

Don't Believe Satan's Lie—You Can Posses This Spiritual Gift

Due to a lack of knowledge, many Christians believe that only a select few in the kingdom are called to prophesy. Craig and Colette Toach, who founded the ministry Next Gen Prophets, simply beg to differ.

At salvation, believers are indwelled by the Holy Spirit. And, Colette says, when the Holy Spirit indwells a believer, they are called to prophesy.

“The apostle Paul says that you would all prophesy,” Colette told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network. “I think every believer from the time that they're born again, has the capacity to prophesy because they have the capacity to connect with Christ because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. But how we prophesy is going to change according to our grace.”

A prophet is only one of the roles of the fivefold ministry to which we are all called as Christ's representatives. Ephesians 4:11 says we are also called to be apostles, evangelists, pastors and teachers.

But how does one begin to prophesy once they become born again? It's not simply by opening their mouths and God blessing them with the right words, Colette says. A prophet must and will receive training before God sends them out into the kingdom.

“Prophecy is really just expressing the heart and mind of Christ, whether it's in your own life or into the life of another,” she says. “Every believer has the ability. We cannot define a prophet by prophecy because a prophet is more than

the sum of the prophetic word. Do not judge me by prophetic word. You judge me by my fruit that I have birthed in this Earth by helping people find a place by teaching them to hear God for themselves; for establishing a face-to-face relationship with Jesus with every believer I come into touch with. WIth that, now I'm being a prophet.

"Don't tell me that I'm a prophet, because I can prophesy. Personally I'm insulted because I didn't get stripped, I didn't get rejected, I didn't go through everything that I did just so that I could prophesy. I prophesy in my secret place in the closet just to connect with Jesus. Yes, but I'm a prophet when I leave that closet.

"They not only need to be trained, they will be trained, whether they like it or not. Did the Lord leave the apostle Paul just to be traipsing on his little horse all the way to Damascus? Not so much. When God called him, when God picked him out, he threw him to the ground because he had to. He got the memo, good and solid."

For more about the Toaches and their ministry, and how they are training up the next generation of prophets, listen to the rest of this podcast. Also, tune into the Toaches' podcast, *Next Gen Prophets*, on the Charisma Podcast Network. {eoa}

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Spirit-Filled Pastor Says to Light Your Candle on the Front Porch of Hell

Many Christians today are unaware of the ongoing battle between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. They are woefully ill-equipped to engage in the work of spiritual warfare and they unintentionally open themselves up to demonic forces.

Yet Sam Storms, the lead pastor at Bridgeway Church in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, says it doesn't have to be that way for believers. Through his ministry, Enjoying God Ministries, Storms teaches Christians how to close the doors to demonic oppression so that they can experience the true joy of deliverance and the freedom of knowing who they are in Christ.

His book, *Understanding Spiritual Warfare*, instructs believers on how to recognize and combat the enemy's advances to experience such freedom.

"I think one of the things I really try to focus on is the authority of the Christian because I don't think even people within the Charismatic Pentecostal world sometimes understand the nature of the authority that Christ has given us," Storms told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network. "Luke 10 talks about Him giving us authority over all the power of the enemy.

"Unfortunately, Christians in old traditions, when they see or sense that there is a demonic manifestation, they run for cover or they go look for somebody with a clerical collar, somebody who has been to seminary. I want to say to them, 'No, no, you are in Christ; the Spirit of God is in you – the same spirit that energized Jesus. You need to take authority in the name of Christ. You need to facilitate deliverance.'

“I really do my best to center the authority of the believer in the personal work of Jesus and his exaltation at the right hand of the Father and the power of the Spirit that we have within us. I think it’s probably human nature that a lot of people are drawn toward darkness sometimes just out of curiosity. Maybe it feels a little bit more sensational to them.

“But I love the imagery. Some people say, instead of shouting into the darkness, light a candle and spread the light of a gospel of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and the indwelling power and the spirit that needs to be the focus of our approach to spiritual warfare.”

For more of this compelling interview with Pastor Sam Storms about spiritual warfare, listen to this Greenelines podcast. {eoa}

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9/11 Survivor: How God Sustained Me in the Aftermath of Terror

Note: On 9/11, Christina and Brian Stanton fled their Financial District apartment, six blocks from the World Trade Center, after watching a jet fly into the Twin Towers. They returned less than two weeks later and found a neighborhood

that was barely recognizable and barely inhabitable. Little has been written about what the 25,000 people who lived in the neighborhoods surrounding Ground Zero faced in those days.

Nine days after 9/11, we were encouraged to return to our Financial District apartment. The management company emailed that our building had been declared structurally sound, electricity had been restored, and asbestos levels in the neighborhood were very low.

Brian was delighted. I was not. Fires were still raging at Ground Zero. Two million tons of debris had been spread over 16 acres of devastation smack in the middle of our neighborhood. The search for human remains continued just blocks outside our apartment building's front door.

However, building management, Mayor Giuliani, the Environmental Protection Agency and President Bush were all telling us it was safe to return. So on Sept. 23 we headed back to our apartment.

As we ascended from the subway, the sulfuric stench seemed as pungent as it had been on 9/11. Papers, dirt and chunks of concrete were piled haphazardly on top of dust and debris-covered cars, awnings, and trash cans. Scraps of twisted metal hung from window sills and fire escapes.

Our apartment building—a 1931 office that had been converted into 294 apartments on 33 floors—was coated in dust so thick I could barely tell the difference between windows and the brick facade. However, the lobby appeared to have been freshly washed, and the gold art deco elements shined.

We learned this gleaming lobby had sheltered people when the Twin Towers crumbled and later provided a break room for firefighters working at Ground Zero. A few employees had been taking turns sleeping in the lobby, climbing stairs in the dark to check on abandoned pets and watch for looters.

Our apartment had been cleaned, but soot and fine dust coated everything. We stepped onto our terrace to scenes from a combat zone: mounds of debris at Ground Zero, crushed cars in an open-air parking lot, twisted metal and debris everywhere. A burned-out fire truck was resting in a small park nearby. A five-story piece of exterior hung precariously from the corner of a building in the World Trade Center complex.

Whenever Brian and I ventured into the neighborhood, we would walk block after block looking for signs of a cleanup. Instead, we discovered destruction and chaos. Heavily damaged buildings dominated Broadway. The battered three-story tenement that used to house our local Burger King now served as a center for police operations.

The two subway lines closest to our building had imploded and were expected to be out of operation for at least a year. The Financial District had never sported as many retail and service providers as most Manhattan neighborhoods, and now many of those few grocery stores, clothing stores and pharmacies were shuttered. Residents had to venture farther and farther to find essentials.

Missing person flyers and posters fluttered from every wall and fence, while candles and flowers piled up beneath them. Charred and battered bikes had been turned into shrines. Handwritten notes and flyers were taped on every inch of the fence surrounding St. Paul's Chapel.

Many streets remained off-limits, and pedestrians wore white masks to filter out the dust that hung heavy in the air. The area had been home to many schools, from nursery schools through college campuses. All were now closed, and most students had been reassigned to other school locations.

Bulldozers, trucks and cranes moved wreckage from the Ground Zero pile 24 hours a day, kicking up clouds of dust and who knew what else. As the weeks went by, I continued to step out

onto our 24th-floor terrace, where the shock of the new view never lessened. The beautiful, awe-inspiring Twin Towers were gone, replaced by a gaping black hole and a pile of rubble.

Before the attacks, my dreams for my future had soared as high as the Twin Towers. But those dreams and my confidence had been destroyed along with those buildings.

For the first time in my life, I couldn't see my way out of the destruction and darkness that surrounded me—both literally and emotionally. Brian and I were both unemployed, living in a neighborhood of destruction and suffering from PTSD. My prayers were shallow and faltering, but I know now that God heard them.

He sent friends into our lives who helped lift us up. He placed a therapist in my life who helped me understand the trauma I had experienced and find a path out of that dark place. And He sent us to Redeemer Presbyterian Church. I went there initially to seek financial aid; when they handed me a check to help pay for some of our expenses, I felt hope for the first time in weeks.

We returned to Redeemer and discovered a Christian community that took us in and helped us heal. As we grew in our faith and our hope, I began to understand that the worldly success I previously craved is not a sign of God's love or approval. I also came to believe that I could trust Him to walk with me through the darkest of places.

The Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C., remain the deadliest acts of terrorism in world history. Almost 3,000 people died and 6,000 were injured that day, and people are still dying from cancers and other illnesses from exposure to the toxic gases and dust released in those attacks.

As I look back on the last 20 years, I am more aware than ever of how 9/11 changed my life. Although it had been difficult to

live among daily reminders of 9/11 in our Financial District neighborhood, it was there where I began to live with the assurance that through faith in Christ, I don't have to fear anything. As the neighborhood slowly revived and restored, I became rebuilt in His image. And that journey brought me to a place of peace when I learned how to sink the foundation of my life deep in the promises of Christ.

When I walked through the valley of the shadow of death on 9/11, God was with me. And He still walks with me through every valley and every mountain peak. He meets me in my brokenness with His strength so that I may offer His strength to others. {eoa}

Christina Stanton *is the award-winning author of Out of the Shadow of 9-11: An Inspiring Tale of Escape and Transformation and Faith in the Face of COVID-19: A Survivor's Tale.*

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After Escaping Communism, Georgian Banov Became 'The Apostle of Joy'

They don't call Georgian Banov "the apostle of joy" for nothing.

Banov escaped the tyranny of communism in Bulgaria in the 1970s to find glorious freedom in Christ in the U.S. Since then, he has been helping fill the earth with supernatural joy in places where most people would not dare to minister, such as the slums of Southeast Asia and the garbage dumps of Leon, Nicaragua.

Banov has put together a radical team with a powerful message at Global Celebration, boldly declaring the finished work of the cross around the world. The team is dedicated to rescuing and caring for trafficked and at-risk children, as well as helping marginalized, impoverished communities and training ministers and leaders with the incredible anointing of Christ.

Banov and his wife, Winnie, spread the joy of Jesus wherever they go. They led more than a million people to the Lord in their years of ministry, helping them move them to a place of godly joy after finding that fruit of the Spirit for themselves many years ago.

“The main thing when we started ministering was evangelism,” Banov told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network. “With the fruits of the Spirit, [joy] is the second fruit mentioned after the love of God. I discover how much He loves me. He kept increasing my revelation of His love, and that love makes you happy.

“Without love, there is no joy. Love is the base for joy. It is the revelation of the joy of the presence of God. When I read it, Psalm 16, ‘in Your presence is the fullness of joy,’ I saw that, I witnessed that. Then you start realizing what helped Jesus endure the cross—the joy set ahead. He endured the cross. So, God began to equip me for the hard times ahead as an immigrant. But that joy that helped Him endure was in me. It is Christ Himself where that joy comes from.”

Hear more of Banov’s compelling story of surviving the tyranny of communism and taking his message of freedom and joy to the

world on this episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network. {eoa}

Joseph Mattera: The Rise of Social Media Prophets

Since the mid-20th century, we have seen the medium of communication go from a dependency upon the printed book (1517-1950) to broadcasting via radio and TV (1950-2010) to the present digital age.

The results have been nothing short of a seismic shift related to the amount of access the average person has to unlimited voices and information! This has served to be both a blessing and a curse.

It's a blessing because more pertinent information related to every subject is now available to the masses (In other words, the American Medical Association no longer has a stranglehold related to what is promoted regarding nutrition and preventative health research). Related to the church, as recently as two decades ago, the evangelical church was influenced by only a small collective of prominent voices (such as James Dobson, Pat Robertson, Billy Graham and more) who could sway the evangelical church politically and doctrinally with their teachings on radio and TV. Now, there are multitudes of Christian "influencers" who have garnered a huge following because of media-savvy content (hence, it no longer takes a budget of millions of dollars to attract a wide audience).

Out of this “flat earth” Christian milieu, there are now numerous self-proclaimed prophets proclaiming what they say is “the word of the Lord” to both the body of Christ and the nations. While many of these prophetic people may be sincere Christ-followers (some are charlatans doing it for filthy lucre), the biblical way to disseminate prophetic words is in the context of the local church gathering, especially so that mature prophetic/leader types can judge said word. This method of vetting words is vital for the health and safety of the church as well as to ensure proper pastoral application of the word to the recipient.

Related to this vetting principle, the apostle Paul said the following, “Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said” (1 Cor. 14:29, ESV). Furthermore, all the manifestations of the Spirit (including prophecy) were taught by Paul in the context of the local church gathering—which included the observance of the Lord’s Supper, starting from 1 Corinthians 11:17 to the end of 1 Corinthians 14 (hence, the healthy and biblical practice of the gift of prophecy should have a corporate dynamic).

Unfortunately, despite these clear instructions in the New Testament, I have heard of numerous people in the body of Christ following so-called “internet” prophets who now find themselves with the ability to reach a huge audience—without paying the price of being vetted as a mature leader in a local congregation (1 Tim. 3:1-12). Although we don’t know their life, their track record, personal ethics, the state of their marriage and family and their accountability structure, they can deliver a purported prophecy that excites and inspires multitudes! Furthermore, many of these same people are promoting “prophetic events” via social media by offering “a word of the Lord” to all who attend, while at the same time bypassing the local church and the spiritual leaders God has assigned to shepherd the (naive) believer enticed to these events because they constantly appear on Facebook, Instagram

and other mediums of media.

I remember not that long ago, a certain prophetic voice started using their social media platform to hold meetings in a hotel in New York City. Prophetic words were given to people from other churches—including our church—*without* their pastor-elder or mature leaders being present to judge said words. Thankfully I was able to speak to one of the leaders facilitating these events. They apologized and were just ignorant of the proper biblical procedures related to conducting prophetic ministry, and they stopped these meetings. I wish all the prophetic leaders were as open and accountable as this person was!

The writer of Hebrews said, “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you” (13:17). With all of the strange teachings, questionable doctrines and unaccountable prophetic voices prevalent today in the plethora of cacophonous voices to the church today, it is getting increasingly difficult for contemporary shepherds of local churches to faithfully feed the flock.

The only recourse for shepherds of churches is to continue to be faithful by consistently teaching, making disciples and preaching the whole counsel of God both in public gatherings and house to house. This is the only way the sheep can have more discernment and flee from unaccountable prophetic leaders and strange doctrines that incite questions rather than godly edifying (Acts 20:25-32, 1 Tim. 1:3-7, Heb. 13:9.)

May all nine manifestations of the Spirit flourish for the edification of the body of Christ, so that Jesus will be glorified in His church, amen. (Read about how the nine manifestations of the Holy Spirit were taught in the context of the local church by reading 1 Corinthians 12:4-27.)

Finally, since there are now so many unvetted platforms for prophetic voices, it behooves the church to be able to discern the difference between “rogue” and “real” prophets.

Note: This article is an excerpt from a chapter in Bishop Joseph Mattera’s latest book, The Purpose, Power, and Process of Prophetic Ministry. {eo}

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Michael Gungor, Atheism and the Great Falling Away

Michael Gungor is the latest Christian celebrity to denounce Christ, part of the unfortunate fulfillment of a prophetically-inspired question I posed nearly a decade ago announcing the great falling away is underway.

The popular Christian alternative rock musician is a full-blown atheist now. And his wife has followed him into his apostasy. A meme is circulating around Instagram in which Gungor insists, “Jesus was Christ. Buddha was Christ. Muhammad was Christ. Christ is a word for the Universe itself. You are Christ. We are the body of Christ.”

Blasphemy! This is a doctrine of demons! He's not the first. A growing number of "visible" Christians have turned their back on Christ—and for all those with name recognition, there are likely thousands upon thousands more who have strayed from His heart.

Don't ignore the signs of the times. In His discussions on the end of the age, Jesus warned us not to let anyone deceive us (Matt. 24). If it weren't possible to get caught up in the great falling away, Jesus wouldn't have issued such a strong warning to His followers and left a record of it for you and me.

Discerning Doctrines of Demons

Paul wrote, "Now the Spirit clearly says that in the last times some will depart from the faith and pay attention to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their consciences seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth" (1 Tim. 4:1-3).

Some have indeed departed from the faith because they have engaged with deceiving spirits and embraced doctrines of demons. We've witnessed more than one man of God with a major ministry platform bow a knee to doctrines like universalism, deceiving and being deceived with this deadly heresy. Despite many in the church lifting their voice against heretical teachings, these deceived ministers hold fast to their demonic doctrine.

We've also watched famous pastors speak lies in hypocrisy—lies that left many hurt, wounded and disillusioned—and yet they remain adored and adorned in the megachurches that made their name great. Clearly, the conscience of some influential church leaders has already been seared with a hot iron (see 1 Tim. 4:2). Some have become the proverbial blind leading the blind.

And would you believe it? Some modern-day, Spirit-filled churches even reserve the right to tell you whom you can or can't marry (along with many other details of your personal life). I've known folks who have nervously gone to ask the pastor for permission to marry another congregant, hoping that their request wasn't denied and their love wasn't dashed. And this wasn't during the Shepherding movement but recently.

The Great Falling Away

Victorious believers will overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony—and the fact that they did not love their lives even unto death (Rev. 12:11). I fear there may be fewer victorious believers at the end of the age than some may think.

The Bible tells us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12). We need to get at it because this is sure: Jesus is coming back for a glorious church without spot or wrinkle (Eph. 5:27). I believe the spots and wrinkles will fall away before His return. The gates of hell are trying to prevail against the church and will ultimately fail, but not before enticing some believers into heresy, idolatry and other sin.

I don't believe in once-saved, always-saved doctrines. I believe you can lose your salvation. I don't think it happens overnight. I think it's a slow progression down the slippery slope of deception.

I often ask people who are deceived this question: "How would you know if you were deceived?" I've never met one who was deceived find an answer for the question. Rather, they insist that they cannot be deceived or that they would know if they were. If we don't think we could be deceived, we're deceived already. And if we are deceived, we wouldn't know it unless the Holy Spirit broke in and opened the eyes of our heart.
{eoa}

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Stephen Strang: Is America Headed for Civil War?

Are we headed toward civil war? Are we on the verge of something like America experienced in the mid-19th century when millions of men went to war and more than 600,000 never returned, instead filling early graves over the issue of slavery and states' rights? Is this the future of our country?

Many level-headed Christians are not just resigned to the fact of an impending civil war but calling for immediate preparation for such a thing. Rational, stable professionals I know have begun storing food and necessary items (who wouldn't, after the 2020 toilet paper shortage?) in preparation for breakouts of violence or potential supply chain disruptions. Others I know personally who have never owned a weapon now carry a gun with a concealed carry permit. With thousands, maybe millions, behaving this way, it becomes difficult to dismiss as a fad or faulty assessment of the future.

Two Different Americas

It certainly does seem like two different Americas have formed within the borders of our nation. Indeed, this division drives cancel culture. The two Americas are so at odds over seemingly everything that some believe the only apparent solution is to annihilate the other viewpoint. Of course, this is not the America most of us grew up in, and the very discussion may seem jarring. But let's remind ourselves that during the Civil War era, those on both sides of the conflict built businesses and families, never expecting that their sons would go off to war and never return, or that their businesses and homes would be burned to the ground. How are we exempt from these same difficulties?

Abraham Lincoln, who did not want to fight the Civil War but wanted to end the conflict as soon as possible while still preserving the union, became convinced that God was allowing it to drag on because the nation required a kind of bloodletting due to slavery. Will rampant abortion, immorality and injustice in America require a similar bloodletting in our day? Is war the cleansing crucible we must pass through to achieve greater national purity and unity on the other side?

But is civil war just a popular, edgy thing to talk about, or are there actual indicators it is coming? Several credible spiritual leaders I have spoken with say there are.

The Second American Revolution

I spoke with longtime friend and popular author and speaker Rick Joyner about this and many other subjects pertaining to a potential violent conflict within U.S. borders. Joyner has spoken frequently and with much specificity about the inevitability of another civil war, which he calls the "second American revolution," for at least the past decade. He has been trumpeting this idea because of a dramatic vision he received in 1987.

I wanted to know, how exactly do we prepare for a civil

war—mentally, spiritually and physically? What would this war look like? Will it involve bloodshed or control of major resources and things such as power plants, government centers and so on? Would everyone be involved? Would it be physical, with guns and bayonets, or would it be a remotely executed, technical kind of war instead? Would it be about taking land or perhaps taking cyberspace? I asked Joyner about these many possibilities.

“Until a couple of years ago, I would have used the word *possible*. But I don’t anymore. I think it’s inevitable,” he said of this civil war. “Some of my friends who thought I was crazy back in 2018 when I started saying, ‘It’s coming,’ they now say, ‘No, it’s here.’ They think we’re already in it. I’m talking about pretty high-ranking military people. They think we’ve already entered a phase of it.”

The source of his confidence, Joyner told me, is what he calls one of the most powerful and dramatic dreams he has ever received. In 2018, he said, he was shown that a Second American Revolution/civil war was coming. He was told in the dream, “It is inevitable. It is right. And it will be successful.”

Preparing for War?

If all this is even a possibility, how do we prepare for it? As Christians, the obvious first answer is to pray.

“I think that, with extraordinary grace from God and wisdom, the damage, the casualties, or whatever we’re headed for, can be lessened,” Joyner told me. “I think that’s what most of those revelations are for. [God] needs intercessors on the earth to intercede for these things. ... Our job is now to pray and maybe to take action that would prevent the bad thing from happening. Repentance and revival [are] usually the way we escape certain things.”

 While he does not believe we can build fortresses, compounds or distant retreats where we can be physically free from everything that's coming, Joyner said the will of God will be the only truly safe place on the planet. For that reason, "we've got to absolutely obey, seeking first the kingdom with every major decision, being sure we're even living in the right place," he said. "If we chose where we live based on geography or family or anything other than putting the kingdom first and seeking God probably are dealing with many problems that are completely unnecessary in our life, because we're not in the right place. ... We've got to get these things right."

I was heartened that Joyner put spiritual things first, because if we don't, having all the food and water and other resources won't help. In the natural, having those things might simply invite thieves to your home. But with God's blessing on our preparations, they could be great tools for sharing the love of Jesus when people need Him most. The perfect storm may provide the perfect opportunity to live and share the gospel. {eoa}

Excerpted from Chapter 6, "A Nation Divided," from Steve Strang's book God and Cancel Culture (Charisma House, 2021). The book is set to publish on Sept. 7, and you can pre-order it on . When you do, you'll get \$120 worth of free gifts, including four e-books and a subscription to Charisma magazine.

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Messianic Rabbi: The Closer You Get, the Larger Things Appear

For many years, I owned a business that installed doors and windows in new homes. When we hung the front doors on houses, many times we had to install a peephole.

A peephole, for those who might be unfamiliar, is a small telescope that allows those inside the home to see who is standing on the other side of the door without having to open the door to see them. In order to install the peephole, you first have to drill a hole through the door and then insert the peephole.

Inserting the peephole is a simple task where there is really only one possible thing that can go wrong. That thing is inserting the peephole backward.

As I said, above a peephole is basically a telescope, so if you look through one side, everything gets larger. But, if you look through the other side, everything gets very small. When a peephole is installed backward, instead of being able to see what they are looking at large and clear, those looking see everything small and distorted.

These peepholes always caused me to think about a psalm and Moses.

The psalm is Psalm 34, where we are encouraged by these words, "O' magnify the L-rd with me" (Ps. 34:3a, ESV)> How can we magnify G-D? After all, G-D is everywhere at all times. He is already larger than anything that can be imagined, yet we are

encouraged to make Him larger. This concept may seem to be an impossibility.

If it seems impossible, it is because we are looking at the term magnify in the wrong way. The psalmist wasn't asking us to join him in actually making G-D larger. He was asking us to become the lens whereby those that look through us see G-D as larger. Said another way, when we walk in faith according to G-D's Word, we become a lens for people to see G-D's greatness and vastness.

Let me try to explain this concept in a different way because, for you and me as believers, this concept is foundational to our understanding and our ability to be witness of Him. To help clarify what I am trying to convey this week, let's look at Numbers 27:12-14 (TLV):

"Then Adonai said to Moses, 'Go up this mountain of the Abarim range and look at the land that I have given to Bnei-Yisrael. When you have seen it, you will be gathered to your people, just as Aaron your brother was gathered. For in the wilderness of Zin during the strife of the community, you both rebelled against My Word instead of honoring Me as holy at the waters before their eyes.' These were the waters of Meribah at Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.)"

In these verses, we are reading a conversation between G-D and Moses just before Moses turns over leadership of Israel to Joshua. Moses is about to die, and G-D is reminding him why he could not lead Israel into the promised land. Notice in verse 14, G-D provides the reason. Moses rebelled against G-D's Word by not honoring G-D as holy. For those unaware about what Moses did that was so wrong, the answer is when G-D told Moses to speak to a rock, instead of speaking to the rock, Moses *hit* the rock.

Most of us would think that in the grand scheme of things, compared to all of the things Moses did that were right,

something this small would be seen as insignificant. After all, when we read the incident in Numbers 20, we can understand why Moses was so angry.

So, why, after all of the positive things that Moses had done as the leader of Israel, was he punished so dramatically because of this seemingly small act? It is because instead of Moses magnifying G-D by speaking to it as Moses was commanded to do, Moses hit the rock and made G-D look smaller. How did Moses make G-D look smaller?

When Moses hit the rock, he showed the children of Israel that his anger was larger than G-D's commandment. Moses' actions made G-D and His word look smaller and less important than Moses' emotions and feelings. We read similar words in the book of Romans 2:24, where Paul writes these words:

"For as it is written, 'the name of God is slandered among the nations because of you.'"

In some translations, the word slandered is translated as blasphemed, but either translation shares the same meaning. In Romans, Paul is correcting the Jewish believers for their hypocrisy, which was causing the Gentile believers to see G-D as smaller. These Jewish believers were justifying their sinful lifestyles, which was causing the Gentile believers to see G-D's Word and His commandments as less important. The Jewish believers' pride in their Jewishness was causing the Gentiles to see G-D as smaller. In his words of reproof in Romans 2:23, Paul says something very similar to what G-D spoke to Moses:

"You who take pride in the Torah, through your violation of the Torah, do you dishonor God?"

When Moses rebelled against G-D's commandment because of his own feelings and emotions, he diminished how the children of Israel viewed G-D. G-D became less in their eyes. Instead of Moses magnifying G-D, Moses made G-D look smaller.

Please understand that Moses could not make G-D look smaller in the eyes of others, unless Moses had first allowed *himself* to see G-D as smaller. Moses let his anger become larger than G-D and His commandments. The result of his actions was that Moses could no longer lead the Israelites into the promised land. Why would such a severe punishment be warranted?

It is because the children of Israel were about to enter into the promised land and fight against the very people that their previous leaders had claimed were too large for G-D to defeat. Remember the 10 spies and their bad report (Num. 13)? If Israel were going to trust G-D for victory, they were going to need to see G-D as bigger, and Moses had just shown them a smaller G-D.

As you read this post, I hope you did the same thing that I did while writing it. I hope you took some time to look at your life and faith walk. Are you living a life that magnifies G-D? When people look through you, do they see G-D as larger? Or are you letting your feelings, your emotions or your desires cause you to sin against G-D's commandments and, by doing so, cause people to see your G-D as small?

The truth is that you and I are like a magnifying glass, and the closer we walk to G-D, the larger He appears to others.
{eoa}

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.

Eric Tokajer *is the author of* Overcoming Fearlessness, What If Everything You Were Taught About the Ten Commandments Was Wrong?, With Me in Paradise, Transient Singularity, OY! How Did I Get Here?: Thirty-One Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me Before Entering Ministry, #ManWisdom: With Eric Tokajer, Jesus Is to Christianity as Pasta Is to Italians *and* Galatians in Context.

Kingdom Plea: 'Stay Awake, Christian'

The night Jesus was betrayed, He first went to the garden of Gethsemane to pray. He took along three of his disciples with him. The Bible tells us that Jesus was greatly distressed and sorrowful.

He was in anguish, and He instructed His disciples to stay and keep watch with Him. Jesus went farther along to pray to the Father.

When Jesus returned, He warned the disciples and said, "Keep watch and pray, so that *you* will not give in to temptation." Even with His soul crushed with grief to the point of death, Jesus was looking out for them. He gave them a key to overcoming temptation—prayer!

We don't know exactly why Jesus asked them to accompany Him on that night.

What we do know about the disciples in the garden that night is that they fell asleep. They didn't rise and pace with agitation or discomfort. They didn't offer assistance, empathy or even keep company with Jesus, and they certainly didn't pray.

They fell asleep.

Even when Jesus returned several times to find them asleep, they repeatedly gave in to laziness and did nothing to ward off—or even give a signal of—the coming danger. Just staying awake, alert and prayerful was not possible for them.

What You Can Learn From Jesus' Disciples

Every Christian today needs to ask himself if he is asleep in any area of his faith. Every Christ-follower must make a conscious decision to be alert, to identify evil, to be prayerful and to defend godliness.

The disciples walked closely with Jesus, yet they were oblivious to the darkness coming. They were in His presence day after day, and somehow they did not know what He required of them when the darkest time was at hand. How easily could we succumb to the same mistakes and be lulled to sleep by not keeping close company with Jesus?

In 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3, 6, it reads, "For you know perfectly that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape. ... Therefore let us not sleep as others do. But let us be alert and sober." {eoas}

*For more information about **Bill Wiese** and Soul Choice Ministries, please visit us at [www.soulchoice.org](#). You can find more of Bill's teachings on YouTube.*

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What Billy Graham Said About Racial Reconciliation

Billy Graham was once asked, "If you could eradicate any problem in America, what would it be?" The evangelist's answer: "The racial division and strife in our nation."

America is not the only nation where racism has reared its ugly head, and racial reconciliation matters.

Racism and hatred of other races is from the pit of hell. It's a sin in the heart of mankind. As a sin issue, the body of Christ should be at the forefront of racial reconciliation. But if we're honest, there's even racism in the church.

Martin Luther King once said, "We need a powerful sense of determination to banish the ugly blemish of racism scarring the image of America. We can, of course, try to temporize, negotiate small, inadequate changes and prolong the timetable of freedom in the hope that the narcotics of delay will dull the pain of progress. We can try, but we shall certainly fail. The shape of the world will not permit us the luxury of gradualism and procrastination. Not only is it immoral, it will not work ... it will not work because it retards the progress not only of the Negro, but of the nation as a whole."

Racial reconciliation efforts honor God. John 3:16 tells us plainly, "'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.'" God created mankind and loves all of mankind, despite race or ethnicity.

Racial reconciliation is part of God's plan. Revelation 5:9 (ISV) says, "And they sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.'"

Awakening Prayer Hubs is looking for 1,000 prayer warriors to raise up as prayer leaders. Launch a hub or join a hub at .

Prayer Points

- (Join our corporate prayer call here.)
- Ask for forgiveness for all the racially divided organizations promoting division and supremacy (Phil. 2:3).
- Ask for forgiveness for allowing slavery to be established in our nation (James 5:16).
- Pray for cross-racial alignment in the body of Christ to form.
- Pray to uproot racial history and heal our land of its tragedy, shame, and blood shed; that it would be through our repenting hearts.
- Pray to honor the redemptive gifts and values in differ racial groups.
- Pray for covenant friendships bond by David-Jonathan love and unity that defies and overrides their prejudices and hate.
- Pray for God to shift the mindset of behaviors the church and nations regarding race.
- Pray that parents will begin raising children to love and teach them compassion that will break across color lines.
- Pray for justice, equality, reconciliation (Amos) prophets to rise; for Jonah prophets to have their Damascus moment; for the body to be ministers of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18).
- Pray God would give leaders strategies to integrate cross racial boundaries in their sphere of influence.
- Pray the body of Christ would not be afraid to evangelize and minister in “those” neighborhoods; and that they wouldn’t

come into these neighborhoods with a wrong intent/motive.

- Pray that the “them versus us” mindset would be demolished.
- Pray God would help us see people as He sees them, through eyes of love and their God given potential (John 1:12-13).
- Pray those who have been wronged would enter into radical forgiveness for their own sake (Eph. 4:32).
- Pray for hearts to be healed that are hurting due to generational mistreatment because of skin color (Matt. 6:14).
- Pray we would get a deeper revelation of 1 John 4:20, “If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar. For whoever does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?” and 1 John 4:21, “We have this commandment from Him: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.”

We decree the light of truth on this lie of one race being better than another. We are each precious and created equal in your image God (Gen. 1:27).

We renounce any seeds of racism planted in us or our family line. Forgive us Lord and cleanse our bloodline (Heb. 12:4).

We cast the mountain of racism that has divided people to be thrown into the sea (Matt. 11:22-23).

We command the enemy fueling this lie and hatred to be silent (1 Pet. 5:8).

We decree what the enemy meant for evil you shall use for good. You turn the tables on the enemy in using people to love others as we love ourselves and to love like you love Jesus (Gen. 50:20, Matt. 22:39, John 15:12).

We decree radical encounters for those being used by the devil to stir up hatred (Acts 9:4).

We decree our nation shall be healed of racism and that our prayers and our voices are part of the solution. {eoa}

Jennifer LeClaire *is an internationally recognized author, apostolic-prophetic voice to her generation, and conference speaker. She is the senior leader of Awakening House of Prayer in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, founder of the Ignite Network and founder of the Awakening Prayer Hubs prayer movement.*

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