

Why It's OK to Be Frustrated With God

Sometimes feeling "OK" is the best you've felt in a very long time. Your brokenness entraps you because of unchangeable moments that took place in your past.

You've yet to let go and find peace amid the storm of remembrance. You're hurting. You're frustrated. You're in repetitious, unwavering pain. You ask yourself, "*Does God even care?*"

God does care. He feels our pain, yet sometimes the way He responds to us might not be exactly the way we anticipate. Over the course of my life, I'll be honest in saying I've found myself furious at God on multiple occasions. I've yelled at God, cursed at God and even threatened God for not providing what I felt was the best response for my current situation in life.

I'm sure He looked down at me, chuckled a bit and knew that I didn't really mean what I was saying. I was just upset, and God was patient enough to let me vent to Him. He allowed me to use Him as a scratching post. He could handle it. That's the beauty of God; He's big enough to handle anything I throw at Him, but wise enough to not give me everything I ask for.

When putting our lives in the hands of God, we must be ready to not understand everything that God does, why He does it, and how long He will do it for. Some things only have one answer: to trust God even if it doesn't make sense. It may seem like a shallow and cliché response, but it's actually quite the opposite.

Trusting God among our brokenness is a beautifully painful but spiritually deepening experience. Every time we put our trust in God, another scoop of our fleshly dirt is removed from our

spiritual sandbox.

Trust God among your brokenness, but realize it's OK to be mad at Him, frustrated and even downright confused. God doesn't expect us to understand everything He does, but He does expect us to trust him among the process.

Don't be afraid to question what's happening. Don't be afraid to wave your fist a little.

God can handle it. Let it all out, and get honest with God about what you're really feeling.

Jarrid Wilson is a husband, pastor and author relentlessly sharing the love of Jesus. For the original article, visit [.](#)

When Parenting Teens, Become a Rubber Wall

Our friend is a couple of years ahead of my wife and me in parenting. She's had teenagers a few years longer than we have, and she recently gave us one of her ideas—an illustration really—for parenting teenagers.

It's a good thing she did. We've needed the help! She calls her idea the "Rubber Wall," where parents serve as a sturdy and safe wall against which their kids can practice living, try out their ideas, experience failure and learn consequences.

Her kids don't physically or literally collide with her, but she likes to say that she wants to provide the safety and structure for them to "bounce off" her. A sturdy wall + a rebounded kid + a little give = The Rubber Wall.

We liked the sound of that, so we tried it out. One of our teens had been lying about homework and grades over a period of some weeks. When we found out, we were hurt and angry—both about the school performance and the evasion tactics. We talked in private, thought about the Rubber Wall, and agreed to not make our feelings the focus of our conversation with our kid.

Instead, we said something like, “OK, look. This was your choice. You know this is a bigger deal than some of the kid trouble we used to talk to you about. So, you’re getting some new boundaries (doing your homework in front of us) and some consequences (grounding and a letter of apology to the teacher).

“Yes, I can see you’re upset about this. While we’re not thrilled either, you’re about to head out into the world where lying and skipping your work just won’t make it. We are here to help you keep practicing hard work and truth-telling for as long as it takes.”

We then sent that child back out to make amends with the teacher and to work on transparency in work habits. (We also called the school to prepare the teacher for what was coming and to intercede for our child, asking if there was a way to make up the work.) Sturdy wall + rebounded kid + a little give = Rubber Wall.

We don’t do anything perfectly as parents. No one does, but we’re trying to learn as fast as we can. The image of a rubber wall has been helpful for us on several counts:

1. It has reminded us to stay solid, maybe even tougher than we’d initially think we should be. And this interestingly, has provided a sense of security for our kids, as they realize their choices aren’t going to wreck us or “hurt the wall.”
2. At the same time, we remember to stay flexible. As

parents we're the place our kids are *supposed* to bounce off. Out there, in the real world, there are a lot of concrete walls. "So, kiddo, if you collide with those walls by making bad choices, you're going to pancake and get hurt. Practice on and with me. You can have some give and mercy as you learn."

3. It has helped us think about and manage our own emotions in the face of our kids' bad choices. We're often tempted in the heat of the moment to take things personally or to lash out in fear and anger. "Don't you realize that (fill-in-the-blank consequence) almost happened? What's wrong with you?" Or, filled with inappropriate levels of parental concern, we're tempted to entirely absorb or cushion the consequences for our teen. The Rubber Wall helps guard us against both extremes in emotion. "I'm not here to unnecessarily hammer you with my own anger, but I'm not here to insulate you, either."
4. Finally, the Rubber Wall reminds us to rebound *the child*, propelling *them* into action and more learning. It can be tempting for us simply to apply the solution to our kid's problems: "Look at the mess this is. Now I have to fix it." This image has reminded us not to rush into activity, fixing every issue. We are starting to look for creative ways to activate our kid to handle their own problems.

No single idea or approach to our teenagers is ever going to be comprehensive enough to address every situation. But we've been finding it helpful to think about how we see ourselves. We're not a house of cards, about to be knocked over by our kids' issues. We're not a pillow that catches and absorbs every impact. We're not a baseball bat that crushes incoming issues with added force.

We're trying to be a Rubber Wall. Sturdy wall + rebounded kid + a little give. It's helped us. I hope it helps you. {eoa}

For the original article, visit .

How You Can Crush the Spirit of Pride in Your Own Life

I want to remind you that there is nothing too hard for God. Though pride is a stubborn demon that shows up in almost every known demonic cluster, God is more stubborn still—stubborn enough to rescue you.

In Job 41, pride manifests itself in the spirit realm as Leviathan, the crooked sea serpent. Spirits operating within the demonic cluster of pride include arrogance, haughtiness, puffed up, self-exaltation, vanity, rebellion, stubbornness, scorning, defiance, anti-submissiveness, egotism, perfection, and the spirits of Rahab and Orion.

Pride brings destruction and a curse, causing a person to err (Ps. 119:21). God resists the proud (James 4:6). The fear of the Lord is to hate pride and arrogance (Prov. 8:13). God attempts to hide pride from man through dreams (Job 33:14–17). Sometimes sickness is the result of pride (Job 33:19–26). God is able to abase those who walk in pride (Dan. 4:37). This spirit blocks prayer, worship and the moving of the Holy Spirit.

Within the rejection personality the spirit of pride convinces a person, “You really do have a lot to be proud of.” This cluster of demons even helps “promote self-advertising publicity campaigns to convince others” and forces “the gauge of inferiorities and low self-image to rise to an unreasonable level, and covers over the warning of Proverbs 27:2—‘Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger,

and not your own lips.'”

King of Pride—Leviathan

“Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or snare his tongue with a cord which you let down? ... He beholds all high things; he is a king over all the children of pride” (Job 41:1, 34, MEV).

In the last chapter I introduced the concept of demonic kingdoms. Pride is another demonic kingdom that establishes occupancy in the soul of a person who is oppressed with a spirit of rejection. In this kingdom the demon-king is Leviathan.

Job 41 is the key passage on leviathan. Most of the people who have this powerful spirit never get deliverance because one of his chief jobs is to block deliverance. Ministers who refuse to open up to the ministry of deliverance are being controlled by a leviathan spirit. This is their chief problem. Most of the people who fight the deliverance ministry have powerful leviathan demons, and are therefore rarely delivered.

Those involved in the deliverance ministry will be familiar with Leviathan. But if you aren't, you may be surprised when you encounter spirits that identify themselves as Leviathan. Some Bible translations refer to him as “the crocodile” or a large sea serpent.

Job 41 is the key passage on Leviathan. I talk about this demonic kingdom in depth in my book *Spiritual Warfare and Deliverance Manual*, but I will briefly describe its characteristics again here as we develop a spiritual strategy specifically focused on destroying the spirit of rejection.

Unable to Flow in the Holy Spirit

“His scales are his pride, shut up tightly as with a seal. One is so near to another that no air can come between them” (Job

41:15-16).

Leviathan's scales are his pride, and as the verse says, no air can come between them. Air represents spirit, and one of the manifestations of pride is the inability to flow in the Spirit.

Leviathan will attempt to block the flow and manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the assembly of believers. Proud people can hinder the flow of the Spirit; humility is a key to operating in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Self-Preserving

Leviathan's scales are his pride. He protects himself with armor. Proud people have a way of closing themselves off and hiding behind the scales of pride. When attacking Leviathan, we attack and strip his scales.

Blocks Prayer and Prayer Ministry

"Will he make many supplications to you?" (Job 41:3).

Supplication is prayer, and Leviathan does not make supplication because he is too proud. Leviathan will therefore attempt to block prayer and attack prayer ministries. We have dealt with people who get sleepy when praying and found that it can be connected to Leviathan.

When we pray, we should always approach God with a spirit of humility. The concept of supplication in Bible verses such as Philippians 4:6 is about submitting a request to one who is in authority over us. God is our creator, our ruler. He is sovereign. He is to be revered and feared. He is our ultimate help. But those who operate with a spirit of pride will have the attitude that they don't even need God, that they don't need His covering and protection. Pride will cause us to strive and work things out on our own.

Pride causes us to lean to our own understanding, which is, at

the very least, limited. We cut God's infinite wisdom and unlimited strength and provision out of the picture, and we set ourselves up for failure and burnout, among other things.

Ron Phillips says about Leviathan:

"When someone is affected by this spirit, it destroys covenant relationships. This spirit breaks up marriages, business partnerships, friendships, and, worst of all, churches."

Pride makes you think you don't need anyone, that you can do everything on your own. It leads you to see people as resources to leverage and use to achieve your own ends. Pride keeps you from experiencing the intimacy of relationship, collaboration and exchanging of thought and ideas. It keeps you from seeing the value in others. Pride will lead you to compete rather than collaborate. You will have a "me vs. the world" mentality.

For prideful people, honoring covenant is not possible. They do not see the blessings of walking in covenant. With covenant, you have to be willing to compromise, to give and take, to hear and sometimes act on behalf of another. Leviathan hardens the hearts of those he possesses, causing them to reject covenant—even covenant with God. People controlled by Leviathan do not value others; therefore they cannot honor others by keeping their word to them. Marriages, friendships and families are the types of covenantal relationships that fall apart because one party is subject to pride.

Defeat Leviathan With the Power of God and Fasting

"You crushed the heads of Leviathan in pieces, and gave him for food to the people inhabiting the wilderness" (Psalm 74:14).

God has the power to smite and break Leviathan's head, which represents its authority. God is our King, who is working

salvation (deliverance) in the Earth.

The psalmist said, "I humbled my soul with fasting" (Ps. 35:13). He knew that humility is a great weapon against pride, and it also invites the grace of God (James 4:6) into the battle to give another level of strength against this stubborn demon. When we fast, we humble our souls. Deliverance from Leviathan brings peace, favor, joy and liberty.

Pharaoh was a Leviathan. God released his people from Pharaoh's grip through terrible judgments. The people of Israel left Egypt and journeyed to the Promised Land, a land flowing with milk and honey. Prosperity will come with deliverance from Leviathan.

The Leviathan spirit can only be overcome through the supernatural activity of God's Spirit, not by any human means. This spirit produces a hardness of heart in people (Job 41:24), making it even more difficult to bring those being used by this spirit to the repentance they need.

As you begin to throw off and dismantle spirits that operate within the spirit of rejection, know that your bout with pride will be the toughest of them all. It is at the root of our fallen nature. It goes deep into the spirit of man. But you can win, though not without humbling yourself before God and seeking Him for deliverance. You will not win against Leviathan in your own strength. {eoa}

Excerpted from John Eckhardt's book, Destroying the Spirit of Rejection (Charisma House, 2016). To purchase the book, click here.

Apostle John Eckhardt is overseer of Crusaders Ministries, located in Chicago, Illinois. Gifted with a strong apostolic call, he has ministered throughout the United States and overseas in more than 80 nations. He is a sought-after international conference speaker and has authored more than 20 books, including Prophet, Arise!, Prayers That Rout

Obliterate Your Desire for Emotional Eating With These Small Steps

A Take Back Your Temple Facebook group member posted recently that she was having a problem with **emotional eating** out of anger. Whenever she reacted to her emotions this way, she said she found it hard to go to God afterward. Here is the message I wrote back to her. I pray it helps anyone else who is dealing with this issue. It begins with a prayer for discernment:

God, Your Word warns me that the devil constantly roars about, seeking whom he may devour. I ask that You give me discernment so that I can quickly see the snares he has laid to trap me and give me the ability to avoid each one. I will be alert and vigilant, as You have instructed. If I happen to fall into affliction, I will cry out to You immediately, and I know You will deliver me swiftly. Thank You for Your deliverance and Your great love for me. Amen.

One thing that needs to be clear in your mind is that you want to be delivered from this. I know when I was struggling with **emotional** eating, I had a vision of myself in darkness but Jesus reaching out to me in beauty and strength. But voices were whispering to me that it was safer to stay in the darkness even though I was miserable there.

But I decided to humble myself and admit to God that I couldn't do this alone. I needed help. And He helped me. One day at a time, one choice at a time. That's how I had to walk this thing out: one choice at a time. Instead of doing things

like I always did them, I told myself, "How can I do just a little bit better right now?" Perhaps it was only **eating** a couple of slices of cake rather than the whole cake. (Yes, I used to eat an entire cake by myself in a single sitting—that's how bad it was.)

Eventually, keep practicing the "just a little bit better" principle with every choice. Before I knew it, those small steps became big results.

Here is an action step I suggest, and it is one that I've recommended many times because it works: Get a piece of paper and a pen and start writing a letter to God. Nobody needs to see this but you. But write the truth. Write down all the things you are angry about, and even write about the people with whom you are angry. If it is in your heart, then get it out on paper. Leave nothing that is in your heart unwritten. You want all of your thoughts in black and white, in your own handwriting.

Doing this brings **mental clarity**. You may cry a lot as you are writing. I did. Once you empty yourself, then ask God in prayer to come in and fill up every empty space. Ask Him to help any areas of unbelief. He will do it—one day at a time, one choice at a time.

I know you want to be **delivered** from this yesterday! But it is a day-by-day process, as you need to be cleansed of old ways of thinking and acting and assume your new role as the beloved daughter of God. But you'll make it if you stay in the fight.
{eoa}

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Employ These Biblical Strategies to Conquer Stress

Believe it or not, you can live a life that is free of the negative effects of stress. God actually promises a way to have a peaceful, happy mind no matter how stressful your circumstances.

The prophet declared to God, *“You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You”* (Is. 26:3, MEV).

The Bible provides a strategy for living free from the negative effects associated with stress. You can live in God’s wonderful peace every day of your life, no matter what disappointments you face, what pressures you must endure and no matter how many difficult, stressful circumstances surround your life.

It almost sounds too good to be true, but it’s not. Take a look at some strategies from the Bible that promise peace—no matter what!

Renewing Your Mind

Not everyone experiences the same stress reactions to the same life events. For one person, speaking in front of a large group feels like a fun challenge, but it makes another individual a nervous wreck. If one person’s relaxation is another person’s stress, then circumstances are not the sole cause of stress. Your individual perception of the events in your life plays a vital role in your experience of stress as well.

Therefore, a powerful strategy for conquering stress is to deal with the roots of stress in your own life by beginning to change your own perceptions and reactions to circumstances. This powerful strategy is taken directly from the Bible. The apostle Paul declared:

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:2).

With God’s help, we can develop new, less stressful ways of thinking. Doing so, in fact, is a command from God’s Word. It says, *“Be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (Eph. 4:23, MEV).*

Renewing the mind is nothing more than breaking the thought patterns and ways of thinking and perceiving life’s circumstances that cause us stress. I call these stressful patterns “stinking thinking.”

Don’t let a mountain of stress avalanche down upon your life and health. There’s so much you can do to conquer that mountain and rise to the top. God never intended for stress to rob your life of happiness and peace.

Why not determine right now to begin implementing these mental strategies for conquering stress:

- Practice time management
- Reject perfectionism and unrealistic expectations
- Reject rigid words
- Just say no
- Learn to delegate

Living stressed out is not God’s best for you. His wonderful Word says:

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with gratitude, make your requests known to

God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will protect your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6-7, MEV).

With God’s help and some wise strategies, you can develop entirely new, stress-free ways of living your life.

Excerpted from Don Colbert’s book, The Bible Cure for Stress, published by Charisma House. {eoa}

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4 Ways You Can Grow the Gift of Spiritual Discernment

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 (MEV) says, “*But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for the common good. To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. But that one and very same Spirit works all these, dividing to each one individually as He wills.*”

It is the wonderful Holy Spirit who gives these gifts to empower people to share God's grace. Each spiritual gift is for the "common good," which means that they are for the body of Christ. The chapters that follow this list in 1 Corinthians elaborate on how these spiritual gifts are used within the local body and how each gift is needed for us to grow as a church into Jesus.

Within this list is the "discerning of spirits," and this spiritual gift needs to be understood and practiced as well as the others in our day and age, as culture seems to be influencing and mixing within the church and sermons become more motivational rather than biblical. As a spiritual gift, it cannot be neglected but it can correctly used.

In the context of 1 Corinthians 12, the discerning of spirits is to distinguish what is trying to look like it is from God but is not. One needs to take into consideration that the Corinthians were a Spirit-filled church, but needed correcting in their practice of using spiritual gifts and that not every prophetic utterance or preacher or message in tongues originated in the Holy Spirit. Some people were competing for accolades and were operating in the flesh, while there were others demonically influenced. A process for discerning and judging prophecies and manifestations was needed, which is why Paul set protocols in place (1 Cor. 14:29).

The use of this gift is to be centered in God. Discernment is identified with the Holy Spirit, so it recognizes where He is moving and what He wants to do, flowing out of friendship with Him.

The purpose of this gift is to rightly distinguish the work of the Holy Spirit from other spirits. Being firmly grounded in Scripture, it leads people to be more intimate with the Savior of the world, glorifying Him, canceling evil that is trying to stop God's work or the interference of man's selfish agenda within the church. Discernment is part of making sure the

Spirit of God has His way, and is an incredible privilege to be part of.

A discerner identifies the presence of God, but also identifies where His presence needs to manifest. When the discerner is well-versed in Scripture, the powers challenging God will be obvious to them, and they are present to be a conduit for God's power.

The discerning person is to be deeply rooted in Christ, loving Him so much that His love flows out of them toward others. The great "love" chapter of the Bible, 1 Corinthians 13, is within the same context as this spiritual gifts list that includes "discerning spirits."

Here are four basic points you can apply in your life to grow in this spiritual gift:

1. Spend time with God every day. His presence needs to be cherished and valued, and the fruit of the Spirit is evident. Discerning spirits is to be exciting as one knows their identity in Jesus and operates in love from a position of knowing they are seated with Christ in heavenly places (Eph. 2:6-7). Their posture is one of victory because of what Jesus won at the cross.

2. Read and study the Bible daily. Scripture is God's Word and needs to be read (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Being immersed daily in Scripture makes one more sensitive to the wonderful Holy Spirit. When a person knows the Spirit of truth, they quickly identify the source that is attacking and follow the biblical guidance and locally established procedures to ensure Jesus is glorified.

3. Make everything a place for God's presence. Be intentional in saturating your home and car with worship music, teachings, Scripture and interactions with others (Eph. 5:19-21). This keeps your heart pure as you seek the presence of God. Maintaining worship makes it possible to identify when

something wrong tries to interfere and take focus off of God, but the discerning person knows how to continue praising and worshipping God to break the powers trying to interrupt.

4. Be an active member within a local church. Your gift will grow as you maintain relationship with your local church (Heb. 10:24-25). Discerning spirits benefits the local church, ensuring truth is upheld in its message and methods, and protecting the church from any people the enemy will try to use to malign the ministry. A discerner is actively engaged with ministry and knows the process set in place by the leaders, enhancing the move of God. {eoa}

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How You Can Guard Your Heart From the Spirit of Perversion

“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual immorality, thefts, false witness, and blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man” (Matt. 15:19–20).

The spirit of perversion rises out of the heart. Homosexuality, lesbianism, adultery and fornication are all heart issues. If you are a practicing homosexual, no matter how much you defend your lifestyle, you have a heart issue.

Somehow the enemy was able to plant the seed in your heart through trauma whether by direct means (such as molestation) or by indirect means (such as generational trauma). Because you did not guard your heart—or weren't spiritually equipped to guard your heart—the seed grew and manifested as perversion.

Let me give you an example. If a man molests a young boy, the boy may grow up with homosexual tendencies because his heart was open. He didn't know how to close his heart to that.

Now, you can close your heart to things. You can make a decision, "I'm not going to be a homosexual." You can shut your heart to it and say, "No, I will not be gay. I hate it. I don't want to be a homosexual." You can make a decision at a young age not to be a homosexual. There are a lot of men who were molested at a young age and could have been homosexuals, but they said no to it. When you close your heart to the defilement of the enemy, there is nothing the devil can do to get it in your heart.

Proverbs 4:23 says, *"Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."* What comes into your life flows out of your heart. How you end up in life is based on how you keep your heart. You end up in certain places because of what came out of your heart. Judas, a disciple of Jesus, is an example of what happens when you don't guard your heart.

"Now supper being concluded, the devil had put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him" (John 13:2).

Not only do we see that Judas's heart was open to the enemy, but we also learn something about Satan. He likes to put things in the heart. He'll put the thoughts in your mind and inclinations into your heart: "You're a homosexual. You're a lesbian. Because you allowed this molestation to happen, you must like it. You must be homosexual. How else can you explain it?" If you receive these lies as truth, they will get in your

heart and you will act them out.

All sexual sin begins with a thought. You just don't fall in the bed with somebody. You think about it before it happens. You don't wake up saying, "What? What happened? How did I get here?" It begins with a thought.

You will never get victory over sexual sin until you take authority over the way you think. I don't care how much deliverance you receive; you have to control your thoughts. You can't think about sexual sin, meditate on it and then expect not to get involved in it. The more you think about something, the greater the chances are that you'll end up doing it.

We must take our thoughts captive as 2 Corinthians 10:5 says: *"Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."* A lot of us are just too lazy. We let the devil run around in our minds all day long, from the moment we get up to the time we go to bed. We never get those evil thoughts out of our hearts, yet we wonder how we get so deep into certain sins.

God Wants to Give You a New Heart

"Also, I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh" (Ez. 36:26).

God will give you a new heart. It doesn't matter what was in your heart before you came to Christ; God will give you a new heart. If you've been struggling in any area we've discussed so far, know that God wants to give you a new heart that is free from the bondage of perversion.

The Bible says, *"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). God will give you a heart

transplant. He will do a miracle in your heart. This is God's promise through the new covenant. It started with the people of Israel. God told them, "I'm going to do something inside of you." Even though it is being taught that once you are a homosexual, you will always be a homosexual, God can still completely transform you. The same is taught about alcoholism: if you were once an alcoholic, you will always be an alcoholic.

The devil is a liar. I don't care how much of an alcoholic you were, you can be delivered. And when you are delivered, you are no longer an alcoholic. You are a new creature in Christ. When God delivers you from alcoholism, you can't even stand the taste of it anymore. When God delivers you from smoking, you don't even like the way cigarettes smell anymore. You wonder how you ever smoked.

When God changes your heart, you are no longer the same person you were before. There may be temptations that try to pull you back into your previous lifestyle, but you can shut those down. You don't have to be a homosexual or a lesbian anymore. You don't have to be a fornicator or adulterer. God is saying, "When I do this work in your heart, there is going to be such a miracle that people are going to say they can't believe it. They will wonder how you left that lifestyle." The kind of change I am speaking of has to be an inside job.

We have testimonies of transgendered people who have gotten saved. Some even had sex changes. We tend to think that if someone goes that far, they are reprobate. But nothing is too far for God's reach. God can do a miracle in the person's life and change his or her heart. There is nothing impossible with God. All things are possible to him who believes.

Do you believe that? {eoa}

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3 Simple, Yet Powerful Words to Cling to in These Dark Days

I can think of no other time during my 29 years on this planet when fear has been more rampant than it is today. It seems as though nearly every day we're seeing more and more headlines reporting terrorist attacks, senseless shootings, natural disasters and rumors of fatal viruses and economic collapse.

As Christians, this exponential increase of fear and uncertainty should come as no surprise, for Jesus told us plainly:

"You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled. For all these things must happen, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines, epidemics, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows" (Matt. 24:6-7, MEV).

I think it would behoove us to go through each of the prophecies listed and see if and how they're playing out today:

Wars and Rumors of Wars

Here are just a few such cases from 2016 alone[1]:

- January 13: North Korea Says Nuclear Test Shows It Could "Wipe Out" U.S.
- February 26: Putin Encircles Turkey in Massive Troop Buildup
- March 18: Disturbing ISIS Video: "We Will Attack America Very Soon"
- March 31: Islamic State is on the Brink of Using Nuclear Weapons, Chilling Report Warns
- April 4: North Korea Claims Attacks on U.S. Will Kill More than 9/11
- May 29: Thousands of Israelis to Simulate Evacuation in Preparation for War
- June 3: Over 40,000 Foreign Militants from 100 Countries Fighting in Syria

Nations Rising Against Each Other

A cursory glance **at this Wikipedia article** will give you a snapshot of the magnitude of man's hell-inspired hatred for one another. According to **this article**, there are only 11 countries in the world that are free from conflict. And even those countries, says the Institute for Economics and Peace, are "not entirely exempt from other problems that could lend to conflict further down the line." [2]

Famines and Earthquakes

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) reported that from 1900 thru 1950, the approximately 330 major earthquakes (6.5+) occurred across the world. However, since 1950, the USGS reports that over 1,000 major earthquakes have

occurred throughout the world. That's an increase of over 300 percent from the 1900-1950 period.

Earthquakes are definitely increasing globally, and they're also occurring in many places where they haven't been known to occur. In 2011, for example, two earthquakes occurred in the unlikely places of Colorado and Virginia. In early August of that year, a earthquake struck just four miles southwest of Mineral, Virginia while a earthquake occurred simultaneously near the suburb of Colorado Springs.

While neither earthquake was considered a major trembler, the Virginia earthquake was still felt as far away as New York City.[3]

Have famines been on the rise as well? Indeed, they have. During the 19th century, 24 famines occurred globally while that number increased to 40 during the 20th century. During the current century, 20 famines have already occurred in less than 16 years. If that trend keeps up, the world will experience more famines during the 21st century than the two previous centuries combined.[4]

And like earthquakes, famines can be deadly. For example, a terrible famine that occurred in India at the end of the 19th century caused an estimated 6-9 million deaths. A major famine that occurred in the Ukraine during the early 1930s killed an estimated 7-8 million people, while a famine that struck China from 1958-1962 killed an estimated 30-33 million people.

Persecution

I could spend a half dozen posts talking about this prophecy and its fulfillment as it relates to America alone. I encourage you to **check out this article** from *Relevant Magazine* on the state of persecution our Christian brothers and sisters are facing around the globe.

As for persecution here in the United States, *The Washington*

Times reported about a poll which found that in just two years, the number of Americans who think Christians are facing growing intolerance in the U.S. has drastically increased.[5]

Sixty-three percent of respondents in the **LifeWay research survey** said they agree or strongly agree that Christians are facing growing levels of persecution, up from 50 percent in 2013. The majority of that surge comes from respondents who said they “strongly agree” with the statement, a number that increased from 28 percent to 38 percent.

A similar number, 60 percent, said religious liberty is on the decline in America, up from 54 percent in 2013.

Some of you may be asking how sharing any of this alleviates the sense of fear in the world. Don't alarming stats and disheartening information only tighten fear's grip on us?

I think many of us—and I am guilty—have a tendency to bury our heads in the sand when we hear the latest negative story on the 6 o'clock news or see a dreary article pop up on our Twitter or Facebook feed. We don't want to be brought down and depressed or overcome with worry. What can we do about it anyway? Isn't it best to just go on living our own lives?

As with most things in life, I think a balance needs to be struck when it comes to how we deal with the rising tide of darkness in our world.

Pretending darkness doesn't exist is not only next to impossible, it also demonstrates our selfishness and susceptibility to fear. Selfishly, we don't want anything negative occupying a centimeter of headspace in our minds. We don't want our moods dampened by devastating events happening halfway around the globe. We don't want to entertain the notion that what's happening to others yesterday could happen to us tomorrow.

And selfishness smacks of fear. We cover our ears and turn a

blind eye in part because we reason, often subconsciously, that the less we know, the less fearful we'll be. In essence, we're afraid of becoming afraid.

On the other extreme, there are those—and I have been one of them—whose eyes are ever glued to their Twitter feeds, following all the latest news as info is released in real time. They scour YouTube for conspiratorial content that would have them believe that their octogenarian, cat-loving next-door neighbor is the next Mussolini in disguise and that if they aren't building a bomb shelter in the backyard, they're dumb as a post.

These people are also operating out of fear and selfishness. Their fear of what's to come and preoccupation with what-if scenarios feed their innate survival instincts, which then births an obsessive thirst for more knowledge and as much control as possible.

Their number one objective is survival, which is undeniably selfish, yet not altogether sinful. God gave us fight-or-flight instincts for a reason, but they weren't intended to be activated 24/7. When this sort of person is always in "fight" mode, they dehumanize themselves by disassociating from others, growing more suspicious and paranoid of those around them, and unconcerned for the plight and suffering of their fellow man.

So what's the answer? How do we find a balance between these two extremes of fear-based, voluntary ignorance on the one hand and fear-based, voluntary obsession on the other?

The answer, I believe, can be summed up in this verse:

"So now abide faith, hope, and love, these three. But the greatest of these is love." (1 Cor. 13:13, MEV).

Faith, the Bible says, is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things unseen (Heb. 11:1). Faith is

knowing, without seeing, that Jesus is the Savior of the world and the coming King, and that His Word is true and eternal. Faith assures us that what we hope for, namely a real home called heaven and a good and perfect God who dwells there, is as real as the air we're breathing.

Hope, according to Romans 12:12, provides us joy in any situation. It generates love and faith (Col. 1:4-5). It inspires us to live like Jesus (1 John 3:3). It motivates us to persevere through trials (1 Thess. 1:3). It uplifts us and prompts praise in our souls toward God (Psalm 43:5; Psalm 71:14).

Hope inspires us to take action with boldness (2 Cor. 3:12). It develops our patience and establishes a sense of security despite the threats which swirl around us (Rom. 8:25; Job 11:18).

"You will trust because there is hope; yes, you will search about you, and you will look around and rest in safety" (Job 11:18, MEV).

Perfect love, a love which flows from the Lord, casts out fear (1 John 4:18). First John 4:18 says "there is no fear in love."

When we focus on God's love for us, how He gave His Son to take our place of judgment and cleanse us of our unrighteousness, and how He'll never leave us or forsake us, there will be no room for fear to take up residence in our hearts and minds (1 John 1:9; Heb. 13:5). We remember that if God is on our side, what can man do to us? (Heb. 13:5-6). Our enemies may kill our bodies, but our spirits and souls will be with Jesus and the saints for all eternity.

Faith, hope, and love. Three simple, yet powerful, words should be constant companions and living bread to our souls each and every day. I encourage you to spend some time meditating on them today. Ask the Lord to show you places in

Scripture where they are exemplified and what you can learn from them.

In a world so full of corruption, perversion, deception and wickedness, we must fight to remain people from whom darkness flees; people around whom demons tremble. We must be people to whom others can come for comfort and strength; people to whom Jesus will one day say, “*Well done, good and faithful servant*” (Matt. 25:23).

I pray this post has been an encouragement to you. As always, please feel free to leave a comment below or tweet me at @dandersontyler. I would love to hear from you. {eoa}

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For the original article, visit [www.dandersontyler.com](#).

Men, Use This Weapon to Shatter Satan’s Deadly Agenda Against You

Working with men is my vocation, and I love it. However, every day I hear from men whose lives, marriages and families are falling apart or barely hanging on.

Often it’s because of emotional neglect—chasing some dream that didn’t include their families. Other times it’s because

of mishandling money, substance abuse, pornography, prostitution, lapses in integrity and so on.

While there is no common denominator for why men fail, most of these men do tend to have one thing in common. If they are Christians, it is uncanny how most of these men were part of a small group they no longer attend. As a result, they have become isolated.

Isolation is the devil's number one strategy. Why? Because it's so effective. We all know from the National Geographic Channel that the lion never goes after the herd. The lion always attacks the stray ... the one who has become isolated. That's because every predator understands the strategic value of isolation—whether in the animal kingdom, human traffickers or sexual predators.

Men are particularly vulnerable to this strategy of isolation. The reasons why men are so vulnerable is a different article, but what's the solution? First Peter 5:8 puts it this way: "Be sober and watchful, because your adversary the devil walks around as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." Easily the best way for a man to execute 1 Peter 5:8 is to be part of a group—like the one they used to attend.

Are you actively part of a group? If so, congratulations. There is safety in numbers. If not, I exhort you as your brother to find, treasure and fully appreciate a group of brothers with whom you can be honest, open and vulnerable.

While there's no law that says you have to do such a thing, why wouldn't you? Only because of the temptation to live in isolation—the isolation the devil adroitly deploys to dull our love for Jesus.

And if you are a leader, please, please, please build a sustainable ministry model in your church that encourages all of your men to get into small groups over time. Yes, pray for their families, preach them the gospel and pick them up when

they fall. But make sure you don't sentence them to try and live the Christian life in isolation because isolation is what men who fail have common.

Until every church disciples every man ...

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For the original article, visit .

Why It's OK to Admit You Are Not OK

Sometimes it's hard to express your feelings to the people around you. Not because you're afraid of what they'll say, but because our culture doesn't seem to be very keen on being honest about their pains.

The reality is that way too many people are putting on a facade of perfection in order to keep people from knowing how they are truly hurting. It's as if everyone feels like showing pain is a sign of weakness.

I'm here to tell you that it's OK to not be OK sometimes. It's okay to admit that you're hurting, broken or even confused about your current spot in life. It's OK. Remember, even Jesus himself wept.

1. It's OK to cry. There is nothing wrong with crying and letting out a few tears. Whoever said crying is for babies was a liar, and definitely never watched *The Notebook*. The reality is that even Jesus himself wept and crying can sometimes be the relief you need to move on and regroup. Showing emotion is good for the soul, and crying has been known to help regulate depression, anxiety and even stress.

2. It's OK to get frustrated. No one has the answers to everything, and even the smartest of people in the world find themselves frustrated sometimes. It's OK to not know the answer, solution or reason for things that have taken place. The light at the end of the tunnel is knowing that God has everything under control, even when we ourselves do not.

Don't let anyone tell you it's wrong to get frustrated. Sometimes frustration is the breeding ground of change.

3. It's OK to get stressed. Let's face it—stress is unavoidable. I'm not saying it's going to consume your entire life, but stress is one of those things that all of us will eventually encounter in one way or another. When you come into areas of your life that are considered stressful, realize that it's only going to last as long as you allow it to. Stress is unavoidable, but allowing it to control your life is not. It's OK to be stressed sometimes, just don't let stress become who you are.

4. It's OK not to understand. Not everything is going to have an answer, but that's where the beauty of faith comes in. There are circumstances and events in your life that you aren't going to understand, but you have to realize that it's OK not to know all the answers. There is humility in saying "I don't know." And frankly, sometimes admitting that you don't know is the first step in finding peace and comfort in your situation. Don't let anyone tell you that it's wrong to admit you don't understand.

It's OK to not be OK. Job, Elijah, Jonah and Abraham were all men throughout the Bible who dealt with incredibly hard times, but God continued to see them through their pain. It was OK for them to not be OK.

Why? Because they were human, and God created us to feel all kinds of emotions. {eoa}

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For the original article, visit .