

# Why This Is a Time for Believers to Stop, Listen and Pray Heaven's Strategies

I believe we have arrived at a wonderful time on the earth, founded and authored by our Father.

The living generations, you and I, are entering and have entered what I believe is a unique and exceptional historical moment led by our heavenly Father, one that will be chronicled as a turning point in world affairs. This is a time to experience astonishing kingdom momentum. It's not unprecedented because it's difficult to outshine Jesus coming to earth.

As the world churns around us, there is a deep rumbling from heaven calling us to pray. This is an undertone heard clearly if we listen from the inner man. To listen exclusively to the noise of media seems to be releasing fear and hopelessness, and we tend to miss the vibration of heaven's call in this season. This call to prayer is like a storm on the horizon.

From a distance it only looks like a small cloud, but for those who know what an approaching storm looks like, they know to prepare. They gather what's needed. COVID has given us this time of preparation and continues to give us the opportunity to gather our hearts to the Father and listen. That respite, a time of quiet and kingdom connect to draw near and listen—God will use all things for good. COVID itself is not good, of course, but he is using it. There's good coming from this time.

Many are talking about the problems our world is facing, but what if the Father is preparing and releasing a kingdom storm—of goodness? His kindness of repentance is being poured out on the world that millions upon millions of people turn

their hearts and lives to Jesus. He is releasing a kingdom storm that has been spoken about for 100 years. What if we are entering into a historic time of repentance? Repentance is not a negative declaration but a positive look to our future and the deepening relationship with a loving Father.

Now is the time as individuals and groups to agree with what the kingdom of God is saying—to stop, listen and pray heaven's strategies. Prayers are kingdom currency that God is investing in our present and our future. Those golden bowls of incense are being filled with your prayers, a sweet and powerful fragrance before the throne of God! What happens when those bowls overflow?

God has a plan that cuts through all the fear mongering, all the frustrations and concerns of our day. His kingdom rules and reigns. Even if we don't feel it. When times almost overwhelm us, we must fall back on the truth. The truth is the God of all the universe, Creator and lover of mankind is sovereign and has a plan. He is asking us to join Him as He releases kingdom strategies in prayer for us, for our world, for you.

What is the Father asking you to pray? Your prayers count. Your voice has influence in heaven that makes a difference in our world. Thanks for being part of the answer to our Father's sovereign plan.

Tune into this episode of *New Era Explorers* with Byron Easterling, titled Heaven's Vibration, on the Charisma Podcast Network. {eoa}

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# Rabbi Curt Landry Says This Kingdom Trait Is Missing From Much of the Church Today

Don't misunderstand Rabbi Curt Landry. He certainly is grateful for the remnant who are diligently serving God and trying to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world today.

But a big part of the church right now, he says, is missing something terribly—something he says it is going to need to thrive in the near future in a society gone mad. That kingdom character trait simply is wisdom.

“Wisdom is the X factor for the next 10 years. It must be a season of godly wisdom,” Landry told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network. “There are so many denominational theological filters that have separated people from a basic relationship with God the Father and what He is asking you to do.

“One of the reasons why people don't get their prayers answered is because of what they're asking God to do,” Landry says. “He's wanting you to do it by faith. And so, I think you have to really go back to the fact that God is the Creator. He created light; He said it was good. It separated us from the darkness. ... Then He created man, and He not only said it was good, but He said, ‘I am giving man dominion.’ Then, and you know the story, we get tempted at the garden, the tree of good and evil. ... And once they ate of it, they learned of it; they became evil. They weren't born evil.

“That's why when you're born again, you are a new creation,

and all things have been made new,” he says. “The Holy Spirit wants to renew you back to pre-garden. The second Adam wants to take back what the first Adam lost in the garden. But I think sometimes we try to do too much, and there is a co-dependent entitlement spirit that’s in the world, like somebody owes me something. We need to understand that Jesus paid it all on the cross.

“And with that said, He has given us power and authority to tread on snakes and scorpions and to destroy the works of the devil,” Landry says. “We need to understand that. I know people don’t like some of this stuff about dominion. But what happens is we have got to take the dominion of the blood of Jesus and the names of God back, and we have to start enforcing it. Not in protest, but enforce it in the prayer in the courts of heaven and say, ‘Father God, Your Word says, Your Word says, Your Word says.’ We have to get back to that place because we battle against the devil and his power and principalities, his heavenly hosts and dark places. Those who overcome him know that their power is like John the Baptist. We must become less in the flesh and more empowered in the Holy Spirit and speak his Word, and know that we will overcome every time.”

For more of Curt Landry’s interview with Dr. Greene, listen to the entire episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network. {eoa}

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# 3 Lessons We Can Learn From Prophetic 'Mistakes'

Many Christians are disappointed and others are disillusioned with some predictions concerning the 2020 presidential elections. Some people have said they have given up on listening to prophets.

However, I want to encourage them to not give up on hearing God for themselves.

Perhaps you are discouraged because you heard a trusted prophetic minister say your candidate was going to win the election. But it didn't pan out that way. There are other people still holding on to hope and believe wholeheartedly Trump is still the U.S. president. This is quite honestly a denial of the facts and can lead to delusion.

Joe Biden is president. And there are some prophetic ministers who predicted Trump would win apologizing and saying they "got it wrong." But there are still some prophets holding on to their word saying a miracle is on the way (and I have an upcoming discussion on this viewpoint on my podcast).

Tony Kim, the U.S. National Director of Harvest International Ministries, and I had a recent conversation where I asked, "Did the prophets get it wrong?" Speaking with wisdom, Tony said, "Some prophets did get it wrong, and some prophets got it right."

Kim said (and I paraphrase), "We need to understand the difference between the old covenant prophets and the new covenant prophets. There's a huge differential between the two. Old covenant prophets were known more for the accuracy

and the prediction of what was going to happen in current events, but if they got it wrong, they'd be dead. In the new covenant, I believe it is not so much about predictions as it is revealing the heartbeat of the Father: God's intent, God's will and the desire of His heart."

I said, "We both love and serve the prophetic community but there are some lessons we need to learn from this." A few lessons we can learn from this are:

1. **Know your metron.** This is your personal calling, anointing and measure or sphere of influence. My personal metron is to stay within personal prophecy and not the political realm unless God later opens the door and extends my metron. People need to know their measure or limits within the boundaries God gave them for prophetic ministry. But there is pressure to go beyond this as their audience asks and wants a word of hope and encouragement in areas they aren't necessarily called to speak into.
2. **Don't prophesy from your political persuasion.** God is not Republican nor Democrat. God is transcendent of our earthly politics. Kim said, "In my humble opinion many of the prophets have prophesied through a nationalistic filter. And when we prophesy through nationalism, it is a presumptuous way of prophesying."
3. **Passionately pursue God's presence.** We should not elevate the prophetic person nor should we pressure them to prophesy. Kim said, "We need to really hear the heartbeat of God and hear the voice of God before we speak."

It was a great conversation with Tony Kim which can help you navigate some of the questions you may be asking. Listen to this conversation of *Adventures in the Spirit with Jared Laskey* on Charisma, Apple, Spotify, Google and anywhere you listen to podcasts. And don't forget to share it with your

friends. {eoa}

*Jared Laskey, ., M.A. in Christian ministry, is the founder of Fireborn Ministries and host of the Adventures in the Spirit podcast. He lives to see Jesus awaken this generation to the power of the Holy Spirit. Jared loves teaching people how to hear God. He has recently published the Spirit-Empowered Journal, available on Amazon, and e-courses Entry Level Prophecy, The Last Days, Healing Warriors, the free Baptism with the Holy Spirit e-course and more on . His testimony of how God supernaturally healed him of PTSD is in Joan Hunter's book, Miracles for Veterans.*

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## **How the Revolutionary War Weakened the Gospel—and 13 Lessons for Today**

In recent years, we have witnessed the evangelical church's engagement in politics in unprecedented numbers. A few years ago, I read a poll that showed that most church attendees expect and desire their pastor to preach and guide them on important political and cultural issues.

At the beginning of our nation's history, Congress would often call in a preacher to exhort them as it related to a particular pressing political issue. They wanted to find out what the biblical position was before they voted. Biblically informed public policy decisions are vital because I don't believe we can or should separate our private faith from public policy.

Below are four progressive steps to how policies and laws emerge within any society:

The first is theology or religion. All laws are a reflection of a nation's religious culture.

The second is philosophy. The religious views of a nation eventually lead to asking the question, "How shall we now live?"

The third is political theory. Out of a corporate societal philosophy arises the framework for our laws and policies.

The fourth is the law. Public policies and laws eventually reflect a nation's morality, philosophy and ethos.

When the church abandoned culture in the late 19th century, it left a vacuum in the halls of power regarding religion as our Judeo/Christian foundation. This resulted in secular humanism and legal positivism, which became the foundation for our nation's philosophy, political theory and laws. This gradually fomented a few generations later and played itself out in the 1960's cultural revolution.

I believe the foundation for any blessed nation is the common law. The common law is rooted in the nature and character of God as expressed in the Ten Commandments.

However, suppose the church allows political engagement, ideology and party politics to dominate its narrative, (instead of finding equilibrium through biblical principles). In that case, it will weaken the ability of the church to preach the gospel. It will also alienate masses of people who perceive it as a political "power grab" by Christians.

It should be noted that the LGBTQ community spent a few decades creating a positive narrative and gaining significant influence in the entertainment industry, universities, the psychological fields and other important areas. They

implemented a bottom-up approach in their attempt to change the law regarding same-sex marriage.

Conversely, the church lost much of its influence in all these areas. The past generations focused primarily on politics. This top-down approach gave the impression to society that it was attempting to force Christian values on the nation.

This was bad branding for evangelicals and negatively impacted the Millennial and Gen Z generations.

Consequently, for the past 20 years, evangelicals have been lumped together with the conservative political movement. Additionally, they are not seen as being part of the cutting edge creative movement in music, art and entertainment. They are depicted as those who are not concerned about community empowerment and those who do not love their neighbors.

To make it worse, in recent days, I have heard from some pastors that it has been harder to preach the gospel because the population has been confused by the massive Christian support for former President Trump. They found it hard to reconcile how a bombastic, narcissistic and megalomaniac president was heralded by some Christians as someone worth supporting.

Of course, every Christian should vote according to their conscience and biblical values. In a two-party system, it's difficult to find an ideal candidate. The problem I am raising here is not voting or endorsing a candidate, but overtly identifying one's faith with a candidate or political party.

### **Contemporary Similarities to 1776**

In light of the Jan. 6 Capitol breach, many conservative Christians on the militant fringe were equating these days to the American Revolution of 1776. They believed the presidential election was stolen by systemic fraud, which to them is a greater infraction than that of King George of

England's actions against the American colonies in the 18th century.

The American Revolution was a mixture of political and religious zeal that greatly weakened the cause of Christ until the Second Great Awakening in the 1820s and beyond.

As I stated in a previous article, "Is America Really A Christian Nation?"

The revolution weakened the spiritual life of the churches. It increased secularization, as America's political ideals and activism virtually replaced church attendance and Christian theology, as well as a person's commitment to Christ. During that time, the belief was that if one was not on the side of the American patriots, he was accursed of God. According to some, the American Revolution became the guiding light for organizing churches, interpreting the Bible and expressing the Christian faith.

Consequently, American patriotism and the revolution's cause became more important than preaching the gospel. It also replaced Christian missions. Thus, the present-day connection between Christianity and engagement in politics is nothing new. It is easily noticeable by those versed in history.

The revolutionaries held to a political theory rooted in the English "Whig heritage" of the 17th and 18th centuries that focused on natural rights (similar to today's Libertarians). They distrusted unchecked power, whether by the King, Parliament or the state church. Unchecked and unrestrained power was the root of all political corruption. Does this sound familiar to some political discourse today?

Hence, when the British parliament proposed a stamp tax in 1763 and tea tax in 1773, it was perceived as an immoral grasp for power. The colonists thought "taxation without representation" was a violation of their view of liberty and freedom.

This, along with other issues, led to the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, which the British viewed as an act of war.

Whig ideology also brought together those contending for individual rights, like Calvinist dissenters influenced by Puritan covenant theology and freedom-loving deists.

This is similar to the contemporary marriage of non-Christian conservative republicans and evangelicals.

### **Sloppy Biblical Exegesis**

The bond between the Whigs and Christians greatly muddied the waters and hurt the gospel. For example, some preachers riled up patriots by likening Britain to the “Beast of Revelation” (see Rev. 13). In contrast, others quoted Scriptures that talked about God exalting America as a covenant nation (the New Israel), high above all the other nations (see Deut. 28:10-13).

Christian patriots used biblical imprecations against colonists who were still loyal to England. (Read Judg. 5:23 as an example of an imprecation.)

In recent months, I have witnessed some Christian conservatives attempting to pronounce biblical curses upon those they believe committed election fraud. One political leader in the church even inserted Trump’s name in place of King David in Psalm 5 while pleading with the Lord in prayer.

During the American Revolution, many preachers erroneously used the freedom passages in John 8:36, Galatians and Romans (referring to freedom from individual sin), to justify breaking away from England. Others believed the emergence of America as the “new Israel” would usher in the Millennium. Some likened the Revolutionary War to Christ (America) versus the anti-Christ (England).

Consequently, commitment to the Revolution was connected to allegiance to Jesus!

American freedom, in some respects, bordered upon idolatry.

Thus, religion and morality were mixed in with the will of the people and individual happiness. There was a failure to prioritize the will of God and His kingdom as Jesus instructed in Matthew 6:33.

Furthermore, when Christians depend explicitly on the state to discharge the duties of God entrusted to the church and family, the result will be Christian institutions' death.

Unfortunately, all of the above led to the secularization of both the church and the nation as political ideas and activism supplanted theology, gospel preaching and church attendance. As a result, by 1800, church attendance and deep spirituality (what theologian and revivalist Jonathon Edwards espoused), was at a low ebb. It took another Great Awakening through evangelist Charles Finney to revitalize the church and prioritize the gospel.

As we conclude this article, I believe we can learn at least 13 significant lessons as we compare the American Revolution to contemporary times.

### **13 Historical Lessons Learned**

1. America is not and never will be the kingdom of God.
2. We should never wrap the gospel with the flag of our nation or a political party.
3. Political activism should never replace our zeal for preaching the gospel.
4. The proper financial support of the church should never be compromised by political fundraising.
5. We should never depend upon the state to be that which God consigned to the church as the light of the world.
6. America never replaced the church as the "New Israel"

(Gal. 6:16, 1 Pet. 2:8-9).

7. We should never allow our church to function as an extension of our political party.
8. Those who voted for a candidate or party we did not support are not our enemies. (Christians have historically espoused divergent perspectives and voted differently from one another. The real enemy of our destiny is not flesh and blood but the dark powers that rule earthly kingdoms and mindsets (Eph.6:10-13).
9. Pastors should preach biblical principles that inform people rather than manipulate people to achieve a particular political result.
10. Christians should derive their identity from the kingdom of God, not their political party.
11. Disciple-making should focus more on theology than political ideology.
12. Political activism should be conducted through the lens of Scripture and for the love of neighbor.
13. The church should be primarily branded as Christ-followers, not followers of partisan politics.

May the Lord help us practice the habits of the heart as per the spiritual disciplines of fasting, prayer, Scripture reading and church participation. May these practices help us grow in discernment so that we can truly be the light of the world and salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13-16). {eoa}

*Purchase Joseph Mattera's latest book, The Jesus Principles, available now on Amazon here. {eoa}*

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# ICEJ USA Director Says Proof of the Bible Is Found in Its Honesty

The Bible is often portrayed by antagonists or secularists as mythology. But when I read the stories in the Bible, I find such gut-wrenching honesty that I am confident it is true.

For example, who would make up a story about ancestors as slaves in Egypt? If I were going to make up a story about my ancestors, I would make them kings and princes—not slaves!

Or if I were going to describe the lives of the patriarchs and founders of my faith, I would probably leave out stories like when Abram lies to Pharaoh that Sarai is his sister, and she is taken into the royal harem. Abraham, whose faith was accounted unto him as righteousness, did not trust God to protect his life and sent Sarai into the Pharaoh's harem?

The story of Jacob and Esau is so honest that Jacob's reputation has suffered centuries of sermons describing him as a supplanter and a deceiver. The father of the 12 tribes of Israel deceived his father in order to receive the blessing of the firstborn. Who would make something like that up?

It is actually the honesty of these stories that serves to encourage all of us. God knows our weaknesses, and He is not caught by surprise when we make a mistake. He was so much greater than the mistakes of Abraham or Jacob, and He is certainly greater than mine.

Join me each week as we *Walk Thru the Bible* and learn the life-changing stories and lessons of this amazing book. To

read along with me, download our Bible Reading Plan. {eoa}

**Dr. Susan Michael** is USA Director of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem and host of the Out of Zion podcast.

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## **Messianic Rabbi: The Gospel According to Esther**

Later this month, Jewish people around the world will be celebrating Purim, the Feast of Esther.

The book of Esther tells one of the most powerful stories about G-D's deliverance of His people that we read about in the Bible. Yet, most of the people who proclaim faith in G-D and believe the Bible is the Word of G-D choose not to celebrate Purim. Now, I know that many people who are a part of the body of Messiah see the Feast of Purim as a "Jewish Holiday."

But by looking at this feast in that light, believers in Yeshua as Messiah miss out on celebrating a feast that declares the Gospel, or the Good News, in a way that no other book of the Bible does. As a matter of fact, it can be argued that the book of Esther is the only book of the Bible that presents the complete gospel message within its pages.

Let me explain. There are many stories in the books of the Bible that share parts of the greater narrative of the Bible. Here are a few quick examples of the partial expressions of the greater narrative. In Genesis, we read that the Messiah would be born of a woman and that He would be Abraham's seed. Exodus tells the story of the Lamb of G-D whose blood saved His people.

The sacrificial system of Leviticus explains how the sacrifice of Yeshua could bring atonement. The prophets share glimpses of the promise of Messiah and the deliverance of Israel. Even the poetry of Psalms gives us insights into the promised redemption. But each of these books only share parts or aspects of the complete Good News.

Only the book of Esther holds within its pages the fullness of the Good News. That is because the Good News has two parts that work together in tandem. The Good News is not just about the salvation of the individual; it is also about the salvation of Israel. The book of Esther is the only book that shares the interwoven story of the redemption of the individual (in this case Esther) and the redemption of Israel.

Too often, today's Good News is focused completely on the individual. We are asked the questions "Are you saved?" or "What are you doing to help people get saved?" When was the last time you were asked "What are you doing to see Israel saved?" Let me clarify that while Israel is a country that has an eternal covenant with G-D, as believers in the New Covenant writings, we know Israel is much broader than just the nation—or even just the Jewish people.

In the book of Esther, we see both parts of the Good News displayed for all to see, woven together in such a way that without the redemption of Esther, there would not have been a redemption of Israel.

If any group of people should read the book of Esther and

celebrate the Feast of Esther, it should be the body of Messiah. However, I believe one of the reasons that it isn't celebrated is because most of the body of Messiah has focused so much on the redemption of the individual that they have lost the second half of the Good News, the redemption of Israel.

To understand this concept of the two halves of the Good News, open your Bible and read Romans 11. And when you complete the chapter, start making plans to celebrate Purim and rejoice in the Good News of Esther that Yeshua came to redeem people individually and corporately. {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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## **Prophecy: The Stepped Over**

# Will Now Step Up

I heard the Lord say, "Step Up. Step Up. Step Up." The Lord is encouraging some of you to step up, now, without delay.

This word is for those who are walking in humility with repentant hearts. This word is for those who seek the will of God first, not their own will. It is for those who are willing and who God has made able through the study of the Word.

"Step up" means it's time for some of you to come forward. Some of you have been hidden in a cave. You've been hidden in dark places, and it's time for you to step up, out and move forward. Maybe you've been hidden in the cave of persecution. Maybe you've been hidden in the cave of religion. But the Lord wants to bring you from religion to revelation—so It's time to step up, come forward and claim responsibility for the mandate on your life.

It's time to stop shirking your duty. It's time to shake off the fear. It's time to pursue your call. It's time to stop putting your commission aside to assist someone else while never fully doing what the Lord has called you to do. I heard the Lord say:

"It's great that you're helping other people fulfill their missions. That is what you should keep doing. But not at the expense or at the neglect of rising up and taking responsibility for the unique calling I've put on your life.

"For some of you, your calling is to be a helper. It is to be that intercessor. It is to be that prophet to the one. It is to be that counselor to the few. It is to be the teacher to the local body. But whatever it is that I've put in your heart in this season to do, it's time to step up and step into it. It's time to take a leap forward. It's time to step up and rise up."

Click here to read the rest of this word. {eoa}

**Jennifer LeClaire**, who formerly served as editor of Charisma magazine, is an internationally recognized author, apostolic-prophetic voice to her generation and conference speaker. She carries a reforming voice that inspires and challenges believers to pursue intimacy with God, cultivate their spiritual gifts and walk in the fullness of what God has called them to do. Jennifer is contending for awakening in the nations through intercession and spiritual warfare, strong apostolic preaching and practical prophetic teaching that equips the saints for the work of the ministry. Jennifer is 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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## **What Many Are Missing About the Gospel of Christ**

There exists a gospel that does not resemble that which was preached by Christ, the apostles or the early church. It goes something like this:

You were lost, dying and destined for hell because of sin.

Jesus came, took your punishment and gave His life on the cross, so you could be saved and go to heaven. If you believe this, you now have a choice between heaven and hell. If you ask for forgiveness and accept the free gift of salvation, you will receive Christ into your heart. You are now a Christian.

Sound familiar?

This gospel is often presented as a decision about what will happen when you die. Once you are saved, you have to make sure you stay saved (depending on the denomination you were converted under) because Jesus could return today, or you could die tonight. If you are a good Christian, you should help save others from hell too. The focus of this gospel is Christ as Savior. Whether you are in the wafers and wine or bread and juice club, sprinkled or dunked, the basic story is the same. So what's the problem?

The church has been reading the right book and telling the wrong story. The central theme of the Bible is not the redemption of man. It is the kingdom of God. It is the story of a King, His kingdom and His royal family from Genesis to Revelation.

The gospel preached throughout the New Testament was "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2). The motivation for repentance was the kingdom of God. This gospel is more concerned with fulfilling God's purpose for your life than your destination after death.

While many are waiting with their ticket to heaven, there is a kingdom to advance on the earth. Mankind did not fall from heaven; we fell from dominion.

I believe God is calling the church to rise up and reveal the kingdom that is "not in word, but in power" by walking in signs, wonders and miracles (1 Cor. 4:20). To do this, we must understand Jesus' response to Pilate. "You say correctly that I am a king. For this reason I was born, and for this reason I

came into the world” (John 18:37).

For more about our discussion on the kingdom of God, tune into the *Envoy Podcast* episode titled *Living a Life of Signs, Wonders and Miracles* on the Charisma Podcast Network. {eoa}

**HG Strickland** has planted churches, launched ministries, and has raised up leaders across denominational lines for the past 25 years. In fulfilling that call, God has taken him far beyond traditional ministry and church leadership to lead charities, foundations, businesses, and even train government leaders on Capitol Hill to operate in their identity and purpose. HG currently serves as a founding pastor of Kingdom Life Ministries DC, a church planted a couple of blocks from the White House. Learn more about Envoy at .

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## 5 Time Principles to Seize Your Day

An ancient mariner proverb states, “Time and tides wait for no man.”

Simply put, time continues to move on, and the opportunities in this life can be limited. For saltwater fishermen, favorable tides mean opportunity. Farmers understand this concept as well with seasons—planting and harvesting.

For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven. ... A time to plant and a time to harvest” (Eccl.

3:1-2, NLT).

Be discerning with the seasons of your life and our moment as a society, but do not be so cautious that you fail to plant for a future harvest.

1. **Invest time according to God's will.** We can be busy without accomplishing what God intends for us if we don't know His will. Our time then is spent unwisely. Paul gives a basic foundational truth in Romans 12:2 about knowing the will of God:

“Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.” (See also 2 Cor. 3:18.)

The English word transform is from the Greek word *metamorphoō* from which the English word metamorphosis is also derived. The word means to change the essential form or nature of something. Through our union with Christ in the Spirit, our essential form and nature has—and is—being changed. We therefore have the potential to live now from the understanding of God's will and purpose.

If we are copying the behavior and customs of this world, we won't know the will of God for our lives. Rather, we need to allow the Holy Spirit to change our thinking to align with God's Word and nature. Then, we begin to understand His will for our lives.

So, what should have the greatest effect on our thinking? The news media or secular teachers? Or should it be God's ways as revealed in Scripture? What God is saying should be the baseline of our thinking.

In other words, you must guard your heart and mind (see Prov. 4:23) to ensure that you don't squander time in wrong pursuits. God wants to do the “exceedingly above all that we

ask or think" (Eph. 3:20, RGT) in your life as you embrace His revealed will.

- 2. Invest time in the lives of others.** We are to be imitators of God. God is love; God is kind. It is easy to lose sight of the value of love and relationships. We must invest time into love and relationships.

Jesus said it was more blessed to give than to receive. Marriages, families, friendships and business relationships ... Pouring our time into kingdom relationships that build people and expand the kingdom leaves a legacy.

We also must be intentional to invest time into the lives of our children—we build in them expectation for the future. Hope is one of our greatest gifts we can give them or succeeding generations.

- 3. Invest time for today.** Jesus said, "So don't worry about tomorrow. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matt. 6:34a, ERV). Focus on today. Ask the Lord daily where your concentration needs to be for the day. Sometimes God will redirect.

What season are you in? An important question to ask and understand. Yet, understand there is never the perfect moment or timing. Remember Nehemiah and the rebuilding of the wall? He sensed a moment, a divine invitation, yet naturally everything seemed contrary.

Building our new church sanctuary a few years ago—in the natural, it wasn't the right time. Most worthwhile endeavors are always challenging with obstacles. Be discerning, but act today on what God reveals.

The sons of Issachar understood the times they were in (1 Chron. 12:32). Conversely, Jerusalem didn't know her moment. Jesus said of Jerusalem, "you did not recognize the time of your [Messiah's] visitation" (Luke 19:44, NASB).

4. **Invest time for your future.** Realize that your tomorrow begins today. Life is a journey, but we must also realize that what we do today affects our tomorrow.

Have you noticed that you never stop learning in this life? Commit yourself to be open to daily growing in the Lord. Get education, get training, ask God how you can better prepare for what He has called you to or what He is bringing you into. Be intentional with your time today as you are investing into your tomorrow.

I was inspired five years ago while visiting the Key West home of 20th-century author Ernest Hemingway. I was impacted when I learned during the visit that in an 8-year span, he wrote nearly 70% of his work. He wrote daily from 6 a.m. through noon, 600-700 words a day. Later he won a Pulitzer Prize for the *Old Man and the Sea* in 1952, and in 1954 awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. As I peered into his office where he did much writing, I was challenged by the Lord to write consistently and intentionally.

5. **Invest time for eternity.** All of us are eternal beings who one day will depart from this earthly realm. Sow your life into eternal pursuits for God's kingdom.

Invest your life in the lives of others' eternal fruit. The Bible says, "he who wins souls is wise" (Prov. 11:20b, MEV). Ask yourself, "What time am I investing for God's kingdom and eternity?" Remember, we are spiritual beings having a temporary human experience!

## **Last Thoughts**

*Carpe diem*—Seize the day! Your time and life matter; God has created you with your future in mind—live today as though it mattered.

Don't just let your days slip away, but ask God how you can better invest your time to fulfill your purpose and calling.

Ask God to empower you to live in the fullness of each day He gives you! {eoa}

**Bob Sawvelle** is the founding and senior leader of Passion Church in Tucson, Arizona. Passion Church is a vibrant, kingdom-minded church in the heart of Tucson that values God's love and presence. He is a doctor of ministry doctoral mentor for the Randy Clark Scholars cohort at United Theological Seminary, an adjunct professor teaching master's-level classes in evangelism, discipleship and church planting with the Global Awakening Theological Seminary and an online course facilitator for Global Awakening's Christian Healing Certification Program and Christian Prophetic Certification Program.

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## **Do You Ever Feel Like Life Is Harder Than It Should Be?**

We all have bad days here and there. But every once in a while, tragedy may strike.

It may be in a loss of income, a broken relationship, or the death of a loved one. It can be so bad it causes us to question whether God is with us or not. Is the Christian life really what I had expected it to be?

I always turn to God's Word at times like those, and there I find such encouragement. I am truly not alone, and I realize all of God's saints had troubles and questions similar to mine.

A perfect example of hardship can be found in the life of Abraham. God told Abraham that if he followed Him to a particular land, he would birth a great nation. So he packed up and followed the Lord to a place called Bethel, and there God told Him this was the land his descendants would inherit—the land of Canaan.

The first problem Abraham encountered was a famine in the land God had promised to him. Famine? Really? It was so bad Abraham had to leave the promised land and go to Egypt for food. God had not called Abraham to an easy land or life but to a land in which Abraham would have to depend upon God.

His grandson, Jacob, would also face a severe famine, and he, too, would have to go to Egypt for food. God was not caught by surprise by the famine. In fact, he had seen it coming some 20 years earlier and placed Joseph in a position of authority in Egypt to save Jacob and his family lineage, and thereby God's plans and purposes for them.

Life in the land can be seen as a foreshadowing of our life in Christ. Many wonderful things are promised to us in that land. But we often encounter difficulties.

Don't be dismayed. Know that God has provided all you need, and He will complete and perfect that which He began in you.

For more encouragement from God's Word, join me on our *Walk Thru the Bible* series. Join me today by downloading our Bible Reading Plan, and get started reading right away! Invite your friends and family to join us! I can't wait to *Walk Thru the Bible* with you! {eoa}

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