

5 Signs of Idolatry in the Church

The greatest sin in the Bible is the sin of idolatry. It violates the first of the Ten Commandments: “You shall have no other gods before Me” (Ex. 20:3). Idolatry is when we put something or someone before the living and true God. It is the root cause of all other sins, which is why the first two commandments are based around this.

While the church today focuses on various sins related to human sexuality and lifestyle choices, many in the church who might not fit into these two categories might be deluded into believing they are OK. However, they might be breaking the greatest commandment.

Based on my perspective of serving as a lead pastor for almost 40 years and serving extensively in extra-local apostolic ministry to churches, here are the following signs that indicate idolatry.

1. **The idol of celebrity preachers.** Some believers traverse the country, attending the latest conferences of many well-known preachers. Often, when they meet them in person, they fawn and faint over them. Some prominent ministers (many of whom I know) cannot even go out in public without constantly being stopped by admirers so they can take “selfies” with them.

Although I am a proponent of having a culture of honor and respect for leaders who labor among us, some people have stepped over the edge into idolatry (Heb. 13:7-17). They follow everything these famous ministers say without question, even if the minister has been in a scandal. These believers fail to search the Scriptures themselves to see if what is being preached aligns with God’s Word.

When Cornelius met the apostle Peter, he bowed down before him; however, Peter rightly told him to get up and that he was only a man like Cornelius (see Acts 10). There is nothing wrong with emulating or following a leader, but there is something wrong with idolizing a Christian leader.

There is a pervasive “celebrity preacher” culture in the body of Christ today. Some megachurches and enterprises have even closed down their ministries when their celebrity preacher stepped down. If churches and ministries would build according to the New Testament pattern, in which the whole body exists to minister and edify one another in love, we would not depend upon one particular leader for the congregation to function (see Eph. 4:16, 1 Cor. 12).

- 2. The idol of worship and entertainment.** Many believers flock to churches that have skilled singers and musicians primarily to be entertained. Consequently, many believers don't realize they are putting self-gratification and entertainment before true worship.

In times past, churches were void of musical instruments. People would flock to those churches anyway, even though the congregation only used hymnals and sang a cappella. Today, it is very common for pastors to budget large amounts of money for the salary of professional singers and musicians with the hope that it will draw a large crowd on Sundays.

Even though we are called to worship with excellence and skill, we have gone too far in the church. We have mingled as a core value of pure worship to God with the entertainment culture of the world. At the end of the day, whether we have worship performed by professionals, use a recording or sing a cappella, congregations should worship and adore God for who He is. He is to be worshiped in spirit and truth, which is the only kind of worship God seeks (John 4:23-24).

Those who leave their local churches to attend other churches

with “better worship,” in my opinion, are often guilty of idolatry. Doing so indicates that they cannot worship God from their hearts since they need to be entertained by professionals.

3. The idol of personal prosperity. There are believers whose main motive is to use their faith to leverage influence with God for personal gain. Although God delights in blessing all of his children, Jesus told us to seek first His kingdom and righteousness for our material needs to be added to us (see 3 John 2, Matt. 6:33).

Many attempt to use God’s benevolent character to live a myopic life in which Christianity orbits around the universe of self. God has given us the power to get wealth so we can spread His covenant to the whole earth, not merely so we can live lives of ease. Using our faith to put our own needs first is a form of idolatry.

4. The idol of objectifying God. Although this point is similar to the previous point, I feel there is enough distinction to separate them. Through the years, I have seen many in the church preach and promote an “I,” “me,” “my” culture. For example, much of the preaching deals with self-actualization, fulfillment and therapy rather than sound biblical theology that calls believers to live a life of service. Pastors have often fed into the people’s cultural idolatry to attract them into the church. This certainly displeases God (Ezek. 44:10-12).

I have observed too few cross-carrying disciples attending churches and instead have seen many who use God when they need Him. For example, many come to church to “feel” the presence of God but are not committed to knowing and loving the person of God. Many come to church solely to feel good instead of being equipped to do good works (Eph. 2:10). Many come to receive a word instead of coming to give a word of edification

to someone else (Isa. 50:4, Eph. 4:29). Many come to listen to rhetorical messages that excite the emotions with no intention of walking out the word. Many come to shout amen, being psychologically deceived into believing that because they shouted, they have already obeyed.

Consequently, many believers live no differently than their unbelieving neighbors. This is one reason why megachurches are not always mega-cultural influencers and why church growth doesn't always result in personal and societal transformation.

Although many have attended church for decades, they have never matured and are still drinking pabulum, having never digested the meat of the word (1 Cor. 3:1-3).

5. **The idol of ethnicity.** Many believers have allowed their ethnicity and culture to trump the Word of God. Jesus said, in some people's lives, culture is even stronger than the word of God (Mark 7:7-8). Consequently, people read the Scriptures through their Caucasian-Western lens, Afrocentric lens, Hispanic lens, Asian lens and so on.

One of the most important things we as believers can do when it comes to receiving the Word of God is to take ourselves out of our cultural context. We must read the Bible through the eyes of the author's original intent, which is only accomplished with the Holy Spirit's help. There is no such thing as a Western European Caucasian Bible or an Afrocentric Bible.

We need to stop reading the Scriptures merely through our ethnic lenses because, in actuality, the Bible was written with a Hebraic mindset. It is foolish to think we can fully understand it with our contemporary perspectives. Consequently, believers often act and react no differently from nonbelievers regarding things that happen in modern society. For example, white, black and brown believers have

generally reacted far differently from one another when interpreting such issues as immigration reform, educational reform and police shootings.

I believe that the gospel is so powerful that it is possible for diverse Christians to come together with one voice and prophetically interpret, speak and bring solutions to these painful and controversial issues.

God is not colorblind since He made humans black, brown, yellow, red and white in His image. He designed us to have distinctions in culture regarding food, dress, language and other things based upon ethnic nuances. However, these distinctions are not where believers should derive their primary identity or anchor their biblical ethics. In Christ, there is neither male nor female, black, white or brown, for we are all one in Christ (Gal. 3:28). When our ethnic thinking trumps our biblical thinking, we are guilty either of ignorance or ethnic idolatry. Unless the body of Christ gets over its idolatry according to ethnicity, we will never become the generation that can disciple the nations (which refers to ethnic people groups, as shown in Matthew 28:19).

Since there is no neutrality, either the church will disciple the nations, or the nations will disciple the church. {eoa}

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*Purchase **Joseph Mattera's** latest book, The Jesus Principles,*

available now on Amazon here.

Messianic Rabbi: The Right Way to Tell Someone They Are Wrong

Throughout the Bible, we read about many men and women. About some, we read many verses or even chapters, and others get only a brief mention in a verse or two.

Each of these people's names, words or actions were entered into the greater narrative of the Scriptures so that you and I reading about them would be able to, in some way, apply their stories to our lives. In other words, these people not only were meant to be a part of history; each of them were, by design, to purposefully interact with our present. Each individual who was included in the Bible was included so that today we could learn something from them. That information was designed to help conform us more closely to the image of G-D.

To provide an example, we will look at a portion of the life of Jacob. Jacob, to me, is one of the most significant people in the Bible because he was so human. In other words, when we read of Jacob's life, we read as much about his failures and weaknesses as we do his victories. I once heard a teacher say, "If you cannot find an answer to a problem in Psalms or Proverbs, read about Jacob." In Jacob's life, we can learn about almost every part of human existence: life, death,

family struggles, financial problems and business issues. You name it, you can find it in the life of Jacob.

With this in mind, and considering the many divisions and disagreements taking place around us, I thought it would be helpful for us to take a look at one lesson we could learn from Jacob and apply to our lives today.

We are going to look at Genesis 29. To provide a little context for where we are in the story of Jacob, this event takes place after Jacob runs away from his father's house to get away from his brother Esau who wanted to kill him because he "stole" the birthright blessing and just after Jacob dreamed of the ladder from earth to heaven. Let's read:

Genesis 29:1-2 (TLV) says: "Then Jacob lifted up his feet and went to the land of the peoples of the east. When he looked, suddenly, there was a well in the field, and there were three herds of sheep resting by it. (For from that well they would water the flocks. The stone on the mouth of the well was large.)"

Jacob arrives at the well and finds shepherds and three herds gathered around the well, but they were not watering their sheep. This sight confused Jacob because it was not the normal way shepherds would act. They had gathered their sheep at the well but they were not watering them. To an outsider like Jacob, their actions would look as if the shepherds were wasting time, being lazy and not caring for their sheep which were thirsty. In other words, in Jacob's opinion, these people were doing everything wrong.

Have you ever looked at a group of people and thought to yourself that they were doing everything wrong? Maybe the thing they were doing had to do with faith, maybe it was family, maybe it was politics or maybe something else.

Jacob was concerned about the situation, and he decided to do something about it. They were wrong—and Jacob knew it—and he

was going to let them know it. I know we have all felt this way. So, let's look at how Jacob handled the situation, and maybe we can learn something to help us when we see something being done wrongly.

We find the first thing that Jacob does in Genesis 29:4: "Jacob said to them, 'My brothers, where are you from?' 'We're from Haran,' they said."

Notice that when Jacob speaks to them, he calls them "brothers." Jacob begins by identifying with the people by saying "my brothers." He then asks them a question: "Where are you from?" After all, it is important to know where a person is coming from in order to understand why they might be doing what they are doing.

The second thing Jacob does is ask another question, but he doesn't ask in the form of a question, which might have felt like a challenge to them. He asks it in the form of a statement.

Genesis 29:7 reads: "He said, 'Since it's still the middle of the day, it's not time for the livestock to be gathered. Water the flock and let them go and graze.'"

Notice Jacob's statement asks the question, "Why are you not watering your flocks so that they can go graze?" without directly challenging their motives or intent. When we see someone doing something we think is wrong, do we ask in a way that prejudices their motives and their intent as wrong?

The third thing that Jacob does is found in Genesis 29:8. This may be one of the most important, and maybe most difficult, parts of this lesson. Jacob let them answer his question: "But they said, 'We can't, not until all the flocks are gathered and the stone is rolled away from the mouth of the well—then we water the flock.'"

When we question someone about the things we believe they are

doing wrong, do we stop and listen to their answer? After all, they may actually have a valid reason for their actions. Remember a valid reason may not be biblically sound or even correct. But it will help us to understand why they do what they do so we can go to step No. 4 in the lesson, which we read in Genesis 29:10: "Now when Jacob saw Rachel (the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother), Jacob stepped forward and rolled the stone away from the mouth of the well and watered the flock of Laban, his mother's brother."

Notice what Jacob does and what he doesn't do. Jacob steps forward and rolls the stone away and waters the flock. Jacob did not spend hours explaining that they could move the stone by themselves if they wanted to. He didn't give many examples of other people who had moved their stones in the past. He didn't even tell them how he had moved stones himself. No. Jacob simply stepped up and showed them how one man could move the stone without waiting for everyone else to get there.

You see, we can either tell people how they should live successfully, or we can show them how they can live successfully. The apostle Paul said it this way in 2 Corinthians 3:2: "You are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone."

More people will believe the word of our testimony when they see the actions of our testimony. In other words, "walk the walk"; don't just "talk the talk." {eoa}

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What You Must Do to Keep Your Heart Spiritually Healthy

Does your heart have peace? Do you feel pain? Do you feel pleasure? Do you delight in His presence?

Solomon said, "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23).

Life flows from the heart.

Leadership flows from the heart. The Bible says that David was a shepherd who led his people with the integrity of his heart (see Ps. 78:72).

Love comes from the heart: "Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind'" (Matt. 22:37).

The Lord looks at the heart (see Isa. 66:2; Matt. 5:4).

As our physical heart plays an essential role in our lives, our inner heart plays a vital role in our lives, leadership and love. The enemy of our soul attacks our heart. He wants us to have a spiritual heart attack. If our heart becomes a stony heart, it can't receive anything good. Or if it becomes full of thorns, it chokes the seed of God's Word. A good heart is a key to fruitfulness and fulfillment.

Jesus is our best example of living a life that's full and pleasing to God. Jesus was busy but not burned out. He was mistreated by people, yet He wasn't bitter. Christ's task was huge, but He lived in a constant state of rest. He shares His secret with us:

“Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me. For I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matt. 11:29).

The secret of Jesus’ idea of “rest” wasn’t going on vacations or taking days off, although those measures are good. It’s not His being tied down to disciplined routines but it is His heart. He promises us that if we study His heart, ours will be healthy, and it will bring rest to our whole being. There are many things to learn from Jesus, but one of the most important things is how to have a healthy heart.

–To have a healthy heart, we must have a humble heart.

–To have a healthy heart, we must replace a hurry with holiness.

–To have a healthy heart, we must prioritize peace over pressure.

Once our heart is healthy, burnout will be replaced with holy burning. {eoa}

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Why We Should Still Trust God When We Cannot Trace Him

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths” (Prov. 3:5-6).

This verse is packed with truth, wisdom and challenge, and the challenge is real. We love to know where we are going and how we will get there.

Unsurety steals our confidence. Our Father reserves the right to lead us into situations that we don't discern. God's plans escape our awareness.

The old saints used to say, “Trust the Lord even though you cannot trace Him.” As humans, we rely on our feelings. However, feelings are not the best source to test our surroundings. We don't always know where God is leading us.

We go out to dinner, and during the dining experience, we realize that the evening is not about dinner. We find ourselves in a divine assignment from heaven. During the assignment, we desperately seek to understand what God is doing. God desires that we lean into the assignment He has planned for us. As humans, we struggle with discerning what to do.

When we are not sure of what God is doing, we must trust His ways.

Trust God

To trust the Lord with all our heart is a command—no easy order for sure.

Trust is what we have when our faith is wavering. We tend to trust ourselves when we cannot trace God. Abraham could not

trust how God would give him his firstborn child, so he trusted his wife, Sarah.

Abraham and Sarah waited twenty-five years for their son to be born because it is “through faith and patience [we] inherit the promises” (Heb. 6:12; see also 10:36).

When God had called Abraham, He promised to make of him a great nation that would bless the whole world (Gen. 12:1-3). God also promised Abraham to be the father and Sarah (not Hagar) the mother (Genesis 17:19; 18:9–15). Sarah did not believe that God was working fast enough to give them their son, so she decided to take control of the situation.

Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, had borne him no children, and she had a maidservant, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. So Sarai said to Abram, “The Lord has prevented me from having children. Please go in to my maid; it may be that I will obtain children through her.” Abram listened to Sarai. So after Abram had been living for ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, his wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. He went in to Hagar, and she conceived (Genesis 16:1–4a).

The problem with Abraham and Sarai’s plan was that it was not God’s plan. Abraham and Sarai developed a self-made plan. We will not dive into the problems this action caused, but they were severe.

Are we guilty of making our own plans and going our own way?

Acknowledge God

God asked us to acknowledge Him in all our ways. The Scriptures say that we plan our way, but God orders our steps. So, we plan and God orders. The difficulty for us is to recognize the places God has ordered for us to do His work.

We forget that God is the director of our story.

Let's look at Jacob's story.

Then Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Harran. He came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. He took one of the stones of that place and put it under his head, and lay down in that place to sleep. He dreamed and saw a ladder set up on the earth with the top of it reaching to heaven. The angels of God were ascending and descending on it. The Lord stood above it and said, "I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie, to you will I give it and to your descendants. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and in your descendants all the families of the earth will be blessed. Remember, I am with you, and I will protect you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I promised you." Jacob awoke out of his sleep, and he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it." He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven" (Gen. 28:10-17).

Jacob sets up camp at a specific place. There is no indication that anything spiritual is about to happen. This is similar to our lives.

God Has a Habit of Turning Common Places Into Holy Ground

As we move through life, God orders things that we did not know were coming. These moments come by surprise, similar to Jacob's camping experience. Jacob said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it."

Most of us would love more clarity as to where God is leading. I sure would.

But that is why faith is so vital. Faith leads us when we

cannot see. Faith is similar to being blind in that the blind person must trust the person leading him.

When we cannot trace God, we must trust Him. That's easier said than done.

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This post first appeared here. {eoa}

Will You Be Thankful During This Wonderful Time of the Year?

We are standing on the threshold of what is supposed to be "the most wonderful time of the year." There are many people, however, who are hopeless, joyless and filled with anxiety as they dread the last five weeks of the calendar year.

I am not one of those people; I have a hope that is boundless, a joy that is inexpressible and a peace that passes understanding even during this, the momentous year of 2020. I also have much to be thankful for, even while the world is spinning out of control.

I am thankful for friends and family both near and far; I am grateful to be able to serve the Lord at this moment in history. I am thankful to be able to read my Bible every day and to be part of His grand plan at this time in the world's history. There is always something for which to be thankful even in the midst of tumult and crisis. I choose to focus on the good of 2020 rather than on the erratic.

Thankfulness is a primary discipline of our walk in Christ, and I will be thankful this year more than in any other year because He is my sustainer, my comforter and my dearest friend.

I have boundless hope because I have attached my life to the promises in the Word of God rather than to the events around me. I believe that Jesus is indeed my healer. I believe He has given me power and authority over sickness and pain. I will declare the Word of God when my body is ill, and I will stand in strong faith that He is well able to touch my body and to heal me. The same Jesus who healed lepers, the lame man and opened blind eyes is the God I serve in 2020.

I have joy inexpressible because He has promised never to leave me and never to forsake me. Although I may not relish the events of 2020 and might even wish for a different circumstantial outcome, I choose to walk by faith and not by sight. I know that in His wonderful presence is fullness of joy. Happiness comes from our temporary circumstances, but joy is extracted from His presence! The baby who was sent from heaven 2,000 years ago invaded our world with joy. Therefore, this year I will choose to sing loudly and to worship relentlessly. We have a reason to sing for joy even in 2020!

I have the peace that passes understanding because I choose to trust our good, good Father has final authority in all of earth's happenings. He has not relinquished one iota of His power, and it is He who still sits on heaven's glorious throne. He has never lost a battle yet, and He certainly will

not lose the battle that ravages our world in 2020.

Peace is a byproduct of prayer, trust and surrender; I will pray without ceasing. I will trust His character, and I will surrender my will and my preferences to His wonderful plan.

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder. And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and over his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with justice and with righteousness, from now until forever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this” (Isa. 9:6-7). {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.

Jonathan Cahn Asks, 'Does

America Have a Spiritual Disease, and Is There a Cure?'

New York Times bestselling author Jonathan Cahn has finally gotten the go-ahead from God to release the long-awaited sequel to his 2012 blockbuster *The Harbinger*.

It's called *The Harbinger II: The Return*, and it reveals the ancient mystery to the current shakings in America—are they a signal that we're drawing closer to judgment and calamity? *The Harbinger II* reveals how the ancient mystery of the harbinger has continued up to this day. It looks behind the pandemic to the economic collapse to the disorder we're watching being played out and reveals that there is more to the story.

"The mystery has never stopped," says Cahn. "What I shared back then in *The Harbinger* was the beginning—it was not the end. This sequel is about what could not be unlocked before—the mysteries that couldn't be revealed until the present time, the manifestations that have taken place since *The Harbinger* came out and up to the present hour and the mysteries of what is yet to come."

The Seventh Harbinger

In *The Harbinger II* Cahn reveals more about the seventh harbinger—the erez tree—which was planted at ground zero several years after 9/11 to replace the sycamore tree which fell on that terrible day. It fulfilled the prophecy in Isaiah 9:10: "The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones; the sycamores are cut down, but we will replace them with cedars."

Cahn says that by planting the erez tree, New York fulfilled the prophecy exactly—although they had no idea why they did

it. Leaders named the erez tree the Tree of Hope.

“So, the erez tree represented a strong America, coming back from the devastation of 9/11,” says Cahn.

A Shocking Sign

But then something happened. A transformation took place, a biblical metamorphosis, which actually became a sign in itself. The ancient sign of national judgment was manifested at ground zero when the erez tree, the symbol of America, began to wither away.

The leaves started turning brown, and the tree started drying up. The groundskeepers did everything they could to revive it—after all, it was the symbol of America’s comeback! But it just kept withering away. Every year, it got more and more sickly looking. Groundskeepers planted eight shrubs around the tree, and while the four shrubs that were away from it thrived, the four shrubs that were near it withered away with the tree, almost as if the tree were cursed.

“God speaks again and again of withering,” says Cahn. “He says: ‘For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb’ (Ps. 37:2). Isaiah says, ‘You will perish like a withered tree or a garden without water’ (1:30, TLB). Messiah spoke to the fig tree (Mark 11:21) and it withered.

“Withering is a sign of national judgment,” Cahn continues. “In the Bible it’s a sign of defiance. The erez tree was the ancient symbol of a nation’s defiant hope. America was saying, ‘We’re coming back stronger; nothing’s going to stop this. The sycamore was a weak tree, but the erez tree is a strong tree.’ The Hebrew name for erez even means ‘strength.’”

The imagery of a defiant tree withering away can be seen in the Bible.

It was planted in a good soil by many waters, that it might bring forth branches, and that it might bear fruit, that it might be a splendid vine. Say: Thus says the Lord God: Will it thrive? Will he not pull up its roots and cut off its fruit, so that it withers, so that all its spring leaves wither? It will not take a great power or many people to pull it from its roots. Though it has been planted, will it prosper? Shall it not utterly wither when the east wind hits it? It shall wither in the furrows where it grew (Ezek. 17:8-10).

Cahn says the Tree of Hope was supposed to be a sign that America was coming back stronger without God, and yet the tree—which stood for America—was withering away.

The Ultimate Issue

So what is the sign of the erez tree saying? What is the biblical message? “It’s a harbinger on top of a harbinger,” says Cahn. “The withering away of the erez tree—the withering away of the Tree of Hope—represents the withering of America. On the outside it still exists (like the tree), but morally (on the inside) it is withering away. Spiritually, it is withering away.

The nation of America is withering from its very core. And if it keeps doing that, it’s not going to be able to stand. The withering is happening from the inside, so eventually that tree won’t make it if it doesn’t get healed.

This harbinger—this sign—is saying that America has a spiritual disease. And we cannot cure a spiritual disease with a political cure or physical cure. Yes, God uses politics, and we have to pray for that and be a part of it. But the ultimate issue is spiritual. And only a spiritual answer can heal a spiritual disease. The only one who can cure it is Jesus.

Find out more at . {eoa}

Why Intimacy with Christ Powers the Core to Your Life Success

Sharon Mancha, co-pastor of Launch Church in Palmdale, California, knows the power of the words of Matthew 22:37.

She's experienced it in her own life, and she wants nothing more than share it and spread it to those in the kingdom that want to experience the presence of God in a way they never have before.

This Scripture cites Jesus' words, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind." It's one that can bring you closer to the Lord and bring you the intimacy you need to make an impact in the kingdom, as she teaches on her podcast, *The Power of Intimacy with Christ*.

"The reason that's my favorite Scripture is that it covers the human experience," Mancha told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network. "It will take care of COVID, oh yes, it will. It will take care of the race issues we have in front of us.

"It gives us the courage to face things that bring division and separation and discouragement and discontentment," she said. "It addresses it all when we learn to love God with all our heart, which is really the pathway to intimacy. When we learn to love with our all mind, we are open to understanding and conversation so we can cross those racial lines and be able to embrace and understand other cultures.

“And when we learn to love with strength, we have the courage and the strength of the Lord to be able to go through healing and reconciliation and the bumpy road because it’s not going to be a smooth transition or pathway,” Mancha said. “Healing is bumpy. Healing can be painful. Healing can be difficult. But if we stay with it, that’s the strength God gives. We can get to the destiny. We can really cross that bridge and get where we’re trying to go.”

For more of how to develop intimacy with Christ, listen to the rest of this podcast and tune into *The Power of Intimacy with Christ with Dr. Sharon Mancha*. {eoa}

Spiritual Professional Says to Use This Kingdom Trait to Finish 2020

Spiritual professionals are businesspeople who pray and carry within them the wisdom of the Holy Spirit—and this is the ongoing miracle we must realize and walk in to finish 2020. This is how we shape the future through our God-given assignments.

I’m speaking of entrepreneurs, educators, corporate people, government workers, lawyers, doctors, moms and dads, and preachers alike.

It’s important to guard against the hopelessness often found

in media. These news cycles are built by creating fear and worry to keep you coming back for the world's counterfeit version of what's going to happen next. Those in its grip are easily crushed by despair, pandemic stats and fear constantly exuded from mainstream media.

Instead we are created to build the future of life and work in a spirit of faith and revelation that positions us to bring solutions leaders, kings and queens long to find.

We have access to resources, brilliance and insight that the world cannot claim.

History tells the fascinating account of the queen of Sheba, who travelled 1,000 miles by camel because she heard of the divine wisdom of Solomon and wanted to see this greatness for herself.

Second Chronicles 9:5-7 records her declaration:

True was the report that I heard in my land concerning your words and wisdom. But I did not believe their reports until I came and my eyes saw; and indeed, half the greatness of your wisdom was not declared to me. You have exceeded the report that I heard. How happy your men must be! How happy these servants, those who are continually before you listening to your wisdom.

Notice the blessing that accompanied the wisdom of God in Solomon. It applied to his staff and literally spilled over to those around him.

Today as you face the chaos, refuse the victim mentality and lean into your spiritual reality as a son or daughter of God—carrying divine wisdom to create solutions that inspire others to inquire of our great God for themselves.

In times of pressure, as believers—as spiritual professionals—we find our greatest hour of opportunity.

To be ready to see these divine opportunities, I recommend that you:

1. Limit your mainstream news intake.
2. Pray and ask God for the wisdom you need to solve problems for yourself and others.
3. Become the shaper of our future and let blessings fall on those around you.

A hunger is rising for practical wisdom for God's praying professionals. Let's lean in to bring the spiritual and the professional together in this day: This is our opportunity to shape the future. {eoa}

Tune into *The Linda Fields Show* on the Charisma Podcast Network.

Marilyn Hickey Says This Virtue Is the Key to Kingdom Success

Wisdom is the key to success. We need wisdom in many areas—wisdom in navigating relationships and managing thoughts, emotions and time. How do you get wisdom? You ask for it. *The Get Wisdom Journal* will give you keys to solving your problems and will help you rise to a higher level of living and understanding of His ultimate purpose for your

everyday life. The journal is an interactive daily devotional filled with God's wisdom, thought-provoking questions and inspired Scripture. You don't need to stand on the brink of another crisis: Get wisdom!

Jesus, through His unwavering compassion, has something specifically for you. The enemy will speak to you, distort the situation and lie, saying Jesus doesn't have anything for you, but Jesus has something for everyone.

In Matthew 15:29-39, Jesus was on a mountain when a crowd came to Him. Although it was a large crowd of several thousand, everyone there individually experienced something from Jesus. Sometimes we struggle physically, emotionally or spiritually, but Jesus has healing for us. Jesus gives us peace, provision, solutions, wisdom and hope so we can experience and express God's genuine love.

Why do some people experience miracles and others don't? Andrew Wommack's book, *How to Become a Water Walker*, shares the faith principles he has learned from God's Word about walking in the miraculous. Most people would like to have the testimony of walking on water, but before you walk on the water, you have to get out of the boat. If you're going to walk on water and see miracles, you're going to have to start living a risky life.

To walk on water—do what God has called you to do—hear God, obey Him, and do what He tells you, and when the going gets tough, don't change or take another route.

Tune into the *Today With Marilyn & Sarah* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. {eoa}

Anne Graham Lotz Says to Place Your Confidence in Our Unshakable God

“I will say of the Lord, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust’” (Ps. 91:2).

The last two years of my life have been physically challenging and spiritually strengthening. I can declare with certainty based on God’s Word and my personal experience the Lord is utterly trustworthy. Therefore, I have made the choice to place my trust in Him, regardless of feelings, circumstances or the opinions of others.

So if you, too, find yourself challenged by chaos, fear, anger, weariness, disease, loneliness and despair, I encourage you to renew your commitment to trust in the one who has loved you from before the beginning of time, and who will love you to the end. The world is not falling apart; it is falling into place at the feet of the one who works all things for your good and His glory.

The following is a prayer I wrote regarding unshakable trust that has been taken from my newest book, *The Light of His Presence: Prayers to Draw You Near to the Heart of God*. As our world convulses and our nation implodes, I have prayed this prayer for you, and for myself.

O God of creation,

I bow before You, acknowledging Your greatness and Your glory. No one compares to You. No one is Your equal. I look at Your creation and marvel at the infinite power and wisdom

that are Yours. Nothing is beyond Your reach. You are the one who “brings out the starry host one by one and calls them each by name. Because of [Your] great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing”(Isa. 40:25-26, NIV). You are the one who “has pitched a tent for the sun. ... It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is hidden from its heat” (Ps. 19:4, 6). “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there” (-8). There is nowhere in all the universe where You are not.

Surely Your arm “is not too short to save, nor [Your] ear too dull to hear” (Isa. 59:1). Yet I confess, as I look around at the mess our world is in—when terrorists strike; when floods, fires, tornadoes and storms ravage our land; when national leaders don’t lead; when business leaders lie; when political leaders put their own interests before the people’s; when spiritual leaders contradict Your Word—I find myself asking, “What’s going on? Where are You?”

The enemy whispers lies, tempting me to think You are distracted, disengaged, distant, inattentive, inactive, impotent, outmaneuvered, outmoded, outclassed, unable, unaffected, and even unaware of our fear, our helplessness, our confusion, our outrage.

Why do You seem so small while our problems, disasters and enemies seem so large?

So I ask, Almighty God, that You would strengthen my resolve to place my trust in You. Give me the courage to declare that even if “the kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord” (Ps. 2:2), I will trust in You. If “the earth give[s] way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging,” (Ps. 46:2-3) I will trust in You. Though “nations are in uproar,

kingdoms fall” (Ps. 46:6), I will trust in You. When “the wicked draw the sword and bend the bow to bring down the poor and needy, to slay those whose ways are upright” (Ps. 37:14), I will trust in You. I trust You!

In the powerful, unshakable, unstoppable name of Jesus, amen.

These are trusting times. Keep praying. {eoa}

For the original article, visit .

This message was adapted from Anne’s new book, The Light of His Presence: A Prayer for Unshakable Trust.

Anne Graham Lotz, second child of Billy and Ruth Graham, is the founder of AnGeL Ministries and former chairman for the National Day of Prayer Task Force. She has authored multiple books, including her new release, *The Light of His Presence: A Prayer for Unshakable Trust*.