

Los Angeles Fire Destroys Over 1,000 Structures as Rabbi Leads Heroic Preschool Evacuation

Los Angeles, California, is facing a catastrophic wildfire crisis as multiple blazes, fueled by fierce Santa Ana winds, spread rapidly across the region. From the Pacific Palisades to Sylmar, thousands of residents have been evacuated, homes and businesses destroyed and containment remains elusive.

Palisades Fire: A Community Devastated

The Palisades Fire, ignited in the Santa Monica Mountains, has scorched between 2,900 and 5,000 acres as of Jan. 8, with 0% containment. Ferocious winds, some gusting over 85 mph, have propelled the flames into residential areas, forcing the evacuation of 30,000 people.

Over 1,000 structures, including parts of Palisades Charter High School, have been lost, leaving residents reeling. Power outages have plagued over 200,000 people across Los Angeles County as utility companies preemptively shut down electricity to prevent further fires.

Mandatory evacuation orders extend from Merrimac Road west to Topanga Canyon Boulevard and south to Pacific Coast Highway. The Westwood Recreation Center has been established as a shelter for displaced residents.

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Miracle Amidst the Chaos

At the Chabad Jewish Community Center of Pacific Palisades, Rabbi Zushe Cunin oversaw the safe evacuation of around 100 preschoolers. “It was a real incredible task to make sure that everybody was safely back with the families,” Rabbi Cunin told “Fox & Friends.”

Acting swiftly at the first sign of danger, the center’s staff evacuated the children even before official orders were issued. “Unfortunately, as we see this horrendous, devastating fire continuing to rage, our hearts go out to the men and women and children and families who have been devastated by this,” the rabbi said.

Despite losing iconic community spaces, Cunin emphasized the importance of unity: “It’s really a time for us all to come together and be there for each other and support each other.”

Hospital patients in Pasadena being evacuated on foot from the fires raging in California.

Chatter of inadequate water in fire hydrants for the firefighters and boots on the ground. Concerning.

Praying for people in the line of fire in Los Angeles, the Palisades, & Pasadena.

– Pastor Travis Johnson (@TravisJohnson73) January 8, 2025

Eaton Fire: Tragedy in the Foothills

The Eaton Fire, burning near Altadena and Pasadena in the Angeles National Forest, has engulfed 2,227 acres and claimed two lives. Like the Palisades Fire, it remains at 0% containment. Overnight, high winds caused the fire to grow rapidly, destroying over 1,000 acres and consuming the

Pasadena Jewish Temple and Center.

Thousands have been evacuated from affected areas, with emergency shelters set up for those fleeing the flames.

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Hurst Fire: Rapid Growth in Sylmar

In Sylmar, the Hurst Fire—also known as the Sylmar Fire—has torn through 500 acres with alarming speed, burning 100 acres in just 15 minutes. Evacuations have been ordered as the fire pushes northward toward Santa Clarita. Residents have been directed to the Ritchie Valens Recreation Center for safety.

The wildfire response includes over 1,400 firefighters battling the blazes, yet containment efforts have been hindered by relentless winds exceeding 100 mph in some areas. These conditions have grounded aircraft crucial for firefighting operations.

Both the city of Los Angeles and the state of California have declared states of emergency. Schools in Los Angeles and Pasadena remain closed, leaving families scrambling to adjust amidst the chaos.

In times of tragedy, believers are reminded of Psalm 46:1-2: “God is our refuge and strength, a well-proven help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.”

Lift up the people of Los Angeles and their leadership in prayer during this difficult time.

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James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.

Ohio Preacher Arrested During Fiery Protest Outside Abortion Clinic

A pro-life man was detained outside an abortion clinic in Ohio after he shared the gospel and offered to adopt babies.

Zack Knotts was arrested on Dec. 28 and received a misdemeanor. The citation, obtained by The Daily Signal, accuses Knotts of “knowingly generat[ing] unreasonable noise by means of a megaphone, causing inconvenience and alarm to passersby at the women’s clinic.”

Speaking to the outlet, Knotts said, “I will preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. I will warn people of the wrath to come if they don’t repent. But I always say that there’s Good News. There’s hope for you in Christ.”

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“We have free resources available,” he stated. “We contacted an adoption agency, a couple of pregnancy resource centers, and got some of their information. We have folders with literally everything they could need if they were able to come talk to us, and we hold it up in the air.”

Knotts explained that he called the police department before going to the clinic. His wife, Lindsay, told the outlet her husband’s “first emotion was just pure shock” after being approached by police outside the facility. “He was standing

there on the public sidewalk, pleading with these escorts, with the women, telling them about the Good News of the gospel, that they can be forgiven, that we have free resources for them," she said.

Those holding pro-life views in both the U.S. and U.K. have faced prison sentences for their beliefs.

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In July, pro-life activist Bevelyn Beatty Williams was sentenced to three years and five months in prison after violating the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act. Williams protested outside a New York City abortion clinic in 2020.

According to U.S. Attorney Damian Williams, the pro-life activist "repeatedly intimidated and interfered with individuals seeking and providing critical reproductive health services. She did so by physically blocking access to clinics, threatening staff, and by force."

In October, British army veteran Adam Smith-Connor was convicted for silently praying outside an abortion clinic, being found guilty of violating a Public Spaces Protection Order. The court ruled that his silent prayer was enough to show "disapproval of abortion."

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Keep Fighting in 2025

In early December I hosted a men's retreat at a camp near my home in Georgia. We hiked four miles, enjoyed wonderful Southern food, enjoyed fellowship around an outdoor fireplace, slept in bunkhouses, worshipped and prayed together, and listened to several of the younger guys give short sermons. Because of the relaxed atmosphere, many of the men opened up and shared that they were feeling battle-weary.

Let's be honest: 2024 was an intense year for many of us. The Christian life is compared to warfare for a reason. When we struggle to trust God in the midst of challenges with finances, relationships, temptations, regrets, disappointment, depression or anxiety, many of us want to give up. That's when we must pick up our spiritual weapons and fight, even on those days when we don't feel like it.

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At the men's retreat I reminded the guys about Eleazar, one of King David's "mighty men" listed in 2 Samuel 23. Scripture gives him hero status because of his determination in the midst of a fierce battle. At a time when all the other soldiers had withdrawn from the conflict—probably because of fear—Scripture says Eleazar kept going. Second Samuel 23:10a (NASB 1995) says: "He arose and struck the Philistines until his hand was weary and clung to the sword, and the Lord brought about a great victory that day."

This brave soldier won special commendation because he stayed in the fight even when everyone else quit. Even though he was exhausted, he kept swinging his sword. Because David had mentored him, Eleazar had learned a lot about how to rely on the Holy Spirit's power during warfare. He was so determined to fight that his hand was literally stuck to his weapon. He

refused to relinquish his grip until he had finished the job.

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Why is that story included in the Bible? It's because God wants you to be a determined fighter, not a quitter. Too many of us today shrink back when life gets tough. We allow our emotions to take charge. We are easily dismayed by every negative circumstance. Our spines are squishy, our resolve is weak and our grip is feeble.

King David spent plenty of time in the Lord's boot camp before training his mighty team of warriors. He wrote in Psalm 18:34, 39: "He trains my hands for battle, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze ... You have girded me with strength for battle; You have subdued under me those who rose up against me."

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Destroying the Spirit of Accusation in 2025

"When speaking truth in a land of liars, it is received by those liars as a declaration of war." –Garrett J. White

The spirit of accusation will fall in 2025 because a revival

spirit of intercession and devotion is rising. People will be delivered from the failure porn cartel and the addiction to self-righteousness. In order for this to take place, we must consider a few powerful truths:

– **First truth: Accusation will never lead to accountability.** Accusation will never lead to accountability because the accusation is not built on the foundation of *the* truth but rather on an individual's version of the truth filtered through personal feelings, opinions and past experiences. The tabloids that once sat in the checkout lines of grocery stores are similar to what we see on X, YouTube, TikTok and blog sites today.

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The tabloids, like modern technological vehicles of communication, never lead to real accountability. Only the truth leads to accountability. Accusation leads to confusion, anger and fear, causing significant collateral damage in the hearts, minds and souls of good people.

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– **Second truth: Social media has become weaponized.** Weapons of mass emotion are dropped on social media with the intention of causing people to feel before they think. If you can move someone to feel a certain way, then you can implant a belief on what they should think. This is exactly how we have seen media and social media weaponized to spread feelings and not facts.

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On X I have personally seen two unique methods of fear. The first is the expansion of an echo chamber that is loud and

hollow-loud with the voices of many fake accounts and profiles that surround differing opinions with fierce hate and attack. The second is the silence of upright individuals who see what is happening but intentionally decide not to speak about situations because of the fear of being attacked mercilessly and the inability to see the complete truth in the tidal wave of disinformation. It is almost like in the early church when people read the epistles in secret for fear of attack. I believe the truth, not the accusation, is being spread in secret out of a similar fear of being attacked.

Recently the X account DOCA published an article on counterfeit Christianity. In this article, the author writes, "For the first time in history, technology has given uninformed opinions and international platforms and mad superstars of those who find a following in controversy." The entire article is worth reading several times over.

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2025 Will Be the Year God Builds the House

"They shall build the old ruins; they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations," (Isa. 61:4).

God promises us to give us beauty for ashes, and through His

glorious grace and mercy, He makes all things new. In prophetic word for January 2025, Alwyn Uys described what he believes the Lord has spoken for the month of January and how it will carry over into the rest of the year.

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“I believe this is something God is orchestrating not just for January 2025, what this word is about, but something that leads into the whole of 2025,” says Uys.

Uys says that the Lord gave him a glimpse at 2024 compared with 2025 and how each of these years served their own purpose.

“In Psalm 25 verse 4 [it] says, ‘Show me Your ways, O Lord, teach me Your paths.’ And I believe that in 2024 there was a lot of stripping taking place, a lot of cleansing taking place, not just individually but also corporately. We saw a lot of turmoil happen in the body of Christ,” Uys says.

Uys compares 2024 to a time of cleaning and cleansing to remove whatever does not belong. He also says that there were things the Lord was doing for a period of time that lasted for a bit, but that this season is coming to an end.

“In order to step over into 2025, and going forth with the Lord, building with Him, we had to let go of certain things,” says Uys.

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Uys says this time of stripping things away is much like when a house gets painted. In order to place new paint on the house, it’s considered the best practice to remove the paint that was previously there.

“God was laying the blueprint for what He wants to do in 2025. In this 2024, He was pointing you in the right direction. He was guiding you along the path that He wants you to go into. But it was necessary that some things had to fall down to the wayside in order that God may lead you onto the path that He has for you, that He can give you the blueprint.”

Uys points to Psalm 127:1 which reads, “Except the LORD build the house, those who build labor in vain; except the LORD guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.”

“In 2025, January heading into the rest of the year, God now has a stable foundation that when He can build on,” says Uys. “He needed a clean slate. He needed a clean foundation in order that He can be the cornerstone and everything from here on out is built upon Jesus.”

Uys says 2024 was a time to experience God’s heart. Now, in this new year, we will see the hand of the Lord.

“In 2024, many people experienced the presence of God, but it was seeing the heart of the Father. Now in 2025, it’s about seeing the hand of God.”

The old year of 2024, as Uys says, was about going deeper with the Lord and seeing Him point clearly in the right direction. This included the stripping and cleansing away of old things past, but 2025 will be a time of seeing the fruit of what God has been working on. He also advises that believers intentionally seek the Lord first in all that they do in 2025.

“It’s like God has consecrated you in 2024 unto Himself and going forward everything will be built upon a solid foundation who is Jesus Christ, the cornerstone of everything the cornerstone of our lives.”

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Abby Trivett is content development editor for Charisma Media.

Pastor Troy Brewer's Prophetic Insight for 2025: A Year of Contrast

As many Christians prepare and pray for the new year, Pastor Troy Brewer of Open Door Church in Burleson, Texas, has delivered a prophetic word for 2025 that resonates with themes of godly intervention, judgment and new opportunities. Known by his deep passion for biblical number patterns, Brewer's message invites reflection on how God's hand will move in this pivotal year.

A Year of Contrast: Blessing and Judgment

"2025 is a year where we will see both the kindness and the severity of God," Brewer states, referencing Romans 11:22: "Consider therefore the kindness and severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but kindness toward you, if you continue in His kindness." According to Brewer, this duality will manifest through distinct shifts in the global and spiritual atmosphere.

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Brewer described the year as a "season of supernatural separations," where individuals, families and even nations will face decisions that align them with either God's favor or judgment. "It's a time where God's people need to be more discerning than ever before," he emphasizes. "We're going to

see doors of opportunity swing open for those who are obedient, while others may experience the consequences of their defiance.”

Prophetic Themes for 2025

Brewer’s prophetic word highlights several overarching themes that believers should watch for in 2025. These include:

1. **Supernatural Separation:** Decisions made in this year will have long-term spiritual and practical consequences. Brewer elaborates, “This is not a year to be double-minded. As James 1:8 says, ‘A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.’”
2. **Divine Redemption:** Brewer believes 2025 will bring unprecedented opportunities for restoration and healing. “God is redeeming the time for His people,” he says. “Expect Him to turn back the clock in areas where you’ve felt loss.”
3. **Judgment Against Corruption:** Brewer warned that leaders who have abused their power may face exposure and accountability. “The Lord is saying, ‘Enough is enough,’ and the scales of justice are being recalibrated,” he declares.
4. **Acceleration of Prophetic Fulfillment:** Brewer noted, “The prophecies of old are coming alive in real time. We’re witnessing the acceleration of events foretold in Scripture.”

Encouragement for Believers

Brewer’s message is not solely one of warning; it is also deeply encouraging for those who walk in obedience and faith. “God is extending an invitation to partner with Him in extraordinary ways,” he says. “This is a year to dream big and to act on those dreams with boldness.”

He advised believers to focus on cultivating their

relationship with God and staying rooted in His Word. Citing 2 Chronicles 7:14, Brewer reminded listeners of the power of repentance: “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

Practical Steps for 2025

To navigate the prophetic currents of 2025, Brewer offered practical advice:

- **Stay Spiritually Grounded:** Spend time in prayer, fasting and Bible study.
- **Discern Your Alignments:** Evaluate your relationships and affiliations. “Ask yourself, ‘Are these connections drawing me closer to God or pulling me away?’” Brewer urges.
- **Embrace Change:** Be open to unexpected opportunities. “God is opening new doors, but you have to be willing to walk through them,” he says.
- **Be Generous:** Reflecting the principle of sowing and reaping, Brewer encouraged acts of generosity. “As you give, you’ll see God’s provision in ways you can’t imagine.”

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Looking Ahead

Pastor Brewer’s prophetic word for 2025 is both a challenge and a call to action to Christians around the world. As believers prepare for a year marked by contrasts, Brewer’s message shows the importance of staying aligned with God’s will. Whether through moments of blessing or judgment, 2025 promises to be a year that demands both faith and vigilance.

“The Lord is moving powerfully in this season,” Brewer says. “It’s time to rise up, stand firm, and partner with Him to see His kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.”

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James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.

Athletes are Pointing to Jesus Through Football and Beyond

Something amazing is happening among sports teams across the country. Athletes and coaches are boldly declaring their faith in Jesus Christ and giving glory to God in locker rooms, press conferences and on the field.

What is taking place is being seen over and over again.

Most recently, it has been happening among college and professional football teams.

This football season has been marked by widespread, ongoing declarations of faith that seemed to kick off last August when the Ohio State University football team preached the gospel to 800-1,000 people on campus. In the end, about 60 students chose to get baptized into the Christian faith.

Athletes are not only speaking out about their faith, but they are gathering together to pray and worship the Lord.

Yet, over the past week, there has been a flood of bold

displays of faith.

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After guiding the Baltimore Ravens to win the AFC North to close the regular season by beating the Cleveland Browns 35-10 on Saturday, Ravens head coach John Harbaugh led his team in The Lord's Prayer.

SO MUCH BOLDNESS FOR JESUS IN AMERICA THESE DAYS ☐☐

It's a new era!

John Harbaugh leading the #Ravens in prayer after clinching the AFC North.

"Our Father, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread..."

– Dr. Malachi – (Dr. Run) (@malachiobrien) January 5, 2025

"I think back to KC (Kansas City). We said before that game that we are going to dedicate the season to each other and to God. We said to God be the glory," he told the team before leading the prayer.

"It's a bunch of guys who love ball and love one another and are willing to do it for something greater than themselves," he said.

Harbaugh has been outspoken about his Christian faith. Last year, after leading the Ravens to their first AFC Championship win in 11 years, he opened the postgame press conference by reading 1 Chronicles 29:11 from the Old Testament.

"I just want to start off with this. It was something that was

said to me before the game and is just meaningful to me, so I'm going to share it with you," Harbaugh told the assembled reporters. "Because I think it's the right thing to do.

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"It's a verse. 'Greatness, power, glory, victory, and honor belong to You. Because everything in heaven and Earth belongs to You. The kingdom belongs to you, Lord. You are the head and the ruler over everything,'" he read.

"There's an amazing spirit on this team and I just want to kind of give honor and glory where it's due," Harbaugh said.

The 62-year-old is not the only coach pointing fans to Jesus.

Liberty University head coach Jamey Chadwell was spotted wearing a "Jesus Won" t-shirt in the Bahamas Bowl Saturday in a game against the Buffalo Bulls.

To read the full story, visit our content partners at CBN News.

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Revealing the Hidden

Spiritual Dangers of Hunting the Occult

Tony Merkel, host of “The Confessionals” podcast, recently shared a cautionary spiritual perspective in an interview with Charisma Media. His personal experiences on the spiritual dangers of hunting for portals and investigating the occult serve as a sobering reminder of the risks inherent in engaging with the demonic realm.

Merkel, who described his initial fascination with portals as “unhealthy,” opened up about the spiritual warfare he has faced as a result of his explorations.

“Doing this stuff definitely gets a target on your back,” Merkel said, likening the experience to being an active player in a game. “If you’re a Christian and you’re just riding the bench, nobody’s going to guard you. But as soon as you start becoming a problem, that’s when the opponent pays attention to you.”

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This acknowledgment of demonic attack exposes a spiritual reality often overlooked: engaging with supernatural topics, even out of curiosity, can attract unwelcome attention in the spiritual realm. Merkel’s experiences align with biblical warnings about avoiding practices rooted in the occult. Deuteronomy 18:10-12 states, “There must not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or who uses divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination to the Lord.”

Merkel admitted that his obsession with portals would

eventually lead him down a spiritually dangerous path. Reflecting on his conversation with Dr. Laura Sanger, he shared, “She walked away from the interview thinking I had an unhealthy interest in the topic of portals. And I confirmed to her, ‘You’re absolutely right. I did.’” Merkel later realized he had overstepped spiritual boundaries, saying, “I felt like God gave me a lot to be trusted with, and I felt like I abused that at certain points.”

One particularly unsettling encounter involved visiting a property in Kentucky where a glowing portal had reportedly been photographed. “Hunting for portals—not a good idea,” Merkel warns. “It’s a doorway to another realm, and things go in and out of that. Trying to hunt down the doorway where things are coming in and out of...not a good idea.”

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Merkel’s experiences with the supernatural reflect a broader biblical truth. The spiritual realm is real, and engaging with it outside of God’s guidance can have severe consequences. Ephesians 6:12 reminds us, “For our fight is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

Merkel also addressed the phenomenon of so-called “Dog Man” or upright walking canines, which he believes could be linked to dark rituals, ancient demonic entities or even government experiments. “We wonder if what people are seeing are projections during rituals,” he said. Despite the intrigue, Merkel’s approach remains grounded in faith. “We don’t need to conjure things. We just go out into the woods and exist in these environments to see what happens around us.”

His team’s prayerful approach—praying before, during and after investigations—is a stark contrast to the dangerous practices of seeking out the occult. Yet Merkel’s journey has not been

without missteps. “I’ve done things I’ve regretted over the years,” he admitted. “I’ve walked in ignorance, thinking God will protect me.”

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Humility and willingness to learn from mistakes offer through Merkel’s story a cautionary tale for those tempted to explore the supernatural without recognizing the spiritual risks. As Merkel put it, “When God calls you to do something, I firmly believe He’s going to protect you and guide you through it. But that doesn’t mean you should test the boundaries.”

The Bible consistently warns against engaging with the occult, emphasizing the need for discernment and reliance on God’s protection. Merkel’s reflections echo these warnings, urging believers to avoid practices and pursuits that could lead to spiritual harm. His journey highlights the importance of staying within the boundaries of God’s calling and resisting the temptation to delve into realms best left unexplored.

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James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.

7 Types of Cancer with Dark Ties to Alcohol

A new advisory from the U.S. surgeon general categorizes alcohol consumption as the “third leading preventable cause of

cancer” in the country.

Dr. Vivek Murthy issued the guidance Friday, stating new findings link alcohol to the chances of contracting at least seven different kinds of cancer: throat, liver, esophageal, mouth, larynx, colon and rectal cancers.

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Alcohol consumption, it should be noted, had already been tied to an increased susceptibility to breast cancer. Earlier data found some 16.4% of breast cancer diagnoses in the U.S. are attributable to alcohol.

The surgeon general shared details from the nascent research in a post published to X:

Consuming any type of alcohol – beer, wine, or spirits – increases the risk for at least seven types of cancer, including cancers of the breast for women, colorectum, esophagus, liver, mouth, throat, and voice box (larynx).

*– Dr. Vivek Murthy, U.S. Surgeon General (@Surgeon_General)
January 3, 2025*

“Alcohol is a well-established, preventable cause of cancer responsible for about 100,000 cases of cancer and 20,000 cancer deaths annually in the United States—greater than the 13,500 alcohol-associated traffic crash fatalities per year in the U.S.—yet the majority of Americans are unaware of this risk,” Murthy said in a statement. “This advisory lays out steps we can all take to increase awareness of alcohol’s cancer risk and minimize harm.”

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New data found that, in 2019 alone, an estimated 96,730 were tied to alcohol consumption, including 42,400 in men and 54,330 in women.

The report summarized, in part, "Alcohol use is very common—in 2019-2020, 72% of U.S. adults reported they consumed one or more drinks per week, but less than half of U.S. adults are aware of the relationship between alcohol consumption and cancer risk."

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Fulfill Your Purpose in Life by Putting Your Faith in Action

God loves you, and He has a great plan for your life. You are a wonderful creation made by God, and He has given you a unique purpose to fulfill in this world.

Ephesians 2:10 (AMPC) says as believers in Christ,

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We are God's [own] handiwork (His workmanship), recreated in Christ Jesus, [born anew] that we may do those good works which God predestined (planned beforehand) for us [taking paths which He prepared ahead of time], that we should walk in them [living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us to live].

It's so exciting to know we are each created with a purpose and God has a wonderful life prepared in advance for us. But it's also important to understand that we have an enemy, Satan, who wants to keep us from having the life Jesus died to give us.

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Yes, Satan has a plan for us, too, but his plan is destruction and death. John 10:10 tells us the enemy "comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows)."

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The good news is, *through Christ*, we have everything we need to overcome the enemy. We just have to know who we are in Christ (who the Bible says we are because of our relationship with Him), believe that we have His authority and understand how to release the power God has given us.

Faith in God is required for us to release the power and authority given to us in Christ. Romans 12:3b (NASB) says, "God has allotted to each a measure of faith." This means God has given you enough faith to do His will, whatever it may be and no matter what the enemy sends your way to stop you.

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