

Prophetic Instruction to Intercessors: Shift the Atmosphere and Get Rid of the Snake

This is a word to sound an alarm for those who pray for the church and those who lead it. It is a reminder that intercessors have a powerful God-given grace to shift atmospheres and cultures through their prayers. It is also a warning of how the enemy is poisoning that same grace to weaken the Church and its witness.

Intercessors open gateways to God's presence that permeate every priority in the life of the church (Mal. 1:11; Luke 3:21). Just as parents create and establish an atmosphere in the home, so do intercessors create and nurture a spiritual environment in the Church that can either open doors to heaven, or open doors to hell. The Lord wants us to know the difference and address some ungodly beliefs that are limiting our influence in intercession.

I was shown in a recent dream how the enemy was sneaking into the church through a faulty mindset that was impacting every area of the community. It was represented as a snake that was brought in for Show and Tell—and it was brought in by an intercessor.

At the beginning of the dream, I saw a community pastor taking a count of people coming into a church service. He was preoccupied with numbers and was comparing this crowd to the last service, commenting on the means and methods to get people through the door. They were even required to register at the front desk before entering the service to help build the ministry network. I could tell his focus was on numbers,

reputation and appearance more than on kingdom values.

It was what I saw next that shook me. I went into the kitchen. I saw one of our older intercessors standing there with a bag in her hand. She had brought in her pet snake for everyone to see. I was immediately startled and surprised, yet she had no idea what she was carrying. She truly thought it was a pet and was excited for others to see it. Just like a grade-school student bringing in a pet rabbit for Show and Tell, this intercessor brought in her pet snake. I knew it represented a faulty mindset she was holding onto without realizing the poison it carried.

This snapshot revealed a demonic spirit that is creeping into the church through an ungodly belief. It's a spirit that seeks to "show and tell" more than to humbly serve. The next few scenes I was shown underscored this Show and Tell mentality that has permeated the church.

The worship team that had been hired was leading the crowd in a party-type atmosphere. Other musicians were joining in from other corners of the congregation, standing on their chairs and performing with the band, much like a karaoke activity. Everyone wanted to be seen and heard, and all were encouraged to join in. I also saw one of the leaders taking around trays of food to congregants during the service. They seemed to be more concerned with the comfort and happiness of their congregation than they were the state of their hearts.

I saw a drink being served that was known to be anti-venom drink. It had been prepared for the community to lessen the effects of the poisonous snake in their midst. I knew this represented some of the current teachings in the church that are compromising holiness and focusing on better performance in order to maintain popularity. These watered-down teachings are desensitizing believers to the consequences of Satan's poison. The last thing I saw was myself back in the kitchen, trying to get this snake back in the bag. It was struggling to

stay alive and determined to poke a hole through the bag so it could breathe.

I believe the Lord showed the snake in the kitchen near the beginning of the dream and again at the end to highlight the influence intercessors have in the atmosphere of a church. Just as the kitchen is the heart of the home, so is intercession the heart of the church. The posture and attitude of intercessors can be an aroma that attracts heaven or a musty smell that hinders the life and growth of the Spirit. What was carried in by this intercessor was affecting the entire atmosphere of the church and needed to be addressed. She was not doing it on purpose – she had simply been conditioned to believe it was a good thing.

So, how could intercessors carry this Show and Tell mindset? What ungodly belief is at work that would allow the enemy to poison a gift of prayer?

In our desire to have greater spiritual authority in prayer and be powerful prophetic voices in our culture, the enemy will try to lure us into a trap. If we struggle with any insecurity or a need for validation, intercession can become a means to notoriety rather than a privilege in private. For some, intercession can become their identity even more than sonship. If we have any bitterness in our heart towards others for not recognizing our gift of prophecy or prayer, we become snake bait. He will use our need for recognition to poison our ministry causing us to seek attention from man rather than staying hidden in Christ.

There is nothing wrong with public prayer, prophetic proclamation or powerful oracles. What poisons them is our attitudes and motives—the reasons why and how we do them. The need to show off our gifts and tell others about our inside-information, spiritual reputation or increasing popularity can open the door to this snake from hell.

This is not an easy word. Yet, as an intercessor, I have no problem sharing it because I have succumbed to this spirit myself. I know it's poison. I have lived through seasons where I wanted my prayers and prophetic words to be seen and heard in public in order to qualify me for ministry. At a time when I felt I had no voice, prophetic intercession became my ticket to having a ministry platform and valid call. I eventually saw where that attitude not only limited my influence but increased the spiritual warfare. I was playing into the enemy's hands. My need to be seen and heard had become larger than my desire to seek the quiet place. Until I repented of my selfish ambition, I was giving room for that snake to operate through my prayer life. Once I decided to humble myself and gave up my right to be seen and heard, the atmosphere in me and around me quickly changed.

This word is not to place blame or guilt on intercessors. If anything, it is meant to empower intercessors to know the true power and influence we have in the spirit. It was clear in the dream that this intercessor was not intentionally doing anything malicious or unkind. She had simply succumbed to a deceptive mindset. The Lord wants intercessors to know the kind of atmosphere-makers they really are!

"Another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. The smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand" (Rev. 8:3-4).

"For we are to God a sweet fragrance of Christ among those who are saved and among those who perish"(2 Cor. 2:15).

Just as a mother's sacrificial love, acts of kindness and hospitable spirit can create an inviting atmosphere in her home, so an intercessor can nurture an atmosphere where God's presence is priority, humility is honored and kingdom values

are celebrated. This is a privilege in prayer and one that is extremely powerful. Intercession *must* increase in the corporate church if we are to shift this culture towards kingdom values. But, in order for it to be healthy and effective, we must get rid of the snake.

For intercessors to deal with this snake called Show and Tell, I offer these scriptural admonitions:

1. Repent for any selfish ambition or pride in your gift of prophecy or prayer (James 3:14-16).
2. Lay down any preoccupation in gaining a platform or microphone (Matt. 6:6).
3. Renounce any agreement with "Show and Tell" and declare your service unto the Lord for His pleasure, and His alone (Col. 3:23).
4. Present your gift and call to intercession back to the Lord and ask Him to sanctify it and breathe fresh life into it (Isa. 53:12, 1 Tim. 2:5).
5. Bless the church, speak life to the leaders, proclaim kingdom promises and love everyone fiercely (Eph. 4:1-6, 15, 25-32).

If you are called to intercession, rejoice! Pray with boldness and confidence. Know that your prayers affect the spiritual realm in ways you cannot imagine. If the Lord has a public platform for you, trust Him to bring it in His own time as you stay faithful in the secret place. Determine to guard your heart so that your intercession is a sweet-smelling incense before the Lord that tips the bowls of heaven, bringing revival and transformation to the Church. Then, our Show and Tell won't be about us, but about Him. {eo}

Wanda Alger is a field correspondent and writer with *Intercessors for America* () and has contributed to numerous online publications such as *Christian Post*, *The Elijah List* and *Spirit Fuel*. She is a recognized fivefold prophetic minister with *DOVE USA* () and is the author of several books,

including Oracles of Grace: Building a Legacy of Wisdom and Revelation. Follow her blog at .