

MYLES MUNROE: 10 Ways to Unbind Your Potential

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The wealthiest spot on this planet is not the oil fields of Saudi Arabia or the gold mines of South Africa. The richest deposits on our planet lie not many blocks from your house—in your local cemetery. Buried beneath the soil of those sacred grounds are songs that never were sung, books that never were written, paintings that never filled a canvas, ideas that never became reality. Tragically, our graveyards are filled with potential that never was fulfilled.

As I walk the streets of our cities, my heart grieves over the wasted, broken, disoriented lives I encounter. During their youth, they had dreams, desires, plans and aspirations. But today they are lost in a maze of substance abuse, alcoholism and purposelessness.

Only a small percentage of the 5 billion people on this planet will achieve a significant portion of their true potential. Their potential remains untapped because they do not understand the nature of the potential principle: *Potential is not what you have done, but what you can do. Not what is, but what could be.*

What is potential? Dormant ability. Untapped strength. Unused success. Hidden talents. Capped capability.

There's a wealth of potential within you. But *you* must decide if you will deprive the world or bless it with the valuable, potent, untapped resources locked away within you. Most men and women never realize their full potential because they do not understand the keys to a fulfilled, effective life.

Every manufacturer establishes the specifications, environment, conditions and operational standards for attaining the maximum performance level of his or her product. God our Creator and Manufacturer has also established a plan for the maximum performance and release of your potential. Violation of these requirements will result in the malfunction, distortion, misuse and abuse of your precious potential.

After careful study of the Bible—the Manufacturer's Handbook—I have identified 10 major keys to releasing your full potential:

1. You must know (be related to) your Source. It is essential that you understand the nature, composition and consistency of your Source, for this is the key to understanding the potency of your potential. If you had a wooden table in your house, for example, you would be aware that the table is made of wood from a tree. The strength, durability and nature of the table can only be as strong and durable as the tree. If the tree is weak, the table will be the same. Therefore, the potential of the table is determined by the potential of the source from which it came.

The same is true for you. To understand how much potential you possess, you must understand the Source from which you came. You and I possess the qualities and nature of our Source and are capable of manifesting these qualities. We also possess an eternal spirit just like our Source. We will live forever—not because He allows us to, but because it's our nature.

A manufacturer's product must remain related to its source in order to be maintained and supplied with genuine parts and authorized service. Manufacturing companies call this relationship the *warranty/guarantee* agreement.

This agreement requires that the owner of the product be subjected to the conditions, specifications and operational

standards if the manufacturer is to take responsibility for the maximum performance, maintenance and servicing of the product. Violation of the manufacturer's conditions and standards cancels the warranty/guarantee relationship and places the product at the mercy of unauthorized dealers.

The same relationship exists between *God* and *humanity*. God guarantees the maximum performance of our potential if we remain related to Him and submit to the conditions, specifications and standards set by Him. A personal relationship with our Creator is a key to the releasing of our full potential.

2. You must understand how the product was designed to function. Every manufacturer designs, develops and produces his or her product to function in a specific manner. Automobile manufacturers, for instance, design their products to function with gasoline, spark plugs, batteries, pistons, oil, water and so forth. No matter what you do, if you do not supply the elements required for the operational function of the product, it will not perform and maximize its potential.

God designed human beings to function as He does. You and I were created to function by faith and love. These are the fuels on which we run.

The just live—operate—by faith (Rom. 1:17). Without faith, it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). And faith works through love (Gal. 5:6) because God is love, and those who operate in love abide in God and God abides in them (1 John 4:16).

Our potential cannot be released without faith and love. Fear and hatred short-circuit our potential.

3. You must know your purpose. Every product exists for a specific purpose. That reason is the original intent of its existence—the purpose for which the manufacturer made it. Knowing the manufacturer's intent is essential because the

purpose for which something was made determines its design, nature and potential.

God created you and gave you life for a purpose. Whatever that purpose is, you possess the potential to fulfill it. No matter how big the dream God gave you, your potential is equal to the assignment. Purpose gives birth to responsibility, and responsibility makes demands on potential.

4. You must understand your resources. All manufacturers provide access to the necessary resources for the proper maintenance, sustenance and operation of their products. Resources and provisions are to help sustain the product while its potential is being maximized.

God, in His great wisdom, provided human beings with tremendous material and physical resources to sustain and maintain us as we proceed in realizing, developing and maximizing our potential. We are never to worship the resources, nor are we to become controlled by them. Idolatry and substance abuse are violations of the Manufacturer's specifications and will lead to the destruction of potential.

5. You must have the right environment. Environment consists of the conditions that have a direct or indirect effect on the performance, function and development of a thing. Every manufacturer specifies the proper conditions under which he or she guarantees the maximum performance of the product. In the manual, the manufacturer will caution against violation of that specified environment for maximum performance. The right environment is the ideal conditions needed to maximize the true potential.

God created everything to flourish within a specific environment. Plants and animals all need a specific environment in order to live. When the proper environment is violated, the potential for life is disrupted and possibly destroyed. This is also true of humans.

God designed humans to function in the garden of His presence, in relationship with Him, free from sin and in daily communion with His Spirit. Human potential needs this positive environment of fellowship, relationship, love and challenge in order to be maximized. You can never be all you could be in any other environment.

Humanity's fall contaminated our environment and poisoned the atmosphere of our potential. It produced abnormal behavior and the malfunction of the human factor. The key to releasing your true potential is the restoration of God's original environment. Jesus came to restore us to the Father. He sent the Holy Spirit to restore our internal environment.

6. You must work out your potential. Potential is dormant ability. But ability is useless until it is given responsibility. When God created Adam, He planted in him the potential to subdue, rule over and care for the earth and everything in it. His potential was predetermined by this purpose. Adam had inside of him all the potential necessary to fulfill the assignment. But he was not aware of his potential, even as you may not be aware of what you can do.

So the first thing God gave Adam was not a wife, but *work* (Gen. 2:15). He made demands on the potential of Adam's mind by commanding him to name the animals and stimulated the potential of his body by commanding him to cultivate the garden. The Lord gave Adam insight into the potential of his spirit by commanding him to dominate the whole earth for God's glory.

Work is a major key to releasing your potential. Claiming a promise does not make it happen. You must apply the principle of work. The land was promised to the children of Israel, but they had to walk it out to possess it (Deut. 11:24). Good ideas do not bring success. Good hard work does. To release your true potential, you must be willing to work.

7. You must cultivate your potential. Potential is like a seed. It is a hidden ability that needs to be cultivated. You must feed your potential the fertilizer of positive company, give it the environment of encouragement, drench it with the water of God's Word and bathe it in the sunshine of personal prayer. Read materials that stimulate your faith and nourish your dream.

8. You must guard your potential. It's tragic when a tree dies in a seed or a person dies in childhood. It's sad when what could have been becomes what should have been. With all the wealth of your potential, you must be careful to guard and protect it.

The Bible calls your potential a *treasure* in an earthen vessel (2 Cor. 4:7). You must guard your visions and dreams from sin, discouragement, procrastination, failures, opinions, distractions, traditions and compromise. Satan is after your potential. Be on guard.

9. You must share your potential. God created the heavens and the earth to operate on this principle: Potential can only be fulfilled when it is shared. Nature abounds with this truth. The sun does not exist for itself. Plants release oxygen for us, and we provide carbon dioxide for the plants. The bee receives nectar as it pollinates the flowers.

No potential exists for itself. This is also true of human potential. The true measure of fulfilled potential is not what is accomplished, but who receives benefit from the accomplishment. Your deposit was given to enrich and inspire the lives of others. Remember, the great law is love.

10. You must know and understand the laws of limitation. Freedom and power are two of the most important elements in our lives. Potential is the essence of both. Potential is power. But freedom needs law to be enjoyed, and power needs responsibility to be effective. One without the other produces

self-destruction.

Every manufacturer establishes laws of limitations. These laws are not given to restrict, but to protect—not to hinder, but to assist and guarantee the maximum performance of potential.

God has set laws and standards to protect our potential and to secure our success. Violating these laws limits the release of your potential. Obedience ensures protection and maximization.

Commit yourself to obeying the Manufacturer. Then watch your life unfold as you discover the hidden ability that was always within you.

Why Does God Take So Long?

Are you tired of waiting on God? Have you been saying, “I’ve waited long enough?” Waiting on God to act can truly be one of the worst things we have ever done. One of the most exasperating aspects of God is His *slowness* to step in on our behalf. But the more we get to know Him, the more we see that His slowness is not such a bad thing after all; it is for our good.

What if you could ask for anything you honestly want?

Have you ever fantasized that God might come to you as He did to Moses and ask you what you want Him to do for you? What if He did come to you and invited you to ask for anything you like? What do you suppose you would ask for? And what if there were no conditions—that is, you need not ask for what is noble, altruistic or even God-honoring—that it could even be a selfish request? You simply have an opportunity to ask for *one thing* and it will be answered. What would you request?

God had let Moses know He was pleased with him: "You have found favor with me," the Lord said to him. Moses seized the moment and replied to God, "If I have found favor in Your sight, *show me now Your way*, that I may know You" (Ex. 33:13, emphasis added).

One of the things Moses learned about God's ways is His slowness to act.

Moses was arguably the greatest leader of men in human history. He might have asked for any number of things—vengeance on His enemies, for example. But the truth of his heart surfaced: Moses wanted to know God's ways. This convicts me. I ask: Would I want to know God's ways above any other request?

I will admit to you that Moses's request puts me to shame. I cannot remember asking that of God. I certainly asked for a lot of other things.

I want to finish well. I would have thought that the safest guarantee that one will finish well is to make Moses's request—to know God's ways—your true desire.

The apostle Paul's supreme wish was the same—"to know Him," that is, Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:10). You may want to ask, "Paul, are you saying you don't know the Lord?" Of course Paul knew the Lord. But his deepest longing was to know Christ better. That is what he meant by the words, "To know Him."

I have learned this. The better you get to know God, the more you want to know Him. The more you know Him, the more you are in awe of Him. The more you know Him, the more you want to spend time with Him. The more you spend time with Him, the more you feel you need him. The best way to get to know anybody is to spend time with them. So too when it comes to knowing God.

Moses frequented what was called the tent of meeting. It was

there that the Lord spoke to Moses, “Face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend” (Ex. 33:11). It was in the tent of meeting that Moses put his request to the Lord—that he might know God’s ways.

God lamented that ancient Israel did not know His ways (Heb. 3:10). God wants us to know His ways. But we must be prepared for this: His ways are different from our ways (Is. 55:8-9). What if we don’t like God’s ways?

One of God’s ways is His slowness, “With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day” (2 Pet. 3:8). Time is His domain. He is in no hurry. But we are. God can—to us—seem so slow.

Yet God can act so quickly when He chooses. Once Jesus was born, suddenly, a great company of heavenly host appeared with the angel (Luke 2:13-14), and after waiting hundreds of years for Joel’s prophecy to be fulfilled, suddenly a sound of a violent wind came from heaven (Acts 2:1-2).

So why is God slow in making things happen? He tells us why. We may or may not like the reason: that He might gain greater glory. The God of the Bible is a God of glory (Acts 7:1-2). Whatever He does, it is for His glory. The longer He waits, the greater the glory. But it also means greater the reward and greater the joy for us.

 Adapted from *It Ain’t Over Till It’s Over* by R. T. Kendall, copyright 2015, published by Charisma House. If you’ve ever gotten tired of waiting for God’s answers, this book is for you. It will encourage you to persevere, not give up, keep keeping on, run the race, and finish well. To order your copy, [click here](#).

Prayer Power for the Week of August 24, 2015

This week, dare to ask God to show you His ways, and not just His works. Honor Him for who He is, and not just for what He

does. Ask Him to draw you into greater intimacy in your relationship and tell Him you trust Him to fulfill every promise He has made no matter how long it takes. Continue to pray for worldwide revival, laborers for His harvest field, our government and spiritual leaders, Israel and the church (Ex. 33:13; Heb. 3:10; 1 Tim. 2:1-5).

JOHN ECKHARDT: Can a Christian Have a Demon?

Note: This article originally appeared in the March 2003 issue of Charisma magazine.

There was a time when we taught in our church that Christians could not have demons. I preached long sermons stating that Christians could be oppressed, regressed, digressed, obsessed and suppressed, but never possessed. We believed that a demon could be *outside* a Christian oppressing him but that it could not be *inside* him. The reasoning I used to defend this position was that Jesus and the Holy Spirit could not live inside the same body in which demons reside.

The problem was, our experience did not match our theology. When we ministered deliverance, we frequently prayed for people we knew were born-again, Spirit-filled believers—and they manifested demons! We had to face the fact that either our experience was wrong or our doctrine was wrong.

We couldn't question our experience because we knew what we were seeing. So we began to question our theology.

In our search for truth, we realized that in the Bible, Jesus tells us to cast devils out, not to cast devils *off*.

Obviously, for something to come out, it must be *in*. We finally came to the conclusion that our interpretation of the Bible had been wrong.

Now I am convinced not only that a Christian can have demons but also that there are demons that operate in the realm of theology, encouraging us to argue and debate endlessly over doctrine rather than meeting the needs of people who are hurting. Demons actually help promote the teaching that a Christian cannot have a demon, because they gain strength from staying hidden. They can operate in their destructive ways without being challenged!

Some may argue that a believer cannot be possessed. But the dismaying fact remains that born-again Christians, including leaders, are experiencing difficulties that can find no solution in natural infirmities or the endless conflict between the flesh and the Spirit.

It's time to acknowledge that we are dealing with real people who have real problems and that God did not save and commission us so we could argue over doctrine. He called us into ministry so we can help people who are hurting, wounded and bruised.

When you come into contact with someone who is controlled by demons, the answer is to cast the devils out, not to argue about whether or not the person is a Christian. The answer is to bring help to that person.

Possessed or Not Possessed?

I realize I'm not the only believer who has ever had an erroneous idea about Christians being possessed. And the sensationalized picture Hollywood has painted of demon possession has not helped. It has led us to believe that if we say a Christian can be possessed, we are saying he can be fully owned and controlled by the devil and will manifest, Hollywood-style, with head spinning and eyes popping out.

The word “possessed” is an unfortunate translation because it connotes ownership, and we know that the devil cannot own a Christian—that is, have complete control of him. But in the Bible, there is no real distinction between being possessed and being oppressed, digressed, suppressed, obsessed and so forth. All these terms mean that a person is, to some degree, under the influence of a demon.

Personally, I do not have as much of a problem with the word “possessed” as other Christians do. In fact, to me the word “demonized” sounds worse.

When I looked up “possess” in the dictionary, I discovered that one definition of the word is “to occupy.” My contention is that if a demon occupies your big toe, he possesses that part of you. It doesn’t mean he possesses your spirit, soul and body. But if he occupies even a small portion, such as a physical organ in your body—as a spirit of infirmity does—then there is possession to some degree.

I often ask those who are skeptical of demon possession whether or not cancer is demonic. Most will agree that sickness is of the devil.

So then, I continue, is cancer inside the body, or is there something on the outside that’s the problem? If it isn’t on the inside, doctors probably wouldn’t cut people open trying to remove it. Evidently, as a Christian, you can have something in you that is possessing a certain organ of your body and is not of God.

Knowing that a Christian can be possessed (or demonized) in some part of his being raises the question: Is any part off-limits to demons? Here is where we can reconcile the issue of Jesus and the Holy Spirit residing simultaneously within someone who needs deliverance.

One thing that has helped us in our understanding is the realization that every person is made up of three parts:

spirit, soul and body. When Jesus comes into a believer's life, He comes into that person's spirit. John 3:6 tells us clearly, "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (NKJV). A demon cannot dwell in a Christian's spirit because that is where Jesus and the Holy Spirit dwell.

It is the other components that make up a human being—the soul (mind, will and emotions) and the body—that are the targets of demonic attack. Demons can dwell in those areas of a Christian's life. So when we say that a Christian is demonized or possessed, we are not saying he has a demon in his spirit but in some part of his soul or body.

To illustrate this truth, the Lord reminded us of the biblical account of Jesus' going into the temple and cleansing it of thieves and moneychangers. The Greek word used for "drove out" in this account is *ekballo*, which means "to expel or drive out." It is the same word that is used in Mark 16:17: "In My [Jesus] name they will cast out demons."

We know that according to the Bible God's children are the temple of the Spirit of God (see 1 Cor. 3:16). In the Old Testament the temple had three parts: the holy of holies, the holy place and the outer court. This picture is a type or representation of who we are as His temple today.

The *shekinah* glory of God, or God's "presence," was in the holy of holies. This part of the temple represents our spirits.

But when Jesus went into the temple to drive out the thieves and moneychangers, He did not go into the holy of holies. He went into the outer court, where these evildoers were carrying on their business transactions.

The whole account is a picture of deliverance—of what Jesus wants to do in our temples. There may be demonic thieves in our lives that are operating in our outer courts (bodies or souls). Even though they cannot enter the holy of holies (our

spirits), Jesus wants them expelled because the temple of God was never intended to be a place for thieves to operate. It is meant to be a place of worship and a place of prayer.

A Covenant Right

Those who believe that the ministry of deliverance is not for believers need to reconsider their position. The truth is, rather, that deliverance is not for the unbeliever.

What good would it do to cast demons out of an unbeliever, unless he is planning to get saved? Unbelievers cannot maintain their deliverance. In fact, according to Luke 11:24-26, after undergoing deliverance, the unsaved person is subject to receiving seven times as many demons as he had before.

The ministry of deliverance is the covenant right of believers. Like every other blessing from God—healing, prosperity, miracles and so on—it is promised only to His covenant people, those who believe in Jesus and come to God through Christ's blood. God, in His mercy, will bless people outside the covenant because He is merciful. But primarily, His blessings are based on covenant.

The story of the Syrophoenician woman in Mark 7:25-30 makes this clear. The woman sought out Jesus so He would deliver her daughter from an unclean spirit. But Jesus told her, "'Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs'" (v. 27).

In this verse, the phrase "the children's bread" refers specifically to deliverance, and Jesus is saying it belongs to His covenant people. Those outside the covenant may receive a miracle based on God's mercy, but deliverance is meant for those who have a covenant with God. Luke 1:71-73 says Jesus came "that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us, to perform the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He

swore to our father Abraham.” He brought salvation from our enemies—devils and demons—based on a promise, of which we are heirs (see Gal. 3:29), that He made to Abraham.

The purpose of this salvation is stated in subsequent verses of Luke 1: “To grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life” (vv. 74-75). God provides the benefit so that we may serve Him without fear, in holiness and in righteousness all the days of our lives. It is very difficult to live this way without being delivered. In fact, it is practically impossible.

One of the reasons it is so difficult is that demons are not always a result of sin in a person’s life. There are many different kinds of evil spirits, and not all of them are what I refer to as “spirits of sin.”

That is not to say that sin is not a huge entry point for demonic influence. For every sin in the Bible there is a corresponding demon. I maintain that if a Christian is living in sin or living in the flesh, there’s no way he can escape demons.

However, it is also possible for a Christian to be demonized as a result of someone else’s sin. For instance, a spirit of rejection or trauma can come upon a person because he is abused. Or demons may be inherited from a previous generation through a person’s bloodline.

We have come a long way in our church since the early days when we believed Christians could not have demons. Now whenever a person gets saved, we automatically assume he needs some level of deliverance, and we lead him through the process. We don’t question if the new believer has a demon, only *how many* he has.

That may sound hard. But remember, demonization is not always the person’s own fault. Generational issues are a major entry

point.

If we can be subjected to the consequences of sin to the fourth generation, as Exodus 20:5 says, and a biblical generation is 40 years, then we are subject to the demonic influence of what people in our family lines were doing 160 years before us. This means that, taking the year 2000 as a starting point, we are affected by what those in our bloodlines were doing as far back as the year 1840.

Think about it. Even if a person has a great genealogy, he can't know everything his ancestors were doing in secret that long ago. And if, in addition to generational sin, he has committed personal sin or has been traumatized or victimized in anyway, by the time he comes to the Lord, he is going to need deliverance on some level. There is just too much defilement and contamination on Earth to escape it.

We must accept the reality that we have been commissioned to minister to God's covenant people, and part of our responsibility is to provide them with their covenant right of deliverance. If we deprive them of it based on some erroneous theological doctrine, then we are denying them what is rightfully theirs, and we cannot call ourselves able ministers of the New Covenant. Let's do as Jesus did, and serve the children's bread to those who need it! {eoa}

God Is Bringing Divine Reconnections Full Circle in This Hour

Divine connections. We all want them. Many of us pray for them. We certainly hear a lot of prophecies about them. Hopefully, you've had a few along your narrow path.

Divine connections—those God-breathed relationships that seemingly come out of nowhere and have the potential to radically impact your life—are vital to fulfilling Father's call on your life. To be sure, these relationships can be absolutely life changing, even if they are only seasonal in intensity.

Divine connections are Scriptural and necessary. Moses and Joshua had a divine connection. Samuel and David had a divine connection. Elijah and Elisha had a divine connection. Paul and Timothy had a divine connection. In each case, we see destiny arising from those relationships. Joshua took the Promised Land baton from Moses. Samuel anointed David as king. Elisha grabbed Elijah's mantle. And Timothy carried on Paul's gospel mission.

Sudden Divine Reconnections

I'm grateful for the many divine connections God has brought into my life. I've been blessed with many godly relationships that have strengthened me, opened doors for me and imparted wisdom that would have otherwise taken me decades to glean. Over the last year, though, God has put an emphasis on divine reconnections in my life that have been as powerful as any divine connection I've ever experienced.

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Indeed, I've seen three especially significant divine reconnections that have brought spiritual increase into my life I wasn't expecting and could never have walked into on my own two feet. One of them was with Ryan LeStrange, with whom I co-founded and my now fellow New Breed Revival Network leader. After a decade, we reconnected about a year ago and it's been explosive.

Another divine reconnection was with Rich and Dottie Kane of the Healing Rooms Ministries of South Florida. They have stood with me, walked by me and helped me launch Awakening Healing Rooms at the Awakening House of Prayer in Hollywood, Florida. During the training session, a woman came in with terminal cancer seeking prayer. We prayed for her, the power of God overtook her, and the doctors could not explain how her cancer markers dropped from 16 to 1.5. It was God—and through a divine reconnection.

Divine reconnections are what I call a “full circle experience.” Dutch Sheets has a strong message on this topic of coming full circle. In this revelation, he explains when you come full circle in God you come up to a higher level. I'm not doing the teaching justice in this small snippet, so I encourage you to click the link and listen to the entire word. My point is that divine reconnections are relationships that come full circle—at a higher level.

Reconciling Divine Relationships

For all the divine connections I see in the Bible, I also see powerful divine reconnections or full circle relationships in Scripture that reveal God's redemptive, reconciliatory power.

One of the most powerful divine reconnections is Paul's relationship with John Mark. When Saul and Barnabas set out to the mission field they took young John Mark with them (see Acts 12:12). For whatever reason (likely connected to the spiritual warfare that raged against Paul's ministry) John

Mark abandoned the mission (see Acts 13:13-14).

Later, Saul and Barnabas split because Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them but Paul thought it was better not to take him since he bailed the first time around. But God brought the relationship full circle. In one of Paul's last letters from prison he mentioned John Mark, telling his spiritual son Timothy to "get Mark, and bring him with you, for he is profitable to me for the ministry (2 Tim. 4:11).

Lot also experienced a divine reconnection with Abraham that may have saved his life. Lot and his family were taken captive by five kings (see Gen. 14:8-12). When Abraham heard it, he gathered 318 men from his household and set out to rescue Lot—and succeeded. Although they did not continue walking together as they had before Lot chose to dwell in Sodom, it was a powerful, divine reconnection.

Just like divine connections, you can't make divine reconnections happen. That's part of the reason they are called divine. It is God's doing in His way and with His timing. When they do come, full circle relationships manifest in His season and for His reason. I believe in this season God is bringing forth many divine reconnections and also breathing new life into established relationships so we can run swiftly into His purposes and redeem the time because the days are evil.

Jennifer LeClaire is senior editor of Charisma. She is also director of Awakening House of Prayer in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, co-founder of , on the leadership team of the New Breed Revival Network and author of several books, including *The Next Great Move of God: An Appeal to Heaven for Spiritual Awakening*; *Mornings With the Holy Spirit*, *Listening Daily to the Still*, *Small Voice of God*; *The Making of a Prophet* and *Satan's Deadly Trio: Defeating the Deceptions of Jezebel, Religion and Witchcraft*. You can visit her website [here](#). You can also join Jennifer on Facebook or follow

her on Twitter. Jennifer's Periscope handle is @propheticbooks.

JOYCE MEYER: How Can Peace Win in Spiritual Warfare?

During my first several years as a Christian, I listened to a lot of teaching on spiritual warfare. I tried to learn all I could about defeating the devil because it was obvious he was giving me a lot of trouble. I wanted the upper hand for a change.

Yet it seemed I gained no victory from applying all the methods I had learned—until the Lord graciously shared some truths that have become a blessing in my life.

He showed me that spiritual warfare *methods* are good, but they are only *carriers*, or containers, of His real power. I was busy rebuking, resisting, casting out and off, binding and loosing, fasting and praying, and anything else that anyone told me to do. The results were minimal, and I was worn out.

I was approaching the point of spiritual burnout. This always occurs when a Christian continues to do things that do not produce positive results.

But God opened a whole new way of looking at spiritual warfare after He challenged me to observe how Jesus dealt with the devil. As I did, I saw Christ did not do a lot of the things I had been doing.

The Weapons of Love and Obedience

For example, I learned that *remaining obedient* is spiritual

warfare. We often quote only a portion of James 4:7: “Resist the devil, and he will flee.”

I was busy resisting, but he was not fleeing! Then I saw the whole verse: “So be subject to God. Resist the devil [stand firm against him], and he will flee from you” (Amplified).

The first part about submitting to God is equally as important as the second part about resisting the devil! I realized I was not as concerned about submitting as I was about resisting. It was a relief to find that my obedience would cause the devil to flee from me.

The Holy Spirit also revealed that *walking in love* is spiritual warfare. The devil cannot handle a lover! He could not control Jesus because He walked in obedience and love. Jesus was always loving people and being good to them.

The Word of God instructs us to keep ourselves “in the love of God” (Jude 1:21). It also tells us that in the last days “the love of the great body of people [the church] will grow cold” (Matt. 24:12).

This latter verse tells us that *cold love* will be one of the signs of the last days. Yet, Peter admonishes us: “Above all things have intense and unfailing love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins [forgives and disregards the offenses of others]” (I Pet. 4:8). The devil brings offense, disharmony and strife between people, but the antidote for the whole poisonous problem is love.

We can rebuke all the devils in the world—literally scream at them until we have no voice left—but they will not flee from the person who isn’t walking in obedience and love.

Satan knows that Christians who “talk the talk” but do not “walk the walk” are powerless against him. His end-time warfare strategy is to build a stronghold of cold love. In this way he can keep the church of Jesus Christ powerless.

But by remaining in obedience, walking in love and living in a third element—peace—we can wage spiritual warfare and defeat the devil's tactics.

Resting in God's Ability

Scripture tells us the believer is seated in heavenly places with Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6). Seated refers to rest. Rest and peace are equivalent to each other.

The book of Hebrews teaches us to enter the rest of God and cease from the weariness and pain of human labor (see Heb. 4:3, 10-11). This rest is and has been available to us since Jesus came, died for us, was resurrected from the dead and ascended on high.

Rest is available, but we are encouraged to *enter* it. We enter the rest of God by believing His Word and by trusting in Him instead of ourselves or someone else.

We actually do spiritual warfare while we rest: "And do not [for a moment] be frightened or intimidated in anything by your opponents and adversaries, for such [constancy and fearlessness] will be a clear sign (proof and seal) to them of [their impending] destruction, but [a sure token and evidence] of your deliverance and salvation, and that from God" (Phil. 1:28).

Constancy refers to being the same—stable and consistent. It is a sign to the enemy of his impending destruction.

Our rest in peace and joy during the devil's attack literally defeats him. He cannot handle a believer who knows how to *hold his peace*.

Consistency is also an outward sign that we are trusting God. It is trust that moves Him to deliver us. We benefit when we defeat the devil, but Jesus also benefits. It gives Him glory when we operate according to His Word. He is able to bless us

with our inheritance in Him.

Talking about the promises of God is encouraging, but possessing them is much better.

The Scripture says: "Blessed (happy, fortunate, to be envied) is the man whom You discipline and instruct, O Lord, and teach out of Your law, that You may give him power to keep himself calm in the days of adversity, until the [inevitable] pit of corruption is dug for the wicked" (Ps. 94:12-13).

God's plan is to work in our lives to bring us to the place when, during times of trouble, we can keep ourselves calm and at peace.

Jesus' followers wanted Him to set up an earthly kingdom and behave as an earthly king. They wanted Him to move against the enemy in the same way that they made war. But He taught them a different way to fight their battles.

He said, "But I say to you who are listening now to Me: [in order to heed, make it a practice to] love your enemies, treat well (do good to, act nobly toward) those who detest you and pursue you with hatred, invoke blessings upon and pray for the happiness of those who curse you, implore God's blessing (favor) upon those who abuse you [who revile, reproach, disparage, and high-handedly misuse you]" (Luke 6:27-28).

This was a brand new way of thinking! Jesus had come to reveal a new and "living" way (Heb. 10:20)—one that would minister life instead of death.

Peace Will End the War

Seeing peace as spiritual warfare may be a new way of thinking. It certainly was for me.

I had spent all of my life trying to fight my own battles. I thought when I learned about spiritual warfare that my struggles would be over. After all, I had located the culprit

behind my problems; taking authority over him would put an end to the misery.

Instead, I ended up in a struggle with the devil that was not producing positive results, simply because I had the methods but not the power flowing through them. Peace, love and obedience are power!

My mind says fight the devil with fury—not peace. How can *peace* win a war?

But think about a natural war for a minute. What finally puts an end to it? One or both parties decide not to fight anymore. Even if only one party decides not to fight, the other one will eventually have to quit because there is no one to fight with.

My husband used to make me mad because he would not fight with me. I was upset and angry, and I wanted him to say just one thing so I could rail on and on. But when he saw that I was only looking for an argument, he would be quiet and tell me, “I am not going to fight with you.”

Sometimes he would even get in the car and leave for a while, infuriating me even more. But how could I fight with someone who would not fight back?

If we meet our battles with peace and respond to the upsets in life with peace, then we will experience victory!

The methods that Jesus teaches us to use to be victorious are usually the opposite of what makes sense in our heads. He tells us to sell what we have and give to the poor, and we will end up with more than what we started with (see Matt. 19:21); the first will be last, and the last will be first (see Matt. 19:30); to humble ourselves, and He will lift us up (see Matt. 18:4, 23:12; James 4:6).

Jesus conquered with meekness. He ruled with kindness. He

humbled Himself and was placed far above all other authority. If we can accept these principles even though our minds cannot comprehend them, then surely we also can accept that peace is a form of spiritual warfare.

When the Israelites found the Red Sea facing them and the Egyptian army chasing them, they became frightened and cried to Moses. He told the people, "Fear not; stand still (firm, confident, undismayed) and see the salvation of the Lord which He will work for you today. For the Egyptians you have seen today you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace and remain at rest" (Ex. 14:13-14).

Notice that Moses told them to hold their peace and remain at rest. Why? They were in warfare, and it was necessary for them to respond in peace in order to win the battle! God would fight for them if they would show their confidence in Him by being peaceful.

When trouble comes, our first temptation is to get upset, speak from our emotions, start trying first one thing and then another, and hope to find something that will work to turn the situation around. All of these are unacceptable behavior for the believer who is walking in faith. None of them will bring victory!

We are instructed to hold our peace. Jesus gave us peace. It is our inheritance. The devil regularly attempts to steal it, but it is ours, and we must hold on to it.

What God gives us is ours. But we can keep it, use it, lose it or give it away. Adam was given dominion over the earth, and he gave it to Satan, who is referred to as "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4).

The Lord God did not create Satan to be the god of this world, so how did he obtain that title? Adam gave up what God had given him.

Let's not make the same mistake with those things that have been given back to us through Jesus Christ. Our inheritance is truly awesome.

Peace is a portion of it—a very important portion. Let a holy determination rise up within you to keep your peace and enjoy it.

And when you go into battle, remember to wear your “shoes of peace.” God supplies us with the armor of a heavily armed soldier. He equips us for battle with righteousness, truth, peace, salvation, the Word, faith and prayer (see Eph. 6:13-18).

But many of God's children carry their armor instead of wearing it. Don't carry your shoes of peace with you like a possession; wear them!

Remember, peace is spiritual warfare. Hold your peace live in obedience, walk in love, and you'll win the battle.

T.D. JAKES: Like Thunder From Heaven

Note: This article first appeared in the November 1996 issue of Charisma magazine.

Bishop T.D. Jakes is a man in motion. He steps across the stage, looking almost svelte after a recent 60-pound weight loss. He uses the kind of facial expressions that speak volumes. He hushes a buzzing sanctuary by reclining on the platform steps, hands raised upward to the God he serves. But whatever his physical stance, Bishop always wields the sword

of the Spirit that inspires his powerful oratory.

"If you can control your soul, you can control your body," he tells his congregation at the Potter's House in Dallas. "You need the Word to get in your spirit so it can reach out and control your soul. Satan's only access to you is through your senses."

This day, Jakes again gets the reaction that greets him in every venue: People spontaneously leap to their feet to clap, dance, wave their hands—and shout: "C'mon, bishop! Preach it! Talk about it!"

His gift, says Holloway Gray, executive coordinator of T.D. Jakes Ministries, is his ability to provide a clear understanding of God's Word via modern-day illustrations: "I think that gives a clarity and simplifies it so people can feel a part of it."

That excitement reaches far beyond Dallas and the Texas borders. His ministry crosses boundaries of geography, race, ethnicity, class—and denomination.

"This is a great move of the Spirit," says Bishop C.D. Owens, presiding bishop of the Church of God in Christ. "It used to be reserved for whites to get the crowds that Jakes pulls. But here is a black man who is bringing blacks and whites together in mass auditoriums. He has my prayers and support."

Few pastors could move 1,100 miles to plant a church and soon fill its 5,000-seat sanctuary or place six of their books on the Christian Top 20 list between January and July of the same year.

But few pastors are like Bishop Jakes, whose seminal teaching, "Woman, Thou Art Loosed!" spawned national conferences and last year's No. 2 best-selling Christian book. Despite his meteoric rise to fame, though, he remains friendly, humble and widely admired.

"Anointed is an understatement," says elder Stanley Miller, senior pastor of Temple of Faith in Charleston, West Virginia, which Jakes founded in 1986. "That's one of the highest accolades you can give a person. But, somehow for him that doesn't say it all."

"There's something inside of him that comes flooding out," says Sherman Watkins, presiding bishop of Higher Ground Assemblies, the Columbus, Ohio, Pentecostal fellowship that Jakes serves as vice bishop. "He's pregnant with God's purpose."

To bask in the glow of his preaching is to experience a spiritual transformation as the world's negative atmosphere fades into mere wisps. He delivers the Word in such lightning-rod fashion that he makes you believe that all things really are possible with God.

His appeal extends to all ages, according to Tim Anderson, youth pastor at Potter's House. "Everyone is aware of the bishop. At his services I've seen kids 5, 6 and 7 (years old) getting filled with the Holy Spirit at the altar."

Bishop Paul Morton, founder of the Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship, traces this impact to meeting the needs of hurting people. Morton points to the changed lives that followed Jakes' sermon before 45,000 people at the fellowship's mid-July convention.

"He has a special gift on his life," says the pastor of St. Stephens Full Gospel Baptist Church in New Orleans. "The Lord places that gift on people for a season to change a generation."

What is the message that has thrilled millions?

It is about God's supernatural ability, bestowed by a Lord who is colorblind and cares about each person—a God who affirms the importance of women and equally appreciates men, a truth

that Jakes believes can end the nation's gender conflict.

"Femininity has its own fragrance," Jakes counsels the thousands who flock to "Woman, Thou Art Loosed!" conferences. At his "Manpower" conferences, he stresses the need for men to live a disciplined life. That includes prayer, Scripture reading and meeting practical needs such as health and life insurance for one's family.

Humble Beginnings

Although Jakes' recent move to Dallas—which expanded the size of his congregation almost 10-fold—may seem to mark a sudden burst onto the national scene, he calls it a "misconception" to label him an overnight success.

Even as Moses had to spend years on the backside of the desert in preparation, 39-year-old Thomas Jakes has been preaching in obscurity for two decades. Jakes heard the call to preach after his father's death from kidney disease brought him closer to the Lord.

"God spent a great deal of time getting me ready," he recalls. "Nobody breaks on the scene without preparation. God tested and proved me in obscurity. He healed some things so that when He brought me to national prominence, He could trust me to stand up under the weight."

A native of Charleston, West Virginia, Jakes grew up as a Baptist but was filled with the Holy Spirit at a storefront apostolic church. Soon he began traveling a circuit that today takes him before a range of denominations, races and cultures.

But in his pioneering times the settings were radically different. When he first preached around West Virginia's storefronts and pot-bellied stoves, Jakes thrust his hands behind his back to camouflage the shaking.

He credits his parents with the solid upbringing that provided

the education and work ethic he now draws on to handle his frantic preaching schedule.

His mother, Odith, part of the 50-member entourage of employees and their families who relocated to Dallas, was a teacher. Though she taught Jakes to read and write before grade school, her greatest contribution was instilling a positive attitude in the youngest of her three children.

"She taught me that I could do anything if I tried hard enough. I believe that nothing is withheld from a person who has effort, tenacity and God's presence. Her affirmation has a lot to do with my self-esteem," he said.

His father molded the drive that contributes to his strengths and weaknesses. Progressive and assertive, workaholic Earnest Jakes Sr. took a mop and a bucket and turned it into a prosperous janitorial service firm.

That was a tremendous endeavor for a member of the state's tiny black minority in the 1960s, Jakes says. Although his father's example taught him the value of hard work, it also gave him the tendency to spend too many hours away from home.

Every minister struggles with that, he says, and he seeks a balance through frequent contact with his children. Occasionally he takes them on the road, and he writes of them in some of the 14 books and workbooks he has published since 1993.

Despite his call to preach, it took a while for ministry to become a vocation. After high school he enrolled in West Virginia State University as a psychology major and completed his bachelor's degree through correspondence courses. He also holds a master's and doctorate in ministry.

He met Beckley, West Virginia, resident Serita Jamison and married her in 1980, taking a job at Union Carbide to support her—and the twin sons who followed, Jamar and Jermaine. At the

plant he met Miller, who helped him build the baptistry at his first church. But before he stepped behind that pulpit, several years of hard times had intervened.

After a 1982 plant layoff, Jakes scrambled to survive on itinerant, low-paying speaking engagements. Though his brood would later include Cora, now 9; Sarah, 8; and T.D. Jr., 2, he struggled to fill four mouths.

Some details of that period in his life work their way into his sermon illustrations: how he earned extra money digging ditches, drove a battered old Valiant and preached in suits with worn-out linings. Today he lives far better, but his former associate pastor says he hasn't changed.

"He's the same man I knew 16 years ago," says Miller. "If I was to describe him in one word, it would be 'real.'"

Pulling Up Roots

After a lifetime in West Virginia, no one was more surprised than Jakes about his move to Texas. Though his packed conference schedule made airports a second home, he had always returned to his roots.

Earlier this year, when he learned that evangelist W.V. Grant's Eagle's Nest Family Church in Dallas was for sale, he called a friend to encourage him to buy it. After waking up one night and wrestling with the idea, Jakes recognized God's hand at work. Coupled with a strong sense that his destiny no longer lay in his home state, Jakes moved forward.

After T.D. Jakes Ministries acquired the 28-acre site and nearby broadcast and print facilities for \$3.2 million, he resettled in stages. Sunday night services started in May and morning worship followed in July.

The pews quickly filled—and resentment toward Jakes became a topic on local radio talk shows. Local pastors were upset over

the prospect of losing members to him.

E.K. Bailey, pastor of Concord Baptist and vice president of the city's African American Pastors Coalition, believes that dispute is confined to the Pentecostal-charismatic community. Saying he has heard only positive comments about Jakes, he calls him a solid Bible preacher: "As long as he keeps reaching people for Jesus, I have no problem with that."

Even friends, such as Clifford Frazier of Heartline Ministries, wondered about the ramifications. Yet, the east Dallas pastor says those jealous of the bishop misunderstand God's kingdom.

"The more churches we have, the better," says Frazier. "This focuses attention on Dallas. I think people will be won to Christ, [people] who will seek out a church because they know of him."

Despite the rumors, no one openly shared negative feelings with him. Jakes describes a warm, enthusiastic reception in Dallas that makes him optimistic about the future.

Not that the challenges will be easy. He says Dallas, whose ethnic mix is approximately 30 percent African American and 21 percent Hispanic, struggles with a seed of racism. Although he expects that from the world, he says it needs to be rooted out of the church. So do gender and denominational barriers, he believes.

Located in southwest Dallas, the Potter's House is surrounded by open fields and is just west of a freeway spur that helps tie Dallas-Fort Worth into a metroplex with more than double the entire population of West Virginia.

Despite the size difference, there are similarities to Jakes' old church. The ushers are women, members are polite, and Sunday morning services last three hours. Most important, the church plans the same social ministry and spiritual growth

efforts that characterize the Temple of Faith in Charleston.

Among the outreaches underway or planned are food distribution, high school equivalency classes, training in completion of job applications, a summer day-camp for children of single parents, and a drug rehabilitation program known as Transformation.

An Anointed Leader

The 6-foot-4-inch preacher cuts such an imposing figure that locals speculated over whether he would inherit the mantle of the late S.M. Wright—a venerable Dallas clergyman whose influence extended beyond ministerial circles to local and state politics. Pastor Bailey doesn't think so, saying Jakes hasn't made himself available to ministerial or city leaders. Nor has Jakes ever mixed politics with faith.

However, Morton believes the bishop can have the impact of a Martin Luther King Jr., although in a different way. Terming him a "black Billy Graham," the New Orleans pastor says Jakes can reach countless numbers of people and help straighten out their lives.

"The connection he has is drawing people spiritually and working on their minds. He can give them a sense of pride and understanding of who they are. If we can get someone started from a spiritual base, that's a key," Morton says.

Jakes not only speaks effectively to hurting individuals, his platform also gives him credibility with the church at large. He speaks of a similar theme of restoring broken vessels.

"It's time for the body to mature to the point that we can accept diversity," he says. "We [must] allow scarred, wounded people to be used by the Master and [realize] the oil does flow from broken vessels.

"I believe with all my heart that we have thrown away some of

the most gifted, God-given people to the body of Christ that were meant to lead us into the next era of destiny. But because we saw their humanity, we failed to appreciate their divinity. I think we need to bring them back to the forefront at such a time as this."

Jakes does that. A recent example is his invitation to Jim Bakker in April to give his testimony at a men's breakfast during Jakes' annual Back to the Bible Conference in Cincinnati. He reaches out across racial lines, too, and is delighted to see barriers fall, giving way to more inter-racial, interdenominational meetings.

"Blacks are coming into white surroundings, and whites are coming into black surroundings. We're losing our fear of each other, which is the plan of the Lord. He prayed that we might be one, and maybe at last it's coming to pass," he says.

Because of his ardent opposition to the term "black church," he is reluctant to discuss its contributions to the body of Christ. Yet he outlines several factors that have distinguished mostly black congregations: enriching the community; pressing for racial equality, both historically and currently; promoting gender equality; and providing musical talent.

The church has always been a central place of meeting and a focal point for our culture. Even how we see our ministers tends to be a little bit different because many of the great heroes of the African American community have come out of the church.

We esteem our ministers a little differently than other cultures do. What I foresee happening in our communities is a resurgence of church attendance. People are turning back to the church. They are turning back to God in unfathomable proportions."

T.D. Jakes, it would seem, is one of the most prominent voices

pointing those thirsting souls toward the Almighty.

Steve Strang: Covering the Politics of Faith

Note: This article ran in the July 2015 issue of Charisma magazine.

Covering politics is not new to *Charisma*. Over the years we have often covered how the Christian community interacts with the political process, as we have this month. As you read this issue you can see things in our nation are very serious, and this election will be pivotal. All year I'm giving my perspective on how *Charisma* has covered the church and the charismatic movement for the past 40 years.

Most other Christian publications are nonprofits. There are laws against nonprofits endorsing political candidates. Even though ministries and churches can speak out on the issues, they are often reluctant to do so. However because we are set up as a for-profit publishing house we don't have those restrictions. And every four years since 1984 we've endorsed a candidate for president.

In our own way Charisma has tried to sound the alarm on the dangerous trends that our nation faces. In the 1980s it was the abortion debate. Then slowly and more recently the big debate has shifted to the gay agenda.

Our coverage is not about endorsing one political party. I've been registered as a voter in both parties at different times. I consider both parties imperfect at best and corrupt at worst.

Our first big political story was in 1983 when we interviewed then Secretary of the Interior James Watt, who was raised in the Assemblies of God and was the first Pentecostal to serve in a cabinet level position. Even though we think of those as simpler and more conservative times, Watt was villainized by the left, who made fun of the doctrine of the second coming that most Pentecostals believe.

He was accused of not caring for the environment because, of course, Jesus was going to snatch us away at any time—which meant long-term care of resources was unimportant. Of course nothing was further from the truth. Watt served with distinction and was one of the best secretaries of the interior before or since.

It is the “Jesus is coming” mentality that has kept many Bible believers from engaging more with the culture or the political process. The emphasis was always on a heavenly kingdom rather than an earthly one. Going back to the World War I, most Pentecostals were pacifists (like we would think of the Mennonites today). That changed by the second world war but staying on the political sidelines continued for decades.

In more recent years that has begun to change and we have covered those changes and editorialized that godly voices must speak up—especially pastors and leaders. One such leader who came not from our ranks but from the Baptists was former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee.

In 2007 I recognized a good story when Huckabee ran for president. We ran it in our New Man magazine. Even though he wasn't well-known, our story made the case, “How Mike Huckabee could be the next president of the United States.”

Our story was written from information in the public domain and we never interviewed Huckabee. We did not literally endorse him—it was too early.

But readers in Iowa started showing up for events with copies

of the issue of the magazine to be autographed. Just the fact that our article gave his candidacy credibility was the boost he needed to win the Iowa straw poll shortly after that. Huckabee emailed me to say our article was an important part of his winning Iowa.

A decade ago we published a book that became a best-seller: *The Faith of George W. Bush*. It was a journalistic look at the then-president and how his faith shaped his outlook on life.

TIME magazine credited that book with putting the evangelical vote firmly on Bush's side in the 2004 election.

Our political coverage is about to explode with our new Charisma Caucus website, which we are announcing in this issue. We already have a lot of political coverage from a Christian perspective you'll find nowhere else online.

We are looking for content both original and material we'd aggregate. So we need our readers to engage with us and help us.

This political season there are several good candidates we could get behind. We are holding our endorsement until closer to the primary season to see who emerges as the leader who can ultimately win.

Stay tuned and help us get out the word on Charisma Caucus.

Paying a Dear Price for the Anointing That Breaks the

Yoke

When God called me into prophetic ministry, He spoke many things to my heart. One of the things He told me was “to count the costs and don’t look back.”

Some years later, the Lord asked me if I was willing to pay the price to do what He had called me to do. I answered quickly, “Yes, Lord. I am willing.” After all, I had already counted the costs when He called me—or at least I thought I had. The Lord admonished me, “Don’t answer too quickly. Consider the costs.”

With that, I went off to pray. After about a week, I returned to the Lord with a solid answer: “Yes, Lord, I am willing to pay the price.” I sensed the pleasure of the Holy Spirit at my sincere answer, but I never anticipated what He would tell me next: “It will be a very dear price.”

Before too long, I started paying a price—a dear price indeed. Thank God that in His wisdom and mercy He shows us things to come if we have eyes to see and ears to hear the truth into which the Holy Spirit is leading us. Had he not warned me of what was about to happen through that one line—“It will be a very dear price”—I would have been devastated at what happened next.

I Paid a Dear Price

See, I was in a spiritually abusive church during those days—only I didn’t know it was abusive. Not really. I saw how others were mistreated but I didn’t recognize it as spiritual abuse. I was always celebrated in that church and figured these others must be doing something badly wrong to be treated so horribly. I was deceived.

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When the Lord finally opened my eyes to what was happening there—when the leadership turned on me and I became a victim of the spiritual abuse I’d long witnessed—I had two choices. I could stay and suffer at the hands of emotional terrorists or I could leave and suffer the verbal persecution others who left that wicked matrix endured.

Ultimately, I chose the latter. And as painful as it was at the time I am so glad I did. It wasn’t easy. It was very costly, in fact. It was part of that “dear price” the Lord told me about. I lost every single friend I had. I lost any public ministry opportunity I enjoyed. I lost my front row seat, my titles, my spiritual parents—I lost it all.

God, though, is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (see Heb. 11:6). Vengeance really is His and He really will repay (see). I paid a dear price but God repaid way more than seven times what the thief stole (see Prov. 6:31). I’ll always remember that lesson and it would come in handy during another season of my life.

I Am Still Paying the Price

I had hit a wall. My ministry—and influence—was growing by leaps and bounds. I was breaking through and into new territory left and right. I was seeing increase on all sides. But something was wrong. I was at a breaking point. One of the issues was that my ministry had outgrown its intercessory prayer covering, but there was more.

I spent about a week in severe frustration until I finally shut everything out and sat for hours in the presence of the Lord looking for an answer. Nothing. I repeated this devotion for several more hours a few days later. Nothing but frustration, mind-wandering, and more frustration. But when I woke up the next morning, I got the revelation—and quite by accident.

See, there was a higher price to pay to go where God was

taking me next. This time, it wasn't about what the enemy was stealing or what I was losing. It was about what God wanted to give me. It was about the spiritual gifts He expected me to steward, how He wanted to amplify my voice in the next season, the new assignments He had in mind—and what I'd have to give up to go there.

Are You Willing to Pay the Price?

When that clarity came, the frustration lifted and although I knew that paying the price would not be easy, I also knew there would be grace abundant. Yes, His grace really is sufficient (see 2 Cor. 12:9).

There are things God has called you to do. Are you willing to pay the price? Don't answer too quickly. Pray on it. Count the costs and be ready to give you an answer with assurance. As for me, I want to see revival in this nation—I wrote *The Next Great Move of God: An Appeal to Heaven for Spiritual Awakening*—as part of that commitment. That was just the beginning—and I am willing to pay the price.

Leonard Ravenhill, a British evangelist and author of many books, including *Why Revival Tarries*, said this: “Few believers have paid the price of laying down their lives and being fully committed to Christ. Even fewer are willing to consider taking up the cross daily.

“Few pay the price because they are too comfortable in this world ... We need to come to the point where we know we cannot do without a mighty move of God.” That's me. What about you?

Jennifer LeClaire is senior editor of Charisma. She is also director of Awakening House of Prayer in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, co-founder of , on the leadership team of the New Breed Revival Network and author of several books, including *The Next Great Move of God: An Appeal to Heaven for Spiritual Awakening*; *Mornings With the Holy Spirit*, *Listening Daily to the Still*, *Small Voice of God*; *The Making of a*

Prophet and Satan's Deadly Trio: Defeating the Deceptions of Jezebel, Religion and Witchcraft. *You can visit her website here. You can also join Jennifer on Facebook or follow her on Twitter. Jennifer's Periscope handle is @propheticbooks.*

A Prophetic Word for Jezebel's False Prophets

Jesus warned that many false prophets would rise in the last days—and Christ's words never fall to the ground. Indeed, we're seeing false prophets rising left and right. But Jezebel's puppets are being exposed.

As it turns out, some are toting credit card machines to the altar so they can swipe your card before they will prophesy over you. (Yes, really!). Others are literally standing on the backs of people apparently slain by some spirit, showboating with a microphone. Still others are divining for money over the Internet in the name of the Lord. Prophets are not psychics, witches and shamans, and Jezebel killed one of the greatest revivals ever!

Although this grieves me to no end, it does not surprise me. Jesus clearly warned us in Matthew 24:11 that many false prophets will rise and deceive many and again in Matthew 24:24 that false christs and false prophets will rise up and perform signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even God's chosen ones. That's why Jesus warned us to "beware" of them (see Mark 7:15). On top of that, in 2008 the Holy Spirit told me, "The merchandisers will rise during this hour like never before."

False Prophets Rising

The Bible says plenty about false prophets. Their end is not good no matter which way you read it. Peter warned they would bring on themselves swift destruction (see 2 Pet. 2:1). Jesus said that not everyone who says to Him, “Lord, Lord” will enter into the kingdom of heaven, including those who prophesied in His name (see Matt. 7:21).

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False prophets are certainly nothing new. In Deuteronomy 18:20, God said, “But the prophet, who presumes to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who shall speak in the name of other gods—that prophet shall die.” Jeremiah 23:26 declares: “How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies? Indeed, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart, who plan to cause My people to forget My name by their dreams, which they tell to their neighbor, as their fathers have forgotten My name for Baal.”

Jeremiah heard plenty about the false prophets and encountered some of them, but he wasn’t the only one. Elijah contended with 850 false prophets, who fell by the sword. The Lord warned Ezekiel about false prophets who “have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, ‘The Lord says,’ when the Lord has not sent them. And they have made others to hope for the confirmation of their word” (Ezek. 13:6).

Micah’s Massive Prophecy

Some say we’re living in a Micah 2 moment in the United States. Micah 2 speaks of those who conceive wickedness and devise evil on their beds—and deceitful prophets who will “preach for you wine and beer.” But there is a prophecy in Micah 3 that really struck me earlier this year. It was something the Lord said with regard to prophets who mislead

His people that I feel led to release right now:

“Regarding the prophets who mislead My people—the ones who have something to eat proclaim, ‘Peace,’ but if one does not feed them, then they prepare for war against him. Therefore you will have night without vision, and you will have darkness without divination; the sun will set upon the prophets, and black upon them will be the day. The seers will be shamed and the diviners disgraced, and they will all cover their beards, for there is no answer from God” (Micah 3:5-7).

That hour is coming and it’s coming soon. Of course, false prophets get very angry with me—and gnash their teeth at me—when I write articles like this. Some of them threaten to cancel their magazine subscriptions when I call out these things. I draw my response from Acts 4:49 and Micah 3:8:

“Now, Lord, look on their threats and grant that Your servants may speak Your word with great boldness, by stretching out Your hand to heal and that signs and wonders may be performed in the name of Your holy Son Jesus” (Acts 4:49-30). I’m praying the false (and misled) prophets will repent. I really am. But I will not be intimidated by the threats anymore than Jeremiah was in his day. And I agree with Micah, “But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might ...” (Micah 3:8).

Jennifer LeClaire is senior editor of Charisma. She is also director of Awakening House of Prayer in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, co-founder of , on the leadership team of the New Breed Revival Network and author of several books, including *The Next Great Move of God: An Appeal to Heaven for Spiritual Awakening*; *Mornings With the Holy Spirit*, *Listening Daily to the Still, Small Voice of God*; *The Making of a Prophet* and *Satan’s Deadly Trio: Defeating the Deceptions of Jezebel, Religion and Witchcraft*. You can visit her

website here. You can also join Jennifer on Facebook or follow her on Twitter. Jennifer's Periscope handle is @propheticbooks.

Whose Voice Are You Listening to?

The days you live in now are just as dangerous mentally and spiritually as they were in biblical days. Giants of greed, fame, power, and other carnal messages seek to divide you from God's best and dominate the thoughts that surround you each day.

How will you face each stained thought? Who is the giant that informs you on how you feel about yourself? Is it your family upbringing, your education, or your job? Have you ever fully considered what God thinks about you?

Overcoming your personal mind wars, whether in relationships, on the job, or even regarding your spiritual maturity, depends on the slow sip of God thoughts in your life that form your mental framework. David was fearless in facing the giant because he had not been standing around for weeks listening to Goliath's slow drip of intimidation.

David simply came to the camp with fresh thinking, which made a new outcome possible. One simple truth, or God thought can help you defeat the giant you are facing.

You may already have a relationship with God through Christ. God is good to you because He is simply good to you. God's goodness to you does not depend on your behavior but on the nature and character of God alone.

Let that thought saturate your thinking for eternity. Simply refuse to sip the cups of the giants in your life. Stop drinking the sulking, negative, fearful thoughts of a giant that you are supposed to defeat. He won't define your victory. God will.

The drips of your own failures were poured out on Christ on the cross. He took all the judgment and punishment for your sins, so stop trying to act like your own messiah. He came not only to save you but to give you all authority over the enemy. The reality is that you have already won in Christ.

Negative thoughts, lies, and predictions of failure will always be dripping onto your daily life. No one is exempt from facing giants! Fight like David and resist the thoughts trying to block your destiny. Remember you are fighting for an effective and overcoming life. And when you become stronger, you will begin to see that good thinking actually pushes back the enemies of your life.

I heard Zig Ziglar say at a conference in Atlanta many years ago, "There is a God! It's not you and it sure isn't me!" Since Zig is right about that, why not be open to the simple emergence of a God thought today? Let awareness of what's really happening foster courage and boldness. You will win this fight, and the victory will emerge from a place of right thinking about the challenging situations in your life. No matter the seriousness—whether it's cancer, relational trouble, a vocational crisis, or even a crisis of belief—there is a God who cares and has a thought of encouragement for you.

This Goliath, the mind war you are personally experiencing, may lead you into a brand-new and exciting discovery of a world filled with the thoughts of God. Most likely you've already had the first thought that will lead to the next thought that births the new future God has intended for you. When Christ is your security and safety, your thoughts can lead to personal freedom and contentment. Think about that!

Listening to what you say is critically important. The words that come out of your mouth reveal whether or not your thinking and your actions are in alignment with how God views you. Few people connect this as an actual power at work in their lives. If the verbal life is not free, it manifests every few sentences through statements of worry or fear, or other sorts of words full of emotions. In fact, so many believers unintentionally give up their spiritual inheritance, those things that are rightfully theirs, because of the way they verbally degrade the power of God in their lives.

Giants in your life are always signs you have arrived at your next place of victory! If you've been following Christ for even a little while, you've come to see giants in your own everyday living. They are internal, and you must call them what they are: mind wars! The current mind war you are in is a part of what it means to be spiritually alive and on the journey. These are the struggles, battles, and wars that cause you to be more effective than ever as a disciple of Jesus.

Your greatest victory thus far is literally just a thought or two away.

However, this can only come through the help of the Holy Spirit—and usually when you are praising and giving God thanks for the privilege to face the giant. God loves you, God is with you, and your heart needs to accept His unconditional love! No matter how silly or sinful your actions have been to this point, get your mind in agreement with God's thoughts about you. That's the way to defeat the giant you are facing.

✖ Adapted from *Slings and Stones* by Mike Rakes, copyright 2015, published by Charisma House. This book will show you how God works in your mind to inspire courage in your heart. It will help you overcome negative thinking and win your personal mind wars. To order your copy, [click here](#).

Prayer Power for the Week of August 10, 2015

This week thank the Lord for the victory that is yours when you overcome your current giant. Use the Word to renew your mind and declare what the Lord says about the situation. Pray His Word and declare His will. Uphold our leaders and ask God to give them wisdom as they make decisions affecting all of us. Continue to pray for worldwide revival, laborers for His harvest field, unity of prayer and purpose in the body of Christ, the peace and protection of Jerusalem, and the persecuted church (1 Tim. 2:1-4; 2 Chron. 20:15; 1 Sam. 17:45-47).