

How Much Would You Pay for 1 of Jezebel's False Prophecies?

Jezebel calls herself a prophetess but is anything but. In fact, the spirit of Jezebel is a false prophetic spirit that works in divination and smooth sayings to seduce God's people to commit immorality and worship idols (Rev. 2:20).

Far beyond control and manipulation, the spirit of Jezebel works over time to muzzle—or kill—prophetic voices. If Jezebel's witchcrafts against your mind don't intimidate you, this principality works to pervert the prophetic voice through compromise.

Of course, the Jezebel spirit also works through false prophets—those who set out to deceive—to wring money out of your pocket with sensational prophecies that tap into the idolatry in your heart or fearful prophecies that manipulate the soul.

Why do so many people give so freely to so many of Jezebel's prophets? Why are some Christians supporting Jezebel's false prophets instead of sowing into the true kingdom of God? Selah.

3 Sources of Prophecy

Prophecy comes from one of three sources: the human spirit, a demonic spirit or the Holy Spirit. Our human spirits have plenty of edification, exhortation and comfort to offer, but that doesn't make our utterances God-breathed prophetic words. On the flip side, demonic spirits are prophesying to many in the body of Christ through diviners. I'm not talking about the fortune tellers with the tarot cards and crystal balls in those creepy little shops of horrors. I'm talking about those

who prophesy in the name of the Lord (Matt. 7:22).

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From the Old Testament to the New, God has a strong rebuke for what we call the spirit of Jezebel and those operating in it. Jehovah had something against Queen Jezebel. (You can read Jezebel's story in 2 Kings.) Likewise, Jesus had something against the church at Thyatira, who tolerated that women Jezebel (Rev. 2:20).

Both Jezebels led God's chosen ones to celebrate sexual sin and worship idols—and the fate of both is clearly described in the Bible. The Old Testament Jezebel was thrown down from her lofty position and eaten by dogs, and Jesus said He would cast the Revelation 2 Jezebel into a bed of suffering—along with her followers—if there was no repentance.

Seeing the fate of Jezebel, why would anyone want to eat at her table? I understand what's in it for false prophets—plenty of payment. Queen Jezebel had hundreds of prophets on her payroll, and they ate at her table (1 Kin. 18:19). I understand how eunuchs fall into Jezebel's trap. It get why Ahabs tolerate Jezebels and how some rise up as Jezebel's children. I talk all about this in my brand-new book, *Jezebel's Puppets*.

But I still don't understand why Christians would pay for a prophetic word from one of Jezebel's false prophets. Jezebel never uttered a Holy Spirit-inspired prophetic word in her life, but rather she preys on the hurts, wounds, wants and needs of the soul with divination. The only answer I can come up with is that believers are desperate to hear for supernatural direction—so desperate that they will listen to any voice that says it is of God.

Why We Fall for Jezebel's Divination

Before I got saved, I used to go to Tarot card readers, palm readers, crystal readers—and even call divination hotlines looking for direction for my life. I was going through major trials and I didn't know which way was up—and I didn't know the Lord. I was desperate.

Many believers are just as desperate. Although Jesus clearly said that “My sheep know My voice and the voice of another they will not follow” (John 10:27), I've discovered that many believers can clearly hear the voice of the devil telling them to sin, condemning them after they do and otherwise selling them a pack of lies. Many have not been taught that they can hear the voice of God—or trained how to discern and identify the many ways He speaks.

True five-fold prophets equip the saints for the work of the ministry. They not only declare what God has said and is saying and teach believers how to apply the *rhema* words they release—they school believers on testing the spirits and inclining their ear to the Lord. Jezebel-inspired prophets profit from this lack of training by making people dependent on them for a word from the Lord rather than pointing them to the One who freely shares words of life.

You can hear from God for yourself. True prophets can confirm what the Lord is saying to you or reveal something new to your heart, but don't be fooled by Jezebel and her witchcrafts (2 Kin. 9:22). Don't fall into the pay-to-pray trap. Don't buy into the Internet diviner's thievery. Read a book, take an equipping class or just go hard after God, and you will find the direction you need for your life. You can check out my new book, *Jezebel's Puppets: Exposing the Agenda of False Prophets*, on Amazon or download a free sample chapter on my website.

Pornography: Not Innocent Fantasy Island

One of the most popular TV shows of back in the 1970s was *Fantasy Island*, starring Ricardo Montalban playing the role of Mr. Roarke, a suave, tuxedo-clad host who, along with his sidekick, Tattoo, greeted his visitors by proclaiming: "Welcome, welcome to Fantasy Island."

Let's talk about Fantasy Island.

The storylines, weaving extravagant fantasies of the newly arrived quests, didn't always work out the way they wanted. In fact, their fantasies actually brought them back to reality, making them want their reality more than the fantasy. This "aha" moment is sorely needed by male guests visiting the new fantasy islands of today.

Someone has to talk about this idea of fantasy because it has become an epidemic—not only here in the United States, but globally. I'm *not* talking about innocent fantasies, childhood dreams, like the Disneyland fantasies. I'm talking about millions—more likely billions—of men chasing *manly* fantasies, mainly pornography and extramarital sex.

These guys are experiencing the same thing guests on the fictional show did—the promise of fantasy only delivers a moral hangover, a cheap release and a numbing shame that exposes his lack of character. The "aha" in front of today's Fantasy Islanders is resolving to accept our responsibilities as men and reject the double life of Fantasy Island.

Today, pornography revenues in the United States exceed the revenue of ABC, CBS and NBC *combined*. Indeed, the revenue of

the pornography industry is larger than the revenues of Apple, Amazon, Google, eBay, Microsoft, Netflix and Yahoo!—combined.

This fantasy problem is so large that it's not only plaguing men globally, but it's creeping into the lives of our mothers, our wives, our sisters, our daughters—even our grandchildren. There is nothing more obviously evident than the *New York Times* best-selling trilogy called *Fifty Shades of Grey*, three books which chronicle the dark secrets of Anastasia, a college student who desires to be dominated by Christian, a tortured man who has particular sexual tastes (fantasies). The caricature of “Christian” is stunning. He is so lost and needs so much help. Where have all the good men gone?

These disturbing cultural trends should hit every Christian man in the mouth and reboot his moral compass as this country heads toward moral, spiritual and cultural implosion.

But I'm not discouraged. As we go through our series called Fantasy Island, you will embrace reality and reject fantasy. We can turn things around. We need, however, to turn to God for spiritual direction and revival. Our reality is the reality of God's glory: His redemption, His love for us.

Men, let God bless you! Pray about your decisions to embrace reality or live a life of fantasy. The choice is yours, and God is waiting for you to make the decision.

Join Every Man Ministries

Fantasy ranges from innocent to indecent. From Disney dreams to dark diversions, it is the wallpaper of popular culture offering every man an alternative relief or escape from reality. Why is fantasy so powerful? Why is it so destructive on so many levels? Most importantly, what does fantasy reveal about a man's relationship to reality? Watch this eye-opening session with men's expert and Pastor Kenny Luck and learn why

fantasy is an island.

Try the 30-day Free Trial and sign up for the Every Man Ministries Newsletter. {eoa}

Kenny Luck is the president and founder of Every Man Ministries. As the former men's pastor at Saddleback Church in California and current leadership pastor at Crossline Community Church, Kenny has found the proven way to improve men's ministries around the world. Sleeping Giant is this blueprint, and gives men the tools they need to lead and understand their own men's ministry. Watch Kenny's teachings at [and](#) start your men's group today!

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Be Careful When You 'Touch God's Anointed'

Psalm 105:15 is one of the Scriptures most taken out of context in the Bible. Many have invoked the passage, "Do not touch my anointed ones, and do no harm to my prophets" as a means of skirting accountability for false teaching and for sin.

Unwittingly, I have been guilty of callously spewing this scripture in the past to defend certain preachers. I didn't do it because of defiance or an attitude of superiority, but because of my own biblical ignorance. I simply did not know the Word of God. Recently, I have repented and taken great

steps to correct this.

Unfortunately, I am not the only one who ever has committed the error of misrepresenting Psalm 105:15. I'm sure each time someone does, it grieves the heart of God.

An article by Watchman Fellowship's Clete Hux called "Accountability: The Way to Touch God's Anointed," helped clear up this issue for me.

When studying Psalm 105:15, Hux says you will see that it has nothing to do with questioning the teachings of church leaders. In this context, rather, the words "touch" and "do no harm" refer to inflicting physical harm upon someone. Specifically, the phrase "touch not the Lord's anointed" refers to David's hesitance to kill King Saul when the opportunity arose. Previously, David indeed had rebuked Saul publicly, and he had done it more than once.

Although Saul was referred to as "God's anointed," Saul still needed to be accountable for his actions and his words.

That goes for double anyone who preaches the gospel. If what they are preaching is not scripturally sound, they've opened that teaching up to scrutiny.

However, there is scrutiny and there is malicious intent—two very separate ideals.

When you scrutinize someone, please make sure it's with 1) Godly intent about his or her teaching, and 2) not against the person themselves. I've read many examples—especially on message boards—where a preacher's character is maligned because of something he or she taught or is NOT teaching (I speak of one preacher in particular who gets dragged through the mud. I won't mention him by name, but you all know him well). That's where people fail to take care when they "touch God's anointed." Their words are simply malicious.

And, malicious intent against anyone, much less God's anointed, isn't without its consequences.

We know from 2 Kings 2:23-24 what happened to 42 youth from Bethel who maliciously mocked Elisha, certainly one of God's anointed. *"He went up from there to Bethel, and going up on the way, little boys came out of the city and made fun of him and said to him, "Go up, you bald head! Go up, you bald head!" He turned around, saw them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord. Then two she-bears came out of the woods and ripped open forty-two of the boys."*

This type of mockery implied malicious intent, perhaps to maim or kill Elisha. At that time, the epithet "baldy" signified contempt in the East and showed severe disrespect for Elisha's message and God's power. God sent the bears as a judgment for their callous unbelief.

God may not be so blatant these days. But again, there are consequences.

So what should Christ followers do when they find themselves in disagreement with someone in the ministry? At least these three things:

- Make sure that what you are disagreeing with is something that person actually said. I've seen a lot of people comment on things they don't even investigate and simply assume it's true because they read something somewhere or heard it from someone else.
- Most importantly, check it against Scripture. This is the ultimate test.
- Don't go off half-cocked and rebuke anybody at time in any place—most specifically on the Internet—when you disagree with someone. Try everything in your power to contact the person and have them or a representative explain themselves. Matthew 18:15-16 says, *"Now if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault*

between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, then take with you one or two others, that by the testimony of two or three witnesses every word may be established" (MEV).

There certainly isn't a lack of public rebuke on the Internet. A great deal of it is mean-spirited and not meant for godly correction, but as it appears, for some people to simply make themselves feel better. That's yet another ugly trait God has surgically removed from my personality. Pastor Kenny Luck calls it "spiritual nitpicking."

It is important—nay, crucial—for Christ followers, as Hux says, "not (to) render a condemning judgment upon anyone (that alone is for God), but to render a discerning judgment upon all teachings. It is important for Christians to test all things by Scripture" as the Bereans did with Paul in Acts 17:11. *"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with all eagerness, daily examining the Scriptures, to find out if these things were so" (MEV).*

If it ain't in the Bible ...

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

Why You Should Advise Your Teen Son to Stay Away From These Types of Girls

At the beginning of 1848, a carpenter named James Marshall was working on building a sawmill near Sacramento, California when

he found gold. Although he and his employer tried to keep the discovery quiet, news started to spread.

Sam Brannan, a shop owner in nearby San Francisco, looked to cash in, not by mining but by selling equipment to prospectors. He initially announced the great gold hope in the streets and then he sent publications east.

Initial reports around the country were greeted by skepticism. But in December, President Polk confirmed the abundance of gold in California. By 1849, the rush was on. The hope-filled prospectors looking to strike it rich became known as "The 49ers."

Unfortunately, some thought they struck it rich only to find out that the shiny, gold substance was only pyrite. It is otherwise known as "fool's gold." While gold is both soft and nearly indestructible, pyrite is brittle and breaks apart easily. Another way to tell the difference is during panning; pyrite is lighter and will easily move around the pan with the water while gold will normally stay in the same place.

When my son discovers girls, the last thing I want him to do is invest his heart and mind on fool's gold. Don't misunderstand me. This is not a value statement. I believe all human beings to be of eternal worth and significance.

However, teenage boys (and plenty of men) will chase flash without considering what is below the surface. Physical attraction is important, but it's the core of a woman that makes her a lasting companion and sharpen him into a better man. My son may need to learn this lesson through painful experience, but hopefully that pain will be held to a minimum.

With all that said, here are five types of girls I don't want my son dating.

1. Dishonest. We have all lied at times, but a person who makes it a habit, even about small things, cannot be trusted.

The relationship will only end in frustration and disappointment, perhaps worse. The thing I would tell my son to look out for in a girl is how she speaks about people. Is she nice to people when they are around, but speaks badly about them when they leave? If so, then watch out.

2. Shallow. She cares most about surface things and first-world problems, namely involving her. Shallow people have limited emotional depth because they don't invest thought and energy in them. Caring little for the needs of others, she also tends to make snap judgments without knowledge and lacks empathy. Many teenagers have a self-focus and have only realized a certain amount of emotional maturity. However, I would caution my son with the question, "How does she respond to people in pain?" If there is a lack of concern, don't waste your time.

3. Vain. It's not just that she is fixated on how she looks, but she is focused on herself. People who are vain will tend to focus their energy on creating a picture of what looks good rather than developing the heart and authentic friendships. Relationships come in and out of their lives with little care. I would tell my son to look for a couple of warning signs. How often is she taking selfies, looking at those pictures or in a mirror? What does her friend history look like? If the answers are *quite a bit* and *a revolving door of friends*, that is a major red flag.

4. Materialistic. When she places the value of things over people, she can't be counted on. Materialistic people will be the first to cut and run when things get difficult. A relationship with her is like building a house in the sand. It won't last. I want my son to only build relationships with people that will hang in there when things are hard. He needs to pay attention to how much she talks about having expensive things. Does she try to impress others with them or take excessive pride in them?

5. Unfaithful. She consistently breaks promises and doesn't keep her word. There is no follow-through. It is a recipe for a painful relationship and potential cheating and is not worth his time. The question I would ask him is, "How often does she do what she says she's going to do?" If she doesn't walk her talk, find a girl who does. There are plenty out there.

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I Will: 10 Realistic Resolutions for 2016

Happy New Year!

Each one of us, regardless of income, education or privilege, has been given the gift of 366 brand new days (366 because it is a leap year).

At the stroke of midnight on December 31, a treasure so rich and so valuable was bestowed upon humanity that the angels gasp in wonder.

- 366 days to whine or to worship.
- 366 days to give or to hoard.
- 366 days to encourage or to criticize.
- 366 days to express hope, joy and power.

As you approach this year of 2016, perhaps like me you are jaded and discouraged when it comes to setting unrealistic New Year's resolutions. You may have set yearly goals in the past but have thrown in that infamous towel at day 11 ... or day 16 ... or day 21.

Rarely, if ever, has a New Year's resolution of mine survived to day 365 or day 366.

Perhaps you have resolved never to resolve again because it only makes you feel like an abysmal failure. I know that feeling so well.

Rather than set unreachable and self-centered goals this year, I have determined to embrace the gift of 366 with a passion unmatched by earthly standards. These are my determinates for 2016:

1. I will face every mountain that gets in my way with unrivaled tenacity and with defiant faith. I will.

2. I will bathe myself in the Word of God and when a storm dares to encroach on my life, I will use the Word as a shelter and as a weapon. I will.

3. I will pray the Word of God ... I will memorize the Word of God ... I will study the Word of God ... and I will declare the Word of God. I will.

4. I will be a generous giver, a lavish encourager and will remind myself daily that every blessing I have been given is not my own. I will sing my way through the wilderness of lack with my eyes set on my Provider. I will.

5. I will be a vessel of hope and I will splash the valuable treasure and glittering jewel of hope on every one I meet. I will.

6. I will use my tongue only as a beautiful instrument of worship and as a healing tool of encouragement. I will.

7. I will immerse myself in the joy of His presence on a daily basis. I will find extraordinary delight in all that He is and all that He does. I will.

8. I will view difficult people not as a hindrance to be

endured but as an opportunity to exhibit the character of Christ. I will.

9. I will bask in the Father's love for me and I will fight off loneliness and feelings of inadequacy with the knowledge that I am never alone and that I can indeed do all things through Christ who gives me strength. I will.

10. And this will be my stirring motto and the song of my life every day of 2016, "More of Jesus and less of me." Indeed it will.{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, including *No More Ordinary, Holy Estrogen!*, *The Rooms of a Woman's Heart* and *Defiant Joy!* Her most recent book, *Refined: Finding Joy in the Midst of the Fire*, was released on Aug. 1. Her teaching DVD *The Rooms of a Woman's Heart* won the Telly Award, a prestigious industry award for excellence in religious programming. You can also listen to Carol's "A Jolt of Joy" program daily on the Charisma Podcast Network.

2016 Prophecy: A Year of Shifting Seasons and Suddenlies

Last year, the Holy Spirit spoke expressly to my heart that 2015 was the year of new beginnings. That rang true in my life

and in the lives of many people whom God called from the waiting room to the delivery room.

2015 was a challenging year in many ways, a year of stretching and transitioning from the old to the new—and now we're going to the next. With regard to 2016, I heard the Holy Spirit say it's a year of "shifting seasons and suddenlies."

Those rhythmic words got my attention. What, exactly, does He mean? On the surface, it sounds like more change, more transition—and at least a few unexpected twists and turns along the way. I decided to press in to pray and study what this means practically. In this first article, I'm giving a general overview at the personal level. I will follow up with more specific details in the weeks ahead.

Embracing Shifting Seasons

We all know what a season is, but we don't always know what season we're in. Spiritually speaking, a season is a period of time—that can be specific or indefinite. We know that to everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven (Eccl. 3:1). We know we're not supposed to grow weary in well doing because we'll reap if we don't give up—in due season (Gal. 6:9).

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We know that if we meditate on the Word day and night, we will stand like trees planted by the rivers of water, bringing forth fruit in its season and prospering in whatever we do (Ps. 1:2-3). But we must also know that it is God who changes the times and seasons (Dan. 2:21). We can't change our own season, but we can position ourselves for a season shift.

Merriam-Webster describes a "shift" as "to exchange for or replace by another; to change the place, position or direction of; to change gears; to go through a change." When the Holy

Spirit said, “shifting season,” it’s easy to discern that He meant changes are ahead. Some of you are going to shift from a time of sowing to a time of reaping. Others will shift from weeping to laughing. Still others will shift from lack to prosperity.

I’m reminded of what God told Jeremiah: “For I know the plans that I have for you, says the Lord, plans for peace and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope” (Jer. 29:11). God has good plans for us in 2016. He wants to shift us out of what has held us back from His best and into His good, perfect and acceptable will (Rom. 12:2).

Creating a Climate for the Shift

Our part is to position ourselves for the shift—and that means creating a climate that sets the stage for God to move in our lives. Scientists will tell you that the earth’s seasons have shifted in recent years—and they point to climate change as the foundation for the shift.

If we translate this to a spiritual reality—as natural surroundings often correspond to spiritual conditions—it’s clear that changing our spiritual climate sets the stage for a shift in spiritual seasons. We can’t shift our seasons—God does that. But we can create a climate that invites Him to do the work in our hearts that prepares us for the next season.

What is the spiritual climate over your life? If you are angry, ungrateful, complaining, angry, greedy, controlling, critical, impatient, indifferent, discouraged, jealous, frightened, frustrated, unforgiving, resentful, bitter, selfish or something of the kind, you’re creating a spiritual climate over your life that repels the Holy Spirit. He loves you, yes, but your flesh is warring against His Spirit.

If, by contrast, you are thankful, peaceful, prayerful, joyful, generous, forgiving, loving, content, selfless,

hopeful, faithful, inspired and worshipful, you are creating an atmosphere that attracts the presence of God. And the presence of the Holy Spirit is the ultimate key to spiritual change and growth. Put another way, we need to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit in our lives and reject the works of the flesh. In doing so, we position our hearts for God to shift us into fruitful seasons of harvest.

Wait for the 'Suddenlies'

When you change your climate unto a season shift, it will lead to a "suddenly." Merriam-Webster defines "suddenly" as "happening or coming unexpectedly; a changing angle or character all at once; marked by or manifesting abruptness or haste; made or brought about in a short time."

After weeks of praying in unity, "suddenly (there was) a sound like a mighty rushing wind," and the 150 in the upper room were filled with the Spirit (Acts 2). When Paul and Barnabas experienced persecution for Christ's sake, suddenly an earthquake rose up and opened the doors to the jail (Acts 16:26). Suddenly.

Suddenly you may shift into a promotion. Suddenly you may shift from sickness to health. Suddenly you may shift into greater authority in the spirit. Suddenly you may shift from a dark night of the soul to greater revelation of Christ. Suddenly you may shift from feelings of oppression to new levels of freedom. Suddenly.

Believe for the suddenlies in 2016. Expect them to happen. Wait with anticipation, but understand that you have to do your part. Like the disciples in the upper room, you need to pray. Like Paul and Barnabas in the prison, you need to praise. In other words, you need to create a spiritual climate over your life that invites the Holy Spirit to work in your heart, in your life and in your circumstances. Your climate change will eventually lead to a season shift that will bring

a suddenly you could never make happen in your own strength.

Take heart in Isaiah 48:3: “I have declared the former things from the beginning and they went forth from My mouth, and I announced them. Suddenly I did them, and they came to pass.”{eoa}

5 Practical Habits of Men in the Happiest Marriages

My wife Kay and I are closing in on 30 years of marriage. I must admit that our marriage is better than I ever expected it to be and seems to get better with age.

There are many factors that make for a good marriage; some are tangible, like provision (shelter, food) and protection (financial security, safety). Other factors are less tangible but just as real, such as understanding, respect and empathy.

While the aforementioned factors are important, there is also a very practical approach men can use to ensure happiness in marriage.

Here are five practical habits of men in the happiest marriages:

1. Grooming. Do you remember what it was like to go on your first dates? You probably put a lot of effort into making yourself as presentable as possible. Unfortunately, somewhere in the daily grind, men seem to lower their standard of physical presentation. It doesn't have to be that way. I strongly recommend that you present your body to your wife as a reasonable service. Don't brush this off like it doesn't

matter.

I've seen an evil under the sun. A middle-aged man goes into a marriage crisis and finds himself alone. What does he do? He goes on a diet, updates his clothing, goes to the barber, joins a fitness center, gets a new car. Why? Because he is trying to reclaim his manhood. I recommend you do these things while you're married.

2. Cleaning. One of the first principles my wife and I implemented in our marriage was not going to bed with the house in disarray. It was uncomfortable and made for a restless night for me if the house wasn't in order. I always help around the house. I have a habit of picking up after myself. If I see a need, I fulfill it. If there are dishes that need to be cleaned or put in the dishwasher, I do it without thinking. We're in this together and we want our house to be comfortable. Amazingly, we've found that this simple habit helps keep strife out of our home.

3. Attention. We're living in a very distracted culture. Take a look around the restaurant the next time you're out. How many couples are looking at their phones rather than at each other? We are very connected without being intimate.

I've made it a habit to leave my phone off or on silent when I am with my wife. When we talk, I look at her and make eye contact. I listen and really engage in the conversation, regardless of what we're talking about. I am blessed that my wife is one of the smartest people that I've ever met (and I've met a lot of really smart people). After 30 years of marriage, she is still intriguing to me.

4. Affection. Affection is emotional and physical attention. Giving affection is something a man should be proactive in doing. Some men get out of the habit of pursuing their wife. They allow their hands to become cold, their words become boring, and their heart to become hardened.

Couples who are very active and proactive in affection have the happiest marriages. Again, it gets better with age. The longer your marriage endures, the more precious and esoteric it becomes.

5. Prayer. I am not sure why it was difficult for me to start this habit but once I did, it brought us together closer than anything else. I want my prayer time with my wife to be authentic, private and intimate. I started preparing and having communion and prayer with my wife when we set aside the tithe to be paid to our church. It really has become one of our most cherished times. We celebrate the goodness of God in our lives, for our families, and in the provision of our household. Prayer is a difference maker in happy marriages.

In the last five years, our three children have all gotten married. It is interesting to see them navigate their young marriages and develop their habits within their relationships. It really is a miracle when two people come together in covenant to embark on their joint venture. Developing a few good practical habits early on will help their marriages remain strong and youthful in excitement.

*Fivestarman was founded in 2008 by **Neil Kennedy**. Kennedy has passionately promoted God's Word for 25-plus years of ministry. He is known for practically applying biblical principles that elevate people to a new level of living. As a business, church, ministry and life consultant, Kennedy has helped others strategize the necessary steps to reach their full potential.*

For the original article, visit .

RT Kendall: 'This Is the Most Important Blog Post I've Written in Many Years'

This is the most important blog I have written in many years. I pray with all my heart that this will be read and spread to ordinary Christians all over the world. I cannot come close in emphasizing how important this particular blog is.

A melancholy fact: Most Christians do not have a Bible reading plan. Most Christians do not read their Bibles regularly. Some Christians do not read their Bibles very much at all. And ... some church leaders do not read their Bibles. I happen to know more than I care to reveal—how many famous Christians and leaders have not read the Bible through at all!

I am aiming this blog at ordinary Christians. My followers are not clergymen or church leaders but laymen—ordinary Christians.

Mrs. Martyn Lloyd-Jones made a gripping observation about C. S. Lewis' book *Screwtape Letters*, a brilliant satire that includes among other things how the devil tempts new Christians. She lamented that one huge thing Lewis left out—that should have been put in—was how the devil wants to keep people from reading their Bibles. I do agree; it would have been so helpful had Lewis put that in.

I am convinced that the devil will do *anything* to keep people from reading their Bibles.

Has the devil succeeded with you? How much do you read your Bible?

This blog was inspired by a recent trauma I had in Bimini, Bahamas. Perhaps trauma is too strong a word. But what

happened was this: I took a brief vacation to do some bonefishing—my only vacation for 2015. When I turned to read my Bible, lo and behold, I had not packed my Bible or diary (which includes my prayer list)! I was sobered. I never leave home without my Bible, but somehow I let that happen. The thought of not getting to read my Bible for three or four days was almost horrifying. I thought: what do people do who don't have their Bibles?

Then I remembered something I heard only a few days ago when I was in Singapore. That there is a church where people are *not* encouraged to read their Bibles—at home or at church—but only wait for God to give a “revelation.” Like a vision. Or *rhema* word of knowledge. That's it. The thought of reading the Bible or hearing an expository sermon does not come on to their radar screen! I was flabbergasted when I heard that.

Do listen to me, dear reader. Once we give up the conviction that the Bible is the only infallible Word of God, we open ourselves to a strange world out there that *may* include the Holy Spirit but *also if not equally* the realm of the demonic. Do not be surprised: Satan “masquerades” as an angel of light (2). The devil will work overtime to keeping Christians from reading the Bible. He would love you to close it and just wait on God.

Whereas the Bible was not given to replace the miraculous or even revelation, as Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones used to say, but “to correct abuses,” too many people don't know their Bibles well enough to *know* what the Word of God says. And what the abuses might be. The Bible is the Final and Ultimate Revelation of Truth; no vision, word of knowledge or insight will ever—ever—contradict what the Bible has said. The first test of any vision or prophetic word is to run it by Scripture. If it is not upheld by the infallible Word of God, reject it—no matter how much you may respect the person who gives you a word.

I am grateful in particular for two things in my life. First, my parents taught me to read my Bible daily. This is what they did: The thought of not reading at least a chapter a day in the Bible was out of the question. Second, Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones—my chief mentor—introduced me to Robert Murray M'Cheyne's Bible reading plan many years ago. As a consequence, I think I can say I have read the entire Bible through some 40 times and the New Testament eighty times. A Bible Reading Plan "keeps you in the Word," Dr. Lloyd-Jones used to say to me.

Many preachers only consult their Bibles when they need a sermon. I persuaded a very close friend—a high-profile prophetically gifted man—to start reading his Bible. Two years ago he began a plan and read the Bible through for the first time in his life! He could not thank me enough. He was (amazingly) amazed over how much it meant to him!

Why had he not been doing this sooner? You tell me.

How much do *you* read your Bible?

I urge you to go online and find a one-year Bible reading plan, one that will help you to read the Bible through in a year. I urge you to begin *today* in this plan and never, never, never, never stop it.

The very thought that the devil does not want you to do this should galvanize every true Christian to want to fall on their knees—to pray more and read the Bible more.

Here's the thing. Read the Bible—*logos*, Holy Scripture—and you will be thrilled to discover how often God gives you a *rhema* word. A *rhema* word basically means the unfolding of God's secret will, when He speaks directly to you. God does this. But I can predict: Chase after a *rhema* word all the time and you will probably receive nothing from God; chase after Holy Scripture and He will give you *rhema* words whenever you need such.

I have said little in this blog about personal prayer time. Please see my book *Did You Think to Pray?* In it I stress *time* with God. Children spell love T-I-M-E. How much time do you spend in prayer? I recommend 30 minutes a day for every layman; 60 minutes a day (minimum) for every church leader. The average church leader in Britain and the USA spends *four minutes a day* in quiet time. And you wonder why the church is powerless?

Please read your Bible through this year. The Bible is the Holy Spirit's greatest product. He wrote it (2 Tim. 3:15; 2 Pet. 1:21). If you want to get on good terms with the Holy Spirit, then read His Word!

One can go through Seminary (preparing for the ministry) nowadays and never get to know their Bibles. They read *about* the Bible. Many young people going into the ministry have not read their Bibles through and then they read only *about* the Bible without the foggiest idea what the Bible says.

One very, very famous Christian said that if he had his life to live over he would spend more time reading the Bible than reading books about the Bible.

It is my heart-felt cry to God that many people will read this blog and take it seriously. You will never be sorry. Also, you will never be the same again.{eoa}

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'Fields of Gold': Finding Hope Amid Sorrow

All of us are aware of music's eerie ability to act like a time machine, transporting us back to the places in our past when a particular song made an indelible mark on our memories.

If you're a woman who grew up in the 1990s like me and Hanson's "MMMBop" comes on, you'll probably feel giddy and start dancing and singing along like you are 10 years old again. If you're a Baby Boomer like my mom and you hear "I Want to Hold Your Hand" by the Beatles, you'll also have a similar flashback and reaction to this iconic song of your youth. And no one, no matter our age, can help but sing along to the classic Christmas carols and hymns that unite and inspire us during this "most wonderful time of the year."

But not every song is a joy-inducing mnemonic device. Not every musical memory is shared by our peers. This is how Eva Cassidy's version of "Fields of Gold" is for me.

It was the summer after eighth grade, and I had a newfound obsession with tennis. I watched all the tournaments on television, could tell you the life story of all the top players, practiced against the wall in the garage while my dad was at work, and played with my him on the run-down court near our house nearly every night that summer.

My dad had a serious love for music. I wish I could show you his endless iTunes library along with his collection of vinyl records and scads of CDs—there are enough of them to fill a small music store! He loved all genres of music, from jazz, blues, and rock to techno, Celtic folk, and funk. He loved to share his latest finds with his friends and family.

"Fields of Gold" was one such find that he played for me during our seven-minute drive to tennis one evening that

summer, and my heart immediately fell in love with it. Not only were Ms. Cassidy's voice and the lyrics beautiful, but the song also was made all the more poignant knowing that the young songstress had died a few years earlier of cancer. She was only 33.

I asked my dad to play "Fields of Gold" again, and then twice more on the ride home after tennis. Meandering down our long wooded driveway, staring off into the golden hay fields glowing beside it in the last breaths of daylight, the song sank into my spirit, nestled into my soul, claiming and defining that summer of tennis with my dad as one of the sweetest seasons of my life.

*You'll remember me when the west wind moves
Upon the fields of barley
You'll forget the sun in his jealous sky
As we walk in fields of gold.*

Those are the opening verses of the song. Today, six years after my dad's homegoing to heaven, I view them as somewhat prophetic. Sitting with him in the car that night, just like any other night, I had no idea that one day a west wind and the sight of sun-soaked fields could sweep me back to it ... back to *him*.

I'm currently listening to an Audible book by Christian apologists Ravi Zacharias and Vince Vitale titled *Why Suffering?* Dr. Zacharias made the following summarizing statement that I found rather profound:

"Where there is freedom [free will], there is the possibility of love. Where there is love, there is the possibility of pain. Where there is pain, there is the possibility of a Savior. Where there is a Savior, there is the possibility of redemption."

I couldn't, in this humble blog post, begin to address the complex answer, "Why is there pain and suffering if God is a

god of love?" but I can address my own pain and how it has brought me closer to the Savior who redeems it.

Suddenly losing my father plunged me into depths of grief I'd never experienced before. While I didn't question God or my faith in Him, I did question why He allowed my father to die so young when he was helping so many people in their battles against cancer and being a loving, caring, and generous man so many admired and respected. I was only 22 years old, still a young woman who very much needed her daddy. I couldn't imagine life without him, my hero, teacher, my best friend.

While I won't, on this side of heaven, know exactly why God called my dad home when He did, I do know that the pain I felt—and still feel—points directly to my Savior, to the one who "[makes] all things new" and will one day wipe away every tear from every eye that looked to Him during their struggles and sadness.

Because there is pain, there is salvation—there is *rescuing*. The ultimate Knight in Shining Armor, Jesus Christ, is the substance of true love, heroism, and happily-ever-afters that every woman's heart has longed for since they were little girls. He is the substance of courage, honor, and strength that every man's heart has strived to display since they were boys. He is the One, the *only* One, who can provide the comfort, peace, and unshakable hope we so desperately need, especially when our worlds are turned upside down.

I wish to add two more lines to Dr. Zacharias's observation above, lines that echo the promises of Scripture:

Where there is redemption, there is the assurance of heaven.

Where there is heaven, there is the promise of reunion.

When we place our trust in Jesus Christ and follow and love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, we can know *without question* that we will one day be with Him in

paradise, just as the thief on the cross beside Him was the night of His crucifixion.

We can be comforted by His immutable promise that He is preparing a home in heaven for us where we'll dwell forever, surrounded by saints and loved ones who have also "fought the good fight" and faithfully finished their race. We can look forward to a day when melodies will evoke only exceeding joy and jubilation, never the tears of yearning for bygone days of bliss.

I know the holidays can be a bittersweet mixture of both celebration and sorrow as we think back to happier times, times when our loved ones were with us and death and brokenness were far from our minds. Whatever you might be going through, please know that "the Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."

Don't let the enemy draw you into depression, but instead give thanks to God for the fond memories you *do* have (I would much rather have happy memories of my father that make me miss him than have no such memories at all) and for the promise of reunion and rejoicing still to come.

Stay fit, stay faithful. {eoa}

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

How to Take the Mystery Out of Reaching Younger Men

Reaching younger men—especially millennials—is a hot topic these days. The deceiver wants us to think that suddenly, after all these centuries, there is now some new, mysterious, opaque wall between the generations that cannot be described or penetrated.

That's myth No. 1, and it's nonsense. They're our children, for Pete's sake, not aliens.

What is myth No. 2? It's that we can't reach them because they don't want to be reached.

Time out. Do any of us really believe that young men don't have the same dreams and aspirations we also had at their age? Has there been a human nature "reboot" in some secret corner of the cosmos? That's ridiculous! We all want to love and be loved, to understand and be understood. But younger men need help.

For example, Trevor, a young man in his late twenties, asked me to mentor him. On our fourth visit (long enough for him to size up whether or not he would trust me), he sat down and blurted out, "I have a mediocre business, a mediocre marriage, and a mediocre relationship with God." Trevor was already a Christian—that wasn't the problem. But he just couldn't see how he could ever become a joyful man passionately living for Christ. That's because his father was never in the picture. What it meant to be a godly man, husband, and father was completely unexampled to him.

How do we reach younger men like Trevor with the hope, nurture and guidance that can only be found in Jesus and His gospel?

Some Things Never Change

The way to reach younger men is the same as it has always been. We have to love them and mentor them into manhood, and that takes time. A man can resist, but it's pretty difficult to resist unconditional love (think "dog"). That's what happened to me.

Some men who had been disciplined themselves and were walking with the Lord took me under their wings and showed me the ropes. Jim Gillean, in particular, made me his project. He gave me a vision for biblical manhood. He spent time with me. He cared. And he inspired me to turn around and disciple others—like Trevor. Reaching younger men is that simple.

What can you do? Stay alert. Be intentional. Decide in advance that you want to disciple younger men. Make yourself accessible. Make time. You can disciple "along the way," or you can lead a group, or you can meet one-on-one. Start with a decision to be part of God's great plan for the next generation.

You may need to give it some time to gel. Twenty-five years ago God told one of my best friends, Rick, "Disciple young men so that they can go and disciple others." But when my friend Rick went out to disciple young men, he couldn't get any to join him—at least not right away. But today, he's the master when it comes to discipling younger men.

Want to be like Rick? One thing to keep in mind is that it takes five years to fully sustain a new ministry, so we always use the axiom, "crawl, walk, run." All disappointment is the result of unmet (overly optimistic?) expectations.

Silver Bullets

Here's the silver bullet for discipleship: When God puts a man in your path who is stuck, discipleship means finding out why and then helping him solve that problem.

And here's silver bullet No. 2: Care about people until they care about people. That's how we change a young man's world.

Besides, you can't get your official "I Am a Disciple" card until you are making other disciples. And by the way, start with the younger men in your our own family.

And here's a different wrinkle: Don't "mind your own business." Men tend toward isolation when they have problems, so go ahead and intrude. Remember that no man fails on purpose. Yet many men make seemingly small compromises which slowly, over time, ruin their lives. So show young men the booby traps.

You may need some guidance and resources. The tried and true principles in the No Man Left Behind Model and book will work just fine with younger men too. Also, get *The Young Man in the Mirror* for high school boys (read out loud together in small groups with an adult mentor/discipler). I think the devil wants to make us think that the tried and true "just won't work here—ours is a special case"—but that's just nonsense.

The Elephant Story

When elephants overcrowded South Africa's Kruger National Park, the government authorized killing adult elephants and relocating their offspring to other parks.

As the orphaned male elephants became teenagers, they were clueless about what normal elephant behavior looked like. When their testosterone levels spiked, the orphaned bulls turned aggressive. In one park they savagely killed 39 rhinos. A park ranger watched as a young bull elephant intentionally knocked over a rhino and trampled it. The situation was out of control.

Then rangers brought several adult bull elephants into one of the parks. Just by being themselves, these animals "mentored" the younger bulls, demonstrating to them what normal male elephant behavior looked like. No more rhinos were killed after the mature bulls arrived.

It's not easy to become a man. Many young men like Trevor have

grown up as “practical” orphans. They’ve been left to guess at what normal male behavior looks like. The faith of young men today is under severe attack. That’s where the battle is raging. And frankly, mature Christian men are just not getting the discipleship job done. Consider these challenging words:

“If I profess, with the loudest voice and the clearest exposition, every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christianity. Where the battle rages the loyalty of the soldier is proved; and to be steady on all the battlefield besides is mere flight and disgrace to him if he flinches at that one point.”

It has been 40 years since Jim Gillean disciplined me, and I’m still singing his praises. That’s the love and respect some young man can have for you too. So pass it on. Take a younger man (or several) under your wing and show him the ropes. That’s where the battle rages. That’s where you’re needed.

Note: This article is a combination of a blog post from June 12, 2014 and excerpts from How God Makes Men.

Patrick Morley is the founder of Man in the Mirror Ministries. For the original article, visit [.](#)