

Revival Begins With Us—So Where Do We Start?

In 2012, I [released a prophetic word](#) that essentially declared God is waiting on us. God is not holding revival tightly in His fist, refusing to release it. I'm convinced that many of us are waiting on God to move when in reality He's waiting on us to move. My 2012 prophecy was: Revival begins with you.

At the same time, I've discovered we cannot set ourselves on fire. Not really. God is the ultimate fire-starter. But we can position our hearts close to His burning flame of love and catch His fire as the wind of the Holy Spirit blows it in our direction. We can't do God's part, but God won't do our part.

So if revival begins with you—and me—where does that leave us? Waiting on the Lord, but not in the way we have been. The Hebrew word for “wait” in the context of waiting on the Lord is “qavah.” It is active verb that means to wait, look for, hope, expect; to wait or look eagerly for; to lie in wait for; and to wait for, linger for. We need to wait like we expect Him to show up.

[Click here](#) to listen to my podcast on this topic!

1. Look for the promise. Jacob went into a downward spiral after he thought Joseph was ripped apart by lions. He was never quite the same after he lost Joseph. When he heard Joseph was alive, his spirit stirred but when he saw the wagons that Joseph sent to bring him back to Egypt for the grand family reunion in the midst of a famine, the spirit of Jacob revived (Gen. 45:27).

Look at the promises of revival God has given through prophetic words. Look at the scriptural incidents of revival and deliverance. Look for the promises of God and be revived.

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2. Drink from living water. The Bible is the inspired Word of God, but with a Word famine rising in the land and the nearly-constant spiritual warfare raging, many are thirsty for a *rhema* word of God—a true Holy Spirit-inspired prophecy that flows like a river of living water. After Samson struck down 1,000 men with the jawbone of an ass, he was thirsty.

“‘You gave this great deliverance through Your servant, but now may I die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?’ So God split open the basin at Lehi, and water flowed out of it. He drank, was refreshed, and revived” (Judg. 15:18-19).

The living water God provides revived Samson—and it will revival us.

3. Stay humble. God resists the proud. He does not revive them. He gives grace, exalts and revives the humble and repentant. Walking in a revival lifestyle means walking in a repentance lifestyle—we need to be quick to repent when we’ve missed the mark.

“For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place and also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Is. 57:15).

4. Pray for personal revival. When the son of the widow of Zarephath died, her response to Elijah showed she connected this death to sin, but Elijah knew better. He knew it was not the Lord’s will for the boy to die. Elijah took him out of her arms of unbelief and despair and into his arms of faith. Elijah set out to pray.

“He cried to the Lord and said, ‘O Lord, my God, have You

brought tragedy upon the widow with whom I live by killing her son?’ And he stretched himself upon the child three times and cried to the Lord and said, ‘O Lord, my God, I pray that You let this child’s soul come into him again.’ He Lord heard the voice of Elijah, and the soul of the child came into him again, and he was revived. Elijah took the child and brought him down out of the chamber into the house and returned him to his mother, and Elijah said, “See, your son lives!” (1 Kin. 17:20-23).

In order to revive that which looks dead, we need to stop looking at the outward condition, which stirs unbelief and despair, and pray until we see God’s will come to pass.

The psalmists prayed revival prayers. In these prayers, the word “revive” is from the Hebrew word “chayah,” which means “to live, have life, remain alive, sustain life, live prosperously, live forever, be quickened, be alive, be restored to life or health.” It also means to restore and cause to grow.

([Check out my new book](#), co-authored with Ryan LeStrange, called *Revival Hubs Rising!*)

Psalm 71:20

“You who have shown me great distresses and troubles will revive me again, and will bring me up again from the depths of the earth.”

Psalm 85:6

“Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?”

Psalm 119:25

“My soul clings to the dust; revive me according to Your word.”

Psalm 119:37

“Turn away my eyes from beholding worthlessness, and revive me in Your way.”

Psalm 119:40

“Behold, I have a longing for Your precepts; revive me in Your righteousness.”

Psalm 119:50

“This is my comfort in my affliction, for Your word revives me.”

Psalm 119:88

“Revive me according to Your lovingkindness, that I may keep the testimony from Your mouth.”

Psalm 119:93

“I will never forget Your precepts, for with them You have revived me.”

Psalm 119:107

“I am greatly afflicted; revive me, O Lord, according to Your word.”

Psalm 119:149

“Hear my voice according to Your lovingkindness, O Lord; revive me according to Your judgment.”

Psalm 119:154

“Plead my cause, and defend me; revive me according to Your word.”

Psalm 119:156

“Great are Your compassions, O Lord; revive me according to Your judgments.”

Psalm 119:159

“Consider how I love Your precepts; revive me, O Lord, according to Your lovingkindness.”

Psalm 143:11

“Revive me, O Lord, for Your name’s sake, for Your righteousness’ sake bring my soul out of trouble.”

5. Believe God will answer. When we pray, we’re supposed to pray in faith, nothing waivering. James says a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways and should not expect to receive anything from God (James 1:8). Habakkuk prayed to God, believed for an answer—and got one:

Habakkuk 3:1-3: “A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, on Shigionoth. O Lord, I have heard the report of You, and was afraid; O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of these years make them known; in wrath remember mercy. God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise.”

Be encouraged. You can see personal revival. And we can see national revival. Check out my new book, [Revival Hubs Rising](#), which I co-authored with Ryan LeStrange.{eoa}

WATCH: Rebuilding the Walls

in 2016

Nehemiah was weighed down by the breaking down of the walls of his beloved city of Jerusalem and how those who remained there were living in shame and reproach. It brought about a sadness on his face and his countenance.

But Nehemiah realized that the “joy of the Lord is our strength,” and that restoration of God’s joy can come through rebuilding.

You may be able to draw parallels between yourself and Nehemiah. As Eddie Hyatt says in the video below, “It’s OK to be in a place of mourning as long as you don’t wallow in it and say there. Turn your eyes to Jesus and motivate yourself to do something about your situation.”

Prayer can take you to the place of joy you seek.{eoa}

3 Benefits of One-On-One Time With Your Children

[If you have more than one child, sometimes you still need to go one-on-one.](#)

I often challenge dads to commit to that “alone” time with each of their children. Here are three powerful reasons:

- [1. One-on-one time lets kids know they are very important.](#)** Your kids know your calendar is jammed, and they also know how you choose to spend your free time. If you carve out regular time with them—just the two of you—that makes a

big statement, and tells them they are a priority to you.

Do be creative and plan cool outings, but really it *almost doesn't matter what you do*; your gift of time makes your child feel valued, needed, secure, even empowered.

2. Kids open up during that time. Derek is a dad I know who has teenagers, and he confesses things can get a little bit tense from time to time. Usually it's just minor stuff around the house and personality clashes.

But Derek says it quickly changes when he's out on one of their runs for ice cream or iced coffee. They get in the car and almost right away his child will start talking about something going on in his life. He knows that it's *dad time*, and it's like he's been saving up topics or questions. He opens up in unexpected ways. Dad, don't miss those priceless opportunities.

3. Things happen when you're doing something together. Maybe the car breaks down, or you get pulled over for speeding. Maybe someone you see needs help. Or maybe you see friends and have a short conversation. In all those situations, you are modeling for your child how to respond with maturity and grace. You're also *learning more about your child* by watching how he handles situations.

Or, maybe you'll run into one someone your child knows while you're out, and you can ask, "So you know them pretty well?" "Where do you see them at school?" And so on.

All kinds of interesting things can happen when you and your child are together somewhere.

Dad, take full advantage of frequent one-on-one adventures. Just go get a frozen yogurt, take a long walk, visit a bookstore, or do any activity your child enjoys. But it's up to you to *make sure it happens*. Schedule it; be intentional. Don't let the busyness of life crowd out special time with

your son or daughter.

Dad, please add your ideas. [What one-on-one activities do you share with your child?](#) Leave a comment below.

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

The No. 1 Health Resolution to Make This Year

Happy New Year! I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas with family and friends and that you're looking forward to the blessings, achievements, growth and challenges that lie ahead in 2016!

As I write this, it's the first day of the year, and every social media platform I'm a part of is abuzz with inspiring New Year's quotes and daring resolutions. From losing weight and gaining control to reading more books and spending less money, people everywhere are taking time today to reflect on their priorities ... and to consider which of them need rearranging.

According to [statisticbrain.com](#),^[1] the top 10 New Year's Resolutions from last year were as follows:

1. Lose Weight
2. Get Organized

3. Spend Less, Save More
4. Enjoy Life to the Fullest
5. Stay Fit and Healthy
6. Learn Something Exciting
7. Quit Smoking
8. Help Others in Their Dreams
9. Fall in Love
10. Spend More Time with Family

If you're like me, you made at least one of the resolutions listed above at one point or another during the past 12 months. And, if you're like me yet again (as well as like 92 percent of resolution makers![\[21\]](#)), you probably failed to maintain those resolutions and reach the goals you set, and so, understandably, you now find yourself a bit jaded by the whole "New Year, New You" hype.

This is purely my opinion, but I think the reason why we rarely keep our resolutions is twofold. For one, I doubt most of us have what it takes—in our own strength, at least—to do away with our bad habits and overcome the obstacles that bar us from success. On top of that, the goals we set are often unrealistic; we attempt to cross a chasm with a single leap rather than build a bridge, one block at a time.

Another aspect of failed resolutions is the cause and effect relationship. We often think that by losing weight, falling in love, quitting smoking, etc., we will feel an abiding sense of joy and contentment. When this isn't the case, we get discouraged and revert back to old patterns of living.

A plethora of articles are available that address why resolutions fail and how to be successful this go-round, and I have no doubt they'd be very helpful to read. However, I'd like to propose a resolution that I believe trumps all other resolutions, health related or otherwise, and that is this:

Study God's Word daily.

If you believe the Bible when it says every word is “breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,” then I invite you to take a look at the following two Scriptures and consider how they might apply to you and me and our pursuit of health and wholeness.[\[3\]](#)

“Don’t be impressed with your own wisdom. Instead, fear the Lord and turn away from evil. Then you will have healing for your body and strength for your bones.” (Prov. 3:7-8, NLT).

“My son, attend to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart; for they are life to those who find them, and health to all their body” (Prov. 4:20-22, MEV).

Before I continue, let me point out that each of these verses are from Proverbs, one of the “Wisdom” books of the Bible and penned by King Solomon, whose God-given wisdom was unsurpassed.[\[4\]](#) In other words, it’s the best “self-help” book available! Conveniently, it contains 31 chapters, one for every day of most months. I challenge you to read it monthly, over and over throughout 2016, and take note of how you think and feel and relate to the world around you. I believe it will bless you greatly!

Moving on ...

Each of those proverbs states explicitly that there is a direct relationship between wisdom and health. When we seek and store up wisdom, we are rewarded with strength and healing. It can be inferred that if we do the opposite and chase after material possessions and carnal passions, we attain only those superficial, external things while our inner being breaks down.

Jesus said that “man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”[\[5\]](#) The Bible is

far more than a history book or an anthology of good advice and timeless moral lessons. It's, as the book of Hebrews says, "living and active"—it reads us just as much as we read it! [6] It changes us from the inside out, renewing our mind, reinvigorating our hearts, refreshing our spirits with every word. Indeed, even the stories and chapters that seem foreign and irrelevant find meaning when we take the time to dig beyond the surface and ask the Holy Spirit to give us revelation.

I speak from personal experience when I say that prioritizing time in God's Word, His divine love letter, positively impacts every single area of one's life. It strengthens us, consoles us, corrects us, convicts us, guides us, and most of all *points us* to the Author and Finisher of our faith. [7] When our minds and hearts are filled with this revolutionizing, one-of-a-kind truth, our whole lives become grafted into the life-giving vine of Jesus Christ. Then, and only then, can we find victory, feel peace, and flourish along the path God's carved out for us.

This year, I encourage you to put "Study God's Word Daily" at the top of your Resolutions list. Plug it into your calendar. Set reminders on your phone. Include it on your to-do list. And then honor it—*no excuses*. Whether it's 30 minutes or 30 seconds, time in the Bible is never wasted.

Tweet me at @dandersontyler to let me know if you've made this resolution as well as how it's going. I'd love to hear about it!

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For the original article, visit dianaandersontyler.com.

Is There a Maw in Your Walk With God?

Having lived in Florida for almost 13 years, I've seen a few sinkholes. A few years ago, my own home had to be rescued from one—a gap in the earth underneath my house had to be plugged with 40 cubic yards of concrete.

The process proved long and arduous, but it stabilized the foundation of our house and saved us from years of grief and heartache. Praise God for his mercy and loving kindness. Other homes on our street weren't as fortunate.

The maw (defined as a cavernous opening that resembles the open jaws of an animal) that Satan meant for destruction of our home—and perhaps our family—worked out for good because, through that situation, my wife and I learned to trust God with our home. *"We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose"* (Rom. 8:28).

We're certainly grateful to those who helped repair our home. We haven't had any issues since.

However, while we did learn to lean on God with our home, it's sad to say that it took a lot longer for me to listen to Him about the gaps in my spiritual life.

Sinkholes are dangerous, and so are spiritual maws.

For years, God has been speaking to me through many friends and preachers—as well as His Word—about the things I need to

do to draw closer to Him. I know I need to immerse myself in the Bible. I know I need to enhance my prayer life greatly. I know I need to focus on and serve others in a way that I never have before.

I am seeking complete transformation for my life, but I know that transformation comes only by obedience, and obedience comes only from a renewed mind. *“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).

And what is necessary for renewal? Plain and simple: the Holy Spirit. John Piper says, “The spirit renews the mind. It is first and decisively His work. We are radically dependent on Him. Our efforts follow His initiatives and enablings. ... The Spirit must work from the inside out, breaking the hard heart that blinds and corrupts the mind.”

Slowly but surely, the Spirit is breaking my hard heart of things that blind me and corrupt my mind. That includes two of my worst traits—complacency and procrastination. Praise God.

But do you know the wonderful thing about Jesus? He doesn't bring guilt or shame upon his children. He doesn't care what you've done in the past or how long you've waited. He desires your repentance and obedience now. *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit”* (Rom. 8:1).

Is there a spiritual maw in your life? Pray that God will reveal it to you so you can fill it up and stabilize the foundation of your walk with Him.

And as I always like to say, “there is that.” {eoa}

More Than Anything Else, This Teaching Tool Will Affect Your Children

My experience working two decades as a schoolteacher was rewarding, interesting and exciting; it also taught me a great deal about human nature.

Among other things, teaching gifted me with a unique perspective on raising kids, a view of people that made me realize the most effective teaching tool is how you live.

Especially telling was the opportunity to observe my students' interactions with their parents. One dad, invited in to talk about his son's ongoing issues with cursing and fighting, grabbed his child by the arm, slapped him hard across the face, and yelled, "You stupid little _____! How many times do I have to _____ - _____ smack you? Keep your hands to yourself and don't _____ curse." Then he turned to me, smiled, and said, "Let me know if he _____s up again and I'll beat his _____ _____." (Feel free to insert your own blankety-blanks in the spaces provided.)

As parents, we are always on. We teach 24-7 with no letup. We use words, and we use actions.

But more than anything else, we teach volumes via the way that we are. The way we are is the most effective teacher our kids will ever have and the most effective teaching tool is how you live.

Here are some things to keep in mind as you are preparing the curriculum:

1. Cultivate an attitude marked by kindness, encouragement and support. When we're unkind and when we discourage our children, we're taking away their confidence in us as leaders.

2. Kids are giant sponges. Kids absorb everything; they have a remarkable capacity to learn. Learning is their natural approach to life. So let's not waste the opportunity by teaching them anything other than integrity, courage, faith, patience, love, hard work and all the positive attributes that will lead them to experience successful, meaningful lives.

3. It's not *if* they learn from you but *what*? We can't abrogate our responsibility to teach. Teaching and learning are the go-to postures for dads and their children. So the question moves from *if* to *what* we will teach.

4. You are your kids' hero; it's not an option. Good, bad or ugly, as Dad, you are your children's hero. Just like teaching, this isn't an optional role. This fact begs the question, *What kind of a hero am I going to be?*

5. How you treat your spouse is the best predictor of how your son will treat his family. You are already teaching your son how to be a husband. So how are you doing? Not only will your son likely treat his wife the same way you treat his mother, your daughter will find a man who will continue the lessons learned from Dad. So how would you like your kids' marriages to look?

6. When you think they're not listening, they are. This is one of those Murphy's Law situations. You simply can't be selective when it comes to teaching your kids how to live. Your life is written large on their consciousness, and it seeps through walls, across the miles between home and work. They will—they do—always “hear” us live. There's no getting around this fact.

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For the original article, visit allprodad.com.

Why We Must Honor Disrespectful People Too

Everybody has people in their life that are rude, crude and downright disrespectful. The question isn't whether or not you do have these people in your life, but instead how to deal with them, respond to them and handle the sometimes-stressful relationship as a whole.

How do you honor disrespectful people?

This is a question people ask me all the time. Whether via email, text or a conversation over coffee, people are yearning to understand the process in which they can honor someone who constantly shows them the opposite.

Who Are They?

1. Family?
2. Friends?
3. Acquaintances?
4. A spouse?
5. Your kids?
6. Your boss?

[First Peter 2:17](#) says, “Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.” Although this seems easy as pie, how do we make this a reality in our own lives?

One thing honoring doesn't mean is that you have no choice but to tolerate one's abuse. Honoring does not mean that you never confront the obvious problems. Honoring does not mean allowing yourself to constantly get walked on.

How Do We Honor Disrespectful People?

1. Show them love even if they don't deserve it ([1 John 4:19](#)).
2. You can honor them without agreeing with them ([1 Cor. 6:14](#)). {eoa}

Jarrid Wilson is a husband, pastor and author relentlessly sharing the love of Jesus. For the original article, visit jarridwilson.com.

How to Encourage a Love of Reading in Your Children

It's the middle of summer, and the school year is a distant memory for our children. It's fine to give them a few weeks to relax and enjoy other activities, but now may be a good time to try to instill a love for reading.

With a little planning and effort, we can get them into good reading habits—reading for pleasure, not because they're fulfilling an assignment. If we can help our kids learn to appreciate the wonder and satisfaction of getting lost in a good book, it can be a big and potentially life-changing accomplishment.

If you work out of the house full-time, you might need some help from their mother or a care provider. Or maybe your school or local library has a reading program you could tap into. As a dad, make it one of your summer goals to encourage your kids to become enthusiastic readers.

One dad wrote to us about his approach: He bought timers for each of his kids and they recorded how many minutes they read each day. For each minute reading, they earned a minute of watching TV or playing video games.

In his case, it really worked. His kids had the motivation to keep their nose in a book, and they often saved up their media time for the weekend, so they also learned about delayed gratification. They even got to count the time when Mom and Dad were reading with them, so that was an added bonus.

This idea might work for your kids too. But the bigger point is that often it helps kids to have a motivation to read. Help them find interesting and age-appropriate books, and they might stumble onto a novel or a nonfiction book on a topic they really enjoy. Suddenly, they'll be reading for their own fulfillment.

Your kids will probably keep their timers going, and that's fine. But beyond that, you will have given them a gift that will last a lifetime—not to mention the benefit to their educational achievement when school resumes.

Action Points

- Let your family members see you reading—a lot. Make it a habit to tell them about something you've been reading lately.
- Especially with a young child, sit close (or place your child on your lap) as you read a book to him.
- Read a current news article with your child and ask for her thoughts about it.
- Set up a reward system for your children's reading

accomplishments. It's worth some money to get them reading.

- Offer to buy your child a subscription to a magazine about a subject or hobby that he or she enjoys.

For the original article, visit fathers.com.

10 Essentials Needed to Fulfill Your Kingdom Assignment

As a person who has been preaching and attempting to implement strategies, I have come up with the following essentials necessary for effectiveness in kingdom ministry:

1. High-level intercession. In Daniel 10-12 and Ephesians 6, we find that there are high-level demonic entities called principalities that rule whole nations or empires. These are the highest-ranking demons under Satan that control the political, economic and social systems of the world through ideology and worldview.

Consequently, I found that when I started preaching the kingdom with a goal of shifting culture toward biblical standards that I walked into the highest level of warfare! This is why God led me to spend much time in deep travail and illicit the prayers of high-level intercessors. If we do not combine kingdom implementation with commensurate effective prayer, we will be defeated! When you preach the kingdom of God you are dealing with demonic systems not just individual demons and sinners! Without a proper prayer plan in place, our goals of kingdom implementation will be doomed to fail.

2. Spouse on the same page. Before you make a public shift from preaching merely an individualistic gospel of salvation to the gospel of the kingdom, make sure your spouse understands the spiritual and social implications it will have on your life! If your spouse is not on the same page with you theologically or teleologically (objective and goals), then the enemy can use this as a wedge that can divide your marriage!

3. Humility in the marketplace. When leaders start making headway implementing successful strategies for the kingdom in their communities, key marketplace leaders in politics and business will latch onto you. You will start moving in circles outside the religious walls of the church and will be in proximity to power, influence and celebrity like never before. Never forget your original vision and what got you there to begin with! Always walk in humility. I have seen countless Christian leaders fall into pride when they started hobnobbing with the rich, influential and famous, resulting in them being transformed by the world instead of vice versa.

4. Strong connection to local church leadership. The local church is the only entity on earth that the devil cannot destroy (Matt. 16:16-19). Leaders and ministers who bypass the local church run the risk of not having long-term fruit! In some cases, high-level marketplace leaders will be connected more with individual apostolic-type pastors who will mentor them, even if they live too far to attend the local church the pastor oversees. In any case, if you want biblical results, then connect your work to a biblical model of discipleship that involves the family of families called the church. Of course, if at all possible, high-level marketplace leaders should attend an apostolic-type church, which is a local church that equips and releases the saints for the work of the ministry by effectively engaging culture and influencing their region holistically.

5. Have a strong covenantal team for support. I have found

that I need to have community with those who understand and partner with me in my kingdom calling. I have been blessed to have several close friends I work with, pray with, travel with and play with! Without this mutually beneficial support group, I would have a difficult time persevering in the kingdom marathon I am called to run in.

6. Avoid mission drift. It is inevitable that, the more successful you become in your kingdom assignment, the more opportunities will come both in the church and marketplace! Many people will want you on their boards, will pull upon you to aid them, and the demands on your time will increase. One of the most important things a leader has to do in order to remain successful is to avoid drifting from their original mission.

For example, I put every invitation and opportunity I get through the grid of my God-given assignment. If it doesn't align, I don't even consider it! If it seems to connect to my mission, I pray and try to get a witness in my spirit before I make a commitment to minister somewhere.

Furthermore, with every new level a person obtains, there will be adjustments they will have to make to ensure they are still on point with their mission. Having a team of folks that help you discern the will of God is also invaluable.

7. Be motivated by the message, not money. The more the demand upon you increases, the more opportunity will come to get involved in church ministry or business deals. God will allow both divine and demonic opportunities to come your way to reveal to you the motivations of your heart! If you are motivated primarily by money, then you will only go after whatever pays the most instead of what will be the most fruitful for the kingdom! This will lead to a watering down of your purpose, resulting in the dissipating of your effectiveness and divine authority.

8. Center the message and ministry on Jesus, not societal transformation. The Word of God teaches us that all things were made by Jesus and for Jesus (Col. 1:16). In all things we do, Jesus alone should have the supremacy (Col. 1:19). I have seen numerous leaders and ministries focus so much on societal influence and transformation they wound up in humanism (humanitarianism without Christ). If we seek first His kingdom and focus on Jesus being the center of our lives and ministries then He will lead us to do things that will enable us to bless both God and humanity.

This does not mean that we have to do every good work overtly in the name of Jesus, but we have to look for every opportunity to let His love be known to our neighbors. Otherwise, the focus is more on quality of life transformation than on Jesus! In my opinion, this violates Colossians 1:16, 19.

9. Balance your life with individual renewal. When we start preaching and implementing the kingdom message in our spheres of influence, we will see more needs and opportunities than ever before, which can result in work overload. There is no end to societal and individual needs.

One of the most important lessons I have learned is that it is essential I consistently do things that build me up spiritually, emotionally and physically. I need to do things that not only strengthen me spiritually (prayer, Bible reading, church), but I need to do things that give me life emotionally (sports, music, art, cultivating a social life and so on). Furthermore, I need to regularly exercise and be strategic in what I eat so I can remain physically functional. Missing it in any of these three areas can mean a premature death either in ministry, family or even our lives.

10. Balance work and play. I have learned not to take myself too seriously. I have learned that I have to work hard but mix play in as well. I need to invest in mutually beneficial

friendships that give me and my wife a healthy social life that will strengthen us (emotionally) and inevitably lengthen our lives and ministries.

I have also found that the leaders I have the most fun with are the ones God is bonding me with the most for kingdom ventures. Jesus called His disciples His friends (John 15). He loved the Pharisees but liked His close associates! Jesus loved everyone, but I am convinced He did not like everyone! (Look at how He spoke to the Pharisees in Matthew 23 and compare it to how He spoke to His disciples in John 15.) Consequently, I believe God is going to lead us to work the closest with those we are compatible with emotionally and socially.

In the kingdom, relationship precedes ministry. If you reverse that, your key ministry partnerships may not endure the test of time.

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For the original article, visit josephmattera.org.

God Stills Our Storms to a

Whisper

Storms have always been highly symbolic to me. I never understood why until I rediscovered a verse in Psalms that reads, “He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed” (107:29, NIV).

What prompted my thinking about stormy weather was an article by Cheri Fuller we once published in *SpiritLed Woman* magazine titled, “Praise Him in the Storm.” It points out there is never a good reason for us to withhold our praises to the Lord.

I can recall growing up in Florida when Hurricane Donna, a particularly damaging storm, tore through our city, leaving an almost indelible mark. For my sister Bridget and me, the experience was both fascinating and great fun—at first. We thought all the sounds outside our house were “neat.”

My mother had baked cakes before the power went out. We played games, told scary stories and stayed up late to “watch the hurricane.”

We loved the eerie glow of the kerosene lamps. We imagined that things must have been like this back when our parents were children in the “old days.”

Finally, we got to bed. Through the night we were only faintly aware of what was happening around us. But when we awoke, we discovered that we had been saved from a very real danger. All the while my sister and I had been blissfully enjoying the excitement or sleeping away, a furious storm had been raging outside.

Our yard was strewn with huge tree limbs and chunks of debris that had been peeled off our neighbors’ roofs. Oaks that had stood for a century had been uprooted and tossed aside. Slowly, I started thinking differently about this experience

and realized how grateful we should be that the Lord had protected us.

Natural storms remind me of God's sovereign protection. They help me remember that He rules over every circumstance and stills the storms of life after they've served His purposes.

I'd like to say that I still face life's storms with the same kind of abandon I had as a child. But I know a lot more now, and with knowledge has come the temptation to fear what's ahead. So, during rough times I try to look back and recall how faithful God has been to me through all kinds of tumultuous situations.

Reflecting on God's faithfulness, you can face your challenges and continue to praise and worship the Lord. Your praise attests to your trust in His power and love. It reminds you of who He is and that He will never change. It also supernaturally lifts you to the realm where His peace reigns—where you know with all certainty that He is larger than your troubles.

I felt totally secure while Hurricane Donna raged outside. I had no doubts that I'd be safe. Though I may never recover that same childish innocence, I am no less secure. In place of the innocence, God has given me the experience of His perfect, incomprehensible peace. He has delivered me from the effects of numerous storms of every sort, and as a result, my faith in Him has matured.

When we come through storms and experience God's deliverance, something wonderful happens to us, inside and out. We remember that Jesus is Lord over everything. We are blessed with a testimony and a deeper understanding that life's storms do not last forever. In the aftermath, we will never see God in quite the same way again.

Prayer Power for the Week of January 10, 2016

This week thank God that He has helped you through the storms of your life, and that He is able to see you through anything that may come your way. Praise Him in the midst of your current challenges and come boldly to His throne with your requests and concerns for the future. Continue to pray for the situation in the Middle East and pray for God's purpose to be fulfilled there. Pray that God's people would pray in one accord for revival and the expansion of God's kingdom around the world. Pray that our leaders would turn to the Lord for wisdom and strategies to solve our nation's foreign, domestic and economic problems. Remember our military and their families (Psalm 107:29; Heb. 4:16; James 1:5).{eoa}