

Contrasting the Kingdom of God and Christian Nationalism, Part 2

Last week, I began to address the contrast the issue of the kingdom of God and Christian nationalism. During the past several months, there has been much talk and concern regarding the latter.

I provided five ways to make the contrast. Here are four more:

- 6. The kingdom of God views the world with a biblical lens. Nationalism views the world with a geo/political lens.** As Christians, we are called to interpret national politics through the lens of Scripture. Unfortunately, nationalists interpret the Bible through the lens of their political and national identity. This interpretation skews the way they treat people who do not politically identify with them. Thus, for nationalists, they have a narrow view of the Bible. They highlight only biblical passages that back up their ideology while ignoring the rest of Scripture that they may deem to be “uninteresting.”
- 7. The kingdom of God is dependent upon neither an earthly kingdom nor an earthly ruler. Nationalism is dependent upon both the ideology of a nation and its ruler.** Some Christian nationalists act as though their choice for a leader (president or prime minister, for example) is some Messianic figure that their nation depends upon to rescue it from the hands of evil people. While God does command us to pray for our rulers, the main focus is so there can be peace. This peace is to pave the way for the gospel to go forth so people can be saved (1 Tim. 2:1-5). In the case of the United States, no matter who ultimately gets elected as president, the nation will be

in trouble unless the church passionately seeks God for an awakening. An awakening will be the only thing that will transform our ethos.

Conservative Christians may correctly assume that a Trump presidency must maintain religious liberty for churches and Christian-owned businesses. However, what good is this liberty if Christians are not passionate about utilizing their freedom to share the gospel? The church is growing exponentially in many nations where Christ-followers are being persecuted (nations such as China, Iran, North Korea, Nigeria, Sudan and India).

To quote the Lord Jesus, “My kingdom is not of this world [nor does it have its origin in this world]” (John 18:36a. AMP).

8. Followers of the kingdom of God are passionate about a Christ-centered global awakening. Adherents of nationalism are passionate about an ideological awakening. I have observed that even politically active Christians can be kingdom centered, even while they are campaigning for a leader or a cause. It is okay to be passionate about politics, policy, and the economy for the sake of our country’s well-being. For example, some Christ-followers express their commitment to the kingdom through their assignment in politics in the same way a plumber can be committed to the kingdom while fixing pipes.

That being said, there is indeed a fine line in discerning the difference between passionately loving our country (which has more to do with being a patriot committed to the good of their nation) and an unhealthy expression of nationalism. (Nationalism is blind to everything else except reclaiming national greatness. It is dispassionate about advancing the gospel.)

Consequently, even a Christian activist should have as their

primary goal a spiritual awakening that will transform millions of hearts from the inside out.

9. Christ followers are primarily identified with the kingdom of God. Nationalists mostly derive their identity from their nation. Christ-followers are called to derive their primary identity from their sonship with the Father (Rom. 8:14-17). This makes them a partaker of the kingdom, out of which they live and move and have their being (Acts 17:28; Col. 1:13). This is different from those who wrap the gospel with the flag of their nation. It gives the impression that their primary identity is derived from their country, not the kingdom. Christian nationalists are obsessed with the political causes they think will bring Christian utopia to their country. They rarely talk about Scripture unless connected to a particular reason like justice, abortion or the family.

This contrasts with the great commandment that tells us to “love the Lord with all of our heart, mind, soul and strength”. Although the second commandment to love our neighbor can fit in the construct of political engagement, it is still second to being passionate about God (Mal. 3:16-18, Matt. 22:37-40).

May the church put His kingdom and His righteousness first so that God can trust believers, who genuinely represent His heart to the world, to be the gatekeepers of culture. {eoa}

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 renown for applying Scripture to contemporary culture. To order his books

or to join the many thousands who subscribe to his newsletter go to .

Will You Boldly Join a Battle That Is Intensifying by the Moment?

Friends, we are living in perilous times. We need Jesus like we need air. There is a great awakening happening.

Sadly, however, many people will not make it through this season. They are so conditioned and manipulated by the world that they have been fooled. They will stay stuck in religious boxes and legalistic ideas.

Fear has run rampant, and many of us have put our heads in the sand, hoping that we can just ignore what is happening. We need to wake up and be bold in this season. This is not a season to stay silent or stay in the camp.

We are in a serious spiritual battle. It requires warriors.

We must speak forth truth; we must be kingdom-minded in this hour. We need to be bold for our faith and willing to be crucified by the world and other believers for it. Jesus came as both the Lion and the Lamb. This hour in time requires the Lion.

We are in a season of courage, strength, boldness, tenacity and grit. This is a season to let out your roar and let your voice be heard. This is not a season to pray only. This season requires putting your faith to action. This season requires boots on the ground! This season requires hardcore intercession and picking up your sword.

No more playing church, saints.

Our lives and future generations are depending on us to do our part!

Get up. Gear up. Speak Up.

Take your place—it is time to be bold as lions. It is time to make war on the enemy's camp and take back all that he has stolen.

It's time to rise up, mighty men and women of God! It's time to rise. Where are the warriors who will fight for our nation? Fight for our faith? Fight for our freedoms?

If not us then who?

Do it afraid. The Lord is with you.

I challenge you to join the battle because we win the war. Are you battle ready? (See Eph. 6:10-18.)

Check out my podcast *Voices of Hope* to be filled with hope and courage in this hour. {eoa}

Gypsy Dallas Smith is called to the mountain of media. She and her husband, Daryl, are the founders of Born 2 Inspire Life, a Christian media ministry that broadcasts *Voices of Hope*. She is an ordained minister through Summit Bible College and holds the position of prophetic program & leadership director as well as instructor. Visit her website at .

Why the Church Must Pray and Be the Light

Note: This is the second of a two-part series. For part one, [click here](#).

Peter and the early church understood that Jesus came preaching the gospel of the kingdom, the Good News that God's reign and dominion were upon them. The whole of the preaching of Jesus and His apostles concerned the kingdom of God. All that they taught was in the context of the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven. In Matthew's Gospel, nearly 52 times either the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven is used.

Yet Jesus only mentions the word "church" twice in all the Gospels. Except for these two cases, He always talked about the kingdom of God.

The first occurrence is in Matthew 16:18: "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."

The second occurrence is in Matthew 18:17 and references a sinning brother: "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector."

In both cases, the Greek word used for church is *ecclesia* which means "a calling out, a popular meeting, especially a religious congregation (Jewish synagogue, or Christian community of members on earth or saints in heaven or both)." Some of the first uses of the word were in Greek culture for citizens who were "called out" to serve in the senate. They were to help rule and legislate the affairs of the nation.

Therefore, the church, as God's called-out ones, are not only to preach the gospel and make disciples in all the nations, but we are to help "legislate" heaven's affairs on earth. For example, Jesus demonstrated the superiority of God's kingdom by healing the sick and working miracles. He was bringing the domain of God's kingdom and rule to earth by driving out sickness, disease and demons.

The kingdom of God and the church are inseparably linked. The church is not the fullness of God's kingdom, but it is an important representation.

The church is the spiritual body of Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit to relate and function as united to Jesus and to each other. God's kingdom manifests through our lives individually and corporately and is best understood through our involvement with a local church.

The church is not an afterthought with God; the church isn't His "Plan B." Rather, the church, as Christ's body, represents God's nature, authority and family here on earth. We experience "heaven on earth" through family. This may seem the opposite of your natural family or prior church family experience, but this is God's intent.

Peter would write some 30 years after Jesus' resurrection and Pentecost in 1 Pet. 2:4-10 that we are "living stones," being built up together in Christ, who is our chief cornerstone. In verse 9 he writes, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may declare the goodness of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

The English word chosen is from the Greek *eklektos*, which shares a similar root word with *ecclesia*, and means "to pick one out from among the larger group for special service or privileges." It denotes believers as recipients of God's favor and called to service. Once again, the church, and individual

believers, are called-out ones to be part of God's family representatives of His kingdom to bring heaven's domain (rule) here in our earthly realm.

The New Testament teaches that genuine Christianity involves two things: 1) being in union with the person of Christ and 2) being in fellowship with the body of Christ, the church. (See Ephesians, which could be aptly titled "Christ and the church.")

Dale Moody stated, "Christianity is a community of faith centered around the person of Christ." Jesus stated clearly that He would build this community, and the powers of darkness would retreat as His church advances in the authority of His name and Word.

The early church understood the value and necessity of staying united and in community with each other.

When persecution arose against them, they prevailed in faith and prayer until heaven broke through. In Acts 12:1-19, we read of Herod's persecution against the church. He had James executed and observing the pleasure of the Jews, Herod imprisoned Peter, planning to also execute him. But verse 5 states, "So Peter was kept in prison. But the church prayed to God without ceasing for him."

As a result, the Lord sent an angel to deliver Peter from the prison and led him out through the gates of the city. What a miraculous deliverance for Peter and the early church! The angel told Peter to "Rise up, quickly" (Acts 12:7) and as he did, the chains fell off his hands.

Church in America, it is time to rise up quickly; the chains will fall off! We must join in united, earnest and constant prayer right now for our nation.

As I said last week, whether you are a Democrat, Republican, or Independent, our civil and religious liberties are at

stake. We must always contend for truth, and we must pray for God's mercy on our nation.

God has empowered us for this purpose. We are called to be His light in a dark world. He is refining His people, His chosen generation, to live righteously in our generation. We can make a difference, so pray like your prayers make a difference.

If you do not have my book, *Our Eyes are On You: Principles to Prevail in Faith and Prayer*, I encourage you to get a copy. It is a very timely book. We need to pray with confidence and deep faith in this season.

In Mark 9:23, "Jesus said, 'If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.'" Believe in His authority in your life and in His church, not to lord over others but to stand against the schemes of the evil one for our families, His church and all of humanity.

Rise up quickly, church in America! {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*.

Messianic Rabbi: This Is the Answer to Our Current Political Upheaval

As I look around the world today, I am sure I am not the first one to see similarities between what is taking place in the USA and what we read about the children of Israel who were in Egypt. Just think about the USA with all of its faults and imperfections that exist because we are a country made up of imperfect people.

The nation was started by men and women who held to biblical values with the intention of starting a nation based upon biblical principles. But it seems that we now have many leaders who “know not Joseph.” These are leaders who do not seem to remember why our nation has not only survived but prospered to become one of the most blessed nations in history.

As we begin, let’s take a deeper look at the first chapter of Exodus and what we can learn from these words. The children of Israel were in Egypt and were prospering by every metric of success—so much so that the Egyptians began to fear being defeated by the Israelites. In truth, this is what we have been experiencing over the past few years in the USA. For the last few years especially, believers in our nation have been prospering.

Pro-life, pro-family and pro-faith legislation has been passed, and we as believers have prospered in many ways. Yet, our prosperity became a threat to the leaders of “Egypt.” So, to make sure people of faith do not become the majority, the

“Egyptians” began to add burdens to our lives. Politicians began to push for laws that violated our biblical values, especially over the past year during COVID-19 when these leaders deemed religious observance as non-essential.

But, before we begin to lay all of the blame for our country’s problems on our political leaders, I want us to look at a couple of things.

First, while the children of Israel were prospering in many ways, they were not impacting the Egyptians with their faith. We do not read about the Egyptian leaders being concerned about Egyptians becoming like the Israelites. Just read Exodus 1:9-10 (TLV):

“He said to his people, ‘Look, the people of Bnei-Yisrael are too numerous and too powerful for us. Come, we must deal shrewdly with them, or else they will grow even more numerous, so that if war breaks out, they may join our enemies, fight against us, and then escape from the land.’”

The Egyptian leaders were not concerned that the Israelites would affect the Egyptians. They were only concerned that the Israelites might join with their enemy to fight against them.

Second, the Israelites had become so comfortable in Egypt that even after the Egyptians began to add burdens to their lives they chose to remain in Egypt, as we read in Exodus 1:11-14:

“So they set slave masters over them to afflict them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Raamses as storage cities for Pharaoh. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread. So the Egyptians dreaded the presence of Bnei-Yisrael. They worked them harshly, and made their lives bitter with hard labor with mortar and brick, doing all sorts of work in the fields. In all their labors they worked them with cruelty.”

As we read on, we find that while the cruelty was pressing on,

the Israelites continue to have children and grow in number. So, the Pharaoh instructs for all of the male babies born to Israelites be killed. What a horrible thing the murder of innocent children is! This whole story is tragic as we read about the slavery of Israel and, ultimately, their freedom from slavery, which brings the destruction of Egypt.

So, if we are seeing that the USA is in a similar situation to the children of Israel in Egypt, what can we learn from them, and what can we do to change things before the slavery and ultimate destruction comes? The answer is simple: unlike the children of Israel who prospered without affecting the Egyptians, we need to make every effort not only to have children physically (grow our congregation from within), but we need to become active in bringing forth children into the kingdom while among the "Egyptians."

Yes, I believe we still have time to change our nation, but we won't do so primarily through political means. We need to increase our efforts to share the message of Yeshua (Jesus). We need to pray until the Egyptians become grafted into the Israelites. Just imagine if every politician was to become a true and real follower of Yeshua today!

What would happen if they all suddenly remembered Joseph? Everything would change because they would no longer fear us, and we would no longer fear them. Instead, we would all fear G-D together. {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*.

How God's Grace Miraculously Turned the 'Straw Man' Into a Kingdom Warrior

Darryl Strawberry knows all about God's grace and turning things around. During and after a stellar Major League Baseball career in which he helped two teams win a total of four World Series titles and hit 335 homeruns, Strawberry endured drug addiction, marriage challenges, prison time and battles with cancer.

Now a pastor and preacher of God's Word, Strawberry wants to remind you that, no matter what has transpired in your own life, God can renew you and that you can overcome anything—that God can turn things around for you if only you ask for forgiveness and surrender your life to him.

He's living proof there is redemption in Jesus Christ.

"My baseball career was set up because I was broken inside, because of the rejection on my life from my father, who was an alcoholic," Strawberry told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network. "The platform of who I was, God would eventually use that for His glory.

"I was broken. Brokenness is real. Lawlessness brings about brokenness. The pain of who I was led me to greatness, but it would also eventually lead me into a destructive behavior because I didn't get well. The wounds and the scars are real, and the pain was real. The great thing is that I eventually ended up leading my father to the Lord.

“I think a lot of people don’t realize that God uses every piece of our life—the broken pieces, the good pieces—to turn it around for His good. We’re still not good enough until we find Him. All that I went through, it was right for a time such as this, just so I could help that young man across the street. Everything God does for us is so that we can impact others and change the world. I’m just glad that God was able to find me and my broken pieces at the worst time of my life and then call me and qualify me and equip me to put me in the pulpit. It’s incredible how good God really is when people understand.”

And now, at 58, Strawberry travels the world with his wife, Tracy, preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ while teaching those who will listen how to navigate many of life’s most difficult challenges.

For more of how God miraculously turned Strawberry’s life around, listen to the rest of this *Greenelines* podcast here and be sure to subscribe for more stories like this. {eoa}

Three-Cancer Survivor Says You Can Shake the 2020 Blues with the Power of 3

The year 2020—fraught with chaos and confusion on many levels—brought adversity into the lives of millions of people. Whether it was financial, relational or simply the challenges of daily existence, many, including Christians, responded with habitual knee-jerk reactions that held them back.

But Robb Hiller, CEO of Performance SolutionsMN Inc. in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, says things can change drastically when you ask the right questions, are able to activate your God-given gifts and talents and can develop advocates, connecting your faith with your family and friends.

A cancer survivor, Hiller calls it “The Power of 3,” and as a coach, he has assessed more than 24,000 people in the past 25 years, including many Fortune 500 executives.

“If you do all of those three, something powerful happens,” Hiller told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of Greenelines on the Charisma Podcast Network. “If you take a triangle and look at it from a geometric standpoint, in trigonometry, it’s the strongest shape known to man.

“The principle is, the triangle is very strong and has equal forces coming together. If you walked in a house, you have a floor truss and a roof truss. Pyramids were triangles done many thousands of years ago, so the principle is there. The most important principle was 2,000 years ago, was the concept of the Trinity. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is a triangle. ...

“We all face adversity—in some ways the same, in some ways differently, depending on where we are in our walk with the Lord, our faith and our experiences. So, everyone responds a little differently. When you activate and stay in your natural gifts, you will make three times the progress you normally would. That happened for me. The one thing I really did was I followed the power of three.”

For more about Robb Hiller’s incredible story and the Power of 3, listen to the entire podcast. {eoa}

Contrasting the Kingdom of God and Christian Nationalism

During the past several months, there has been much talk and concern regarding Christian nationalism.

There is a fine line, an almost indiscernible line, between Christian nationalism and patriotism.

I am willing to die for my nation. I believe the United States of America is the greatest nation on the earth despite all its flaws and sins. Hence, I am a patriot. I support our right to have a strong military, and I believe God had a special plan for the nation from its very inception. I would love to see the United States build its laws upon the Scriptures' standard of morality and justice. I am strongly pro-life and pro-biblical marriage. I also advance a biblical worldview in many of my teachings.

These beliefs do not make me a Christian nationalist.

I am more committed to advancing the Gospel of the kingdom of God than a set of policies of a particular political party. While being a patriot is a noble thing, it's more important for a person to be "born from above" and become part of the kingdom of God (see John 3:3-8). I am first a Christian, secondarily an American. As a Christ-follower, I am a citizen of the world; my concern is global. I desire for God's kingdom to influence every nation, not just the United States.

In the context of this article, most of the recent concerns about the rise of Christian nationalism are coming from the radical Left. This is primarily because most evangelicals support President Trump's policies. The radical Left utilizes

a lens of interpretation skewed against anything for what conservative evangelicals stand. However, there are also important concerns coming from conservative evangelicals. Joel McDurmon criticized Trump supporters for desiring top-down power and control. Although I thought the article in which Joel criticized Trump raised some crucial issues, Joel failed to mention that it is the radical Left themselves who seek top-down control. It is the Left themselves who promote laws and celebrate court decisions that most Americans would never vote for (such as those related to abortion and gay marriage).

Some in the body of Christ have done an excellent job addressing Christian nationalism.

The purpose of this article is to further clarify the issue by contrasting the kingdom of God from Christian nationalism.

1. **The kingdom of God focuses on the advancement of the gospel.** Nationalism focuses on the advancement of the politics of the nation. As much as I believe politics and economics are vital and, to an extent, can represent biblical ethics, I am much more committed to making disciples and seeing humanity change. (It is also possible for a committed Christian to be a faithful witness for Jesus while serving in public life as an elected official.) For me, anything that potentially distracts my energy and focus away from advancing the Gospel takes a backseat in my personal life and ministry.
2. **The kingdom of God produces loyalty to Christ above all else.** Nationalism produces loyalty to the nation above all else.

I have studied the behavior and writings of Christians for many years. In some cases, I have concluded that some Christians are more committed to their nation and ethnic heritage than they are to God. The kingdom of God transcends

all nations and ethnic identities (see).

In the mid-20th century, we witnessed Christian nationalists turn a blind eye to the 3rd Reich when most of the German churches aligned themselves with Hitler. If it happened once, it can and will continue to happen again, especially to a non-discerning church.

3. The kingdom of God produces martyrs for the cause of Christ. Nationalism produces citizens who are willing to die for their nation.

Although I am willing to defend my neighbor and die for my nation, I believe the greatest honor is to die for the sake of Christ and His kingdom. (Some may argue that I am a better citizen not because I am willing to die for my nation but because of my faith in God.) Hence, it has to do with motive, not merely actions.

4. The kingdom of God raises the banner of Jesus above all else. Nationalism raises the national flag above all else.

During this acerbic political season, I have witnessed Christians fighting on social media, becoming irate and condescending towards those with a different political view. (Consequently, Christians are jeopardizing the eternity of unbelievers who may be the recipients of their political rants!)

We are called to walk in the ideals set forth by Jesus in the "Sermon on the Mount" and aspire to represent His kingdom. We must be the "salt of the earth and light of the world" (see Matt. 5-7).

5. The kingdom of God promotes the interests of God above the world. Nationalism promotes the interests of the nation above the kingdom.

In the Old Testament, we have seen many times that prophets

like Jeremiah, Amos, Jonah, Isaiah, Elijah and more, declared words from the Lord that were not always good for Israel. They risked their lives because their first allegiance was to His kingdom rather than the nation of Israel. Jesus even corrected Peter because he was more interested in the things of men rather than the things of God (Mark 8:33). Consequently, we in the kingdom of God should have our essential allegiance to Christ and His gospel, even if it does not comport with our nation's rank and file and the policies they espouse. {eoa}

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 renown for applying Scripture to contemporary culture. To order his books or to join the many thousands who subscribe to his newsletter go to .

Marilyn Hickey Says God Has Great Plans for You in 2021

The year 2020 was one filled with uncertainty, but it was also a year of great opportunity. In February, Marilyn traveled to Bangladesh, the poorest country in the world. At a healing meeting with 30,000, she prayed for the sick and saw 18,000

people get saved. While there, she also held a youth conference and ministry training school. Sarah also had a productive year, writing two books and starting a ministry. She learned that God has cures for quarantine. In these challenging times, we don't have to look down—we can look up and believe God to do wonderful things. Make great and mighty plans for 2021!

God never creates anything without purpose, and you are not an accident. Today, people are frustrated, suicidal and unfilled because of a lack of purpose. But when you are busy with God's purposes, you will be fulfilled and satisfied. Guillermo Maldonado's book, *Created for Purpose*, explains that we must be anointed to fulfill our purpose in life and be supernaturally empowered with divine ability to do the impossible. God has ordained for you to live in time and have seasons while on Earth. But you will not enter your season—a time of supernatural favor—without knowing God's purpose for your life.

During stressful times, it's important to put the Word of God into our minds, and properly care for our bodies. Dr. Bob DeMaria joins Marilyn and Sarah to share wisdom on how to safeguard our health. By making good choices in your daily diet and avoiding sugar, you can improve your health: spirit, soul and body. Dr. Bob's books *Guide to Optimal Health* and *1 Minute a Day to a Healthier You* will teach you what foods to avoid and how a proper diet can create optimal mental, physical and emotional health. {eoa}

If You Really Messed Up, Read This Prophetic Word

I heard the Lord say, "Do over." God is encouraging us to tap into divine do overs in this season. Make no mistake, divine do overs are always available, and God is more than willing to dish them out.

I prayed through this on my *Mornings With the Holy Spirit* prayer broadcast, but I wanted to break it down a little more here.

A do over is a new attempt or opportunity to do something after a previous attempt has been unsuccessful or unsatisfactory. Think about that. You tried something, and it failed. Or you tried something, and it didn't bear much fruit. Maybe you tried something, and it didn't just fail but backfired in your face. Or you tried something, and on the point of breakthrough you met with disappointment.

Make no mistake, divine do overs are always available, and God is more than willing to dish them out.

Maybe you got ahead of God and birthed an Ishmael. Maybe you caved in to Jezebel's intimidation and hid in a cave. Maybe you didn't run to the battle line to take down that Goliath, and now he and his brothers are coming back to haunt you. The divine do over belongs to you.

Maybe you backslid. Maybe you're prodigal. Maybe you just got divorced. Maybe your spouse abandoned you. Whatever you've done and whatever has happened to you, God is the God of second chances, third chances and newness of life. The divine do over belongs to you.

[Click here to read the rest of this article.](#) {eoa}

Jennifer LeClaire 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, FL, founder of the Ignite Network and founder of the Awakening Prayer Hubs prayer movement.

10 Signs You Might Be a Pharisee

What is the possibility that you could be a Pharisee? What are the signs—or warning signals?

I list 10 below, though there are many more. But these are a good start.

Chances Are You Are a Pharisee If

- 1. You love to point the finger.** The devil is a master at this; that's why he is called "the accuser" (Rev. 12:10, ESV). You must choose whether you want to play the devil and point the finger, or be Jesus, who lets us save face. Jesus actually gives us a selfish motivation for

not pointing the finger. "Do not judge, and you will not be judged" (Luke 6:37, NIV).

2. **You are good at sending people on a guilt trip.** The Pharisees tried to do a "Gotcha!" again and again because of the fact that Jesus performed miracles on the Sabbath and allowed other things to be done on the Sabbath that seemed to go against the Law. For example, when His disciples were hungry on the Sabbath and plucked heads of grain and began to eat, the Pharisees seized the moment to condemn both Jesus and His disciples.

The Law invariably finds people guilty. When you have interpretations of the Law that exceed the Law—or rules of your own you think are valid—it increases the occasions for placing blame. Are you good at giving a person a guilt trip? Do you like making people feel guilty? Chances are you might be a Pharisee.

3. **You require people to live up to standards not written in Scripture.** Do you require duties of others that you yourself do not do? The Pharisees, said Jesus, "tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger" (Matt. 23:4, ESV). It is somewhat like preachers who tell their congregations to witness for Jesus in the streets and in the workplace, but they themselves never mention the gospel except when they are in the pulpit.
4. **You say a person is not a Christian if they disagree with you.** You say they are not saved if they oppose you. This is judging just as the Pharisees did. It is a quick cop-out; it is your way of punishing the person with whom you disagree. Instead of saying politely that they disagree with you, you glibly claim, "These people aren't even saved."
5. **You fail to practice what you preach.** Jesus plainly said

of Pharisees that they “do not practice what they preach” (Matt. 23:3, NIV). The greatest testimony we give to the world is not our articulate theology or eloquent way of presenting it but their discovery that we are real—that we really do practice what we preach. This does not mean we are perfect or never sin. “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8). But if our faces, hearts, and lives reflect the love of Jesus, people are going to want what we’ve got.

6. **You judge by outward appearance.** “Do not judge by appearances,” Jesus said to the Pharisees (John 7:24, ESV). Samuel, the great prophet of the Old Testament, had to learn this lesson. The Lord said to him as he was trying to discern who would be the next king, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7).

If you don’t like the way a person dresses—too fashionable, too expensive, or too casual; you don’t like their accent—too posh or too working class; you don’t approve of their education or lack of it or where they received it; you don’t approve of their theological or church background; you judge them by their neighborhood; you don’t approve of their employment; or you don’t like their friends, you are a Pharisee.

7. **You care more about people’s opinions than about God’s.** Jesus said that the Jews were not able to believe in His Messiahship because they preferred the praise of one another over God’s praise. People ask, How could the Jews have missed their own Messiah? Here is the answer: they made no effort to seek the honor, glory, and praise of the Most High God. They chose the praise of each other. But you too could miss what God is doing in our

day—and the direction He is taking—if you are controlled by the opinions of your peers, whether friends or enemies.

- 8. You want people to notice when you give, pray, or fast.** Jesus told us not to be like those who gave, prayed, or fasted only when their acts would be seen by people. Why was this so important? Because the principle of John 5:44 is at stake. Jesus made it clear: if we do what we do to be seen of men, we get a reward, yes; but it is only in the here and now. We get a feeling that builds up our egos: the praise of people, not of God.

“Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Thus when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogue and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving might be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you” (Matt. 6:1-4).

The irony is, we actually develop a healthy ego, significance, and sense of self-esteem when we cultivate a habit of seeking only the praise of God. God has a way of doubling our sense of significance and self-worth. He will not let us down. But when we choose to give, pray, or fast only when people are likely to find out, we risk repeating the fatal sin of the ancient Jews who utterly missed out on what God wanted them to receive.

- 9. You are motivated by money.** The Pharisees were “lovers of money” (Luke 16:14). This was partly why they ridiculed Jesus—because much of His teaching pertained to money. To be clear, the Bible does not say that *money* is a root of evil; it says that “the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils” (1 Tim. 6:10). This is

because, as God's Word makes clear, we must be wholeheartedly devoted to God, not to the things of the world. We cannot serve both God and money (Matt. 6:24).

10. You feel righteous when comparing yourself to others.

Rather than measuring yourself by the Word of God, you measure yourself by others. Instead of discovering the sinfulness of your own heart, you find someone you judge to be in bad shape and assume, by contrast, that you are OK. But that is by comparison. We can't know what is in another's heart. Therefore when we get a righteous feeling by selecting someone we assume to be more wicked than ourselves, we totally avoid the very thing Jesus wants us to do; namely, to see what we are like before God and not in the eyes of people.

Whether you see yourself in any of these signs, the truth is, the Pharisee lurks in all of us. This means we are among those Jesus condemned the most! Hopefully the desire to be in good standing with Him will motivate you to search your heart and confess any area of self-righteousness, trusting God to not only forgive you but also empower you to put this sin behind you for good. {eoa}

Excerpted from Chapter 6 of You Might Be a Pharisee If... by R.T. Kendall (Charisma House, 2021).