

How Would You Respond to Your Husband Watching Porn?

My husband and I had been married only a few years when he came home from work one day to say he had been suspended for **online pornography**. I was then pregnant with our second child. It felt like an atomic bomb had fallen on me: All that I thought was safe and stable in my life imploded, and everything around me went into slow motion.

Eighty percent of Christian men admit to struggling with an **addiction to pornography**. I had been a fairly good girl my whole life. I never dreamed that my marriage would become part of a statistic like this. Honestly, in order to reflect reality, the statistic should be much higher. **Pornography** is the church's dirty little family secret that no one is allowed to talk about.

My husband was one of many men in today's society who was exposed to **pornography** by the age of 6. Initial exposure to pornography is often not by choice but rather in the form of **advertising** or through another person's influence. **Pornography** is presented to men or boys as **entertainment** and, like addiction to gaming systems, its imprisonment comes as a total surprise. Pornography's iron fist is stronger than self-will or any counseling tactic.

But in one moment, God changed our story. After 30 years of struggling, my husband experienced **freedom** and **innocence** again. And his freedom was my freedom.

As a wife, you are in a place of tremendous influence in the situation. You can build or crush his faith in God, the only hope of his rescue. Your husband watches your words, attitudes and responses, and though he may not admit it, they bear so much weight in the end result.

Here are some things to remember as a wife:

1. It's nothing personal. Sure, it feels personal, but an addiction has nothing to do with you. He isn't rejecting you. He is entrapped in something bigger than himself. Remind yourself often: "I am not the victim here. He is."

2. Decide to be compassionate. Your husband is human and flawed like everyone else. I would often have to remind myself of who I knew my husband to really be: a man who loves God and sincerely wants to please Him. If you can offer compassion to a drug addict that desperately wants to be free, why can't you offer compassion to your own husband?

3. Be careful not to view him as "dirty." If he is dirty, then you are too. Guilt is guilt, and we are all guilty of sin. Shame is not a gift from God, but is rather a tactic of Satan to drive the imprisoned deeper into hiding with their chains. Protect and enforce a safe atmosphere, free from criticism and judgment, for him to come to God and receive freedom. You can do that with carefully spoken words that build up his faith and reinforce proper perspective: He loves God and needs Jesus just like we all do.

Lastly, pray a lot more and speak a lot less. The Bible says that Jesus can heal with just one word. Pray for your husband frequently, and pray for yourself to have a right heart toward him. One word from the mouth of God created the universe. One word can recreate your marriage too.

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Biblical Womanhood and the Pariahs of the Church

pa·ri·ah

1. an outcast
2. any person or animal that is generally despised or avoided
3. a member of a low caste in southern India and Burma

A few years ago, a friend in the process of divorce encouraged me to write on the topic of pariahs in the church. These are the believing women around us whose life circumstances make us uncomfortable—the Ruths and Naomis in our culture. Maybe they lost a child to death or are estranged from one in rebellion. Maybe they could never get pregnant in the first place. Perhaps their husband left them for another woman, or maybe their husband died. Perhaps they never got married and are heavily involved in their career.

Whatever their life story, the thing that makes them feel like a pariah to others is that they don't want a pariah's life circumstances as their own. Perhaps their story plays to our fears for our own, and therefore we reject or avoid them. Of course, few would use the word *pariah* to describe someone in circumstances that we don't want for ourselves, yet the larger church often treats women like they are outcasts if their life story doesn't match the norm.

Unspoken fears play out in real ways:

“If we embrace this divorced woman in our church, won't other young women think divorce is an option when their marriage gets hard?”

“If we embrace this single working mom, won't other young moms be tempted away from raising their children at home?”

“I don't want to enter into this widow's suffering, because I

don't want to consider the possibility that one day I might face my own similar loss."

In contrast, I've found deep comfort watching the overcoming faith of my limping friends enduring seasons of brokenness or loss. And I admit that I, too, have circumstances in my life that others may find uncomfortable, causing them to want to distance themselves from me. Whatever the loss, these struggles are not denials of God's good plan for women!

Any of us in such circumstances did not fall off the bandwagon of biblical womanhood. Instead, the purity of God's good plan for women becomes clearer as we hold on to faith in the midst of our losses. The enduring faith of "pariahs" motivates me when my own fears become my reality and I am faced with my own unique set of circumstances that test my own faith.

Our understanding of biblical womanhood has to include such women. The divorced. The widow. The single mom. The working single mom. The single woman with no kids. Ruth and Naomi were as much God's daughters created for His purposes when they were widowed without children as when they were married with them, right?

Carolyn McCulley says in her new book, *The Measure of Success: Uncovering the Biblical Perspective on Women, Work and the Home*, concerning her view of herself as a single woman in the church, "I had been deriving more identity from an adjective ("single") than a noun ("woman"), which was not the emphasis I saw in the Bible."

Carolyn Custis James, in her book *Half the Church*, reminds us that most women in Third World countries, where the majority of modern Christians now live, would find our American, evangelical stereotype of biblical womanhood completely foreign and often simply physically impossible. Whatever the Bible says to women, it should be as relevant to the single mom in an African hut as to a middle-class American woman with

a spouse who provides for her and her kids.

All of Scripture speaks to women, right? But it's good to also think through specific parts of Scripture that speak particularly of women. Genesis 1-2 speak of the woman created in the image of God as a strong helper after His example. Proverbs 31 gives wisdom about a woman in a very different context from our First World American one. Ephesians 5 gives a vision of womanhood empowered by the gospel to reclaim the image of God as He intended in perfection. How do these apply to any woman with any adjective? Single woman. Married woman. Divorced woman. Widowed woman. Woman with kids. Woman without kids. Working woman. Stay-at-home woman.

When we remove all of the adjectives, God says something about us made in His image that transcends all the specific things that define us individually. Some of those individual characteristics give us status. Some of those characteristics make us feel like outcasts. Yet God's image in us transcends all of those adjectives.

I am thinking today that biblical womanhood is best understood when we understand it in our worst-case scenarios. When we boil it down to what God most wants any of us to reflect about Himself regardless of the adjective in front of *woman* and then expand that back out to the specific circumstances in which we find ourselves, we are much better equipped to endure the waves of life that come at us at each stage as a woman after God's own heart.

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There's a Tidal Wave of Revival on the Horizon

The moment I stepped through the doors, I felt a powerful shift. I had just walked more than a mile in the below-freezing weather and entered into what I can only describe as a sacred place—the church on Attwell Drive in Toronto, home of the **Toronto Blessing**. The room was abuzz with expectation, the atmosphere pregnant with hunger for God's presence. I could almost feel the weight of the thousands of **testimonies** that had happened there over the past 20 years.

Thousands of people had journeyed to the church to renew their spirits and to be touched the way they had been touched 20 years ago when this **historic** revival started. I was surprised to see so many people there who had been a part of the initial **outpouring**. What an honor to meet Richard Holcomb, who in 1994 had given Randy Clark the life-changing prophetic word that strengthened him for the coming revival. Toronto pastors John and Carol Arnott were so welcoming of the **body of Christ** and also of the Holy Spirit. It was also wonderful to see people such as Blaine Cook, whom I recognized when I attended the Anaheim Vineyard years ago. Like so many people, he was re-engaging with this stream of revival.

During the service, worship songs from the early days were offered unto the Lord. They brought me back to my early childhood days at the Anaheim Vineyard. Then Randy Clark shared the same message he spoke 20 years earlier on that day in history. During the impartation time at the end of the service, I hurried up to the front. As Randy prayed for me, recounting **revivalists** of old, the power of God fell and I dropped to my knees. I wept as God powerfully encountered me

there. For me, this was only the beginning of my adventure and my first trip to Toronto.

How I ended up in Toronto started with the research I am doing for Bill Johnson's upcoming book on revival. While working on a chapter about Randy Clark and the Toronto Blessing, I noticed some interesting patterns. I saw that this 20-year anniversary of the outpouring, which is also the 30-year anniversary of Randy's personal impartation from Vineyard movement leader John Wimber, could be significant. Further, for years I have heard wonderful things about the Toronto Blessing and how the **Father's love** has been poured out to bring restoration. I saw how it had greatly impacted my friend Heidi Baker in a powerful way in addition to many friends from around the world.

Months leading up to the event, every time I heard about the 20th anniversary celebration, my heart was stirred. Finally, after a conversation about the expectancy of what God was going to do in Toronto this year, at 1:30 a.m., less than two weeks before the date, I booked my flight by faith, not knowing how I would pay for it. Through a series of **financial breakthroughs**, God's favor and three people sowing into my trip after I made my decision, the Lord provided beautifully. The special thing about this particular trip was that I was supported by one of the main leaders of Iris Global, a main leader of the Home of Peace (Carrie Judd Montgomery's healing home in Oakland, Calif.), and a long-time supporter from the Anaheim Vineyard who was a part of the ministry team in Toronto in 1994. These three streams merged into one to send me into the healing waters in Toronto. Once I was there, I was also incredibly **blessed** by the media team there and the Iris family.

Let's Tap Into the Well

In the 20th anniversary celebration and in several of the meetings over the following week, one of the recurring themes

that continued to emerge is that there is a huge tsunami wave of revival approaching. If the church wants to ride this new wave well and not wipe out, to quote Heidi Baker in her impactful **sermon** that week, "We need to put our hands in the Father's hands and step on His feet."

We need to trust God to take us further and deeper in Him than we have ever known. What is coming on the horizon is too big for us to do alone. We need to put all of our trust in God. One week after the conference, Randy Clark continued to confirm this word when I talked with him in Redding, Calif. He said, "Now's not the time to be backslidden or lukewarm because something wonderfully powerful is about to hit the country."

In many ways, John Wimber paved the way for the Toronto Blessing. I grew up in the Anaheim Vineyard where John Wimber was the pastor. I was born into **signs and wonders**; that's all I have ever known growing up. Seeing healings and miracles were normal for me. I always loved to hear stories about how the Holy Spirit broke out in the early days of the Vineyard movement from those who were there.

While in Toronto, I was reminded of a story I heard about Jesus People movement preacher Lonnie Frisbee. John Wimber had invited him to preach on a Sunday night on Mother's Day in 1980. Toward the end of his talk, Frisbee had all those under 30 years old come up to the front to receive a blessing from the older generation. Then he said, "Let the power of the **Holy Spirit** come." When he said this, the Holy Spirit came powerfully. From eye witnesses, I heard that when he lifted up his hands in a V shape and invited the Holy Spirit, people in a V shape, according to where his arms pointed fell over in the Spirit. From that moment on, the Holy Spirit broke out in a powerful way and the Vineyard movement of churches was launched. This movement would later birth many of the leaders in the Toronto Blessing.

As a **revival** historian, I notice some similarities between the Toronto Blessing (1994) under John and Carol Arnott's leadership and the **Welsh Revival** (1904) under Evan Roberts' leadership. Both movements make room for freedom in the Holy Spirit. They both value and create space for the power of the testimony. Worship and seeking the glory of God are other markers.

Since the Toronto Blessing has some roots in Lonnie Frisbee's influence, his catalytic prayer is important. That Mother's Day when the Holy Spirit moved powerfully in Wimber's church, Frisbee also prophesied of another wave coming. If now, over 30 years after that prophecy, we are expecting a greater wave than ever before, why not go back even further into digging the wells of revival? Why not tap into even greater momentum than the already powerful 20 years of sustained revival that the Arnott's have stewarded so well within the Toronto Blessing? Why not go back 110 years and not only synergize Frisbee's catalytic prayer but also tap into a prayer that comes from a similar and powerful movement in Wales?

During the Welsh Revival, Roberts received a download from the Lord of a certain prayer to send ahead him to the towns where he was going to minister. He gave directions for the children in those towns to learn how to pray this prayer in preparation. Many times before he had even arrived, revival had already broken out. Without becoming ritualistic or creating a dependency upon a prayer, I want to invite you to access the legacy, heritage and testimonies embedded in this prayer so we can pull from not only 20 years but from 110 years of revival history. We need more momentum in the Spirit than just the 20 years for what's coming next. So rather than only pray "Come Holy Spirit," which I regularly hear, why not take this prayer one step further? Why not also pray for an increase of the momentum of the tidal wave that we are inviting to come? Why not pray like both Lonnie Frisbee and Evan Roberts and ask for the Holy Spirit to come in greater

power for Jesus Christ's sake?

Are we ready? Are we positioned to catch this wave? We welcome Holy Spirit to come in power and invade our very lives. We say "yes" to all that He has for us as we ride this new wave for Your glory.

We agree with the prayer Roberts sent ahead during the Welsh Revival. We take hold of this catalytic prayer and make it our own for this next season, preparing ourselves for the mighty wave that is rapidly approaching on the horizon.

"Send the Spirit now, for Jesus Christ's sake. Send the Spirit now powerfully, for Jesus Christ's sake. Send the Spirit now more powerfully, for Jesus Christ's sake. Send the Spirit now still more powerfully, for Jesus Christ's sake." –Evan Roberts (1904)

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Release the Power of God at Your Workplace

One of the last things Jesus said to the disciples was, "'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature'" (Mark 16:15, NKJV). This Scripture applies to His followers today as well, but it doesn't mean we all have to leave our jobs and homes and go into full-time ministry. It simply means we are to act as Jesus acted.

Jesus deposited His life in us, the church. Now we are commissioned to do just what He did—and He gave us the power

and authority to do it. He said, “‘I give you the authority over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you’” (Luke 10:19).

The problem is that we often put limits on God. We acquire wrong mind-sets about the ways in which He works—or the ways in which He will work through us. We need to ask Him to remove the mental “box” that limits our faith and to help us believe that the same Spirit who was in Jesus is in us, making it possible for us to operate in the same types of ministry He did.

Everyone Jesus met was affected by Him. Not everyone followed, not all became disciples, but they still knew He was connected to something or someone other than Himself. He met people where they were and helped them connect to a higher realm, a realm outside their natural circumstances, where they were changed by the power of God and brought into relationship with Him.

Woman at the Well The woman from Samaria is a good example. She came to the well to draw water and found Living Water instead (see John 4:5-30). When she first met Jesus, she knew He was no ordinary man because He spoke with authority.

She wanted to have a religious discussion. But Jesus ignored her attempt to steer the conversation in an intellectual direction and spoke directly to her situation: “‘You have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband’” (v. 18).

His words must have been disarming. She wasn’t expecting this encounter to turn personal. But Jesus saw by the Spirit that she was more than a woman fetching water, more than a woman talking about religion. She was a lost sheep who needed the Great Shepherd.

In order to reach her, He spoke right past all He saw in the natural realm and zeroed in on the hidden facts of her life.

She perceived that He was a prophet, but it wasn't until He revealed Himself more completely that she began to understand He had the power not only to discern her situation but also to bring lasting change.

“‘Whoever drinks of this water [from the well] will thirst again,’” Jesus told her, “‘but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life’” (vv. 13-14).

Jesus had a wonderful way of reaching people where they were, but He didn't just meet their immediate needs. He introduced them to a greater realm of life and death and helped them come to know His Father.

His compassion caused Him to reach out not with mere sympathy but with power from God. Because He lived in the Spirit realm, He didn't respond to natural circumstances; He saw past them and ministered to the real issues. He brought the truth into outward circumstances and delivered people from the bondage of natural things—even death.

We can do this, too. And we don't have to wait for people to come to us; we can take Jesus right out into the marketplace and minister to those we meet with His love and His power.

Praying in Faith Years ago I was in a wonderful move of God in London. We reached out to people through the gifts of the Spirit and in faith. One of the elders in our church was an actor named John, who had been in a show for a number of months and had a burden for the orchestra leader.

John shared the gospel with him several times, but the man was not interested. He didn't appear to need God! He was very happy; he had a good marriage, a good income, a nice home—and no bad habits to kick. He simply saw no reason to get saved or give his heart to God.

When the play finally finished its run, we prayed with John for this man: "Lord, please reveal a need that this man and his wife cannot meet for themselves." We left it at that, and John did not see the man anymore—until about a year later.

We were all in a "Let Your Light Shine" march in London. There were many thousands of Christians taking part in the march, all singing and shouting praises to God. While we were walking, John suddenly looked up, and a hundred yards away he saw Denis, the orchestra leader, carrying a huge banner, which said in bold letters "Jesus Is Lord."

John learned that Denis and his wife had been living their happy-go-lucky life when their cat was taken very sick. The veterinarian who examined the cat told them she had leukemia and wouldn't live long. He offered to put the cat to sleep.

The couple were distraught because they loved their pet. Denis remembered that John had said something to them about healing, so they looked in the Yellow Pages to see what they could find. They came across a listing for the London Healing Mission, which, unbeknownst to them, was a ministry to street people that actually had nothing to do with physical healing.

They called the number. "Do you heal cats?" they asked, when the minister answered the phone. "Well, I don't see why not; after all, they are God's creatures," he wisely answered. So Denis and his wife wrapped the cat in a blanket and drove clear across London to the mission.

When they arrived they put the cat into the arms of the minister, who had answered the door. "Lord, please touch this little cat," was all he prayed. Suddenly, the cat leaped from his arms and was perfectly fine.

The couple were saved that night and later became Spirit-filled. God answered our prayer by working through a need they had! He loves to use the situations people find themselves in

to reveal Himself to them, if we will release our faith and pray.

Proving God When I was first filled with the Holy Spirit I was working for a company in the West End of London. Up to that point I didn't have much of a testimony.

But once I became filled with the Holy Spirit, I had the power to witness—and something to witness about. I asked Him to help me evangelize the worldly people I worked with. I knew they were not going to take any notice of what I said, so I needed the Holy Spirit's demonstration.

My work at the company was in the accounting department, and at the end of every month, we would have to balance the books. Invariably the balances would be "out," and we would spend several hours—sometimes days—finding the differences and reconciling the accounts.

I seized the opportunity I saw and made an announcement. "When we do the balances, I am going to pray, and the Holy Spirit will show me where my balances are out."

Everyone looked at me as if I had forgotten to get dressed. But at the end of the first month when we started to reconcile the balances, I sat and prayed and asked God to show me where my accounts were out.

"Oh, Lord," I said, "I stepped out and told everyone that You are alive and real. I know You want me to have a testimony. Help!" The Holy Spirit whispered in my ear and told me in which section of the accounts to look. In a few minutes I had found the error, and my balances were all OK.

No one said anything. I didn't say anything either, but the point was made. Every month after that I would sit and pray, and the Lord would tell me where to look. Always within a few minutes my balances were OK. The other employees began to wait for me to pray and got used to seeing God come through.

But settling my accounts was not the only way God revealed Himself to the employees. He began to show me things about them—and released me to confront them.

You see, I wanted to have a testimony when I left that place. I wanted people to know that God is real and that He really does communicate with us today. And I wanted an opportunity to tell them about Jesus. So when God would show me things, I would let the people know that He was “reading their mail.”

The chief salesman was a very worldly man. When the Lord began to show me some things about him, I stepped out in faith.

“Ron,” I said one day when he came into the office for a file, “God showed me that you are selling the company accounts to another company and that you are planning to follow them.”

Ron looked at me with a very open mouth, like a goldfish. He knew he was caught.

“What are you going to do?” he asked.

“Nothing if you bring back the accounts,” I said. He did, and after that he began to keep well away from my desk.

When I was in the chief accountant’s office one day I stepped out again. “The Lord has been telling me something concerning you,” I said.

“Oh, really!” he responded.

“Yes,” I said. “You have been swiping the petty cash.”

“What will you do?” he asked me.

“Nothing, if you promise to stop and put back what you can.”

As far as I know, he did stop, but he kept his distance—except when his wife left him. Then he wanted me to pray!

The Lord gave me words of knowledge and prophetic words for people there all the time. They came to know that God was around and that He knew all about them.

This is part of the purpose of prophecy, as 1 Corinthians 14:24-25 points out: "If all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in [to the church], he by all. And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you."

God Wants You The Lord wants to give you opportunities such as those I had to show that He is real. How will people know if you don't step out and let them see God in action? If you can hear His voice and are willing to obey, He is more than willing to demonstrate His Word.

Unfortunately, we take ourselves too seriously sometimes. We get concerned about our "reputation," and it hinders us from obeying the Holy Spirit. We miss a great deal of excitement and adventure that way.

Don't let self-consciousness hold you back. God wants to use you. People may not always get saved right away, but they will know that God has their number. The rest is up to Him and the work of His Spirit. Your job is simply to listen for His prompting and do what He says, no matter where you are, what you're doing or who's looking. If you do, you will make a difference for eternity!

Read a companion devotional.

Kathie Walters travels and speaks nationally and internationally. She is the author of several books, including *Living in the Supernatural*, *Parenting by the Spirit* and *Celtic Flames*.

When It Comes to Miracles, God's Timing Is Always Perfect

Logan Knupp was born in March 1997 to Alan and Lisa Knupp. Eight months later, Lisa noticed her happy baby showing some odd behaviors. He had trouble sitting up. One of his eyes had turned inward. He was becoming wobbly and had bouts of projectile vomiting.

Lisa took Logan to the family pediatrician, who found nothing wrong but sent Logan on to a noted ophthalmologist to determine why his eye appeared to be turning inward. The ophthalmologist sent Logan for an MRI at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. The test revealed a malignant tumor the size of a ping-pong ball growing at the base of Logan's brain.

The next day, Logan spent six long, agonizing hours in surgery as a medical team removed the **tumor**. In the operating room, doctors found the tumor laying on the base of the brain, and they successfully removed 98 percent of it.

Doctors ordered another MRI the following day. Alan and Lisa were waiting with Logan in the baby's hospital room when the entire neurology team came in to break the news: Logan's spinal cord was encased by a tumor that had wrapped itself around Logan's spine like an ivy vine. The prognosis was absolutely stunning and tragic: Logan had a one in 10 chance of living to see his first birthday.

The medical team revealed there was nothing they could do. The tumor on Logan's spine was inoperable. It appeared the only thing that could be done was for Alan and Lisa to make the

most of whatever time Logan had left.

Alan and Lisa were told that with very aggressive **chemotherapy**, Logan's life could possibly be prolonged. Because they wanted as much time with their son as possible, they agreed to extensive chemotherapy. Logan's treatment would consist of chemotherapy for the next three years, provided Logan survived that long. It was decided chemotherapy would start on Sunday and go 24 hours a day for seven days. Logan would rest for a week, after which another round would begin.

The following month, a woman they knew as a prayer warrior came to see Logan's family. Alan says, "She told us **God** had shown her Logan's spine, and at the bottom of the spine was an ax, and the ax was lying down. The ax was a sign that God had cut away the tumor and had put down the ax to show His work was finished."

It was a month after the initial diagnosis, during the second round of weeklong chemotherapy treatments, that the Knupps got some more shocking news. After another MRI, the radiologist entered Logan's hospital room and told the family they could go home. Alan and Lisa were confused. They knew they had to stay the entire week for Logan's chemotherapy treatment.

"What about the tumor?" they asked. "What tumor?" asked the radiologist. "Your son is fine."

The Knupps were speechless.

The radiologist placed the MRIs side by side. The results of the new test revealed only a dark shadow at the bottom of the baby's spine. The Knupps believed this shadow was the "ax of God," laid down when Logan's **healing** was accomplished.

These new scans set off a stir. A team of doctors evaluated the results. No one could explain how a tumor that was supposed to claim Logan's life no longer existed. A doctor performed a spinal tap on Logan and reported no sign of any

tumor, even at the cellular level. There was nothing on the baby's **spine**, he said. The tumor was completely gone. Logan was cancer-free.

Today Logan is 15 years old and in the ninth grade. He enjoys playing hockey and basketball and going to youth group activities. His last MRI was in 2003. He has never had another tumor, and doctors say it is unlikely he ever will.

Alan and Lisa did not receive their **miracle** when they wanted it. They preferred to have it before the surgeons ever operated on Logan the first time. But our ways are not necessarily God's ways, and our **timing** is often not synchronized with God's time. But one thing is sure: If we can be **patient**, God will get to us in His time, and His timing is always perfect.

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How to Handle Your Call to Lead When You're a Woman

God is placing more women in ministry leadership roles today than ever before. The number of God-fearing women serving in leadership roles traditionally held by men in churches, ministries and Christian organizations of every kind is growing. How exciting to see godly men and women serving together at every level and the body of Christ more closely

resembling the fullness of our Creator.

If you are called to be a leader in Christian ministry, God will bring it about. Psalm 75:6-7 tells us that promotion comes from the Lord. He also determines how long each leader serves. It is not up to us to prove or position ourselves for leadership. It is up to us only to be prepared and to live pure lives of obedience as we walk with God. That knowledge relieves the pressure of having to “perform” or to please people. We need to please only God.

My own journey in Christian leadership has been filled with blessings as well as challenges and changes. As I continually submit my ministry to the Lord, He has directed my steps and shown me His great wisdom. He also has taught me some key principles of Christian leadership that women need in order to be effective.

Walk in Humility Leaders who walk in humility not only engender the favor of the Lord, but also evoke trust, honesty and support from their peers and staff. Having a woman serve in ministry or church leadership is a fairly new phenomenon for many men who have been in ministry for years. A spirit of humility will help disarm the internal conflict they may be confronting.

Our accuser, the devil, will use any opening to sow distrust and disunity among ministry leaders. A hint of pride can be misconstrued as a manipulative “Jezebel” spirit. James 4:10 tells us to humble ourselves before God, and He will exalt us.

A spirit of humility also overcomes the spirits of pride and arrogance that leaders are sure to encounter along the way. It is very tempting to take an aloof, self-righteous posture when decisions are questioned or mistakes pointed out. Fight that with humility. Hear what is said, and take it to the Lord.

Several years ago, one of my peers came to me with an offense. I honestly did not think I had done anything wrong and was

tempted to shrug off the whole thing. However, tension was building between the two of us and between our teams.

We both took the matter to prayer and made some visible adjustments in our relationship. Our simple act made a significant change in the spiritual climate of the entire organization. Godly leaders will make changes in themselves and override previous decisions if necessary to stay in line with God's Word and on track with the vision.

Know Your Boundaries Leaders should have a clear understanding of their mission, scope of authority and responsibilities. Having unclear boundaries leaves the door wide open for problems.

God is doing many exciting things in the world today. It may be enticing to jump on every opportunity that comes your way. Doing so, however, can distract you from your primary mission, dilute your effectiveness and hinder those who are ordained for those roles.

Having a clear vision of your mission will keep you on track, especially when opposition is fierce and problems are abundant. Be ready and willing to make tough decisions, to lead against the tide and to intercede for wisdom and victory. In ministry, the buck stops with the leader. If that is you, the buck stops with you.

As a woman leader, be vigilant against anyone who tries to assume the authority given to you. Some men, and possibly women, may try to undermine or take over that authority simply because you are a woman. Use the apostle Paul as an example. He exerted his God-given authority without apology to ensure the good of the churches under his care.

Paul rebuked those who tried to take over spiritual leadership that was his and was careful to stick to the field God had given him. Know your scope of authority, take responsibility for it and stick to it! (See 2 Cor. 10:13-15.)

A leader's responsibility includes caring for the people God brings alongside her. Jesus declared that, "Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant" (Matt. 20:26, NLT). Serving is our responsibility. It keeps us humble and keeps us in touch with the health of our team. Most of all, it sets a godly tone even in stressful situations.

This has been an area of struggle for me. God moved me into a leadership role when I was still young. I feared that if I was seen serving others, my credibility as a leader would be eroded. I feared my male counterparts would not see me as a person in authority.

I should have trusted that when God makes a place for us, no one can take it away. Our gracious and loving Father did not humiliate me in any way, but has continually and lovingly prodded me to take on the nature of His Son, the nature of a servant. I learned firsthand that as we serve, our authority in Christ grows.

Have Integrity in All Things Christian leaders of either gender cannot afford a lapse of integrity. King Jehoshaphat instructed leaders under him to "'always act in the fear of the Lord, with integrity and with undivided hearts'" (2 Chr. 19:9). His words still apply today. This should be true in personal, professional and ministry settings.

Do not mix personal and ministry funds. Ensure legal compliance unless a law opposes Scripture, which is sometimes the case in closed countries. Thoroughly examine every accusation of wrongdoing in your organization. If there is any truth to it, set the record straight.

Count the cost before making a commitment and then keep your word, even when it hurts (see Ps. 15:4). Show yourself faithful even in the small things, which indicates how you will handle greater responsibility (see Luke 16:10).

Avoid All Appearance of Evil Many eyes are upon today's Christian leaders. Some folks are looking for a role model, while others are watching for a leader to slip up so they can once again ridicule a follower of Christ.

It is wise to implement safeguards in advance to avoid compromising becomes increasingly important as more men and women serve together in leadership. Consider these practical suggestions:

- Do not spend long periods of time alone with any man, unless he is a relative.
- Reserve your most intimate thoughts and feelings for your husband, family or female accountability partner.
- If you must travel with an unrelated man, keep an appropriate distance physically and emotionally. If either of you are married, avoid one-on-one social interaction.
- If you travel to minister, take along your spouse or a female "armor bearer." Have them accompany you to your room each evening.
- If you feel drawn into an unhealthy relationship with anyone—man or woman—disengage immediately, and discuss it with your spiritual accountability partner.
- Dress modestly at all times. If you are young, be accountable in your clothing to a godly woman who is at least 10 years older.
- Although you have freedom in what you eat and drink, do not let your freedom be a stumbling block for those who are less mature. Seek God about what freedoms you can enjoy.

Christian leaders must be willing to be accountable to others for their actions and appearance. Believers cannot live by the standards of the world. Our standard must be Christ and Him alone. We are called to be "'holy, because [He is] holy'" (1 Pet. 1:16).

Choose a Good Team Every leader needs a team. Someone who fulfills a vision alone may be a very gifted individual but is no leader. The first step in assembling a good team is determining what gifts and strengths are needed to accomplish the mission. Then, honestly assess the gifting, strengths and weaknesses of team members.

Ask God to bring people with a complementary mission who have the missing gifting and strengths. Be willing to wait for the right fit. Understand God brings some people for only a short time. Be willing to release and bless them when they feel called to go elsewhere. Don't be afraid to bring aboard gifted men. Be ready to lead them.

Leading men and women is very similar. Everyone needs a clear understanding of the mission and direction. Everyone enjoys using their gifting and strengths for something meaningful. Everyone responds well to confident, caring leadership. Many men respond well to a direct communication style, but not all. That is more a function of personality type than gender. One of the main differences is how men and women build camaraderie. Men tend to lean toward joking and active fun.

Women prefer compliments and personal sharing. Finding a healthy balance for mixed gender teams is possible and makes for effective and joyful ministry dynamics.

Through the years, God has placed many men—including former senior pastors—on my team. As of yet, there have been no authority issues. Each has come in obedience to God and in fulfillment of his own mission.

As leader, my role has been to point them in the right direction and serve them so their gifting is used effectively in furthering our mission. All have respected that. We have learned from one another, and the kingdom has benefited as a result.

What About Spiritual Chauvinists? Although many Christian men

are embracing the new way God is using women in ministry leadership, not all are willing to—just yet. Some have been taught that Christian leadership is not a woman's place. Some may have cultural biases. Some are threatened by anyone else in leadership—man or woman.

Their rejection of a woman leader can take a variety of forms. They may not take her seriously. They may purposefully exclude her from strategic meetings. They may ignore her counsel and partnership. They may be outright hostile. In any case, it is critical to respond in a godly, professional manner.

Remember that bringing glory and honor to God and building His kingdom takes priority; personal pride has no place. Jesus instructed His disciples to be “wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Matt. 10:16, RSV). Conduct yourself in like manner.

If the man in question truly has a heart to see God's kingdom advanced, send a man from your team to build a relationship and see if God opens the door of partnership that way. If it proves to be a hindrance to the work of God, partner with someone else.

Do not get distracted with a battle that is not yours. Unless God assigns you to confront it, forgive and move on. God will make a way for what He wants done.

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Spiritual Warfare Strategies: Should You Shout or Stay Silent?

When it comes to **spiritual warfare** strategies, there's a time to shout and a time to stay silent. Discerning the difference can deliver your enemy into your hands—or deliver you out of the hand of your enemy.

Although there are spiritual laws and kingdom principles, you have to discern what law is operating and what principle to apply. Unfortunately, we often shout when we should keep our mouth tightly shut up, and we often keep silent when we should be shouting His praises.

If you shout when you should remain silent, you could find yourself fighting in the power of your own flesh—which won't take you far in **spiritual warfare** because our weapons are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. If you remain silent when you should shout, you could be neglecting those supernatural weapons that will cut your enemy to bits.

Hold Your Peace

When Moses delivered the Israelites out of Egypt, he came to the Red Sea. You know the story. The Red Sea was in front of him, and Pharaoh's army was behind him. The Israelites had no place to run and no place to hide—and they were afraid. The Bible says the Israelites cried out to the Lord and complained to Moses that he led them out into the wilderness to die (Ex. 14:10-12).

Moses reassured them, encouraging them not to be afraid but to stand still and, well, shut up: “Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will

accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace” (vv. 13-14, NKJV). The Message translation puts it this way: “God will fight the battle for you. And you? You keep your mouths shut!” (v. 14, MSG).

Holding your peace in spiritual battle is one key to flowing in power. Complaining about your situation only opens the door for another attack because you can't hold up your shield of faith and speak words of death (complaints) at the same time. Moreover, sometimes the battle is not yours to fight. Sometimes the battle really is the Lord's. So all of your binding and rebuking in Jesus' name is only stirring up devils that weren't bothering you before you started provoking them with your blind buffeting.

Shout the Walls Down

God delivered the Israelites out of the hand of Pharaoh's army, but only after they stopped complaining and kept their mouths shut. God gave Joshua a different strategy. Rather than staying silent, his battle plan was to make as much noise as humanly possible:

“And the Lord said to Joshua: ‘See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor. You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. It shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat” (Josh. 6:2-5, NKJV).

The result? The walls of Jericho fell down, and Joshua and his

men took the city. But they had to shout as loud as they could. The Bible calls it a “great shout.” I don’t know how God used a shout to tear down walls any more than I understand how He parted the Red Sea so the Israelites could pass through. But what I do know is this: We have the victory in Christ, but manifesting that victory largely lies in our obedience.

For example, when we practice sin, we are in disobedience and we open the door for the enemy to wreak havoc in our lives. When, on the other hand, we practice obedience, we open the door for God’s power to flow through us to overcome every obstacle. Complaining when God tells us to stand and, having done all, to stand (Eph. 6:13) won’t deliver us out of the hand of the enemy. Likewise, staying silent when God is telling us to shout won’t bring us the victory either. Obedience is a monumental key to seeing victory.

So, before you charge into battle, get your **spiritual warfare** strategy from God. That may mean staying silent. It may mean shouting. It may mean something else. Spiritual warfare is not like making cookies with a cutter. Again, although there are spiritual laws and kingdom principles, you have to discern what law is operating and what principle to apply. So follow the **Holy Spirit**, and you’ll see the victory every time. Amen.

You can download a sample chapter of Jennifer’s new book, *The Making of a Prophet*, by clicking [here](#).

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Are You Giving In to Satan's Mind Games?

What a week ... business problems, church problems, people problems. It seems all of a sudden that nothing but problems are in my life.

A few months ago, I felt as if our business was unstoppable—boy, was I wrong. Business has slowed almost to a stop. I do see light at the end of the tunnel; I just hope it's not a train.

The strains of church have taken hold as well. With the economy, the world problems and individual struggles, people are starting to become depressed and despairing—through which comes with lots of counsel.

With all of this going on, it has taken my focus off of God and placed it on me. That's not a good place to be. I don't know about you, but when I do that, depression and desperation kick in. This seems to be where the whole world is right now.

We are all so focused on ourselves that we have forgotten others are suffering as well. We are focused on the physical instead of the spiritual. This is where Satan wants us, because now he's in control. Taking our focus off of God and focusing on ourselves gives Satan the opportunity to play games with our minds—thus the depression and desperation.

So yesterday, as I am wallowing in my own pity, a ministry opportunity came about and I was able to help someone who was in need. This person was in desperate need of some help, counsel and prayer. I was able to help, and for a moment all my depression and despair went away. It was a wonderful feeling.

Imagine if just for a moment we took all our self-centered

focus and placed it on those around us. How awesome would it be? Imagine how little depression and desperation there would be in the world.

Now imagine if we stayed in the Word every day, we applied it to our lives, and we stayed focused on the others around us. That's a world I want to live in. We would be rid of depression and desperation once and for all. But any time we take our focus off of God, sooner or later the double-Ds will kick in.

So try this with me. Let's all stay in the Word, keep our focus on God and others, and then see how you and I feel. Let me know the success you have.

I would bet it's a better place than being depressed and despairing. I saw a glimpse of that yesterday in Psalm 32:7:

"You are my hiding place; You preserve me from trouble; You surround me with songs of deliverance" (NASB).

God bless, and share your faith.

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3 Reasons Why People Don't Operate in the Gifts

Even though there are countless churches that boast a statement of faith or creed claiming they believe in the continuation of the **gifts of the Spirit**, the truth is that many of these same churches deny the gifts' operation in their

meetings and services. The **Holy Spirit** is embraced in their word and doctrine but rejected in demonstration.

How is it possible that churches that theologically acknowledge the modern activity of the Holy Spirit's gifts can reject their demonstration?

A few reasons:

1. The gifts have been mystified and distanced from everyday people. As a result, Steven Brooks, in his new book, *How to Operate in the Gifts of the Spirit*, is on a mission to demystify the supernatural and show believers how accessible and normal God's power should be in their everyday lives. In some circles, the gifts have been presented as available to the "super-spiritual" and **charismatic** elite. In turn, everyday believers feel like they are unable to attain this high level of spirituality and do not pursue the gifts or desire to see them operate. If we mystify the gifts, we make them inaccessible. When they are presented as inaccessible, they become easy to avoid.

2. The gifts have been confused. In the age of seeker-sensitive churches and political correctness, it is typical for many believers to lump every type of God-given gift into one big pot and paste on the title "spiritual gifts." (Often, the more unusual and supernatural gifts are never even mentioned.) Denominations that historically have been embraced a Pentecostal approach to Christianity claim to believe in spiritual gifts and recognize that all believers have received such gifts at salvation. Sadly, through confusion, people believe they are operating in the gifts when, in fact, they are settling for something that is not what the Bible defines as a manifestation gift of the Holy Spirit.

God knit us together with unique gifts and talents, absolutely. These should be celebrated as God-birthed, God-originated and God-given. However, there is a distinct

difference between a gift of teaching, encouragement, leadership or singing, and the nine manifestation gifts of the Holy Spirit as defined in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14. This does not mean there are levels of spirituality, making people who do not operate in the nine manifestation gifts “less than.” It simply means that we need more clarity on what these gifts actually are. If we do not know what something is, it is impossible for us to operate it correctly, let alone desire its demonstration in our lives.

3. Finally, the gifts have been rejected. This has been one of the major points of contention in the Strange Fire debate. However, Brooks’ book is not written to convince you that the Holy Spirit is still at work in the world; he takes it to the next level. Assuming that the Spirit of God has not changed and that He is still moving, Brooks provides us a Bible-based handbook for what each of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit is, describes its purpose, and gives readers an understanding of how we in the 21st century can flow in these gifts—and it does not have to be mystical, weird or spooky. In fact, it can happen throughout the course of your everyday routine. You may be at work, in the grocery store, getting a haircut or on an airplane—no matter where you are, God wants to use you as His Spirit-empowered ambassador.

In the initial chapters, Brooks shows you why a relationship with the Holy Spirit is so important. He is God on the earth. The Father is in heaven, and Jesus is seated at His right hand. By implication, since the Holy Spirit is the Person of the Trinity sent into the earth, it is absolutely essential that all believers learn how to communicate with Him correctly.

Operating in the nine gifts is one important aspect relating with the Holy Spirit. By the way, the nine gifts of the Spirit are the nine keys to experiencing God’s **supernatural** power in everyday life. Brooks reminds us that everything we need to know about walking in God’s power is already clearly revealed

in Scripture.

Why is this book so important? There is a world out there absolutely desperate for the real thing. If we, the church of Jesus Christ, remain silent and timid about the Holy Spirit, we deny the humanity the very One who fills its interior. Remember, it is the Holy Spirit who removes the blinders and scales off of our eyes, illuminates the gospel message to our spirits and fills us with the presence of God.

If we deny the operation of the Spirit's gifts, we not only rob unbelievers of a potential life-changing encounter with God, but we deprive Christians of their inheritance in Christ. Even though the gifts of the Holy Spirit are not a doctrine leading to salvation, they are no mere side issue in matters of everyday Christian life.

Consider their true relevance for a moment. It should be in the safe, instructional context of the church that the gifts of the Spirit are practiced and cultivated, so that as God's representatives we can effectively operate in them outside of the four walls of the church. If we (particularly leaders and pastors) remain silent about the supernatural, there are several voices outside of the faith who are unashamedly vocal about it. These counterfeit supernatural expressions are looking for inroads into the next generation. If we do not practically train the 21st-century church how to operate in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we can be rest assured that the generation denied of authentic power will seek it out elsewhere.

This is what gives Brooks' statement concerning the Holy Spirit's importance so much substance: "I think one of the saddest things in the world is for a pastor to not allow the Holy Spirit to move as He desires in the church." Brooks discusses this concept in greater depth during his Voice of Destiny interview.

How to Operate in the Gifts of the Spirit is an ideal book for believers who desire more than their Christian experience and leaders who want to help people operate in the gifts of the Spirit. Brooks has written a user-friendly, easy-to-read guidebook. Built upon solid, scriptural insight and filled with practical examples, powerful testimonies and personal experience, this book will prove instrumental in taking you to the next level in your walk with the Holy Spirit.

Larry Sparks is host of Life Supernatural, a weekly radio program that features best-selling authors, emerging filmmakers and key ministry leaders. In addition to serving as the director of curriculum resources for Destiny Image Publishers, Larry is president and founder of Equip Culture Ministries—an organization that equips believers to experience a life of sustained victory through the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. Visit him at [www.larrysparks.com](#) or on Twitter at @LarryVSparks.

1,500 Answer Missionary Call at Miraculous Ethiopia Crusade

I'm absolutely speechless about what the Lord Jesus did here in Wendo Genet, Ethiopia. We witnessed God move in an incredible way, resulting in thousands of decisions for Christ and amazing miracles. More than 600 first-time decisions for Christ were recorded and are being carefully followed up by the local churches.

God really had His protecting hand upon us. A nearby tree broke and fell because of a very heavy storm. It plunged to the ground, missing our big sound tower by just 2 yards. If

the tree would have hit the tower, our campaign would have probably ended. But God was faithful and didn't allow it to happen.

I was deeply moved in spirit on Sunday. Approximately 1,500 people responded to an altar call for those who want to be used by God as missionaries. Only eternity will reveal the fruit of what God did here.

A young boy came to the crusade accompanied by his father on Friday. He had attended the first night of the crusade. They said the boy had been deaf. After prayer the first night of the crusade, they went home.

The next day the boy got into a squabble with one of his brothers, who blurted out, "You are so dumb!" To everyone's surprise, the boy responded, "I'm not dumb!" He would have not heard the insult before. They testified in front of a rejoicing crowd that the boy can hear perfectly. Glory to God!

A man with cataracts testified of his healing, saying he could see perfectly. A baby with a terrible lung disease that had been taken to many doctors was healed according to the testimony of her mother. She had run out of money, having spent it all on doctors, but on Thursday she said the power of God had come on her and the baby was completely healed. You can see videos of some of these testimonies on my Facebook page.

Chris Franz *founded Cita (standing for "Christ Is The Answer") Ministries in 1998. He has since led nearly 70 crusades in Africa.*