

7 Dangerous Myths That Can Kill Your Marriage

In more than 30 years working with couples on their marriages, I have found most couples struggle with managing their paradigms in marriage. There are good paradigms to have, but in this article, I want to tell you about some paradigms you may find in your marriage that can destroy the peace and love in your home.

As I go through these, you might identify with one you're holding onto. It's great if you can see a problematic paradigm. We can't change what we can't see.

1. **Marriage is between a man and a woman.** This is by far the most dangerous paradigm for a Christian marriage. This is 100% a secular idea and will ruin the foundation of your marriage. Marriage is between God, man and woman. God made marriage, and He is an integral person in a Christian marriage. If He is not actually enjoyed in your marriage, you have bought into a secular paradigm.
2. **Our money is ours.** No, your money is God's. He asks you to give 10% of His money to your local church. Every couple I've counseled who had significant financial difficulty did not tithe consistently. If you think all your money is yours, you may suffer financial stress in your marriage. This "mine" mentality can be found in other areas of the marriage other than money.
3. **I'm right.** If you buy into the paradigm that you're right, most conflicts or opportunities for growth become about you and you being right, which creates an adversary relationship with your spouse and any of their great and helpful ideas. Having to be right is a curse that limits you from learning from others and cancels the much-needed journey to discover the best solution.

4. **My gender entitles me to ...** In Christ there is no male or female (Gal. 3:28). Using your gender for hierarchy or control is not only sad, it's dangerous. Marriage is between three people—the King of kings, God, is the only king in your marriage. All others are servants of Him and each other. For more on this, read my book *Servant Marriage*.
5. **I'm here to be served.** This paradigm is fatally flawed. When you're married, you're called into a lifelong service of the other person. How well we serve our spouse, not how well we demanded service, will be evaluated by God. This immaturity can rot a Christian marriage from the inside out.
6. **I can't be wrong.** Since we're all sinners, we all make mistakes. Humbly accepting our flaws and taking responsibility when we're wrong is part of our Christian walk toward everyone, especially our spouse. If you haven't asked for forgiveness from your spouse, you may secretly believe you didn't sin and you're not wrong.
7. **Never ask for help.** As Christians, we're part of the body of Christ. We're interdependent, which means we depend on each other. In my experience, I have often found the wisdom I'm lacking already exists in someone else. If I'm humble enough to ask for help from another, I'm almost always helped.

When someone has the level of pride that says they're supposed to know all the answers, they'll fall hard. This is a dangerous paradigm to live with in marriage.

These are only a few of the dangerous paradigms people have wholeheartedly believed prior to coming to my office for counseling. Their hearts believed these as true. Their behavior reflected their embracing of these paradigms. Their marriage deeply paid the price for these false beliefs.

Use these paradigms as a guide to have the right attitude toward your marriage. If any of these struck a nerve with you

or you related to any of them, take steps to change. Again, it's good to evaluate the issues because you cannot change a problem if you are unaware it exists. {eoa}

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Prophet: How God Can Help You Use Your Leverage to Build His Kingdom

We all want to be successful in life. But how do we get there? Christians especially want to know how to step into their God-ordained destiny. Prophet Joe Joe Dawson offers some help.

"I want to teach you how to use your leverage. God has given every single person leverage on how to be successful in life, successful in marriage and parenting, in ministry, in business, but most of all, to be successful in the kingdom of God," Dawson says on the *Kingdom Mindset* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. "You know, it would be a shame for somebody to live their life and never fulfill the kingdom assignment that God has. ...You know, there's a lot of people who were born, and they're just wasting their life. I see so

many people who, at best, they're just trying to make it into heaven. ... They've missed the whole entire meaning of Christianity."

Dawson adds, "And I want to encourage you on how to use your leverage. Now, the word 'leverage' means 'to use something, to maximize an advantage.'

"To be successful in life, you need an advantage. God has given everybody an advantage. Now, the cool thing is, He wants us all to prosper in different areas," Dawson says. "What are you gifted at? What is your talent? What is your ability? Everybody has a gift. And when you use your gift, you will get an advantage in life."

Pointing to Isaiah 45:2, Dawson explains, "It says, 'I will march out in front of you and level every single obstacle. I will shatter into pieces bronze doors and slash through iron bars for you.' What the Lord is saying right here is, 'I'm going to go out in front of you, and I'm going to level everything that is coming against you.'"

To learn more from Dawson about how to use your leverage for the kingdom of God, [click here](#).

Why Not All Prophets' Ministries Are the Same—And Shouldn't Be

I believe that just like there are different types of people, there are also different types of prophets. There are prophets

of judgment, edification, exhortation, comfort and so on.

Jeremiah was referred to as the weeping prophet. John the Baptist was known for calling the people to repent. Anna the Prophetess was known as a worshipper (Luke 2:37). Nathan was a prophet of council, especially to those in authority (King David).

All were prophets, but their functionality and purpose were not the same. Prophets are called to distinct areas that line up with their expertise and experience. I believe that they are groomed by God to walk in specific mandates. Where one is quick to confront, another may be called to pray. While a certain prophet may be led into the wilderness for ministry, another is placed in position within the king's council. They are all prophets, but they have different assignments and personalities.

Balance in Ministry

We must always remember that just like there are different types of churches, there are different types of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. They all have distinct personalities and functions.

For example, some prophets are judgment-based ("Repent; the kingdom of God is at hand!" types). Others are encouragement-based ("Exhort, edify and comfort" types). Neither one is wrong—just different from one another, despite the fact that their calling is the same.

When we put forth our way of doing prophetic ministry on others as the "correct way," it reeks of arrogance and religion. To think that every prophet has to be hard, or every one encouraging, is a false assumption. I've seen prophets who are almost always angry, and I've seen others who are overwhelmingly encouraging. The key to both is balance.

Balance both in the office (gift) and the church. The problem

is that many people don't want to hear the true gospel in churches. When it's preached in its full power, many will leave, saying that you're being too hard on them. Ask me how I know! The key to ministry is balance. There's a time for ministering repentance and such, but there's also a time for encouragement and blessings.

Be Balanced Personally

Proverbs 11:1 talks about true and false balances. I had to learn this. When I first started, repentance was all I preached. I was consistently telling people that they were going to hell if they didn't get it right with God. "Repent!" was one of my most used words.

The result, surprisingly, was that sin increased in the church. People said I was being too hard and some left the church. I guess that I was expressing my prophetic side over my pastoral aspect. This taught me about balance and using uplifting words to get my points across concerning repentance.

Medicine goes down much more easily when sweetness is added. Just ask any kid that you know!

Decreed Blessings

Just because one decrees blessings over or above curses, doesn't mean that they are false. To say otherwise or speak negatively about prophets who are not always negative is arrogance. It is establishing their single voice as the one of the few or only true one that speaks on behalf of the Lord.

I seem to remember a prophet in the Bible thinking that he was the only one who hadn't bowed to a false god. The Lord quickly reminded him that he wasn't the only one who hadn't. Many others hadn't as well.

There are some prophets today who have a similar mindset. Prophets of God, you're not the only one. As prophets and

prophetic people, we cannot afford to be divisive at the present moment. Yet some prophetic voices are causing division. They do this by demonizing others and their associations, while sanctifying themselves and their affiliations.

Different Parts of a Whole

True prophetic ministries represent different parts of a whole. In the Gospels, there are different accounts based on personal perspectives, but all are true. Scripture lets us know that we see in part.

Each prophet gives a different piece of the puzzle. When the puzzle is complete, it gives us a whole picture. While some saw COVID-19 and others didn't, it doesn't make them false. I, for one, still believe that God will cause His people to be fruitful in a land of affliction. For many of you, I believe He's already done this. I also believe that He will continue to.

Not the Only One

"I'm the only one" prophets hide under a guise of humility, constantly pointing the finger at others, but never themselves. Their messages are full of self-centered jargon disguised as modesty. What I see is a desire for bigger platforms over a true love or concern for the people of God. Being overly critical of others is not a sign of humility, but conceit.

Prophets Have to Fight Being Consistently Negative

A prophet's natural proclivity is to be negative. I had to learn how to encourage through words of knowledge, prophecy and wisdom. It was difficult, initially. I also had to learn balance when dealing with the prophetic. Even when things look terrible, I'm going to decree an end to the terror.

If someone is ill, I'm going to speak healing. I strongly believe that the Lord graciously honors my prophetic decrees and allows many of them to come to pass. So even in the greatest darkness, I'm going to see and speak light. Selah! {eoa}

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Messianic Rabbi: How Yeshua Freed Israel From Quarantine

Nearly every conversation I have had over the past two months or so has included a statement that incorporated the word "after," such as: "After the quarantine, what will you do first?" or "I can't wait until after the quarantine when I can

get a haircut” or “I can’t wait until after the quarantine when I can hug people again.”

But the phrase spoken most often seems to be: “I can’t wait until after the quarantine when things return to the way they were—normal.”

During this time when we couldn’t go out to eat, couldn’t go to movies, couldn’t visit with friends and couldn’t gather all together for worship, I, like most of the people around the globe, have had some time to think. This is mostly because thinking is one of the few things that the quarantine didn’t place a limit upon.

As I thought about the statements listed above, I began to think about the word “after.” This simple word is one of the most powerful words in the English language. It holds within its definition hope and promise.

Yet of the promises inherent is a promise that scares many of us. The word “after” carries within its two syllables the idea of change. You cannot have an *after* unless change is taking place. These thoughts brought me to a series of verses found in Leviticus 16:1-2 (TLV):

“Then Adonai spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they approached the presence of Adonai and died. Adonai said to Moses, ‘Tell Aaron your brother not to come at just any time into the Holiest Place behind the curtain—before the atonement cover which is on the Ark—so that he would not die. For I will be appearing in the cloud over the atonement cover.’”

These verses tell of one of the saddest moments in the Torah. To understand what is taking place, you would have to turn a few pages back in your Bible to Leviticus 10 where Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu enter the Holy Place and offer strange fire. The result of their actions of disobedience is fire coming from the presence of G-D and consuming them instantly.

Six chapters later, we find that their actions had a further consequence.

Up until that time, Aaron could enter the Holy of Holies anytime he wanted to spend time with G-D. But, after the death of Nadab and Abihu, that changed and now Aaron could only enter into the Holy Place when the cloud of G-D's presence appeared upon the ark, or atonement cover.

Just imagine for a moment what a tragic "after" this was to Aaron. Not only had his sons died because of their disobedience, but after their death, Aaron was quarantined from the Holy of Holies. From that moment on, things were different. There was a significant and overwhelmingly sad change that had taken place.

Aaron's freedom to enter into G-D's presence for fellowship had been removed. This is one of the most significant and difficult "afters" in the Bible. This "after" remains the "new normal" for nearly 1,500 years.

However, about 1,500 years after Aaron experienced his "after," Israel experienced a new "after" that we read about in the book of Hebrews 10:19-20:

"Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have boldness to enter into the Holies by the blood of Yeshua. He inaugurated a new and living way for us through the curtain—that is, His flesh."

You see, because of Aaron's son's disobedience, Aaron and all the other priests of Israel experienced their "after" and were quarantined from the Holy of Holies. This horrible "after" was reversed because of the obedience of Yeshua, G-D's Son. After His death, G-D restored our freedom to enter boldly into the Holies. While Aaron's "after" was one of the saddest in history, our "after" was the most glorious. Yeshua's "after" set you and I free to enter into the very presence of G-D 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

This is confirmed in 1 Peter 2:9:

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the One who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

And the restoring of the promise made in Exodus 19:

“‘So as for you, you will be to Me a kingdom of kohanim and a holy nation.’ These are the words which you are to speak to Bnei-Yisrael.” {eoa}

Eric Tokajer is author of *With Me in Paradise*, *Transient Singularity*, *OY! How Did I Get Here?: Thirty-One Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me Before Entering Ministry*, *#ManWisdom: With Eric Tokajer, Jesus Is to Christianity as Pasta Is to Italians* and *Galatians in Context*.

For King & Country, Tori Kelly Release New Song ‘Together’

Grammy Award-winning artist Tori Kelly, for King & Country and Kirk Franklin released a new song titled “Together” about the effects of COVID-19. The music video shows people holding up signs of things they’ve lost, from the death of a loved one to a canceled wedding. Then it shows people holding up signs of silver linings surrounding the disease: being reunited with family during quarantine, relaxing and starting a garden, to

name a few. Some of the lyrics read:

“If you’re looking for hope tonight/ If you’re feeling alone tonight/ If you’re in the fight of your life/ We’re gonna make it ... If we fall, we will fall together/ When we rise, we will rise together.”

For some encouragement during these trying times, watch the entire music video [here](#).

Prophecy: The Lord Says, ‘Push Down the Gates of Hell’

The Spirit of the Lord would say to you this day, “Church, you are loosed from the bondage of this world. I did not bind your hands or gag your mouth. You have allowed the enemy to do that. But I say, ‘No more!’

“I created you to win every battle that confronts you. I say, ‘I back you every step of the way.’ You are not the tail, but the head on this earth. Trust Me; lean not onto your own understanding. Step forward and take the step of faith needed in these last days.

“Though the enemy kicks and screams against you, what is that to you? Have I not told you in My Word that he is the accuser of the brethren, falsely accusing night and day? But I have given you all of My authority over that serpent of old.

“I say, rise up, be not afraid, be bold and do not allow your hands to be tied on this earth. Break out in the power of My

might; be the mighty warriors I destined you to be.

“Open up your mouth and tell them around you that I love them, and I am coming soon. And they have a decision to make—either they are for Me, or they are against Me.

“Keep My praise on your lips morning, noon and night. I say to you, ‘Truly you do not understand the hour that you are in.’

“Don’t hold back. Push the gates of hell down, and release as many as you can from the strongholds on this earth. Do not question the authority that I have given to you on this earth to fulfill the Great Commission.

“So little time is left to gather them in. Bring as many to Me that will come.

“Don’t prejudge their decision—just give out the invitation to them in love.” {eo}

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For the original article, visit .

Pray for the Nations Suffering in This Lockdown

Americans living in their comfortable suburbs are quick to scold people for not staying indoors during the COVID-19 pandemic. We work from home on our expensive laptops, buy our essential items on Amazon, order in pizza and wear designer masks—and then condemn people who want to venture back to “nonessential jobs” because they can’t pay their rent.

I understand we need to be careful about spreading the virus. But I wish smug Americans could understand how this forced quarantine is affecting people in developing countries. A dose of reality might make us more sympathetic and a lot less self-righteous.

This past week, I raised almost \$10,000 from donors to send to church leaders in eight countries where the lockdown has triggered unimaginable suffering. In some of these countries, people can’t practice social distancing because 10 people live in one small room. Villagers make their daily wages selling food or other items in the streets—and now they are told they can’t go outside. Meanwhile, hospitals and clinics in these countries don’t have COVID-19 test kits, ventilators or even masks or other protective gear for health care workers.

I talked to friends in Uganda, Pakistan, India, Guatemala, Uganda, Nigeria, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa and Tanzania, and all gave me the same story: They are suffering.

—“Many people started getting hungry in the very early days of the lockdown,” says Mondli Myeza, who pastors His Church in Durban, South Africa. “They were living hand-to-mouth prior to the crisis. Many households have lost all income,” he says, adding that domestic violence has increased.

—Robert Kaahwa, a pastor in Masindi, Uganda, says the lockdown

in his country has been unbelievably harsh even though there has only been one reported case of COVID-19 in his city. Cars are not allowed on roads. Kaahwa is trying to feed destitute families in his community, even though he struggles to feed his wife, two children and the 12 people who are currently living in his house because they got stranded when the lockdown began eight weeks ago.

—"The economy is collapsing," adds Ugandan evangelist Medad Birungi, who is based in Kampala. "People have lost their jobs, businesses are closed and it has left people very poor," he said, noting that women have been dying in childbirth because they can't get transportation to clinics. "The government has added two more weeks to the quarantine, so it is going to be terrible. Many families are going to starve," Birungi added.

—Kelechi Okengwu, a leader in the Assemblies of God in Nigeria, says forcing people who live in slums to shelter in place may actually be spreading the virus. But people are afraid to venture outside because security officers have at times been violent with those who disobey quarantine orders. The BBC reported that security forces killed 18 Nigerians in April. "There is so much fear that without divine help, Nigeria may be the next epicenter of the virus," Okengwu said.

—There have only been a small number of COVID-19 cases in the small African nation of Malawi, with just three deaths. But the president called for a 21-day lockdown, and this sent the nation over the edge. "Some people would rather die from the coronavirus than to die from hunger," says pastor Tony Mkamanga from Mzuzu. "Others have locked themselves in their homes for the fear of COVID-19." Because Malawi is so poor, there are only four hospitals in the entire country where people can be tested for the virus.

—The nation of Kenya was already dealing with a devastating locust plague before the virus crisis began. Now the nation is

on lockdown, even though there have been only 24 deaths from COVID-19. Pastor Elijah Wafula, from the city of Moi's Bridge, near the Uganda border, says three people have already died from police beatings after the lockdown began. Says Wafula: "Many people are saying they can't sit and die in the house of hunger. They would rather die of coronavirus." Starvation is a real possibility because people can't sell anything in the markets, and poor farmers are prevented from going into their own fields to tend to crops, Wafula added.

—"We are going through a time of calamity," says Pastor Fredy de Mata from Estanzuela, Guatemala. He notes that more than 70% of Guatemalans depend on street vending or other limited businesses, but most of those jobs are shut down now by the lockdown. "People are living right now in fear and panic, and they are losing hope of a tomorrow," he says.

—Berrings Mlambya, a Pentecostal pastor in Iringa, Tanzania, describes COVID-19 as a terrifying storm. "It is as if everyone is strangled half to death," he said. In a nation where most people normally live on less than \$1 a day, the lockdown is a death sentence. "It is now a miracle to see a quarter of a dollar. There is no way to express our anxieties—we just pray, 'Lord Jesus, save us!'" Mlambya says.

I hear Americans complaining that their stimulus check hasn't yet arrived, or that certain items are hard to find on Walmart shelves. Please remember that the rest of the world doesn't live in our comfortable bubble.

Pray for nations where a lockdown is creating a starvation crisis. And consider adopting a church overseas and helping to feed people who are falling through the cracks during this global catastrophe. COVID-19 has had a terrible impact on our country, but the impact on poor nations is unimaginable. {eoa}

T.D. Jakes: Why It's Good to Bother God With Our Problems

Pastor T.D. Jakes says many times, people don't reach out to other people and even God for fear of "bothering them" with their problems. But in reality, persistence brings breakthrough. If you're going through trials, the best thing is to "bother" God through prayer with every fear, and He will give you peace in return.

"Jesus says, 'Peace, be still,' and it penetrated the turbulence around [the waves]," Jakes says. "There are some turbulent seas that we're dealing with right now and have been dealing with for a while. It's not just COVID-19; there are some systems in place that prayer must be able to penetrate. When you pray, you're bucking the system. ...

"Politeness kills the intensity of the relationship. If I didn't want you to bother me, I wouldn't have given you the number. ... I don't know how the wind is blowing against you. I don't know how tired your arms might be. I don't know how many times you have to pull the lawnmower up the hill, and it feels like it's bigger than you. But God said, 'Bother me.' ... If you bother Him, He'll rebuke your devourer. If you bother Him, He'll bind the curse."

To listen to the entire sermon titled "Bother Me," [click here](#).

WWII Underground War Rooms Lead to New Prayer Strategy

The foundations of The Strategic Prayer Initiative (SPI) can be traced back to the underground war rooms in London, where Prime Minister Winston Churchill and his staff tracked the strategy and logistics of the British elements of the Second World War.

Years ago, about one month after these rooms were made available for the first time as a public museum, the founder of SPI was sovereignly led to this surreal military bunker. While the tour guide explained how pin pricks on the great world map came from tracking supply convoys and escort ships across the Atlantic, an intense thought came into this young man's head: *We, the Christian church, believe that we are in a spiritual war, yet we don't fight it this way!* (Eph. 6:12, 1 Pet. 2:11, 2 Cor. 10:2-7, Dan. 10:12-14).

During World War II, a war in which 40 million to 65 million people lost their lives, Churchill's cabinet addressed their circumstances with the utmost seriousness and focus. They planned extensively concerning their offensive and defensive positions. As little as possible was left to chance. They spent thousands of untold hours systematically and strategically laying out their courses of action. Some individuals and churches in the U.S. are effective in engaging in spiritual warfare, but the average American Christian spends only a very modest amount of time strategically shouldering some of the responsibility for the battles that rage in the spiritual world. Independent research of almost 4,000 individuals strongly indicates that the preponderance of American Christians are unsatisfied with their present prayer lives and want to improve, if it is not too burdensome.

Through researching the key obstacles to prayer and building

tools to overcome them, SPI has developed systems and strategies that can work for any sincere Christian. Learn more at [and click here](#) to listen to the first episode of the strategic prayer series on *Charisma Connection*.

4 Things God Told Us to Do in Case of National Emergency

It's no surprise that we are witnessing the rapid deterioration of a nation right before our eyes. As a result, many are struggling with fear, anxiety and uncertainty—yet God offers hope, tremendous hope.

I recently had the privilege of speaking to our church audience from 2 Chronicles 7:14. Both messages can be heard [here](#) and [here](#). The sacred text says, “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.” Note that it does not say, “If Hollywood or Washington or the media turns to God,” but “if My people” turn.

I can already picture the emails coming in: “Second Chronicles 7:14 doesn't apply to us. It was for Israel.” As a lover of theology with a contextual underpinning, I can appreciate these statements. Many Scriptures, taken out of context, have done great damage to the church and our witness. The context of 2 Chronicles is that when God brings judgment on His people as a result of their sins, He would heal their land (think rain and a bountiful harvest). God said if they humble themselves, pray, seek Him and turn from their sin, He would reestablish His blessings.

I have a question for those who don't like using this verse in modern America: Is it a bad thing if America humbles herself, prays, seeks God and repents? Is it possible that blessings could follow such an outpour of repentance and spiritual renewal? Although the context may not apply to us, the principle of seeking God always applies.

Should we minimize the importance of Zechariah 1:3 because it wasn't written to us?—"Thus says the Lord of Hosts: Return to Me, and I will return to you." Should we discard Micah 6:8 as well?—"He has told you, O man, what is good—and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" God forbid! Like 2 Chronicles, there are very important principles in these Scriptures—principles that lead to national restoration in the midst of catastrophes. Let's take a quick look at each principle:

1. If my people humble themselves: The process of revival and hope must begin with humility. "Pride must die in you, or nothing of heaven can live in you" (Andrew Murray). The amount of pride in the church is astonishing. We've created an *American Idol* mentality with many wanting center-stage attention. We often look more like Hollywood than the character of Christ.

If we are to see a genuine move of God (which is the only hope for our nation), then we must humble ourselves and confess our pride. Our blessings have become a curse; our abundance has taken us away from God. Pride is so powerful that many people reading this will get upset rather than humble themselves and seek God afresh. I have not mastered this area. I'm a prideful person working on humility on a daily basis. But we must recognize pride, repent of it and return to God with a broken and teachable attitude.

2. If my people pray: Second Chronicles says, "If My people pray," not preach or teach. I enjoy preaching and listening to

sermons, but Jesus said, "My house shall be called a house of prayer." Prayer is the life source to our faith; it is the building block of our soul. We need people of extraordinary prayer, brokenness and humility. Men and women filled and clothed with power from on high. Those who do the most for God are always people of prayer.

When Martin Luther prayed, the church was reformed. When John Knox prayed, Scotland was revived. When John Wesley prayed, America was restored. When George Whitefield prayed, nations were changed. When D.L. Moody prayed, America fell to her knees. When Amy Carmichael prayed, India received the gospel. And on and on it goes. When you pray, you move the hand of God. The dry, dead, lethargic condition of the church simply reflects an impotent prayer life.

God is not too busy, He's not on vacation and He's not sleeping. He is an ever-present help in times of need. You can call on Him at 2 a.m. or in the midst of the storm. He hears the prayers of His children, but we must once again cultivate a life of prayer. Five-minute devotionals aren't going to cut it in these dire times. We need powerful times of prayer.

Prayerlessness in the pulpit leads to apostasy and dead sermons. Prayerlessness in the pew leads to shattered lives and depression. Prayerlessness in men leads to the breakdown of the family. Prayerlessness in Washington leads to the breakdown of society. "When faith ceases to pray, it ceases to live" (E.M. Bounds).

3. If my people seek: We have a seeking problem and a form of microwave Christianity. Churches drop service times to an hour to relate to the culture. "People are bored," they say, not realizing that church is boring because the power of God has vanished. Like Samson, "they know not that the Spirit of the Lord has departed." But there is hope. We can once again position ourselves to seek God: "You shall seek Me and find Me, when you shall search for Me with all your heart" (Jer.

29:13). To seek in this context means to “find what is missing.” The Hebrew word for seek, *baqash*, has a very strong meaning. Imagine losing your child in a crowded mall. How would you spend your time? Where would your energy be concentrated? Now parallel this with seeking God.

4. If my people turn from wickedness: The Benson Commentary is spot on: “They must humble themselves under his hand, must pray for the removal of the judgment, must seek his face and favour: and yet, all this will not be sufficient, unless they turn from their wicked ways, and return to him from whom they have revolted.”

Facebook is filled with jealousy and envy. Self-indulgence is rampant in the church. Sexual sin has reached an epidemic and some churches are allowing porn stars to speak from the platform in an attempt to reach the culture. Granted, we are called to reach out to others, but not at the expense of compromising the gospel.

I’ve witnessed soft porn images on Christian websites, questionable movie clips during PowerPoint sermons and youth pastors talk about their favorite sexually charged TV show or movie with the youth, all under the guise of “relating” to the culture. And we wonder why the American church is powerless.

Isaiah 59:1-2 reminds us, “Certainly, the hand of the Lord is not so short that it cannot save, nor is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear.”

We are running the risk of “perverting the words of the living God” (Jer. 23:36) by not warning and challenging people to turn from their sin. Pastors, as the church falls deeper into self-reliance and further from reliance on God, our need for bold leadership has never been greater. Change will only occur when there is a strong conviction of sin, genuine faith,

humility and sincere repentance—may God grant us the wisdom and strength to proclaim these truths. We must stop confusing God's patience with His approval and preach with conviction from the pulpits again. Repentance is our only hope.