

# Former Reality Star Finds Freedom in Christ, Leaves Harmful Teachings Behind

Former “19 Kids and Counting” star Jinger Vuolo is opening up about leaving behind the harmful teachings under which she grew up. Based on sermons by Institute in Basic Life Principles founder Bill Gothard, the teachings were known for extreme beliefs on modesty and parenting. Now, Vuolo is sharing how she’s found true freedom in the person of Christ.

“It took me so many years to realize that God was a good and loving heavenly Father, not waiting to punish me at every turn for some sin,” Vuolo said in an interview with Allie Beth Stuckey. “Maybe I forgot to confess a bad attitude I may not have confessed to God. He wasn’t going to just kill me because of that.”

In a recent video introducing her new book, “Becoming Free Indeed,” Vuolo shares how she’s known many who have walked away from the Christian faith due to Gothard’s sermons. However, she wants others to know that her rejection of these principles didn’t push her away from Christ—they pushed her toward Him.

“My faith is still intact, but it has changed,” Vuolo said. “Instead of leaving the faith entirely, I’ve been disentangling it.”

Gothard’s teachings targeted items such as clothing, music and debt until he was accused by over 30 women for harassment and misconduct. This led to his resignation from the IBLP in 2014. Gothard formally apologized for the variety of ways that he may have hurt members of the IBLP movement, but he still denied any claims made against him.

It's within these teachings that Vuolo found herself frightened to do anything that might take her outside of God's protection that she believed was dependent upon a strict adherence to whatever her parents told her to do, including confessing all sins to them so that she could be forgiven.

"In the umbrella of authority Bill Gothard would teach, like you have to stay under your parents' authority; they are basically, like, I guess you'd say almost like a priest," Vuolo told Stuckey. "You go to them to confess every little sin and every little detail of your sin and then God will forgive you."

Vuolo sees her adventure of coming to know Christ at a deeper level not as "deconstruction," but rather as "disentanglement" from the teachings that instilled more fear than faith in her. She has been tested to seek out the truth of what Scripture says, without the voice of Gothard's principles.

"It's taken years of me saying 'okay, well this is what God's Word says, and so I'm gonna believe this even if I had a twisted, warped view of the Bible for so many years from what Bill Gothard said this verse means, from what this other church said this verse means, but going back to the context, seeing the Word of God for what it truly is. Walking through the Bible just verse-by-verse with preaching, teaching, all of that has helped me to take apart what's true from what's false," she said.

Stories like Jinger Vuolo's should remind Christians that none of us are perfect and all fall short of the glory of God. If we place our trust in men, we are sure to be disappointed. But if we keep our eyes focused steadily on Christ and His glory, then we can be renewed, freed from bondage and experience our eternal inheritance. Like Vuolo discovered, there is real beauty and freedom found in Christ, and only in His Word can we place our trust and hope.

**Abby Trivett** is a marketing copywriter and coordinator and Staff Writer intern for Charisma Media.