather in our ability to never stop chasing God's awesome calling.

I once heard someone say, "If the cost is too great, then the call is not enough!" I must take it one step further and say that if you're able to accomplish your dream on your own, then God never birthed the dream you're following.

God's Power, Not Ours

If God can use Simon Peter, He can use you and me. But if ever we think we can accomplish anything without God's help, then we have bought a lie that leads to destruction.

If you wonder where the power of God has gone, you need only look at the mainstream Christian messages that flood the airwaves with overinflated egos espousing self-help sermons, watered-down talks and hyper-grace theology. Eloquent speech and cool clothes have never chased a demon out of anyone. When we reduce preaching to an art that doesn't require Spirit unction and Spirit visitation, God simply becomes a late-night infomercial that lulls us to sleep.

To preach a compromising gospel that doesn't require repentance makes us no different from the religious who sell indulgences and penance. Nice messages and sweet services simply allow the demons to relax and make fodder of God's people. When we place God in a box of human rationality, we

only experience human results.

This is exactly why God is awakening the misfits and the unqualified. Purity is the backbone of authority, and authority is determined by brokenness. The spiritual depth of the unqualified will not come from degrees on the wall or memberships in prestigious God clubs but from the classroom of brokenness. If you will cry out on your knees in your prayer closet, then you will stand out on the shoulders of God in the public square.

God has always confounded the wise. He doesn't look for social stature, good looks or even the most intellectual among us. He calls forth the available, no matter how misfitting they are.

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If you liked the article, you'll love the book.

Evangelist and author Pat Schatzline shows how you can be used by God no matter what your weaknesses through his most recent book, *Unqualified: Where You Can Begin to Be Great* (Charisma House). You can find his book at [www.pat-schatzline.com](#), or anywhere Christian books are sold.

Blessing Prophets Comes With

Rewards

God rewards those who receive and bless prophets. Those who are hospitable to prophets get God's attention. The treatment of prophets is a sign of a person's heart toward God. Prophets are sent representatives. Rejecting prophets is tantamount to rejecting God. Favor, blessing, promotion and financial breakthrough are some of the blessings that come into your life when you receive a prophet of God.

In this article, I am going to expand on some of the rewards you can receive when you welcome the ministry of prophets.

Prophets Are Encouragers

Prophets are great encouragers. Prophets love to encourage others. This is one of the assignments of prophets. They will encourage people others have forgotten. If you need encouragement, get around prophets. In Acts 4:36, Barnabas is called "the son of prophecy." Some translations will call him "the son of encouragement." The words in these verses for "prophecy," "encouragement" and "exhort" are so closely related that they actually can be translated either way.

Prophets bring encouragement through prophecy, singing, preaching, teaching and counseling. Prophets encourage you to seek God, not wizards. Seek God. Don't seek after wizards who peep and mutter. Don't seek after those with familiar spirits. This is the cry of the prophet.

Prophets are needed when there is weakness and discouragement. The Jews were weak and discouraged when they were rebuilding the temple, but God raised up Haggai and Zechariah to encourage them and strengthen them. The Jews were able to finish the work with the help of the prophets.

Finally, prophets speak to and encourage the weary. They have compassion and love for the weary. They bring encouragement to

the weary. They bring refreshment to the tired. If you are tired and weary, you need to get around prophets.

They can identify weariness and discouragement quickly. They are sensitive to it. The weary are the sad, the tired, the faint and the discouraged.

Prophets Challenge the Saints

Prophets stretch us. Prophets will challenge the church in the area of faith. Prophets will encourage the saints to “believe God for greater things.” Prophets hate doubt and unbelief. They speak things that require you to believe. They stretch your faith with the word of the Lord.

Prophets can speak things that are sometimes hard to believe. The prophet moves us into areas that are impossible with man but possible with God. God uses prophets to push us past our comfort levels.

Prophets will sometimes speak words that seem so impossible that they will say, “Did I just say that?”

Prophets help us go through God’s chastening (correction). God’s discipline is important to prophets. Prophets lift up the hands that hang down and strengthen the feeble knees. We all need encouragement when we are going through correction. Prophets are good at helping us endure God’s correction in our lives.

In addition, prophets challenge us to make a decision. Elijah asked Israel, “How long will you stay between two opinions?” Elijah challenged them to make a decision. A double-minded man is doomed to be unstable in all his ways (James 1:8).

Prophets also challenge our comfort zone. Amos gave a word to those who were at ease in Zion (Amos 6:1). They were comfortable in their sin and rebellion. They felt safe and secure in their disobedience. They were living an easy life

without any concern for others who were downtrodden and oppressed.

Prophets Warn of Danger

Prophets can see the end from the beginning. Prophets know where people, churches, cities and nations are headed based on their decisions. They will know the end. They will know where you are heading.

They will know where you are going. Prophets encourage and warn people to make the right decisions so their end can be blessed. They try to turn you around if you are heading to a bad ending.

Before God acts, He shows His plan to His prophets. Prophets will see it and pray about it before it happens. This is heaven working with earth. After all, Amos 3:7 says, "Surely the Lord God does nothing without revealing His purpose to His servants the prophets."

The future is not our enemy. Prophets help keep us poised for the future. They will not let you get stuck in the past. They bring hope for the future. Prophets understand destiny and purpose. They will help us not to fear the future or to remain stuck in the past.

Prophets are concerned about your future. Prophets want to know where you are heading. They want to know what decisions you are making now that affect your future. They want to know if you are fulfilling your destiny (Jer. 29:11).

A Prophetic Oasis

The prophetic atmosphere is an oasis (Elim). An oasis is a fertile spot in a desert where water is found. It is a watering hole, watering place, waterhole or spring. The prophetic refreshes, provides rest and waters dry places. An oasis is a place of palm trees. Elim is a picture of this.

Elim was a place of 70 palm trees in the wilderness. The prophet is like a palm tree. If you need refreshing, get around a prophet.

Refresh means “to revive or reinvigorate, as with rest, food or drink; to renew by stimulation.”

Prophets help prepare us for times of refreshing. Churches and believers need seasons of refreshing. These times of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord.

Prophets Bless People

Prophets bless. Some people think that all prophets do is curse people, but prophets love to bless people. They love to speak words of blessing over people whom God desires to bless. Jacob blessed his sons before he died (Gen. 49). Moses blessed the tribes of Israel with prophetic words (Deut. 33).

Prophetic blessings are powerful. Your life will be changed and blessed when you are blessed by a prophet. And don't despise what prophets have to say (1 Thess. 5:20). Those who hate prophets have a long line of unflattering predecessors (Matt. 23:29-32).

A prophetic word can save your life, release you into your destiny, give you understanding, release grace into your life, bring correction, cause breakthrough and give you direction. Prophets and prophetic utterances are sometimes despised and lightly esteemed. Prophets should be esteemed and received. They bring great blessing.

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If you liked the article, you'll love the book.

In his latest book, *Prophet Arise* (Charisma House), apostle John Eckhardt teaches you how to discern and use your prophetic gift. Discover what the prophet's call is and how to find healing when you are misunderstood. You can find this book at [Amazon](#), or wherever Christian books are sold.

Mary Had a Choice and She Chose Life

When the mighty angel Gabriel appeared to Mary with a prophetic announcement that she would give birth to a baby named Jesus, fearful thoughts surely flooded her young soul. Under Jewish law, single women who turned up pregnant were stoned to death in the public square. At best, she would be an outcast, divorced and unmarriageable before she ever even wedded Joseph.

If anyone can relate to the fears of women who face unexpected pregnancies, it's Mary. Every day, 3,322 women give in to that fear and choose to have an abortion, according to the Guttmacher Institute—and a disturbing 64 percent of them are Protestants and Catholics. Mary chose to obey the law of God—understanding all too well that abortion is a violation of the Sixth Commandment: “Thou shall not kill.” She loved not her life even unto death and bore a Son who gave eternal life to dying souls.

But what if Mary wasn't pro-life? What if she chose, instead, to give in to the fear, the social stigma, the financial

pressures or one of the many other reasons women choose to have abortions? What if she had decided not to respond to Gabriel's declaration with, "I am the servant of the Lord. May it be unto me according to your Word" (Luke 1:28)? Mary had a choice—and she chose life. She chose to give birth to the Son of God who would take away the sin of the world.

Fast-forward 2,000 years and many frightened, pregnant women are facing the same choice today. They can listen to the spirit of abortion whispering in their ear about the convenience of murder, the cost of raising a child, the struggles of being a single mother, the call to lay down their own dreams to nurture the dreams of another—or they can listen to that still, small voice urging them to choose life.

"It happened in biblical times," says Laura Allred, director of the Back to Life Movement. "That spirit of abortion—now legalized in many nations across the earth—was alive and well then. If Mary hadn't yielded to the Spirit of God and pressed into the strength of the Lord, ... can you imagine? What a brave, brave woman it took! I'm thankful that Mary chose life and gave us the Savior of the world."

As millions celebrate the birth of Jesus this Christmas, many pro-life advocates are asking these profound questions: What if Jesus had never been born? What if Mary hadn't been pro-life? What if the manger had been empty?

Changing One Heart at a Time

Mary had a heart after God's will, but many women who have abortions don't know Jesus. Changing a culture of death that sees over 1 million abortions in America, then, means more than changing laws—it means changing hearts with Holy Spirit strategies that demonstrate the selfless love of God in a selfish world. That's the goal of a growing nationwide movement known as "Empty Manger."

Hundreds of people will gather again this Christmas around

empty mangers outside abortion clinics and sing Christmas carols that aim to stir hope and joy in places of misery and despair. Countless lives have been saved as mothers—touched by songs such as “Silent Night”—have reconsidered the choice to abort their babies.

“It puts Christmas into the proper perspective,” says Eric Scheidler, executive director of the Pro-Life Action League, which held the first Empty Manger event in 2003 in Chicago. “It shows you in a very powerful way how desperately the world needs Christ. It puts you in touch with what the world was like before Christ came and radically redirected human history, establishing the church and putting down the worship of demons that had been so prevalent.”

Holy Spirit-inspired pro-life strategies are not returning void. Indeed, they are accomplishing what God intends them to do one life at a time.

The Personhood USA movement contends to drive personhood rights for all humans, and March for Life recently saw 300,000 protest abortion at the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The Back to Life Movement enlisted 39 young women to walk nearly 250 miles from Houston to Dallas, and then there’s Bound4LIFE, a grass-roots prayer mobilization movement focused on the ending of abortion. The number of adoptions has increased, while spiritual awakening has brought about a reformation of government and society. Hearts and minds are changing even as the culture wars rage.

Call it a massive shift in public opinion about abortion. “Over the last two years, there has been a wave of the most pro-life legislation we’ve ever seen combined with some of the most revealing evidence exposing the abortion industry,” says Matt Lockett, executive director of Bound4Life.

Since the 2010 elections, some 260 pro-life laws have been passed across the country, according to Americans United for

Life. Already, a dozen states have passed the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act—prohibiting abortions of unborn children who can feel pain. The National Right to Life Committee reports substantial medical evidence that demonstrates unborn children are capable of experiencing pain by 20 weeks after fertilization.

This death-defying legislation comes amid the release of a series of undercover videos revealing what attorneys for The Center for Medical Progress (CMP) describe in court documents as Planned Parenthood's alleged "practice of buying and selling fetal issue." In the wake of the scandal that brought disgusting abortion practices to light, Planned Parenthood's "favorability" has dropped from 55 percent in 2012 to 44 percent now while its "unfavorability" has increased from 22 percent to 39 percent, according to the Alliance Defending Freedom.

"Abraham Lincoln said if you can change public opinion that you can change government," Lockett says. "What we are seeing in conjunction with public opinion changing is more and more legislation. We are seeing it at the state level and amazing attempts at the federal level. States have been pulling funding for Planned Parenthood."

Spotlight on Planned Parenthood

The Planned Parenthood controversy erupted when a series of undercover videos revealed the abortion giant allegedly receives money from medical research companies in exchange for "donating" body parts of the babies it aborts.

Posing as the head of a company eager to purchase fetal body parts and tissue, David Daleiden, executive director of CMP, and others caught Planned Parenthood officials on video describing how they obtained tissue from aborted fetuses for researchers.

In court documents, attorneys for Daleiden explained the

investigation revealed evidence of the “selling of fetal tissue for profit ... , the collection of intact fetuses born with beating hearts for research purposes and the procurement of fetal tissue for research without patient’s knowledge and consent.”

Planned Parenthood contends the videos falsely portray its participation in tissue donation programs for medical research. Planned Parenthood President Cecile Richards says the organization does not sell the tissues and only accepted reimbursement for handling it. In the face of public outcry, she announced that a handful of health centers involved in fetal tissue research would no longer accept reimbursement. But few are buying her story, including pro-life politicians.

The CMP videos prompted demands by members of Congress to cut off funding to Planned Parenthood, threatening a government shutdown in September. In October, the House of Representatives voted to create a select panel within the Energy and Commerce Committee to investigate abortion practices and how fetal tissues are handled and obtained, along with the costs.

“This is about getting answers to questions about how we treat and protect life in this country,” says pro-life Rep. Marsha Blackburn, vice chair of the committee. “This is a discussion that this country must have; we cannot shy away from what is an unsettling topic. The allegations raised in these disturbing and abhorrent videos have led us to ask: What have we come to in this country?”

Turning the Tide

The answer is clear: We’ve come to a culture of death where abortion is celebrated and euthanasia is being legislated. Although *Roe v. Wade* opened the floodgates to the spirit of abortion, that spirit was murdering preborn babies before the law, and no law can completely prevent the rising wave of

lawlessness that Paul the apostle prophesied. Again, the answer is changing hearts. Many are leaving the abortion industry and sharing their testimonies with the world.

“In the midst of the rising tide of hostility that pro-life activists are experiencing, it’s important to remember that some of the most vociferous abortion advocates of the past have become prominent pro-life champions,” says Michael L. Brown, host of the nationally syndicated talk radio show “The Line of Fire” and president of the FIRE School of Ministry. “It’s a scenario that is sure to repeat itself again.”

Brown points to Dr. Bernard Nathanson, an obstetrician who oversaw the performance of about 75,000 abortions before becoming a leading pro-life advocate. He performed his last abortion in 1979 and produced the 1985 film *The Silent Scream*, which shows sonogram images of a child in the womb trying to get away from the abortionist’s death devices. He later produced *Eclipse of Reason*, which explains abortion procedures in gory detail.

Then there’s Norma McCorvey, the “Jane Roe” of *Roe v. Wade* infamy. For those who still don’t know the story, the 1973 ruling was based on a nonexistent case, as McCorvey never had an abortion. Brown notes that she too had a change of heart and a conversion to the Christian faith, and today she is a pro-life champion.

“Back in 1973, I was a very confused 21-year-old with one child and facing an unplanned pregnancy,” she says in a one-minute pro-life video. “At the time I fought to obtain a legal abortion, but truth be told, I have three daughters and never had an abortion. ... I think it’s safe to say that the entire abortion industry is based on a lie. ... I am dedicated to spending the rest of my life undoing the law that bears my name.”

These are two prominent examples, but the stories of a

countless number of less prominent “converts” are little known. Brown asks a hopeful question: If God could change the heart of Nathanson, a man who helped found National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) Pro-Choice America and once operated one of the nation’s largest abortion clinics, and if God could change the heart of the “Roe” in *Roe v. Wade*, why couldn’t He change the heart of the angry young woman who identified herself as a “fetus slayer”?

Exposing Abortion’s Lies

In the never-ending abortion argument, there’s no limit to the number of factions—pro-choice, pro-life, political parties, presidential candidates, bioethicists, legal and religious scholars—clamoring for media attention to trumpet their particular point of view. So says Debby Efurd, president and co-founder of Dallas-based Initiative 180 and its post-abortion healing and recovery program, Peace After the Storm.

The problem is, she says, we rarely hear from those at the heart of the debate: the millions of “silent sufferers” for whom abortion has been a traumatic, life-changing experience. She’s lending her voice on behalf of the post-abortive community, which, by anyone’s calculation, is a large percentage of our society. Her message is loud and clear: Planned Parenthood has betrayed women.

“In 1973, I wasn’t informed of the medical procedure I would undergo; I never received counseling or even a follow-up phone call,” Efurd says. “I walked in the front door, paid for the services in cash and was then shown the back door—but not until the abortionist told me, ‘Good news: You no longer have a baby.’”

Efurd hopes a full investigation of the nation’s largest abortion provider will expose the extent of this deception—and that perhaps the physical, mental and emotional needs of women who are at their most vulnerable moments will finally be put

first.

“For decades now, American women have been told they could have an abortion with little or no consequence,” Efrud says. “Nothing could be further from the truth. Abortion is an unnatural process that interrupts one of the primary functions of the human body.

“A woman’s body naturally resists the abortion, causing physical and emotional pain. I’m not alone in this mindset—there are millions just like me, women who regret their abortions and have suffered silently. For far too long, they have held on to a secret that slowly destroys them. But we are finding our voices with each passing day.”

As she sees it, the veil of lies has finally been lifted: Laws have been broken, human rights violated and we have all been deceived—and there’s no way to “spin” this. She agrees with former Obama White House staffer Michael Wear, who said, “It should bother us as a society that we have use for aborted human organs, but not the baby (who) provides them.”

Are There Any Exceptions?

Still, people like Efrud, Lockett, Allred and others who speak up for the preborn are often accused of being uncaring and disregarding the extenuating circumstances that might force a mother to choose death over life. What about rape? What about incest? What about an in-utero diagnosis of birth defects like Down Syndrome or Trisomy 18? Is abortion still murder then?

When Lisa Smiley was 23, she got pregnant with her firstborn. She was thrilled, until doctors spotted a life-threatening heart defect called Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome. Only half of the baby’s heart was developed. Doctors suggested an abortion.

“We were stunned,” Smiley says. “While I was crying and devastated to hear this, they took my husband to another room

and explained to him the gravity of our decision. We had already told them we are against abortion, no matter how serious our son's condition was, yet they were not satisfied and thought we were being idealistic."

Smiley admits that she had absolutely no idea what she and her husband, Jim, were getting into. She knew they were not prepared for the challenges ahead. But long ago they had made a decision that abortion was wrong, under any condition. The Smileys chose life. When baby Ezekiel was born, he was put on life support. He had his first open-heart surgery at 1 week old, his second at 1 year old and his third at age 5.

When Ezekiel went into cardiac arrest in 2014 and died, Jim performed CPR while waiting for the paramedics, who revived Ezekiel. He was left with a brain injury and was completely paralyzed and mute. Doctors said he was in a vegetative state and would eventually die, suggesting they cut off all life support.

Once again, the Smileys would have to live out their pro-life convictions when presented with the option to passively euthanize their son. With intense daily therapy for the past year and a half—along with vital prayer and encouragement—miraculously Ezekiel is learning to eat, walk and talk again.

"Thinking back, I am reminded of the option we had before Zeke was born to abort him—the warnings doctors gave us about all the complications that could happen, and did happen. Many may wonder, would I choose differently?" she asks. "Raising him has, no doubt, been hard, heart-wrenching and stretched us beyond anything we have done. Just as surely, our lives have been filled with joy and happiness by having Zeke in our family."

Still, some women choose to abort, only to regret it later. About one in four women in America have had an abortion. For

women who have had abortions, Allred says the Lord offers forgiveness, not condemnation.

“Some of the strongest voices for life are women who are post-abortive,” Allred says. “As I’ve ministered on this topic, women come up to me with tears streaming down their faces—some in their 70s—who have been carrying this and have never told another person, not even their spouses, that they had an abortion as a young woman.

“There are thousands and thousands of women in the church pews who are wounded, who have never confessed it and never gave themselves permission to grieve. I would say to them that there is no condemnation, and God will use even the darkest night of your soul for His glory.”

Hope for Life

This Christmas season, pro-life advocates have never been more hopeful about a sea change in the abortion industry. For Frank Pavone, national director for Priests for Life, the Planned Parenthood controversy has helped “expose abortion for what it is—a destructive reality in our society.” Given heightened public awareness about the real nature of abortion, Pavone says he’s more optimistic than ever that the number of abortions can be slashed: “Right now, we’re at a crossroads, and either enough people across the country are really going to wake up and do something about it, including things like the protests we’re seeing across the country or not.”

The big question is whether *Roe v. Wade* can ever be overturned. Pro-life advocates say this can’t occur until the composition of the U.S. Supreme Court is changed by presidential appointment.

Cheryl Sullenger, senior vice president at Operation Rescue, says she is encouraged that many of the candidates running for president are addressing abortion. “We have never been able to communicate on a national stage to the extent that these

videos have allowed,” Sullenger says. “We have never seen presidential politics focused on abortion to the extent they are right now.”

Lockett believes abortion has a divine deadline. On the 40th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, following a 21-day fast and persistent prayer, he felt the Lord declaring He has a timetable for *Roe v. Wade*. Lockett says the Holy Spirit showed him how “dishonest scales are an abomination to the Lord” (Prov. 11:1) and that the U.S. has been using deceptive and dishonest weights in its scales so that it cannot accurately weigh the value of human life. “I’m absolutely convinced that *Roe v. Wade*’s days are numbered,” Lockett says. “While public opinion is changing, there are court cases that are moving through the system, and some of them will be hitting the Supreme Court. That’s ultimately where it has to go, and that’s where we have to focus our prayers and our activism to continue to see the culture shift and to see the courts reflect that.”

Lockett is praying on many different levels and suggests others do the same.

“I pray for the young girl who is in the most difficult situation of her life,” Lockett says. “I’m praying that she would encounter the Lord and have the support from the church that she needs. I’m praying for elections, and I’m praying for the minds of judges who directly have the power and ability to change the laws of the land.”

This Christmas, as people attend pro-life events and gather around empty mangers outside abortion clinics, the clock ticks toward this divine deadline.

“Abortion will continue to diminish over the next 10 years, and then with lower abortion numbers, we’ll see more abortion clinics closing because they won’t be able to stay in business because there is not enough money to go around,” Sullenger declares. “I think that will happen before *Roe v. Wade* is

overturned. You have to have all the stars align.”

But that’s what happened 2,000 years ago after Mary chose life and Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Wise men came from the east to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is He who was born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east and have come to worship Him” (Matt. 2:1-2).

This Christmas, let’s do more than remember Jesus is the reason for the season. Let’s do more than sing Christmas carols. Let’s be thankful for Mary’s courage and pray that women making decisions about unexpected pregnancies will choose life. After all, they may not be carrying the Son of God, but they could be carrying a world changer and a history maker.

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Troy Anderson and Ben Johnson *contributed to this article.*

Watch Pro-Life Action League’s seventh annual “Empty Manger” Christmas Caroling at five Chicago abortion mills at .

John Eckhardt: Heaven’s

Prophetic Assignments

God puts a prophet through a process of refinement. God purges the prophet and develops their character. The prophet has to respond to the dealings of God in his or her own life before they can effectively deal with the problems in the lives of others.

Sometimes as a prophet you will feel as if you are in a furnace. You may find yourself saying, "God, why are You dealing so strongly with me? Why don't You deal with everyone else like this?" Don't give up, prophet. Go through the process.

A prophet is a vessel. God purges His vessels. God will take the dross (impurities) out of your life. You have to become the raw material to be a prophetic vessel. Go through the process. Let the fire burn.

Prophet, don't allow guilt, shame and condemnation to prevent you from accepting and walking in your calling. Many prophets struggle with feelings of inadequacy as a result of their past. Isaiah was purged and sent. Allow the Lord to purge you from sins of the past, walk clean before the Lord and fulfill your call.

Moses distinguished himself as a prophet by his faithfulness (Num. 12:7). Be faithful to the call and commission.

The Prophet's Anointing

Prophets understand grace. They know God's strength is by grace. They understand that they cannot do this in their own strength (1 Cor. 15:10). Prophets depend on the grace of God—His strength, favor, power and ability. They understand that without God, they can do nothing (John 5:30). Prophets will find themselves in situations in which they have to depend on grace.

God calls all kinds of people to be prophets. The Lord chose the foolish things to confound the things that are wise (1 Cor. 1:27-29). David was an obscure shepherd boy. Amos was not a prophet or a prophet's son. God calls people who would not qualify by the standards of men. Prophets are not determined by men but by God. God's choice is a challenge and rebuke against the pride of men.

There are things that you can learn directly from God. This is what happens to prophets. Prophets know things that are not taught by men. Jesus knew more than all the religious leaders of His day. They marveled at His knowledge (John 7:15). Jesus had not attended their schools.

The prophet's words are anointed and carry power. When prophets speak, things happen. When prophets speak, things change. When prophets speak, God moves. Open your mouth, prophet, and speak. God will back you up. He will confirm the words of His servants (Is. 44:26).

God commands His prophets to prophesy. When they do, there is a noise, a shaking, a coming together. Dead things come to life. Dry bones live again. The prophets' words bring life. They release breath.

When God is speaking, who can keep from prophesying? Some may want the prophets to be quiet, but they can't help but prophesy (Amos 3:8). This release can happen in the form of weeping, speaking, writing, singing, dancing or praying.

You cannot make prophets do what you want them to do. They are not to be used for your benefit and desire, but they are created for God's purposes. You are in trouble when you try to make them see and say what you want them to see and say. Prophets are independent spokesmen.

Prophets don't preach what is popular. Neither do they preach to be popular. They often preach a truth that makes them unpopular. They are not owned by people and organizations;

they are owned only by God. The prophet is devoted to God and truth, not institutions, organizations, religions, doctrines and creeds.

You Must Overcome Fear

The Lord will put you in situations where you must overcome fear. You will have to learn to overcome criticism, rejection, jealous people and the like. This is part of the making of a prophet. The Lord is building courage in you. You will have to make decisions some people won't agree with. You will have to take a stand. You cannot please everyone. You may lose some relationships.

Prophets must overcome the fear of man. This can be a major battle for some. The fear of man brings a snare. You cannot fear man, the call, criticism, rejection, persecution or intimidation and be strong in the prophetic. Fear will short-circuit your prophetic flow. Everyone has to overcome some kind of fear. You are not alone. God will deliver you from all your fears and give you the courage you need (Jer. 1:8).

The prophet's desire is to please God, not men. You cannot be a servant of Christ and please men (Gal. 1:10). Prophets don't seek the approval of men. The prophet's priority is to please God. Inordinate people-pleasing brings you into bondage by enslaving you to everyone whom you desire to please.

Jesus did not look for or receive honor from men (John 5:41). Jesus received honor from the Father. Prophets have always had to live without honor from men. God does not want you to depend on man's honor. The Father's honor is the most important thing to prophets (John 8:54).

Some of the early church leaders were excommunicated. Martin Luther, Jan Hus and other reformers were excommunicated. Are you willing to be rejected because of the truth?

How to Handle Opposition

Demons hate prophets. Witches and warlocks hate prophets. Jezebel hates prophets. Prophets are a threat to the works of darkness. They expose the works of the enemy. Prophets are on the enemy's hit list. God protects His prophets, so don't be afraid of the enemy. No weapon formed against you will prosper (Is. 54:17).

God sustains His prophets. They don't have to depend on men and religious systems to survive. Prophets depend on God. They must be free to speak for the Lord. True prophets don't eat at Jezebel's table.

Elijah was fed by ravens (1 Kin. 17:3-5). God was his source and provider. Prophets depend on God for sustenance. Prophets need God's sustenance because they are often rejected by men. Prophet, expect to receive miraculous provision from God.

God hates when His prophets are mistreated (Ps. 105:15). Prophets can be mistreated, persecuted, ignored, called crazy, rejected, overlooked, isolated, muzzled and passed over. Prophets are often persecuted by the systems they cry out against. This is nothing new. God vindicates His prophets, defends them and deals with the systems that mistreat them.

If you are a prophet, you will have to develop some toughness. Prophets have to learn how to "shake off the dust" (Matt. 10:14). Prophets want everyone to receive the truth and be blessed, but sometimes it just does not happen that way. You can't make people do what the Lord says. Sometimes you have to leave and "shake off the dust."

If you are rejected, don't pick up demons of hurt and rejection. Don't let those demons in your life. Remember the word of the Lord to Samuel: "It is not you they have rejected, but Me they have rejected from reigning over them" (1 Sam. 8:7).

It's not about you; it's about the Lord. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad.

General Functions of a Prophet

Prophets pull down that which God did not build, root up that which God did not plant and destroy what God wants destroyed.

God uses prophets to send out ministries. Prophets enjoy releasing and seeing ministers released. Prophets love to see people activated and released into their God-given destinies. They love to see the plans and purposes of God come to pass in peoples' lives.

Prophets don't like being in ministries where no one is released. Prophets don't like seeing the wrong people released.

It is the ministry of prophets to pray over and lay hands on those being separated unto special ministry (Acts 13:2). The prophets and teachers at Antioch heard the Spirit say to separate Paul and Barnabas. They separated them, laid hands on them and sent them out. Prophets help us release ministries.

Some prophets are also scribes (Matt. 23:34). They write down their dreams, visions, prophetic words and insights. They often love journaling. The scribal prophet is not limited to writing, but can release the word through audio, video, print and other media. They have a desire to record what God is saying.

Scribal prophets, go back and read the things you wrote down years ago, and you might be shocked at what the Lord has done to bring those words to pass. Some of you have journals that you have written over the years. God is faithful.

Scribes can also be persecuted. Religious systems of control hate scribes. This is because their writings challenge these systems. Truth and revelation can be imparted and released through writing. Writing has always been a powerful tool of reformation.

Some prophets are musicians and singers; others may express themselves through dance. Both Miriam and David expressed themselves in the dance (Ex. 15:20; 2 Sam. 6:14). Prophets are expressive, and the dance is one of the most powerful ways to express God's power, victory, love and mercy.

The Unusual Life of a Prophet

Prophets can find themselves in the most unusual places and circumstances, and wonder, "How did I get here?" Prophet, God can place you there to release His wisdom and His word. Don't be surprised where you find yourself ministering. God will open doors for you, send you and place you with people who you ordinarily would never meet. They need what you have.

Prophets can speak to people of power and those in positions of power. This is because power is so easily abused and misused. Nathan spoke to David. This is an example of speaking to power. Sometimes power does not want to hear what prophets say. Jesus spoke to power when He challenged the religious leaders of His day for their hypocrisy and abuse.

Yet beware. Lord Acton said, "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men." This famous quote addresses the fact that men have a difficult time handling power. Pride tends to corrupt men of power, and this is why we need prophets who will speak to and challenge power.

Moses is the exception. He was a man of great power, but he's called the meekest man of the earth (Num. 12:3). He never needed a prophet to correct him.

Prophets are not normal, and their experiences are not normal. Prophets are different because they have visitations. Unusual salvations, deliverances, dreams, visions and divine encounters are the prophet's portion. When a person encounters God, he or she cannot remain the same.

Moses encountered a burning bush, Isaiah saw the Lord in His glory, Ezekiel had visions of God, and Daniel had angelic visitations. Jeremiah encountered God at a young age, John was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, and God appeared to Jacob in a dream.

Prophets are different because they encounter God in unusual ways. They have unusual testimonies. If you tell people some of your experiences, they might think you are crazy and spooky.

Prophets do most of their work in secret. Prophets don't have to have platforms, although God may give them one. Prophets don't have to be seen, although God may highlight them.

Prophets pray, weep, minister to the Lord and study in secret. What God shows them in secret, they speak to the world. Prophets love the solitary place. Prophets hate the hype and sensationalism they see on many platforms.

Prophets are often hidden from view. They do much of their work in the secret place.

The hidden ones are the "secret ones," "the precious ones" and "the treasured ones" (Ps. 83:3).

Prophetstown

I drove from Illinois to Iowa some time ago and passed a town by the name of Prophetstown in Illinois. I have lived in Illinois all my life, and I have never heard of this town. I researched it, and this is what I found:

"Prophetstown is named for Wabokieshiek (White Cloud), a medicine man known as 'the Prophet.' (He was) also friend and adviser to Chief Black Hawk. Born in 1794, he presided over the village known as 'prophet's village' on the Rock River. He was half Winnebago (Ho-Chunk) and half Sauk and had great influence over both tribes."

I pray that the Lord would raise up “Prophetstowns” in every region across the globe. Let true prophets arise and come forth in every town and city. Let the cloud of glory be in these towns.

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Apostle John Eckhardt shares his excitement for his new book, *Prophet Arise*, on Brian Carn Live at .

If you liked THE article, you’ll love the book

In *Prophet Arise: Your Call to Boldly Speak the Word of the Lord* (Charisma House), apostle John Eckhardt teaches how to use the prophetic gifts. Discover the prophet’s call and how to find healing when you are misunderstood. You can find this book at , or wherever Christian books are sold.

Miracles, Signs and Wonders: Redigging Healing Wells in

the Holy Land

Jesus did many mighty miracles in Jerusalem and Galilee—and He's still working miracles there today through a "healing rooms" movement rising rapidly in Israel.

Two years ago, John G. Lake's supernatural ministry model made its way to the Holy Land.

Lake was a Canadian-born healing evangelist from the late 1800s and early 1900s who studied under miracle worker John Alexander Dowie.

As part of Lake's ministry, he launched "divine healing rooms" in Spokane, Washington, and trained "divine healing technicians" to pray for the sick. From February 1915 to May 1920, more than 100,000 healings were reported in Lake's healing rooms.

"God has given us a vision to open healing rooms in every city and in every nation," says Cal Pierce, international director of Healing Rooms Ministries and founder of International Association of Healing Rooms (IAHR). Pierce re-dug Lake's healing wells in Spokane in 1999 and ultimately birthed a movement. Today, more than 3,000 healing rooms in 78 nations exist—including four in Israel with five more in the works.

"Healing rooms in Israel are strategic because Israel is the crossroads of humanity," says Pierce. "Israel is the center of God's heart. Reports are coming back—we're seeing ever-increasing miracles, signs and wonders."

Miracles, Signs and Wonders

Rich and Dottie Kane, who opened healing rooms in South Florida in 2002, are leading the charge in Israel. Standing on 1 Corinthians 1:22—"For the Jews require a sign"—the Kanes contacted key leaders in Israel to cast the vision and healing

rooms were quickly established in Jerusalem, Rishon Letzion, Galilee and Ashkelon. Two additional healing rooms are planned for Jerusalem, along with others in Haifa and Christ's hometown of Nazareth.

"Muslims and Jewish people who don't know the Messiah yet are coming to the healing rooms and God is touching them with His awesome power," says Dottie Kane, co-director of Healing Rooms Ministries of South Florida and a national adviser for IAHR in Israel.

Pierce mentioned Israel is the crossroads of humanity. The nation connects three continents—Africa, Asia and Europe—and Daniel and Carolyn, directors of Oasis Healing Rooms of Galilee (last names withheld for security purposes), have discovered that people from many nations visit for prayer.

"Jesus went about Galilee healing the sick, and it will be a part of the global awakening coming to Israel and the nations," says Carolyn, who gained victory in an eight-year cancer battle at the healing rooms in Galilee after launching the ministry in 2013. Angelic visitations, she says, have marked the ministry. "In October of 2014, as we were gathered in the healing rooms, an angel manifested in the center of the room. He was dressed as a warrior," Carolyn says. "He said he was there with his company to guard and protect believers in the village. He said we are in a time of war, and it's imperative that the flame of worship does not go out in this place. From that day on, I experienced waves of peace and joy."

Israeli citizens Evgeny and Irina Rozin opened Passat Healing Rooms in 2012 with Mark 16:15-18—the Great Commission—in mind. Evgeny says not everyone can visit the healing rooms, so people call him from across the country seeking prayer. He even gets calls from foreign nations.

"We pray for people. We send prayer shawls, and they are

healed,” Evgeny says. “To pray for unbelievers in Israel is not easy. Many people are not ready for prayer in Jesus’ name. Sometimes they even refuse to be healed when they hear us pray in Jesus’ name. But when they agree to allow us to pray for them, God works.”

Some Orthodox Jews are willing to hear what Evgeny has to say about the Messiah, why He died on the cross and what His resurrection means for all who believe in Him. More Jews, he says, are considering Jesus and asking questions. Sometimes miracles result.

“During our work at the healing rooms, we’ve seen healing of pains in knees and elbows and backs and migraines. Swelling and bruises have disappeared,” says Evgeny, noting that the prayer ministry to other nations has been more miraculous than at his healing rooms in Ashkelon. “We’ve seen people cured from cancer from telephone prayer and sending prayer shawls.”

Doctors Embrace Healing Rooms

Even medical doctors in Israel are embracing the healing rooms movement. Dr. Michael Yaron and his wife, Marianne, launched the Beit Margoa Healing Rooms in Rishon Letzion two years ago. Yaron believes when he shares Yeshua with Jews as the Jewish Messiah, he also needs to demonstrate Yeshua is still the same as He was 2,000 years ago—that He still heals the sick.

In Israel though, physical healing is just the beginning. Israel is a land of immigrants and home to a generation of Holocaust survivors whose deep suffering has passed on to the second and third generations.

Yaron says many Jews need inner healing. Some are terror victims who suffer physically while others suffer emotionally from post-traumatic stress disorder.

“One man came for prayer and told us about his problems,” Yaron explains. “When we spoke about rejection and childhood

problems with his father, he started crying, and a healing process got released there and then. He's still on the way."

Then there was the Orthodox Jew who for years couldn't sleep and suffered from pain associated with dry eye syndrome, a malfunction that caused a lack of tears.

Like the woman with the issue of blood, he tried everything to find relief—including an unsuccessful operation.

"After our prayer, for the first time in years, he slept throughout the night, and from that moment on, he was healed," Yaron says. "This is also interesting because he was still not a believer and followed Eastern religions and philosophies."

Many prophetic voices are backing Yaron up. Cindy Jacobs, co-founder of Generals International, prophesied: "A new signs and wonders movement is coming, which is significantly greater than what was seen in the post-World War II healing evangelists.

Part of the fruit of this movement will be 'healing centers,' which will be built around the world, devoted to praying for the sick and casting out demons."

Prophecy of the Dead Raised

Jacobs went on to proclaim one of the distinctives of this movement: raising the dead.

She declared this would break barrenness off the church, and entire cities would turn to Christ. James Goll, an international author and prophetic minister, also prophesied about healing rooms: "Healing rooms and centers will be instituted in many cities devoted to praying for the sick and casting out of evil spirits. Parades of people healed of various diseases will once again occur as in the days of the life of John G. Lake in the 1920s."

Lake's movement is rising in Israel and beyond, but to many,

it seems especially significant in the Holy Land. Kane calls the healing rooms in Israel “glory portals” and believes “God’s glory is going to fall, and many are going to turn their hearts to the Messiah.” {eoa}

Jennifer LeClaire is the news editor of *Charisma* and the director of the *Awakening House of Prayer* in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Ryan LeStrange and Joe Joe Dawson share a prophetic word from the Lord about releasing the healing wells at .

Rediscovering the Power of the Holy Spirit

For much of my life I have felt unqualified as a leader in the kingdom of God. I have always known that without the help of my closest adviser and guide, the Holy Spirit, I would not make it.

Recently while praying, I heard God say to me: “Son, why is the church ashamed of My Spirit? Do they not realize that they cannot do true ministry without Me?” As I prayed, I began to ponder what the Lord had asked.

For years I have cried out for revival to hit America. This generation wants to see the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, yet the spiritual leaders of today act as if they have outgrown the move of God.

To decide we must keep the passionate in the back rooms and back rows of churches means a slow death. We must not relegate the moves of God to retreats, encounters and youth services. After all, great programs, warm bodies and full offering buckets have never transformed the hurting. It is the Holy Spirit who does the work.

I believe it's time to hire Him back.

Do We Really Need the Holy Spirit?

Recently a well-known television evangelist made the statement, "The Holy Spirit does not convict the believer of sin but of his righteousness in Christ!" This statement has some truth in it, but it is also very misleading. Yes, the Holy Spirit brings us into righteousness with God, but none of us should ever get to a place where we no longer have conviction at work in our lives. It is the Holy Spirit who brings conviction (John 16:8).

The same minister also made this statement: "The work of the Holy Spirit is no longer needed."

This is an absolute farce. The work of the Holy Spirit will always be with us. It is the Spirit who leads us to truth (John 16:12-15), and also the Holy Spirit who gives us the power to declare the truth in the first place (Acts 1:8).

The moment the church decides to be quiet and stop declaring the truth is the same moment we become irrelevant.

The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin. The work of the Holy Spirit advocates on our behalf. The Holy Spirit gives us power. The Holy Spirit also comforts us when we are in need. Do we need the Holy Spirit? Without a doubt.

For too long many have listened to the opinion of the crowds, the committees and the comfortable when it comes to allowing the movement of the Holy Spirit in our churches.

But God never called us to fit in. When we said, "I have decided to follow Jesus," it wasn't by the leading of a mob but by the love of a King.

If we continue to create a benign label that determines what flavor we enjoy when we eat at the table of the Lord, we will turn God into nothing more than an idol on our shelves whose belly we rub when we have a need. We must get back to our first love.

The Light of Truth

We are called to be the messengers of light, and our churches should be the lighthouses in the storms (Matt. 5:15). Yet I believe we are living in very dark times because culture is now deciding what the church can say and do.

For example, the most hated chapter in many social circles today is Romans 1.

This is the chapter the apostle Paul wrote that condemns homosexuality:

"Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done" (Rom. 1:28).

The term "depraved" means "reprobate mind," or a mind that is now "devoid of all true knowledge and judgment."

I never believed this verse could apply to the church until I realized some churches now teach sexual perversion is fine as long as two people believe they love each other.

This is an example of what I call our compassion crisis.

Churches have come to so deeply love people's flesh that they are afraid to talk with them concerning their souls. To say we love people so much that we don't want to offend them is

actually not showing them love at all. A person's eternal soul will long outlast their habitation in your church.

You must allow the Holy Spirit to personally lead you to the truth in order to lead others to the truth. God will restore their souls. You cannot simply love someone into heaven; you must lead them to the cross of freedom and let the Holy Spirit do the work.

I will close this article with a final question for the reader: Is it possible to do what you are called to do without the habitation and partnership of the Holy Spirit in your life? I think the answer is a resounding no.

I challenge the church to hire the Holy Spirit back. What do we have to lose? Everything.

Pat Schatzline is a leading international evangelist and author. He and his wife, Karen, co-founded Remnant Ministries International. Known for his crazy humor and unique ability to communicate God's Word with passion, Schatzline desires to introduce a generation to the awesome love of the Father and to see God's last-days remnant make a stand for truth through the power of the Holy Spirit.

More information

Evangelist and author Pat Schatzline shows how God can use you no matter what your weaknesses, failures, shortcomings and missteps are in his most recent book, *Unqualified: Where You Can Begin to Be Great* (Charisma House). You can find it wherever Christian books are sold or at or .

How to Defeat Your Mental Giants

When our son was young, he began having bad dreams a couple times a week. We tried everything we could to get him to sleep through the night, but monsters kept appearing in his dreams. We talked and read the Bible together, planted good thoughts throughout the day and prayed with him, but nothing we did worked. Over a period of months we tried everything, but there were giant thoughts in his little mind that overruled any attempts we made to assure him monsters didn't exist.

One day his mom realized the only way to overcome this embedded thinking was to plant another thought to overrule that one. We agreed that we would go into his room and squirt this special monster-killer juice (water) and get rid of the monsters. He made sure that we squirted it into every corner, under the bed and in the closets.

Guess what? Once we squirted water in his room, he was fine. He never mentioned another bad dream.

Here's the point: The words we introduced to him on that particular night were a greater reality than the monster in his mind.

A friend of mine who has a doctorate in psychology said that the real issue was resolved when our son understood that his parents took him seriously and acknowledged a deep fear in his reality. This Ph.D. said the brilliant thing was that we didn't force him into the room, but we took his place and went in on his behalf.

A War of Words

The truth is that the damning lies in your head can be overcome by a stronger word. The actual Word of God, Jesus, walked in your shoes and defeated your enemy once and for all. Your thinking must be founded on the reality of God's Word given for you. It must be biblically sound, or a life of futile spiritual gymnastics may consume one's entire energy.

What giant lives in your mind? Is it insecurity, guilt, shame, messages of failure or even something worse?

All of those are weaker thoughts compared with the grace and mercy extended to us through Jesus Christ. He is the Living Word and now prays for you all the time. The One who is the way, the truth and the life speaks a strong word of hope to you today. He has already gone into the deepest places of your life, done a security sweep, and declared the room to be clean.

Your inner life has been made clean, not by a bottle of concocted potion, but by His very precious blood. There is nothing that any enemy, on earth or under the earth, can do to take that reality away. All he can do is attack with the thought that it's not true.

You can win a mind war through the blood of Jesus and the thoughts that form across your own lips. Speak out the real truth.

We fight from a place of already having won in Jesus. The war is not for some position to which you must try to ascend, but rather a guarding of the thoughts that line up with what God has said in His Word.

Battleground of the Mind

Here is a simple fact that no one would argue against: The goal of war, in most cases, is to deceive your enemy. It doesn't matter how it's done; you just want your enemy not thinking correctly. No one wants their enemies making good

decisions.

The enemy of your soul wants to put forth thoughts that predict failure and destruction in your life. But the Holy Spirit is always active in your life and most active in the area of your thinking. Pay attention to the smallest thought because it could bring about the biggest victory.

David's enemy, Goliath, under-estimated how powerful the smallest thought inside the smallest boy could be. Begin right now demonstrating faith in God by completely trusting the smallest "God thought" in your mind. It might be to change your daily routine or share your struggles with a friend.

Your enemy is counting on your inaction and is determined to distract you from these powerfully small thoughts. No matter how many days, months or years you have been intimidated by the enemy's taunts, stop underestimating what God can do today.

Just as they did my son, perhaps giant thoughts are disturbing your peace. You will face them from time to time, but there is One who hears your heart's cry in the middle of the night and reminds you that He has already cleared the room. Seek to be more active in reframing your thinking from a biblical place.

Though the giant you may be facing today is very real, such as a relational breakup, cancer or a career coming to an end, there is One who comes close to remind you not to fear any of those situations. Take some time and talk with Him. He is with you as you read this and is at work in your mind and heart to offer you courage. Take faith and have a meaningful conversation with Him about what you are going through.

Bring all your giants to God for help, and you'll discover that even the smallest thought can lead to your greatest victory. {eoa}

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If you liked the article, you'll love the book

In his latest book, *Slings and Stones: How God Works in the Mind to Inspire Courage in the Heart* (Charisma House), Pastor Mike Rakes uses the story of David and Goliath to show how the underdog can rise up by tapping into "God thoughts." You can find this book wherever Christian books are sold or at or .