

# How Pride Can Blind Us to Blessings

Like everyone else in the world, there are times in my life when the Spirit of G-D directly confronts me to point out a sin issue in my life. Let me clarify a little more.

What I should have written is that there are times in my life when I am listening to the Spirit of G-D, and I am confronted by a sin in my life. I clarified because the truth is that the Spirit is constantly confronting us to point out sinful activities or thoughts, but unfortunately too often we are too busy or distracted by the cares of this world to listen to G-D's voice. This confrontation was so meaningful and forceful that in my mind it reminded me of the time when Baalam was confronted by the messenger from G-D in Numbers 22.

In order for you to understand the importance of this encounter, please allow me to share my experience. I was watching a news report about poverty and, while watching, I noticed that the children who were being shown in the video were laughing, playing in the same ways that my grandchildren laugh and play.

The parents were busily working in their fields and around the simple homes. While watching, I began to think about and compare their lives with mine. I thought about their home, which was not much more than a tent-type structure, and not much larger than a single room in my house. They were using a donkey for transportation, while I drive a truck. They were carrying water into their home in buckets, whereas I have running water. They didn't have electricity, air conditioning, a refrigerator, a television or internet service.

As I compared their life to mine, I began to feel badly for them. As I continued to think about the differences between

their lives and my life, I felt a little guilty that I had been born in a country and to a family that had so many blessings compared to so many in other parts of the world. It was at that moment of allowing myself to begin to transition from guilt to shame because of where I was born and what I possessed that I heard the voice of the Spirit of G-D speaking to me.

The words I heard in my heart and mind cut me to my core: "You need to lay down your pride."

My thoughts were thrown for a loop. There I was, brokenhearted because I had once again been reminded that there are millions of people who are not blessed with all of the things I have been blessed with. I asked G-D: "How can my concern for those less fortunate be considered prideful?"

His reply stunned me. The Spirit responded, "Why do you consider the things you have to be blessings, and why do you believe that those without them are less fortunate?" This question caused me to review the scene from the news report again in my mind. The families I saw had food; they looked healthy and happy. They clearly loved one another and were enjoying themselves. They did have difficult jobs and simple homes without modern conveniences, but were they less fortunate?

I was forced to ask myself, "Why do I consider myself more blessed because I have more stuff?" The answer was that I had allowed pride to rise up within me. My pride caused me to use myself and my stuff as a means of measuring G-D's blessings. I had allowed ungodly pride to cause me to believe that how I lived (or at least the norms of how people live where I live) to become the way to recognize if G-D's blessings were present in the lives of people.

I had let pride get such a foothold in my heart that I allowed myself to question why G-D withheld His blessings from so many

people. The truth is, He didn't withhold His blessings from them. They were just as blessed, if not more blessed, than I was. They just didn't have the same stuff I had.

The more I thought about their lives compared to mine, the more I realized that many of the things I had cost me so much time and money that having them actually kept me from enjoying the simple blessings which the people on the news story were enjoying while I watched feeling badly for them.

The Spirit that day awoke me to the reality that my pride was causing me to measure G-D's blessings not by the things I had but by the things that had me. This pride caused me at that moment to judge G-D as unfair and unjust because it seemed unfair that everyone didn't have access to the same blessings.

I realized that day that everyone does have the same access to G-D's blessings; we just don't all have the same stuff. {eoa}

**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*.

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# MEV Bible Editor: Is This the Sign of the Son of Man?

The purpose of this article is not to promote a particular viewpoint (such as a pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation or post-tribulation rapture) nor is it to promote a pre-wrath rapture perspective (nor a pre-, post- or a-millennial perspective).

Its purpose is simply to present what Jesus said would occur in sequence in Matthew 24:29-31. What He said is intended for us to understand and accept without theological prejudice. Some who read various passages such as the Olivet Discourse may not realize that they are reading it with their own bias. Yet essential biblical interpretation involves letting biblical writers set forth their view in the culture and time those passages were written.

The context of Matthew 24 is not insignificant. Jesus left the temple, and He does not return, at least as Matthew has reported it. Jesus was displeased with the religious leaders. They rejected Him and were about to lead the Romans to Him in order to have Him crucified. And he knew that a bitter fate awaited Jerusalem, just one generation later. The disciples, on the other hand, did not know this, nor could they.

So, in defense of the temple, they approached Him and called His attention to the splendor of the temple buildings (Matt. 24:1). After all, Zerubbabel and Ezra themselves had been deeply invested in the rebuilding of this temple (Ezra 6:15). Herod the Great had expanded the temple enormously, and even the emperor Titus (who would oversee its destruction in A.D. 70) considered it to be one of the wonders of the ancient world. For nearly a thousand years, Jewish life had centered

on this temple. Jews swore by the temple (Matt. 23:16) and thought it blasphemy even to speak negatively of it (Acts 6:13).

So, Jesus replied to the disciples: "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another that shall not be thrown down" (Matt. 24:2). Then he proceeded to the Mount of Olives outside the temple grounds and sat down. His disciples followed and joined him, asking three questions: "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?" (Matt. 24:3).

Jesus answered the first question in Matt. 24:9-14, as he described to the audience what would occur between the ascension and the end of the age, which included the destruction of this second temple that stood before them. Jesus interpreted the coming of the Son of Man as the destruction of the second temple. He said, "Then they will hand you over to be persecuted and will kill you. And you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. Then many will fall away, and betray one another, and hate one another. And many false prophets will rise and will deceive many. Because iniquity will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."

Then Jesus answered the second and third questions in Matthew 24:15-31, revealing the sign given before the "second coming" and the end of the age, and referencing Daniel 11:31: "So when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet standing in the holy place (let the reader understand) ..." (Matt. 24:15). This editorial comment, "let the reader understand," places the event in the time of the ancient reader. Though Jesus' prophecy is echoed by the apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, the timing of his prophecy was pertinent to those actually reading Matthew and

Mark just after these Gospels had been written.

The abomination of desolation is the main sign, along with their warning to flee in Matthew 24:16-20. It is the consummation of everything in Daniel 9:27. Antiochus Epiphanies (a second century B.C. Syrian king who fought vehemently against the Jews) served as a type of anti-Christ, whom we read about in Daniel 11:31. The abomination of desolation serves as the indicator of the end of the age in Daniel 12:11. It marks the revelation of the "man of sin" in 2 Thess. 2:3-4, and it is related to the image of the beast in Revelation 13:14-15. After that, the sign of the Second Coming occurs as "lightning" in Matthew 24:27 and 30. These materials run across the synoptics and refer to the same event.

It is helpful that Jesus prefaced His chronology of end-times events with the warning that someone might deceive them in some way with respect to them (Matt. 24:11). After all, not all seven tribulation and millennial viewpoints listed above can be true. In addition, charlatans will try to manipulate this passage for their own selfish purposes. So, Jesus tells them that He will be clearly seen by all who are alive at the time of His return, just as lightning flashes from the eastern skies to the west (Matt. 24:27). Only those who do not understand this passage might be candidates for deception.

The synoptic Jerusalem passages are important to compare and contrast because Luke brings clarity, quoting Jesus in saying: "I tell you, on that night two men will be in one bed; the one will be taken and the other will be left. Two women will be grinding grain together; the one will be taken and the other will be left. Two men will be in the field; the one will be taken and the other will be left." They asked, "Where, Lord?" He replied, "Where the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together" (Luke 17:34-37). Both Matthew and Luke mention *ἀετοὶ*, meaning "vultures." Though some people prefer the term "eagles," eagles are a type of vulture, part of the Accipitridae family of birds of prey with strongly hooked

bills, and do not gather.

Furthermore, Greek words have a semantic range that needs to be captured in English translation, and context is crucial to determining which translation provides the most suitable meaning. In this instance, the Greek means “vultures,” which is most suitable.

Jesus treats the taking away event as a judgment, and the one left behind as the one who is spared—which runs contrary to how the majority of the church today reads this passage in popular, Western Christian culture. Also, he places the event before the Second Coming (Matt. 24:30). Jesus’ chronology leads the audience to the gathering of the chosen ones in Matthew 24:31: ἐπισυνάξουσιν τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς (*episynaxousin tous eklektous*, meaning “they will gather together the elect” or “chosen ones”). Certain implications present themselves and are present within the Bible itself:

First, “Immediately after the tribulation of those days, ‘the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken’” (Matt. 24:29).

Second, “Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven. And then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matt. 24:30).

Third, “And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet” (Matt. 24:31a).

And fourth, “And they shall gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other” (Matt. 24:31b). This appears to be a gathering of the chosen ones who are already in the heavens.

Rather than over read what Jesus said, let’s focus on what He said specifically through the interpretation of the Gospel

writer himself. And let's be of an agreeable spirit in the body of Christ without forcing our interpretations on others, as we stay aware of the sign of Jesus' return—which all who are alive at that time will see and must prepare for.

We have entered uncertain times today, and we need spiritual unity to get through these difficult times. Taking to heart what Jesus said will help us not only to prepare for these times at hand but also for what may (or may not) be imminent. We can prepare by changing our minds about lifestyles that fall short of biblical standards of life and conduct—by righting the wrongs we have committed against others, by taking on a joyful disposition regardless of circumstances and by obeying Scripture in all things as best we know how.

This necessitates daily prayer and meditation on God's Word.  
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# Why This Spirit-Filled Bible Teacher Says Believers Must Conduct Honest, Intimate Conversations With God

Like any other believer on the planet, Sarah Bowling says she is aware that she is a sinner, and that she messes up in life from time to time.

But Bowling, the daughter of legendary evangelist Marilyn Hickey, also knows God won't hold it against her if she comes to Him with a truly repentant heart. Like heroes in the Bible such as Moses, David and Adam, Bowling says an honest conversation with God and simply being in His presence can bring much-needed healing to your soul. It will allow you to overcome the enemy's lies that you are unworthy.

That belief prompted Bowling, a powerful scholar and spirit-led Bible teacher, and the founder of [Living Genuine Love](#) ministry, to preach a series of sermons about the subject and to write a book called [Hey God, Can We Talk?: Real-Life God Encounters for Real-Life Circumstances](#).

The host of the [Living Genuine Love](#) podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network, Bowling believes her book will help Christians experience much-needed life-changing encounters with God in a world whose future looks bleak and one where the enemy is quick to point fingers and condemn.

"These conversations with God are timeless. I don't think they're just for the Bible," Bowling told Dr. Steve Greene [on a recent episode of Greenelines](#) on the Charisma Podcast Network. "I think they are for us 21st-century Americans, because these struggles in these situations are universal for humanity.

“Those mornings that I really appreciate is when I feel like I have dialogue with God, when there is a flow,” she says. “It’s not every morning, but it makes me look forward to praying and that devotion time where I feel like I’m in dialogue. I may not understand everything I’m hearing, but I know the voice of God. ...

“It’s like in Jeremiah 23-24, where it says let the wise man boast in wisdom, the strong man in strength, the wealthy man in his riches, but let him who boasts, boast that he knows Me,” Bowling adds. “And that’s my heart; knowing God and having an intimate connection with God.”

For the rest of this fascinating interview with Sarah Bowling, [listen to this entire episode](#), and subscribe to *Greenelines* on your favorite podcast platform for more inspiring stories like this one. Make sure to tune into [Living Genuine Love with Sarah Bowling](#) on the Charisma Podcast Network. {eoa}

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## **Why the Pandemic Could Not Stifle Spirit-Filled Canadian Couple’s Ministry**

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit North America early last year, preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ has been a major

challenge for everyone. It has proven even more difficult on ministers, pastors and churches in Canada, which implemented some of the more stringent worship service restrictions on the continent.

But for Sandra Benaglia Smith and her husband, Todd, “the Word does not stop just because Canada is locked down.” As the co-founders of Fresh Fire Apostolic Ministries in Ontario, Canada, the couple, while totally complying with government protocol, is using every means necessary to bring the gospel to the Canadian people and to the world via the internet.

The two co-host the [\*Fresh Fire Podcast\*](#) on the Charisma Podcast Network, helping listeners encounter a fresh wind of God’s fire every day. The podcast will help listeners increase their faith through powerful and kingdom anointed teachings.

Since the lockdown began in 2020, churches in Canada have faced multiple run-ins with the police, and one pastor in Alberta spent a month in jail for repeated refusals to comply. Many churches in America have been back at full attendance for a few months.

“Ours is a full-time ministry, and it’s a 24/7 call of God,” Sandra told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network. “When people need you, you are there.

“We’ve been on complete lockdown, but we’ve just heard from the province of Ontario in the last couple of days that we’re going to be opening up partially on June 16,” she says. “So the churches have really, really suffered. We’re only allowed 10 people in a facility, so we’ve been using social media platforms to get the message out. We’ve still been open every Sunday for those who want to come, but we’ve been very careful. We are still full-bore ministering, and we do deliverance sessions. Throughout the week, we do private counseling even through Zoom social media.”

Todd Smith says despite the pandemic, the enemy hasn't been able to stifle God's kingdom in Canada.

"What the enemy has tried to do to close the churches isn't working," Todd says, "because Facebook is alive and well, and social media is letting us get out there to the people."

The Smiths have used Zoom to do group intercession, and they have conducted "encounters" through social media.

"We just keep going," Sandra says. "I just find that the need for healing and deliverance has increased far more than we can ever see right now because people are so far under oppression and depression. We need Jesus; we need God. So we will use whatever avenue we have to continue the work of the ministry.

For more of this compelling interview, [listen to the entire podcast here](#), and [subscribe to Greenelines](#) on your favorite podcast platform for more inspiring stories like this one. And don't forget to tune into the [Fresh Fire Podcast with Todd and Sandra Benaglia Smith](#) on the Charisma Podcast network. {eoa}

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## **Bridging 7 Huge Gaps in the Church**

Since my conversion to Christ, I have observed seven serious

gaps in the church. If not corrected, these gaps will significantly limit the ability of the church to fulfill the great commission.

To deal with this issue, the national organization I lead, [USCAL](#), has an annual Bridge Summit conference. At this impactful conference, significant leaders are brought together from every facet of society to help bridge the following seven gaps.

1. **The gap between church and workplace leaders:** Since about only 2% of the typical church member will ever go into full-time church ministry, discipleship should be focused more on bringing the gospel to the workplace than preparing people for the church-place. Unfortunately, we have trained the typical Christian to bring their friends to church to be saved instead of equipping them to make disciples outside the four walls of the church.

Christ-followers have to stop depending on a Sunday service in a building so that they can take the gospel to the entire world. Furthermore, workplace believers need to view themselves as ministers of the gospel in the same way church-place leaders are viewed as ministers. The primary purpose of the church-place should be to equip the saints for the workplace. Unless this shifts, the church will have more influence on Sunday than on Monday, and our society will continue to decline.

2. **The gap between younger and older leaders:** There is a considerable gap between Baby Boomers, Millennials and Generation Z. They speak the same language but have different connotations attached to the words they use to communicate.

Much dialogue and new partnerships are necessary amongst these three groups if the baton is going to be successfully passed

to the emerging leaders of the church. It will be a shame if the younger generation goes without gleaning from older leaders' wisdom and life experience, and an equal shame if older leaders refuse to learn from younger leaders and adapt to a multigenerational approach to ministry. This is why our coalition intentionally includes young, influential leaders in every event.

3. **The gap between different ethnic leaders:** Sunday morning is still perhaps the most segregated two hours of the week because there are still huge ethnic gaps separating the body. This gap may have even worsened in the church since the last presidential election. One of the goals of the leaders of the United States Coalition of Apostolic Leaders is to bridge the gap between ethnic leaders. This is why our events are ethnically diverse.
4. **The gap between the Word and the Spirit:** Jesus told us to worship the Father in spirit and in truth (John 4:23,24). He told the Pharisees that they were in error because they knew not the Scriptures nor the power of God (Matt. 22:29). If today's church is going to be effective in reaching the world, we have to mimic the church of the book of Acts. There we observe that they had a great handle on the Scriptures (as we can see from examining this book's sermons). Today's church should also move in the demonstration of the power of Jesus to convince unbelievers of the reality of Jesus' Resurrection.

In our annual Bridge Summit, we have rich theological content in our teaching and allow the Holy Spirit to move through prayer and prophetic ministry.

5. **The gap between male and female leadership:** The conservative evangelical church has often overlooked the important role women have in extending the influence of the kingdom of God. As we can see in both testaments of the Bible, women have played a significant role in

leadership and in influencing not only their families, but the nation of Israel and the church as well. (The biblical examples are too numerous to cite in this brief article.)

Unless the broader body of Christ recognizes the role of women in leadership, we will continue to underutilize the majority of Christ-followers in our churches. This greatly limits our capacity to spread the gospel and extend His kingdom's influence. In our movement, we highlight extraordinary women as presenters. They contribute to closing this gap in the church.

6. **The gap between revival and reformation:** I have observed that often those who are proponents of prayer and fasting for revival don't associate with Christian activists and reformers who deal with politics, policy and cultural issues and vice versa. However, both testaments of the Bible illustrate that we need people involved in prayer and policy. (See the book of Esther, Nehemiah, Ezra, Daniel, as well as the book of Acts. We see high-level leaders like Cornelius, Sergius Paulus, Manaen and others coming to Christ and helping to spread the gospel.)
7. **The gap between serving God with the heart and the mind:** The Lord Jesus told His followers to love God with all their heart, mind and soul, which is the first and foremost commandment of the law (Matt. 22:37-40). In the charismatic and evangelical church of America, we see that within the past few generations, there has been a bypassing of the mind and more of a connection with the emotions of Christians. Consequently, there has been a dualism regarding applying the Bible to human life. The church has only focused on spiritual things and disregarded the other aspects of the created order regarding politics, economics, education and all the sciences.

When Jesus said that He is the truth, He said that in Him is all truth, not just biblical truth or spiritual truth (John 14:6). Truly, in Him, all things of the universe hold together, all things and not just spiritual things (Col. 1:17, Heb. 1:3). Until Christ-followers embrace the fact that the Word of God contains a biblical world and life view applicable to all of life on the earth, our effectiveness in attracting and equipping the next generation of world changers will not be realized.

In closing, at the Bridge Summit, significant leaders from various sectors of society grapple with all of the seven issues articulated by the seven points above.

To register for the Bridge Summit, which takes place on Tuesday, June 15, online, click [here](#). {eoa}

*Purchase Joseph Mattera's latest book, [The Jesus Principles](#), available now on Amazon [here](#).*

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

**Dr. Joseph Mattera** is an internationally-known author, consultant and theologian whose mission is to influence leaders who influence culture. He is the founding pastor of Resurrection Church and leads several organizations, including The U.S. Coalition of Apostolic Leaders and Christ Covenant Coalition. Dr. Mattera is the author of 12 bestselling books, including his latest, *The Jesus Principles*, and is renowned for applying Scripture to contemporary culture. To order his books or to join the many thousands who subscribe to his newsletter, go to [josephmattera.org](#).

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# Prophetic Vision Reveals Confrontation With Demonic Powers

I had a vision of a showdown at high noon! If the enemy routed you last time around, now is the time to emerge with guns blazing.

This time, you will take out the enemy that took you out in the last season. There's vindication and restoration for those bold enough to confront the thief who stole from you.

Determine to engage in this prophetic showdown, this spiritual clash, this final face-off in the spirit to settle a long-lived dispute between you and the demonic powers that have harassed you. Decide to put an end to the demonic cycles and vicious circles that keep you oppressed.

When you make a stand, the Lord will back you up. If God is for you, who can be against you? (see Rom. 8:31).

In the vision, I saw a large clock right in front of somebody's face. The clock is tick, tick, ticking. The opportune moment has come around again—and this time, you are not going to miss the chance to take back what the devil stole. This time, you are going to rise up and fight.

It's time to engage in the confrontation you tried so hard to escape from in the last season. You didn't know how to fight last time. You didn't feel prepared. But you are ready now. You're wiser. You're stronger in the Lord and the power of His might (see Eph. 6:10).

I decree your enemies will not be able to stand against you when the Lord leads you onto the battlefield. The God who answers by fire will be with you just like he was with Elijah. He is the same God.

### **Meditate on These Scriptures:**

“For the Lord your God is He that goes with you to fight for you against your enemies, to save you” (Deut. 20:4).

” Have not I commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go” (Josh. 1:9).

“Through You we will push down our opponents; through Your name we will trample those who rise up against us” (Ps. 44:5).

### **Let's Pray**

*Father, in the name of Jesus, give me the courage I need to confront the demons of my past—and the demons that are hindering my progress even now. Strengthen me in my inner man so I can easily push back the darkness, break the cycles and escape from the vicious circles the enemy tapped me in during past seasons. I decree I have the upper hand because I am in Your hands. {eoa}*

*Join Jennifer for live prophetic intercession weekdays on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).*

*Get practical training for victory at [schoolofthespirit.tv](http://schoolofthespirit.tv).*

**Jennifer LeClaire** is senior leader of [Awakening House of Prayer](#) in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, founder of the [Ignite Network](#) and founder of the [Awakening Blaze](#) prayer movement. She is author of over 25 books. Find her online at [jenniferleclaire.org](http://jenniferleclaire.org) or email her at [info@jenniferleclaire.org](mailto:info@jenniferleclaire.org).

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## **Messianic Rabbi: Can G-D Unfriend You?**

G-D unfriended me—can that even happen? Let's find out.

If you use social media, and if you are like most people, then over the past year or so you have had plenty of opportunities to unfriend people. Between social demonstrations, political upheaval or religious disagreements, there have been times when I had to hit the unfriend button.

However, the unfriend button is not my first response to offensive posts or tweets. My first reaction to offensive statements or memes is to reach out to the poster and attempt to influence their actions by requesting they edit, clarify or delete their post.

If that doesn't work, and if they continue posting offensive posts, I will hide their posts so that I won't see them or they won't appear on my wall or feed. In other cases, I may hit the button that hides their posts for a period of time.

I use the unfriend button in those cases when the offense is so egregious and the poster is so pigheaded that I just have to cut the digital cord that connects them to me. Most run-of-the-mill aggression against me will rarely bring me to the

point of unfriending someone. One notable exception is when someone claims I have been or I am being dishonest.

However, when someone attacks someone I love, such as my wife or my children, then I go full Papa Bear, and if I cannot convince that person of the error of their ways, their choice will result in being unfriended.

I was thinking about this concept, and that made me wonder how G-D would respond to these types of attacks. Does G-D “unfriend people,” and if He does, what would it take for Him to come to the point of severing a “friendship?” This thought brought me to a familiar verse found in Matthew 10:33 (TLV):

“But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.”

To understand this verse, we have to read it within the context that these words were spoken by Yeshua (Jesus). He was sending His disciples out to proclaim, “The kingdom of heaven has come near!” Yeshua went on to instruct His followers what to do if people rejected this message, which included “shake the dust off your feet.” It is after these instructions that we read Yeshua’s proclamation about those who deny Him before men.

Think about the gravity of this statement. Then, stop for a moment and consider the full implications of what denying Yeshua means. As you consider, remember that John 1:14 tells us:

“And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us. We looked upon His glory, the glory of the one and only from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

The Bible tells us that Yeshua was the Word made flesh, and if we deny the Word is true, then we have denied Him. How might we deny Yeshua in this way? One way is when we interpret the Bible according to feelings or cultural shifts. A few examples

of this may be not holding to the biblical concept of marriage being between one man and one woman.

Another example is the rejection of the biblical truth that life begins with conception. Another example is accepting the false belief that G-D abolished the Torah through the death of Yeshua, something that Yeshua directly rejected in Matthew 5:17-18:

“Do not think that I came to abolish the Torah or the Prophets! I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. Amen, I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or serif shall ever pass away from the Torah until all things come to pass.”

Each of the above false understandings can only be believed by one who rejects the Word of G-D as true—in other words, by calling G-D a liar.

One more example of someone denying Yeshua by rejecting the truth of G-D's Word is the belief that Israel has been replaced by the church. In this case, not only does one accuse G-D of being a liar, but they also are attacking those whom G-D loves, those with whom G-D said He had made an eternal covenant, both physically and spiritually, those whom G-D proclaims are His bride.

If you are a believer in Yeshua as the Messiah, then there was a time that you became a friend of G-D, or said another way, G-D accepted your friend request. However, if you believe any of the above examples or reject any other truth expressed within the Bible, then you may be guilty of denying Yeshua before men.

Please remember what Revelation 22:18-19 says about adding to or taking away from the Word of G-D:

“I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book. If anyone adds to them, God shall add to him the

plagues that are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his share in the Tree of Life and the Holy City, which are written in this book.”

While being unfriended on social media may be hurtful, being unfriended by G-D could be eternal. {eoa}

**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*.

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## **Richard Roberts Finds New Ways to Spark Miracles in Underdeveloped Countries**

Six years ago, at age 66, Richard Roberts heard from the Lord, who told him the days of Roberts' healing crusades were finished. It came as a shock to the healing evangelist, who spent a great deal of his life witnessing God's miracles and

wonders through those crusades.

Roberts, son of legendary evangelist Oral Roberts, asked God what that meant for him. What did He want Roberts to do next? After all, during his years as a minister he had laid hands on 25 U.S. presidents, prime ministers, and kings and queens around the world. He had preached in 45 nations.

With the technology available today, the answer was simple. Roberts, who has been on television and radio for decades, would reach the masses through other media he had not previously used, such as the internet and the podcast airwaves. One of those avenues is his [\*Expect a Miracle with Richard Roberts\*](#) podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. He was also counseled to put resources on electronic tablets and give them to pastors in nations who could not afford them.

“By that time, I had stepped down as president of Oral Roberts University, of which I had been president for 15 years,” Roberts told Dr. Steve Greene [\*on a recent episode of Greenelines\*](#) on the Charisma Podcast Network. “And the Lord said, ‘I want you to focus now on the pastors of underdeveloped nations, teaching them on healing in the Holy Spirit and to seek faith.’ We’re battling about how to do that now, how to go to these nations and be more effective than just going in for a few days and then going home.

“My wife and I were walking one night with staff members, and they said you need to put your entire school on a tablet and take all of the resources of the Oral Roberts Ministry all these years and put all of the audio, video and printed material on it,” Roberts said. “And you need to go to the nations of the earth and put those tablets as a seed into the hands of underdeveloped nations pastors where there is little to no internet.

“It got into my heart, and we’ve done that for a while now,” Roberts added. “I’ve been doing this in India, Africa, the

northernmost part of Canada. We're continuing to do it and get these tablets with some 20,000 pages of resources, plus hundreds of hours of audio and video and teaching the entire school. ... They've been completing these three-day seminars, and these ministers who are making \$50 a month are teaching Holy Spirit healing and seeking faith. Their churches are multiplying. They are exploding."

For more of this fascinating interview with Richard Roberts, [listen to the entire episode of the Greenelines podcast here](#), and [subscribe to Greenelines on your favorite podcast platform](#). And listen to [Expect a Miracle with Richard Roberts](#) on the Charisma Podcast Network. {eoa}

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## **Escaping Her Islamic Bloodline, Marie Muhammad Now Preaches the Gospel for Jesus**

Marie Muhammad is intimately familiar with overcoming the "shipwrecks" of life.

As the great granddaughter of Elijah Muhammad, the founder of the Nation of Islam, Marie became ostracized from her family when she shunned their religion to become a follower of Jesus Christ and receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit at age 17.

She endured an abusive and adulterous marriage, a heart-wrenching abortion and poverty. But the Holy Spirit never left

her side and [Muhammad is now serving the Lord](#) with fervor and determination. She preaches to others of similar circumstances to let them know that Jesus is the only way to salvation.

Muhammad also heads up a ministry called Ruth's Vineyard, which she says is a mission to serve young single mothers by providing educational support and resources. She's written a book called *Overcoming the Shipwrecks of Life on Broken Pieces*, published in 2020, and she's the host of the [Overcomers Podcast](#) on the Charisma Podcast Network.

Muhammad's book is a memoir based on Acts 27, in which the apostle Paul's ship endured a great storm on its way to Rome. It's a biblical story she clings to.

"Paul received prophetic words that no one was going to be lost during that storm," Muhammad told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on CPN. "Everything got destroyed, and they had to toss things overboard to end up making it, some of those on broken pieces.

"And that's how God led me to write my book, the situations that have caused me to become an overcomer. I've overcome many, many things in my life. I struggled with the spirit of murder and suicide. The enemy really wanted me, to take my life and my husband's, because he had gotten so bad. But God began to just draw me and draw me and draw me; and it was through His loving kindness and drawing me near to Him that He began to really deliver me.

"Not only did He begin to turn my heart, but He turned my heart to intercession," Muhammad continues. "God gave me two strategies: mercy and truth. I believed God for great favor and for things to be restored for my family. I believe in God for that favor, and the Word tells us in Proverbs 3 to bind mercy around our neck and to write it on the tables of our heart. If we do, we will find that favor."

For more of Marie Muhammad's fascinating story, listen to the

rest of this podcast. And don't forget to listen to [Muhammad's Overcomers podcast](#) on the Charisma Podcast Network. {eoa}

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## What Are Your Core Values in Life?

If you are not familiar with the phrase, let me explain to you exactly what a core value is.

Core values are the fundamental beliefs of a person. These guiding principles often dictate behavior and also help the person to understand the difference between right and wrong ... good and bad ... purposeful and wasteful ... valuable and worthless.

Your core values, when used as a moral map, can help determine whether or not you are on the right path in life.

So let me ask you again: What are your core values in life? Do you have any at all?

Now that I have explained what a core value is, let me give you an example.

I have a dear friend who loves adventure! The commitment to making life an adventure is one of her core values. She has climbed mountains, slept in tents in Africa and gone places

that cause my heart to race and my blood pressure to rise. I actually have nightmares about the things that are on this woman's bucket list!

But because she is an adventure junkie, she has accomplished missions that I would never even think about! She works in remote parts of Africa to empower rural women through microenterprise opportunities and the message of the gospel.

All because "adventure" is one of her core values in life.

Perhaps to a homeschool parent, "family" is one of his or her core values in life.

Compassion must be a core value of a doctor or health professional.

I wish integrity and truth were the core values of more politicians!

Thriftiness was a core value to my dad, who was raised during the Depression.

The value of a hearty laugh has always been a core value to my mom who was born during the Depression and lived through the terrifying days of World War II.

The veracity of Scripture and the eternal truth found therein must be a core value to a pastor or to a Bible teacher like me.

As I was contemplating my core values over the past few months, I realized that I have a core value that perhaps I have never before identified. This particular core value has been birthed in me in the battle zones of depression, cancer, infertility, financial challenges, personal rejection and praying for children who have left their faith.

Now, I am ready to state this core value in a bold and assertive manner. What is this newly recognized core value?

It is the importance of thanking God for the hard times in life. To praise Him in the fire. To worship Him in the storm. To stand and say, "I love You, Lord" at the very worst moment of your life.

*"In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which perishes though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory!" (I Pet. 1:6-8, NIV, author's emphasis).*

But let's go back to the beginning and allow me to explain how I got here, how I arrived at being able to sincerely express gratitude to the Lord for the hard times in life.

I try to be a grateful person.

I know the unseen yet rich power of simply having a thankful heart. I have always believed that being aware of one's blessings can turn a gray day into radiant sunshine. A grueling challenge into pure delight. An unwanted trial into rich joy.

I often count my blessings.

Food. Home. Family. Books to read. Clothes to wear. The laughter of children. Flowers blooming on my daily walk. My health. Sweet friends. My Bible. Open doors of ministry. Provision. A legacy of faith passed down to me through my heritage. My piano. The glorious changing of the season. A new grandbaby. The ability to travel. Raspberries.

And the list of undeserved blessings goes on and on and on.

However, as I have been contemplating my core value system, I

have been struck by the fact that some of my greatest blessings have come disguised as the most difficult events of my life. (I swallow hard even as I admit that lovely yet aching truth.) So let me say it again:

Some of my greatest blessings in life have come disguised as the most difficult events of my life.

On one hand that statement is filled with rare anguish as I gaze at the battle scars of my life. And yet, even pain stares back at me with all of the beauty of the sun stubbornly shining through a stained-glass window.

I have met the Lord in the hard moments of life, and for that I am profoundly and humbly grateful.

As I sit here writing, and contemplating not only my blessings but also that which has caused me unremitting trauma that lingers even to this day, I am thankful for the valleys in life, for the wretched storms—and for the fierce fires.

I am thankful for the “hard.”

And so, one of my newly identified core values is this: It is vitally important to pause and to thank the Lord for the difficult days in life.

We should never ignore the breathtaking surety that the hard stuff prepares us for the great stuff.

I am abundantly aware of the advantages and the sheer good that has come my way and I must—I simply must—thank God often for the good. But truthfully, I am perhaps more thankful for the disappointments, the pain and the challenges than for any blessing that has made my life easier.

I can say with certainty that it is possible to grow through what you go through in life.

Perhaps my life message is found in these words: “Lord, I am

grateful for the adversity I have experienced in life. I am a stronger, more vibrant woman because of it.”

“Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (James 1:2-4, NASB).

I will thank God in the fire. I will praise Him in the storm. I will worship in the valley.

“The defining choice to praise Him no matter what—and especially when life is at its worst—is a core value in my life.

“I have learned to kiss the wave that throws me upon the Rock of Ages.”—Charles Spurgeon {eoa}

**Carol McLeod** is an author and popular speaker at women’s conferences and retreats, where she teaches the Word of God with great joy and enthusiasm. Carol encourages and empowers women with passionate and practical biblical messages mixed with her own special brand of hope and humor. Carol has written 11 books, including *Significant*, *StormProof* and *Guide Your Mind*, *Guard Your Heart*, *Grace Your Tongue*. Her teaching DVD, *The Rooms of a Woman’s Heart* won the Telly Award, a prestigious industry award for excellence in religious programming.

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