

NFL Star Quarterback Kurt Warner Says He is a 'No-Label' Christian

The St. Louis Rams pro doesn't like the 'charismatic' label, but he attends a large Pentecostal church with his wife and kids

St. Louis Rams star quarterback Kurt Warner devoutly attends a large Pentecostal church, but he prefers that you don't call him a charismatic Christian.

"I'm just a Christian," Warner, 30, told Charisma before the start of the current National Football League (NFL) season. "Just put me in a church and teach me the Bible, and let me praise God, and I'm going to do it. I don't have a title. I was raised Catholic, but right now I just consider myself a Christian and beyond that I don't really have a label for myself."

But that doesn't mean Warner—who along with his wife, Brenda, and four children are members of the 4,000-member St. Louis Family Church (SLFC)—isn't open to Pentecostal doctrine and teaching. In fact, in 1999 Kurt and Brenda were introduced at their home to the baptism of the Holy Spirit by Rams tight end Ernie Conwell and SLFC pastors Jeff and Patsy Perry.

"Well, it's just something obviously new for me," said Warner, who led the Rams to Super Bowl XXXIV and won NFL and Super Bowl MVP honors two years ago. "I'd never really been in church or been shown that. Since then, I've read a lot about praying in the Spirit and allowing the Spirit to intercede for us. And it's just been a great revelation of blessing for my

prayer life.

Perry, who with his wife, Patsy, have discipled the Warners, added: "In retrospect, it was equipping for opportunities and platforms that the Lord was providing. It was supernaturally natural; it was great. They were so hungry for the Lord and for what God had for them. They both readily received what God had for them."

Warner also believes in divine healing, which is a plus in a brutal sport such as football. Besides suffering a finger injury that sidelined him for six games last season, he suffered a concussion during the last regular season game that caused lingering effects, including headaches and light sensitivity.

Warner said the Lord has healed him from the concussion, having been anointed with oil and prayed over by SLFC elders. He has also claimed healing verses such as Nahum 1:9, which says, "Whatever they plot against the Lord He will bring to an end; trouble will not come a second time" (NIV).

Additionally, he has read healing books such as Understanding the Healing Power of God by Tulsa, minister Doug Jones. "He says we must continually counteract the feelings that we have or what the devil tries to put on us with the Word of God and say, 'I'm standing on this Scripture, and that there's nothing that anybody can do to convince me otherwise,'" he said.

Warner partly attributes his injuries and the lack of focus by several Christians on the Rams last season to spiritual warfare.

"I noticed that even before the injuries came because of the way that I've lifted up the Lord's name, the devil's been attacking us—trying to get our peace and wanting us to question why this happened and lose some of our faith," Warner said. "But I understand that the devil's going to attack, and we're going to be persecuted when you lift up Jesus' name. It's given me a chance to expand my testimony and another opportunity to raise up the Lord's name and say, 'Hey, you know, with Him I'm healed, I'm protected, and we move forward.'"

Regarding other believers on the team, the Rams' Super Bowl win caused some to put God on the back burner.

"I wouldn't say it was one person, but two years ago everybody's primary concern was lifting up the Lord, and with the success came the benefits and blessings," said Warner, who expects the Rams to again make a Super Bowl run this year. "Last year, it wasn't a priority. We need to get back to that form and realize that He's who brought on the blessings and the success we had. And if we don't get that back, then I think it's going to be hard to do what we did two years ago."

-Eric Tiansay