Why Aren't Christians Speaking Out Against Growing Trend of 'Drag Queen Story Hours'?

"[God] created them male and female" (Gen. 5:2a).

The Bible says there are only two genders, male and female, and they are God-given and unchangeable.

A biologically created male's DNA will always be male. "He will never have a uterus, and no amount of cosmetic surgery, fake hormones or media propaganda is going to be able to change these facts." (Quote is from Bill Whatcott, a British Columbian whose biblical beliefs and scientific, biological facts have caused him to be declared guilty of "hate crimes.")

In the modern world of gender ideology, truth no longer matters. The judge wrote that Whatcott's printed flyer "denies the reality of transgender people." By referring to a male, who self-identified as a female, with male pronouns, Whatcott's "misgendering" hurt the transgendered individual's "feelings, self-respect and dignity."

Whatcott was judged as guilty of public discrimination of this protected class and charged with hate crimes.

In "progressive" Canadian and European courts, biological truth seems to no longer matter. Subjective and changeable gender identity trumps objective truths of rationally minded people. Truth gives way to "feelings, self-respect and dignity," even if it limits the religious freedoms and the freedom of expression of others.

Warning to U. S.

For a country built on biblical beliefs, with Judeo-Christian values and practices, these kind of restrictions of religious beliefs and social expressions are ominous warnings to the citizens of the United States.

Though not as censorious as Canadian laws and ordinances—yet—we have already seen some state legislatures and federal district courts upholding punitive non-discrimination laws and ordinances to silence opposition to "gender identity" (as well as homosexual) ideology and lifestyles. Religious belief and even the biological realities seem to be no defense!

The apostle Paul warned the Romans that such sexually confused individuals have led societies in downward spirals throughout human history.

> *But the basic reality of God is plain enough. Open your eyes and there it is! By taking a long and thoughtful look at what God has created, people have always been able to see what their eyes as such can't see: eternal power, for instance, and the mystery of his divine being. So nobody has a good excuse. What happened was this: People knew God perfectly well, but when they didn't treat him like God, refusing to worship him, they trivialized themselves into silliness and confusion so that there was neither sense nor direction left in their lives. They pretended to know it all, but were illiterate regarding life (Rom. 1:20b-22, MSG).*

"Drag yourself away from our children."

The U.S. is now reeling from the frequent exposure of "drag queen story hours" in local libraries. Some are sponsored by the liberal-minded libraries themselves. Others are arranged by local LGBTQ advocates by renting meeting rooms at libraries and then inviting preschoolers and older to listen to them read sexually provocative stories, such as *What Color is You Underwear?*

These flamboyant drag queens are males provocatively dressed as females who encourage the kids to romp and play on top of them during these "story hours." This desensitizes the natural confusion of the children and any uncertainty of their sexually-progressive parents.

One library in Texas had to change its regulations and no longer rents out meeting rooms to anyone, in order to legally prohibit these drag queens (many with sexual abuses and some found to be registered sex offenders) from influencing children with their lewdness and perversion. Concerned parents have begun to protest these "story hour" events, some with signs saying "DRAG yourself away from our children!"

Another parent protester's sign explained that "Men dressed as women: marginalizes women, confuses children and feminizes boys."

Misguided Gendering

Sensuous times like these were described by the apostle Paul in later verses of Chapter 1 of Romans:

"Worse followed. Refusing to know God, they soon didn't know how to be human either—women didn't know how to be women, men didn't know how to be men. Sexually confused, they abused and defiled one another, women with women, men with men—all lust, no love. And then they paid for it, oh, how they paid for it—emptied of God and love, godless and loveless wretches" (Rom. 1:26-27).

Unfortunately, many churches and pro-life groups are reluctant to confront these radical, gender-ideologies and social changes directly for fear of being called names, etc. They don't want to say that LGBTQ ideology and high-risk practices are harmful and destructive beliefs and behavior based on junk science and sensual lust.

Pro-family activist group MassResistance calls that religious

reluctance out as “cowardice” which “only empowers the radicals more and leads to what Canada has become.”

Randy Thomasson, president of *SaveCalifornia.com*, has explained the very practical realities these LGBTQ activists avoid:

“For the sake of health and life, everyone should agree that sexual promiscuity and homosexual behavior invite infection and should be discouraged and that marriage with fidelity between a husband and wife is the real ‘safe sex’ and should be promoted. These are the trustworthy facts that every teen and pre-teen should be taught.”

Fortunately, no matter how we may have used and abused substances or each other, we can be forgiven by confessing our sins to Jesus and committing to follow Him as our Lord and Master. We will be given “a fresh, new start by Jesus, our Master, our Messiah, and by our God present in us, the Spirit” (See 1 Cor. 6:9-11, MSG.) {eoa}

Ordained to the ministry in 1969, **Gary Curtis** *is a graduate of LIFE Bible College at Los Angeles (soon to become Life Pacific University at San Dimas, California). He has taken graduate courses at Trinity College in Deerfield, Illinois, and Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, California. Gary served as part of the pastoral staff of The Church on The Way, the First Foursquare Church of Van Nuys, California, for 27 years (1988-2015); and served for the last 13 years as the vice president of Life on The Way Communications Inc., the church’s not-for-profit media outreach. Now retired, Gary and his wife have been married for 50 years and live in Southern California. They have two married daughters and five grandchildren.*

Why the American Church's Incomplete Preaching Is Incredibly Dangerous

If you're looking for controversy, this post will hit you just right. Some of the edgiest topics in our culture are religion and politics. Both are extremely controversial.

This post will stir the religious. It might stir up pharisaical and other fundamentalists.

We live in times where unbiblical and extra-biblical messages pour through our pulpits and airwaves.

Some have taken the gospel and fashioned it to their own comfort. Some have made "being saved" the end of receiving eternity. It is actually the beginning.

As Christians, we realize we are sinners and need forgiveness. None of us is worthy. All need salvation.

How Do We Receive Christ?

"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

Confess That Jesus Christ Is Lord

"That if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, and

believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved, for with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:9-10).

Is this it? Yes and no.

This is where we will be stretched.

Is this all there is? No. That's not all.

But this is what we are taught. Being saved includes having a circumcised heart, becoming new, bearing fruit and living by faith.

"But he is a Jew who is one inwardly. And circumcision is of the heart, by the Spirit, and not by the letter. His praise is not from men, but from God" (Rom. 2:29).

"Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things have passed away. Look, all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

"A good tree does not bear corrupt fruit, nor does a corrupt tree bear good fruit" (Luke 6:43).

"But a man may say, 'You have faith and I have works.' Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works" (James 2:18).

Is there more? Yes. I am not questioning anyone's salvation. But there is more to consider. John's baptism was obviously not sufficient.

Check This Out

> *"While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper regions and came to Ephesus. He found some disciples and said to them, 'Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?' They said to him, 'No, we have not even heard that*

there is a Holy Spirit.' He said to them, 'Into what then were you baptized?' They said, 'Into John's baptism.' Paul said, 'John indeed baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people that they should believe in the One coming after him, that is, in Christ Jesus.' When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in other tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all" (Acts 19:1-7).

If John's baptism was complete for salvation, why did the apostles travel and teach them more?

Why did they introduce the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, 3, 8, 10 and 19?

Today's Preaching

Is this what we are doing in the pulpit today? We preach repent, repent; and if you repent, you're OK. You are saved.

"When He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (John 20:22).

Does that sound right? OK, take a breath and think. After Christ's resurrection, He breathes on the apostles.

This is symbolic of receiving the Spirit of God (being saved). Did you get that? Now, what happened?

The disciples wait for the Holy Spirit in Acts 2. Then the apostles go throughout all Galilee, Judea and beyond and tell the people about the Spirit of God.

They go. Why would they go? This was obviously important.

What drives them to travel, take risks and face hardships? Because the message was vital. It carried eternal weight.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is

> *born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, "You must be born again." The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit (John 3:6-8).*

Read it again. So, is everyone born of the Spirit? When you were saved did anyone mention the Spirit to you? Probably not.

But I am sure they told you that you were saved, right? I am not saying you're not. That's not my call.

But please make sure you are.

When you signed your salvation pledge card did anyone mention that you are a new person, or that you were born by the Spirit just like you were born as a child?

No. Not. Almost never.

Why Did the Apostles Share the Holy Spirit?

What happened to the church after Acts 2 and after the Holy Spirit came?

Signs, wonders, miracles, prophesying and healing. All works of the Spirit.

Has religion stolen our identity?

We must examine our lives through the lives of the apostles and our Lord.

It is imperative that we know that we are saved and have the fruits of being a new creation in Christ Jesus.

Watchman Nee once wrote: "We have the Holy Spirit within as life and without as power and gift. If we are truly filled with the Holy Spirit within, we have the riches of the life of the Lord. If we do not have the riches of the spiritual life,

this proves that although we have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, we are not filled with Him. In the same way, if we have the Holy Spirit upon us, we have power and a certain kind of gift. We cannot say that we have the Holy Spirit upon us if we are not powerful and are unable to do anything. We must have power and gift."

Let's take our own temperature. Is the American church preaching an incomplete message? Is repentance enough (John's baptism)?

I think it's incomplete. Controversial for sure.

Let's see what Jesus says:

"I indeed baptize you with water to repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Matt. 3:11).

There is more. Let's make sure we get this right. It's too important. {eoa}

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How to Take That Crucial Step of Faith—Even If It Terrifies You

While on a mission trip in 2003, the Lord invited me to leave the comfortable for the unknown. The moment reminds me of Abraham and his call to leave home and family to go to the land of promise—the land of Canaan 1,500 miles away.

The writer of Hebrews states, “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out into a place which he would later receive as an inheritance. He went out not knowing where he was going” (Heb. 11:8).

At the time, I was a bi-vocational pastor, working a full-time job to support my family while pastoring our new church plant, Passion Church (*passiontucson.org*). During that time, the church grew, but it was not enough to support a full-time pastor. In fact, we were the main financial givers in the church, but we gave and labored with joy—we were following Jesus.

During the trip, we had a time one morning of training and prayer for pastors and leaders. Afterward, along with many of the Brazilian leaders, I found myself consecrating my life and ministry afresh to the Lord. God’s tangible presence was heavy. I can still see the floor of the church in Rio de Janeiro as I write—it became holy ground for me.

As I lay yielded to God at that moment, the Holy Spirit spoke to me, “Bob, your job is your river Jordan and I need you to ‘cross over.’ The church cannot become what I intend it to be until you leave your job and pastor full-time.”

I was undone and shaken. I knew God’s voice and I was sure this was Him speaking, but what He had just spoken challenged

me.

I was making an excellent salary with good benefits. We had money in savings but not enough to sustain us for very long. Yet I kept hearing, “Bob, your job is your river Jordan and I need you to ‘cross over.'” Oswald Chambers once said, “Faith doesn’t know where it is being led, but it loves and knows the one who is leading.” True faith responds out of relationship and obeys God’s guidance—no matter how bizarre. Faith does not rely on the natural senses or the wisdom of man to decide when to respond to God. It hears and obeys.

When I arrived home from the trip, I immediately shared this experience with Carolyn. To my surprise, she calmly said to me, “Before you left, God had been preparing me, saying that you might be leaving your job soon.” I think she had more faith at that moment than I did. We both continued to pray and seek God for confirmation during the next few weeks. Each time we prayed, we sensed that this was God’s will and that I was to leave my comfortable and secure job.

I spoke to my supervisor at work, talking to him about the church we started the previous year, and that I needed to attend to it full-time. To my surprise, he was supportive of my decision. He offered me a part-time position, but as we prayed, God reaffirmed to us that He needed us at the church full-time. With some trepidation, I turned in my notice to leave the company. We trusted that “as God guides, He provides,” and provide He did.

Our savings ran out within a few months, but the church had grown and was able to pay me a small salary. God was providing. Random people would show up at our home at odd times with groceries. God continued to provide. By faith, we hired a worship leader and moved him and his family across the country to Tucson. Somehow, all the bills were paid, and God kept providing. God also directed us to purchase church property during this season. God was in the details, and all

He needed was for us to trust and obey Him. He kept providing.

I am convinced that our church and our ministry is where it is today because we said “yes” to God when He asked me to leave the job. Our promised land was on the other side; we just had to trust God and cross over. We had to leave familiar territory for the inheritance we couldn’t fully see. Your “yes” to God is all that He needs—let your yes be louder than doubt and unbelief!

Is there anything God has told you to do that you may be delaying? Perhaps you have taken a shortcut or two hoping to fulfill His mandate. Could it be that the heavens are closed, that God’s blessings are withheld because of your partial obedience? Find out what the Spirit is saying and be obedient to do that!

Abraham Gave Himself to God’s Eternal Purposes (Heb. 11:10)

Abraham waited for the “city,” God’s eternal dwelling place. His natural eyes couldn’t see it, but He could see it as “revealed” by the Spirit to him. Abraham saw the church and the heavenly Jerusalem, God’s tabernacle among humanity. We have come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God through Christ and the New Covenant. We have become the very “city of God!” (See Hebrews 12:22-24.)

We want to live from that which was promised, with an expectant eye on the future. Abraham lived from prophetic expectancy based on God’s promise. Yet Abraham and Sarah didn’t see the fullness of the promise—larger than them. Abraham looked for the city that is now ours. He gave himself to the very eternal purposes of God. He kept his eye on that which was unseen, yet eternal.

The church should live in expectancy that is larger and later. Live from expectancy. Expect means *to look forward, to be pregnant*. We live best from expectancy—anticipating and yearning for what we hope for.

Many in the body of Christ are expecting—carrying something—ready to birth something! We carry His glory and influence our world with the weightiness of His presence (Col. 1:27). God's glory should build in our midst and across the globe.

How can we give ourselves to God's eternal purposes?

What is God doing in your life, family, church, city and nation? Do you see with God's eternal perspective for these areas? When you do, things begin to look differently, and you will act differently.

Cultivate an intimate relationship with Jesus (John 15:7).

Walk in unity and love with one another (1 Pet. 3:8-9).

Follow and obey your leaders and others. Be submissive to one another (Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:5).

Get involved with small groups and fellowship consistently with others (Acts 2:46).

Make a commitment to your local church and become a servant leader—each of us is called to this. Support your church with tithes and offerings. Give God the best of your time, treasure and talents—steward well what you have been given in the local church community God has placed you in.

Final Thoughts

Abraham was a man who heard God's voice and simply obeyed. Abraham believed in what God spoke. He was convinced, based on God's character and nature, that if God promised something, God had the ability and the desire to bring it to pass. Abraham gave himself to God's eternal purposes. In a similar manner, you can believe and obey God to fulfill your purpose and participate in God's eternal purposes.

Abraham believed God's promises and walked with Him

faithfully, and this friendship created a divine partnership that greatly impacted our world. His life demonstrated that relationship with God transcends our failures. God chooses to use those He calls friends, despite their mistakes, to partner with Him here on earth. Therefore:

Believe God's promises to you—in His written Word and those He has spoken to your heart. Obey what He has revealed. He knows how and when to bring His promises to you to pass—you don't.

Do not fear when God's promise and leading take you in a direction you don't understand. God knows what He is doing—trust Him. Faith embraces adventure.

God's nature is to provide for us. As you follow the Lord, expect His provision to follow you in life. We can trust God will provide as He promises. God's nature is to provide. Jesus is the good Shepherd who loves His sheep and provides for them. {eoa}

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Marilyn Hickey’s Success Secret: I Declare These 40 Promises Every Morning

At 89 years young, Marilyn Hickey preaches around the world with the enthusiasm of a teenager. She’s bringing the Good News of Jesus to hundreds of thousands in the Middle East and her crusades are helping to tear down strongholds and obstacles to the gospel.

The secret behind her limitless energy, she says, is a fresh dose of the Holy Spirit and making sure she’s empowered by God’s Word every morning before she hits the front lines of battle. Hickey says she was first filled with the Holy Ghost at 23, sparking a transformation that helped her become of the most well-known and beloved preachers of her time.

“I always wake up and say, ‘Good morning, Father. Good morning, Jesus. Good morning, Holy Spirit,'” Hickey told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of “Greenelines” on the Charisma Podcast Network. “This is your beloved Marilyn. I say that because He calls us beloved over 60 times in the New Testament. I make coffee and I speak 40 promises of the Word. Then I read the Word, every morning.

“All of those things are the key to my energy, and that’s what I would tell everyone. For you to win in life and be successful in your ministry, read the Word so you have faith for these people. Ask God to give you a hearing ear.

“Joshua 1:8 says if you meditate on the Word day and night, if you speak the Word day and night, you will be successful in everything you do. As for me and my house, we will serve the

Lord. He builds my faith, and faith comes by hearing the Word."

For more about how Hickey continues to impact the world, listen to this podcast. And don't forget to tune in to "Today with Marilyn and Sarah" on the Charisma Podcast Network.

Don't Listen to This Damaging Lie

You were made on purpose, for purpose and with purpose! What an extraordinary—but sadly, often disbelieved—truth! May I make that statement again so that you can allow the power of the words to sink deeply into your purpose-parched soul?

You were made on purpose … for purpose … and with purpose!

You must not allow any person or situation to convince you of anything to the contrary. Your circumstances may endeavor to persuade you that you will never walk in your life's destiny. Don't believe them.

Your culture may attempt to strip you of your God-ordained purpose. You must defiantly believe His Word and lay bare the lies of the culture. Your feelings will undoubtedly shout at you, endeavor to manipulate you and then cause you to minimize the purpose that is eternally yours. Remind yourself daily that your feelings are not the author of all truth. God is.

Even well-meaning people may try to convince you that your purpose is less than what you were created to fulfill. You must learn whose advice to listen to attentively and whose to resolutely ignore at every juncture in life.

Allow me to affirm this truth one more time: You were made on purpose, for purpose and with purpose. Your life matters to the plans of God at your moment in history. You are the only person just like you whom God has ever created in all of eternity past or will create in all of eternity future.

There has never been anyone like you in all of recorded history. There is no one else like you today, and there will never be anyone like you in all of the ages to come. No one else has exactly your genetic makeup, your fingerprints or the number of hairs on your head. How astounding!

It only takes one sentence to explain definitively why your existence on planet Earth in the first part of the 21st century is so important to the plans of God and to eternity. It is not necessary for you to consult the insights of philosophers or the theories of psychologists in order to comprehend your purpose. You can understand your overall assignment with this simple but profound truth: You are here to reveal the story of Jesus!

Dear friend, you are here so that Jesus can be present in the flesh through you.

If you don’t reveal Jesus to other people through the power of His Spirit, who will?

If you don’t tell the story of Jesus with your life, who will?

If you don’t love difficult people as He has loved you, who will do the difficult loving?

If you are not good, as He is always good, who will be good?

If you are not kind, as He is unspeakably kind, who will be

kind?

Your life, dear friend, will only be as significant as your choice to lay down your life and tell the story of Jesus. The overriding, driving purpose of your life is to reveal Jesus to others!

I can assure you that you will never be distracted by comparing yourself to other people if you are captivated by your purpose. No one can reveal the story of Jesus like you can! {eoa}

Carol McLeod *is an author and popular speaker at women's conferences and retreats, where she teaches the Word of God with great joy and enthusiasm. Carol encourages and empowers women with passionate and practical biblical messages mixed with her own special brand of hope and humor. She has written five books:* No More Ordinary*,* Holy Estrogen!*,* The Rooms of a Woman's Heart*,* Defiant Joy! *and* Refined: Finding Joy in the Midst of the Fire*. Her teaching DVD* The Rooms of a Woman's Heart *won the Telly Award, a prestigious industry award for excellence in religious programming.*

Prophetess: God Miraculously Healed Me on My Deathbed—He

Can Do the Same for You

In 2007, Valora Cole became sick, and doctors diagnosed her with a brain tumor. Frail at 90 pounds, Cole was sent home by her doctors, who said there was nothing else they could do and her death was inevitable.

But then God reminded Cole of His promise to her that she would someday "declare the works of the Lord" and that His promise to heal her would come to fruition. She clung to it, took Communion every day, and "God's word manifested in my life."

Cole and her husband, LaJun, now lead Contagious Church in Tampa and minister all over the world with the message that God will deliver on His promises—guaranteed. They also host the "Prophetic Moments" podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network.

"I could literally feel death walking around my hospital bed," Valora told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of "Greenelines" on the Charisma Podcast Network. "I said to God at the moment, this is where my life is. They've told me I have no chance to live. But God responded back to me, and He said to me, 'Valora, you cannot die because My promise to you is still alive.'

"He completely healed me, without man's intervention, without surgery, with chemo and without radiation." An MRI revealed no signs of the tumor, and doctors couldn't even find where it had been located.

"So, I am a witness, and He still heals. His word is the same yesterday, today and forevermore. Whatever God says to you, no matter what it looks like, no matter what your senses perceive, you have to look at the things you don't see. Whatever you see is temporal and is subject to change to the Word of God. Everything in my life lined up with the Word of

God. My husband and I have been on this journey to spread the gospel and to let people know he is the same God. You stand on the promises of God. He's still ministering today."

For more of Valora and LaJun's story, listen to this podcast and tune into the Prophetic Moments podcast on CPN.

Still Waiting on Your Prophetic Promise? Remember This Truth

In the past two weeks, I have examined the lives and faith of Abraham and Sarah. We read in Genesis that God promised that from Abraham's descendants, all the families of the earth would be blessed.

But 24 years passed since the Lord first spoke to Abraham and Sarah about having a son, and their faith has weakened. God, however, appears to them in Genesis 18 and tells them that Sarah shall conceive and have a son by the set time next year.

"Is anything too difficult for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son" (Gen. 18:14).

As promised, Sarah gave birth to the son of promise, "and the Lord did for Sarah as He had spoken" (Gen. 21:1).

What promise have you been waiting for? Remember, He is God

Almighty, El-Shaddai, the all-powerful God who is enough! He is able to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves!

Abraham and Sarah's son of promise, and the promise of many descendants, was to rest upon El-Shaddai—Almighty God. Their future prosperity and posterity were not found in their ability, but in God's ability. So it is for us.

Abraham is highlighted 74 times in the New Testament, second only to Moses. Abraham is the only person in the Bible called a friend of God (James 2:23)—perhaps the highest honor anyone can receive.

Abraham is the father of faith and the faithful. Throughout his life, faith is exemplified. Even when Abraham was weak in faith, God saw him as a person of faith.

Abraham and Sarah learned through their journey that they could trust and obey God. They weren't perfect, but they trusted God through the process. From this "friend of God," we learn that faith is not perfect character or integrity. Rather, it is simply taking God at His word and trusting Him. By doing so, Abraham became the model of faith for all believers.

Abraham and Sarah had to align their lives with God's prophetic promise to see it fulfilled.

Abraham discovered God as a Father—One who deeply loves us. God communicates vision to us through love—not demand. It's an invitation to journey with Him. He builds us up through His promise revealed and inspires us to partner with Him to impact our world.

The Father is looking for friends! Jesus said to those who would follow Him, "I no longer call you servants … But I have called you friends" (John 15:15). God loves us unconditionally; performance is not required to earn God's love and favor. Yet from a place of intimacy with Father God,

He invites us to believe His prophetic promises and risk. Prophecy reveals the perfect heart of Father God—His love and goodness.

Abraham had to start with some "basic steps" to fulfill God's purpose for his life. He had to believe God's promise, obey God's promise and give himself to God's eternal purposes. The same is true for you and I if we are to see prophetic promise fulfilled in our lives.

> *By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out into a place which he would later receive as an inheritance. He went out not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the promised land, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs of the same promise, for he was looking for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. By faith Sarah herself also received the ability to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, who was as good as dead, sprang so many, a multitude as the stars of the sky and innumerable as the sand by the seashore (Heb. 11:8-12).*

Abraham Believed God's Promise (Heb. 11:9)

Abraham and Sarah dwelt by faith in the land of promise and patiently waited for the son of promise, Isaac. Prophetic promise enables you to see when circumstances cloud the promise. Like a marathon runner getting a drink, hearing God's voice (promise), refreshes and strengthens you to keep running your race (Heb. 12:1-2).

Impossible circumstances didn't bring Abraham into unbelief; rather, his faith was strengthened as he waited in faith upon God's promise. Abraham's faith grew stronger rather than weaker. He continued to give glory to God as he waited for the promise. The promise releases grace to believe.

“Against all hope, he believed in hope … and not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body … he did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what God had promised, He was able to perform. Therefore ‘it was credited to him as righteousness'” (Rom. 4:18-22).

Don’t stop believing God’s promise to you. When faith weakens, prayer ceases!

Faith occurs when we cease trying to do something by our own efforts and simply trust God! Romans 10:17 says that “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” It doesn’t say “from having heard,” but by “hearing” a God-breathed word for now. It’s the intimate, communing heart in the present tense that is ready for God’s deposit of faith. Hearing now is a key to faith—Abraham had to hear “now,” and so it is for you and me.

Faith is fastened to the heavenly realm. Unbelief is attached to the natural (seen) realm. Faith lives from the invisible toward the visible. Use your promise as a foundation for prayer!

Faith that hears, believes and obeys God’s promises isn’t always easy. It involves trust, patience and a willingness to risk. It means waiting upon God, believing in God’s goodness when others might easily give up.

Paul writes that each of us has been given a “measure of faith” (Rom. 12:3); it is up to you to develop your faith that “sees” clearly what God is offering in His unseen kingdom realm. Measure is from the Greek *metron*, and implies a unit of measure, with dimensions or volume. You’ve been given a portion of faith from God; you must cultivate what He has given to see faith increase. Your ability to believe His promises is connected to your stewardship of the faith given to you.

You must also be “imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (Heb. 6:12). The Greek word for patience means patient endurance, longsuffering. Enduring faith in God’s promise and prophecy is needed to fulfill your purpose and destiny. Your faith is sustained with patience and endurance.

Remember, you are responsible for God’s promises—you must steward what God has given you! Others aren’t responsible for your promise to come to pass—you are.

The Holy Spirit reveals the plans God has for you—to give you hope for the future (see Jer. 29:11). God reveals by His Spirit things that your eye hasn’t seen—things God has prepared beforehand for you. Your mind can’t conceive it, but the Spirit reveals those plans God has for you (see 1 Cor. 2:9-10). Your mind will eventually believe and conceive the reality of God’s plans.

Prophecy releases kingdom identity. You may have taken a wrong turn, but with God, your destiny is redeemable through surrender. He is a loving Father! Identity, calling and destiny are discovered through a Father-son, or Father-daughter, relationship.

Abraham Obeyed God’s Promise (Heb. 11:8)

Abraham’s faith was demonstrated by leaving his family in Haran and journeying to unknown lands. He lived in Canaan, the land of promise, waiting for the son of promise, Isaac.

When God spoke to Abraham to “get up and get out to a land I will show you,” he had to believe and obey (see Gen. 12:1-4). God led Abraham and Sarah on a 1,500-mile journey that began with believing and obeying God’s directive. This theme of God speaking to His people, and God’s expectation for us to believe and obey, is repeated throughout the Old and New Testaments.

Like Abraham, we're walking a faith walk that requires obedience even when we don't understand. God's promise empowers us to act and obey. God was saying to Abraham, "take the first step and I'll show you the second!" It took years for everything to unfold, but they had to begin by going to the land of promise.

It's one thing to "hear" God's directive, but another matter to believe and obey God.

Later, Abraham is told to view the land before him, and God said, "All the land that you see I will give to you and to your descendants forever" (see Gen. 13:14-17). He doesn't even have the son of promise yet; just a word!

Oswald Chambers, an early 20th-century Christian evangelist, teacher and author of the devotional *My Utmost for His Highest*, stated regarding faith, "Faith never knows where it is being led, but it loves and knows the one who is leading it." Intimate relationship with God yields strong faith that trusts God even when it doesn't know where it is being led.

After Isaac was born, God tested Abraham. It required extreme faith and obedience to God.

"Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you" (Gen. 22:1-2).

Abraham and Isaac are a shadow of the Father offering His only begotten Son, Jesus, to die in our place (John 3:16). God's love for us has provided forgiveness for our sin—God's love never fails us in Christ! God's requirement to sacrifice Isaac was the supreme test that demonstrated Abraham's trust in God and his confidence in God's faithfulness to keep His promise.

Abraham is ready to sacrifice his son and the angel calls out to him to stop. God provides a lamb in the bushes that Abraham can offer up instead. God commends Abraham for his faithful

obedience and reaffirms the covenant with Him. Abraham named the place “Jehovah-Jireh” which means the Lord will provide (see Gen. 22:1-19).

Jehovah-Jireh, or more accurately from the Hebrew *Yhwh–rāʾāh*, which means God who provides what is needed. But *rāʾāh* also means to see, to perceive by sight, to understand, to have prophetic vision.

Before Abraham saw the ram in the thickets, he had to see God as the one who provides!

What if Abraham’s love for Isaac prevented him from fully trusting God? God was bringing Abraham into a deeper level of authority and fatherhood. It required him to be willing to let go of the “promise” for God’s greater purpose to be accomplished. Sometimes our love for the promise fulfilled prevents us from moving into a greater sphere of influence or ministry that God desires. When God says, “let go,” trust Him!

Remember, God’s provisions are available along the road of faithful obedience! Like Abraham, this doesn’t mean your walk of faith is perfect. No, it means that you discover your life in God is a journey, and as you endeavor to stay close to Him, God promises to care and provide for you. Prayer keeps you in an intimate place with God to believe Him and then act upon what He reveals.

I heard the Lord say while praying this week, “I rejoice over every prayer you make!”

“Let us then come with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).

Every prayer we make is a delight to our heavenly Father. Confidently approach Him; it’s in the secret place of intimacy and worship where God reveals His secrets to friends, and He gives more grace to believe! Faith for the promise and

provision is realized when we are close to His heart.

Stayed tuned to Charismamag.com *for Part 2 of this article Monday.* {eoa}

Bob Sawvelle *is the founding and senior leader of Passion Church in Tucson, Arizona. Passion Church is a vibrant, kingdom-minded church in the heart of Tucson that values God's love and presence. He is a DMin doctoral mentor for the Randy Clark Scholars cohort at United Theological Seminary (UTS), an adjunct professor teaching master's level classes in evangelism, discipleship and church planting with the Global Awakening Theological Seminary (GATS), and an online course facilitator for Global Awakening's Christian Healing Certification Program (CHCP) and Christian Prophetic Certification Program (CPCP).*

Spirit-Filled Preacher Says This Is Seriously the Only Hope for America

Shane Idleman, lead pastor of Westside Christian Fellowship in Lancaster, California, believes the only hope for America is revival. And revival, he says, must begin on a personal level with humility and repentance.

Believers don't have to strive to be perfect, Idleman says. They simply must surrender their lives to Christ and remove

the sin that hinders their intimacy with the Father and the execution of their kingdom calling.

“The only chance our nation has is getting God’s people broken and humble again,” Idleman told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of “Greenelines” on the Charisma Podcast Network. “Many people are discouraged because they are not living the way they should be living. They’ve made mistakes, and they may be caught in sin.

“I want to encourage you today that if you turn everything over to God, you can be right in the center of God’s will again, and you can experience personal revival. This is coming from someone who has drifted from God many years ago and has had bouts of drifting since. But you can get back on track. Just make that decision.

“Some people believe they must live a perfect life. You don’t have to be perfect, just fall forward and lean on Christ every step of the way. Remove those hindrances, those stumbling blocks, whatever they are. Pray, and God will convict you about whatever area He wants you to work on. When you do that, He will never fail you, ever.”

For more of Pastor Shane Idleman’s thoughts on personal revival, listen to this podcast. {eoa}

For more on revival, check out The Secret Keys to Starting Revival, *a Charisma e-book, available at this link for just $1.99.*

Apostle: 5 Reasons Holy Spirit Wants to Transform You With Glory

In the spiritual dimension, nothing is in the process of being created and nothing will be created in the "future." Everything is fully developed, mature, complete, ready or formed. Additionally, everything in the spiritual realm is instantaneous, occurring in an eternal present.

In contrast, in the natural dimension, we are governed by time. That is why, after being created in heaven, everything that is formed on earth in fulfillment of God's plan requires a process. This includes our life and our purpose.

Your purpose has already been established by God. However, there is an enormous distance between creation and formation—becoming what He created us to be. We need to undergo a process—usually a series of processes—for our purpose to reach maturity or fullness. And the aspects of our purpose will unfold as we await God's earthly timing for fulfillment. We carry something powerful from God in the Spirit, but we must be ready to go through His process, so that what has already been created in the spiritual realm can be manifested in the natural realm.

The Law of Process

Just as there are universal laws in the natural world, such as the law of gravity or the laws of motion, there are laws in the spiritual world. Universal laws cannot be avoided, annulled or changed. The law of process is one of them. It is not optional, but rather a law to which every purpose of heaven is subject.

A process is a continuous series of actions, steps and changes

that lead to a result or destination. Again, we undergo this process in order to be formed. To be “formed” means to be fully developed, completed, finished or trained. Growing in our purpose necessitates adapting to new levels of maturity, intellect and character. Without a doubt, we must often go through painful stages involving periods of adjustment and adaptation, until we reach the development and transformation that our purpose requires.

If we don’t go through this process, we won’t be able to enter into our destiny. Many people know in theory that they were created for a big purpose, but they haven’t been taught how to achieve it or what to do with it. Others understand the idea of process, but they aren’t willing to submit to it, and so they miss out on their potential. For this reason, breaking the law of process can be lethal to our calling.

Total Transformation

The main purpose of process is to achieve a total transformation in our lives. God’s process leads to the transformation of our spirit, soul, and body. We are to be transformed into the image of Christ, which is a continuous and progressive process that takes us “from glory to glory” (2 Cor. 3:18).

What can we expect from this process of transformation? Here are some of its divine purposes.

1. **Transformation changes our heart.** All transformation into the image and likeness of Christ originates in the heart, not in the mind, even though the mind is also renewed. We cannot truly be changed merely by applying a mental understanding of sound principles. We must first be transformed in our spirit. When our spirit is renewed in Christ, we can undergo change in our minds and emotions.
2. **Transformation leads us to know God as our total**

reality. Our transformation by the Holy Spirit gives us an awareness of the reality of God and enables us to receive revelation of the Father's mind. If we allow ourselves to be guided and changed by the Holy Spirit, we will be able to see God, in His splendor, in every area of our life.

3. **Transformation leads to a demonstration of God's power, dominion and authority.** The divine process allows us to experience God in the "now" and manifest His life and power in our environment. The more advanced the transformation of our body, mind, will and emotions, the more we can demonstrate the power of God and spread His kingdom with the authority that Jesus won on the cross.

4. **Transformation enables us to become a bearer of the glory of God.** Transformation also brings the presence of God and makes us bearers of His glory. Wherever God's presence is, heaven invades earth, and God does what man finds impossible. You can become a bearer of the glory of God if you allow yourself to be transformed by the Holy Spirit.

5. **Transformation puts to death the old nature.** Each time we allow the Holy Spirit to bring change and healing to our minds and emotions, more of the power of the old sinful nature within us dies. At the same time, the holy nature of Jesus grows in us until we are transformed into His likeness.

As we become more like Christ, our transformation brings about the development of our personal character. Having mature character is a foundational condition for fulfilling our eternal purpose on earth. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the strength and wisdom to submit to your personal process of transformation so that you can recognize your calling and achieve your purpose in life. {eoa}

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Active in ministry for over 20 years, bestselling author **Apostle Guillermo Maldonado** *is the founder of King Jesus International Ministry—one of the fastest-growing multicultural churches in the United States—which has been recognized for its visible manifestations of God's supernatural power. He is a spiritual father to 400 churches in 70 countries, which form the Supernatural Global Network. He is also the founder of the University of the Supernatural Ministry (USM). Apostle Maldonado has a doctorate in Christian counseling and a master's degree in practical theology. He resides in Miami, Florida, with his wife and partner in ministry, Ana, and their two sons, Bryan and Ronald. Visit* whitakerhouse.com.

Watch Out for This Lie Satan Loves to Tell Christians at Work

As a believer and a businesswoman, Linda Fields knows well the lies the enemy constantly feeds daily to keep her from achieving her goals. She also knows it's a major hurdle every believer must face every day.

But Fields wants Christ followers to know they don't have to listen to Satan's deceptions and that God has a plan for them to realize their hopes and dreams.

“The enemy is always trying to tell you that your life doesn’t matter, that your goals will never happen and that your dream is something you made up,” Fields told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of “Greenelines” on the Charisma Podcast Network. “It’s too late, you messed up.

“If we’re honest, at least everyone I know has some of that language hitting their minds when they put their head down at night to go to sleep. And that’s not OK.”

Fields, an author, a minister and CEO of 7M-Pact, a marketplace ministry organization that teaches on personal growth, leadership and productivity, has come up with a three-step system called the Prayer Plan for Your Life to help believers shake off the daily discouragement and distractions in their professional life and partner with God strategically to get things done.

“I want to light up as many people as possible with this reality of what it is to live a spiritual professional life that is exciting,” Fields says. “It’s not supposed to be a barely-make-it-through-the-day thing. It is living a life [where] God is putting favor on you.”

For more about Linda Fields’ ministry, listen to this podcast.