

Oprah Winfrey's Deceptive Prayer Practices Leading Many Astray

Remember when Oprah Winfrey created a firestorm among believers by suggesting that Jesus is not the only way? Apparently, her drift away from the Way, the Truth and the Life started decades ago when her Baptist pastor referred to God as a jealous God (see Ex. 20:4-5).

"I looked around and thought, 'Why would God be jealous? What does that even mean?' And I'm looking at the people in the church, and everybody's up, shouting," Winfrey told *O* magazine readers of the experience, which happened when she was in her 20s. "And I started wondering how many of these people—including myself—would be led to do whatever this preacher said. That's when I started exploring taking God out of the box, out of the pew."

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I agree that we don't need to do whatever a preacher says or put God in a box, but Oprah took God into the New Age with her Oprah's Lifeclass: the Tour in 2012 in which she partnered with New Age guru Deepak Chopra on a broadcast about "Spiritual Solutions." It was against that backdrop that she claimed she was a Christian, which set off another huge debate about the entertainment and media icon's faith.

"I am not talking about religion. I am a Christian. That is my faith," Winfrey told her Radio City Music Hall audience. "I'm not asking you to be a Christian. If you want to be one I can show you how. But it is not required. I have respect for all faiths. All faiths. But what I'm talking about is not faith or religion. I'm talking about spirituality."

New Age Meditation

This “spirituality” made its way to Stanford University’s Memorial Church last week. Oprah led over 1,000 members of Stanford in some sort of New Age meditation exercise.

“Close your eyes for a moment, will you please, and breathe with me,” she told them. “And if you will, put your thumb to your middle finger and gather your other fingers around, and let’s feel the vibration and pulse of your personal energy as you take three deep breaths with me.”

Oprah went on to share with them a secret to prayer, or at least her version of prayer.

“Open your heart and quietly to yourself say the only prayer that’s ever needed: Thank you, thank you, thank you,” she said. “You’re still here. You get another chance *this day* to do better and be better, another chance to become *more* of who you were created and what you’re created to fulfill. Thank you. Amen.”

In fact, Winfrey said she started a gratitude journal in the 1980s and suggested her listeners take up the practice.

“Gratitude journaling has become a spiritual practice that leads to a more enhanced and meaningful life, and you can start it today,” she said. “I guarantee if you did it for a week you would see a difference, because every day—and I’ll do it when I go home—I write down five things that I am grateful for, or that brought me joy or opened my heart space.”

A New Age Take on Prayer

I’m all for gratitude journals. I’m all for prayers of thanksgiving. But this New Age take on prayer is simply not biblical. “Thank you, thank you, thank you” is not the only prayer that’s ever needed. This is so far from the truth that I have to call it what it is: deception. The Bible commands us

to pray for very specific things beyond thanks.

Consider 1 Timothy 2:1-4: "Therefore I exhort first of all that you make supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings for everyone, for kings and for all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty, for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

What about Psalm 122:6, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem."

Oh, and let's not forget the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13: "Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

I appreciate the encouragement that Oprah has given many over the years, but her alignment with New Agers like Chopra, the graphic depiction of sexual perversion on her television network, and her open door for heretics like Rob Bell to trash the Bible on her program trouble me. These are not the moves of a woman who knows how to pray and tap into the wisdom of God.

My Prayer for Oprah

Oprah claims to be a Christian and I will not judge her salvation, but clearly she's wielding her great influence in a way that's conflicting with Christian values and biblical teachings. The Bible tells us to give thanks when we pray, but "thank you, thank you, thank you" is not "the only prayer that's ever needed."

My prayer for Oprah comes out of Ephesians 1:17-21: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give

Oprah the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, that the eyes of her understanding may be enlightened, that she may know what is the hope of His calling and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance among the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward those who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He performed in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principalities, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come." Amen.

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