

We All Need Revelation on Revelation

Why is there such controversy surrounding Revelation? (By the way, it's not "Revelations," there's no "s" on the end.) There are many reasons. Revelation is one of the most supernatural accounts we have in all the Bible, for Jesus Himself appears to John in His glorified state and takes John through heaven's portal into a realm where he sees things no one can fully describe. John had to use the words "like," "something similar to" and so on to describe what he saw.

Then, add to that all the multiple interpretive models you can apply to the book (futurist, historicist, preterist, idealist) with an almost endless supply of variations and nuances that come from hundreds of commentators. No wonder many believers today don't even bother to read the final book of the entire Bible—the book of Revelation.

We really need to have help from God as we study the book of Revelation. Don't you agree?

What would revelation on Revelation look like? I think it would look like humility. All too often we get dogmatic about a text—sure that we have understood and teach it correctly—only later to realize we only saw but a faint glimmer of His truth. To read the sacred text is like gazing upon the Grand Canyon—you can't take it all in with a glance. The light shines upon a section and reflects its beauty. So it is with reading the book of Revelation. We need God's help to understand it, and we need humility to acquire God's help.

So how does one navigate the "minefield" of oft-conflicting interpretations related to Revelation? In a word, *carefully*. Many believers hold their own view of the last days as the only valid one. It seems we all are divided over how God

brings everything together in the end. But if we start with the premise that God indeed brings all things together in Christ, we can step back, take a deep breath and leave room for differing viewpoints.

While working on The Passion Translation project, we've done our best to keep these multiple interpretations in mind as we finished the monumental task of translating the New Testament, and especially the book of Revelation. We are praying that the Holy Spirit drenches us with revelation from God, insights into His holy Word, and passion to live the truth in every aspect of our lives.

Many have asked what makes Revelation different when read in The Passion Translation. First, we've tried to explain the nuances of the Greek text. Scholars will tell you that John's text of Revelation breaks nearly every Greek grammatical rule. It's almost like he's saying, "You *have* to think out of the box." So you'll find ample explanations of many Greek words and phrases.

Also, we were working under the assumption that people don't want to simply read the book; they want to understand its meaning. With that in mind, we've kept the translation clean, crisp and to the point. We think you'll love it.

But perhaps the one guiding light for understanding this cryptic, apocalyptic book is found in its title. It is not "The Manual for Coming Events" or "How to Know When the Antichrist Comes on the Scene" or "How to Survive Armageddon." The title of the last book of the Bible is "The Unveiling of Jesus Christ." We believe that the best way to read and study this book is to look for Christ on every page. It is false advertising for God to give us a book called "The Unveiling" only to have nothing unveiled and everything confusing and unknowable. God wants to lift the veil from our eyes and show

us a beautiful Christ full of glory, coming again with love overflowing His heart for His bride. Yes, there are judgments included, and some painful episodes full of loss and death, but it all must be placed on the canvas of an unveiling of Jesus within His people.

To read Revelation is almost like reading a book in a foreign language. You must learn the language first before you can read its contents. And so the book of Revelation is written in the language of God—pictures! Take time to digest them, to “eat the scroll” (Rev. 10:9) and ponder long on what you read. It will yield its treasures to the patient and passionate ones. We know you’ll enjoy seeing Christ unveiled before your eyes.

May the Lord give us all revelation on Revelation!

[Download](#) a free e-book from *The Passion Translation* and sample of *The New Testament With Psalms, Proverbs, and Song of Songs* (releasing Oct. 31, 2017), including a section of Revelation at thepassiontranslation.com.

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Jim Bakker: The Stage Is Set for One-Fourth of the World

to Die as Fifth Seal Breaks

The stage is set for one-fourth of the world to die ahead of the fifth seal breaking, Jim Bakker says.

The televangelist discussed the Revelation end-times prophecies during a recent episode of his self-titled show.

“Power over a fourth of the earth was given to them, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth,” John wrote in the book of Revelation. “When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony they had held. They cried out with a loud voice, ‘How long, O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’ Then a white robe was given to each of them, and they were told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers should be completed, who would be killed as they were” (Rev. 8b-11).

What does this mean? Watch the video to see.

Priest Encountered the Demonic When He Entered Las Vegas Shooter’s Hotel Room

A Catholic priest recently blessed the Las Vegas hotel room from which shooter Stephen Paddock fired hundreds of rounds of ammunition on Oct. 1, killing 58 people and injuring hundreds of others.

The Rev. Clete Kiley of Chicago, Illinois, [told Newsweek](#) that he confronted evil when he approached a hallway inside the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino's 32nd floor on Oct. 18—and that he felt the same presence when he walked into the room.

“I felt surrounded by the mystery of evil,” he [told The Chicago Sun-Times](#). {eoa}

[Click here to read the rest of the story from our content partners at Faithwire.](#)

Recognizing God's Presence in Your Everyday Life

Our day-to-day lives are mostly spent doing ordinary, routine activities such as working, sleeping, eating, commuting, doing household chores and maintaining personal hygiene. The few hours, if any, that remain are normally dedicated to family, friends, hobbies, entertainment and spiritual pursuits. It is in this last category (spiritual pursuits) that our Christian culture has usually counseled us to develop our faith and pursue God's presence and kingdom. While practices such as Scripture reading and study, prayer and meditation, and fellowship and service to others are vitally important for our Christian experience, they generally are not incorporated into the remainder of our day.

Yet, if we are to live entirely for God's glory ([1 Cor. 10:31](#), [Rom.12:1](#), [1 Pet. 4:11](#)), then the 20 or so hours we dedicate daily to mundane tasks and demands should be as spiritually significant as our “special times” with the Lord. Thus, a fundamental aspect of our Christianity must be discerning the presence of God and His kingdom in our everyday

lives.

If this is true, why do so many of us overlook this down-to-earth spirituality and only seek spiritual nourishment in the little free time we have each day? One possible reason is our tendency to take everyday activities for granted because of their sameness and repetition. In general, the everyday is ignored until it becomes a problem. Since we find nothing remarkable in the ordinary, we conclude that it has no spiritual value.

As a result, many of us seek out extraordinary experiences in our limited free moments. By doing this, we too readily place our Christian experience into the category of the unusual and, thereby, overlook the valuable spiritual dimension of everyday life. Both orientations, however, are vital. Just as we are to pursue and hopefully *encounter* the extraordinary (supernatural manifestations of God's love and kingdom rule on earth), we are also to *discern* the presence of God in the mundane and humdrum activities of life.

Fortunately, our everyday affairs have the inherent capacity to reveal the sacred. Yet, to discover God's immanent presence and rule, we must move beyond merely going through the motions of daily life. Approaching life mechanically and mindlessly creates a dullness of heart that interferes with our spiritual perception and discernment. Our challenge is to pay reverent attention to daily life with the full assurance that God will meet us in the ordinary and extraordinary. Our common, routine activities and situations can then become "sacraments" that reveal the mystery of God and His kingdom. Over time, as we gain in our ability to find God in the pleasures and problems of everyday life—and not simply in signs, wonders and spiritual experiences—we can gain a deep love and respect for God, creation and our own existence.

The Workplace as Dominant Reality

From the very beginning of the Old Testament, work is portrayed as a divine ordinance for humanity ([Gen.1:26–28](#)). This charge was carried out so thoroughly by the Hebrews that they were eventually instructed to rest periodically rather than work longer or harder ([Ex. 20:9–10](#)).

In like manner, our modern society places a great emphasis on careers. For many of us, the workplace is the dominant reality. More energy goes into our occupations than into our home lives. More status is accorded to what we do at work than to any other factor. We ascribe more significance to our occupations than to any other activity and, as a result, generally worry more about them than about our health, families, and friends. Finally, more time is put into our work than anything else we do. The average, gainfully-employed adult in the United States spends approximately 88,000 hours in the workplace from his or her first full day of employment until retirement. When this statistic is measured against the mere 8,000 or so hours most of us spend over a lifetime in church meetings and activities, we can readily see why it is necessary to seek God's presence and kingdom in the marketplace and not merely at church.

Indeed, if we endure our work simply to engage in spiritual pursuits in our leisure time, then we can understandably feel jealous of early Christian monks such as the desert fathers and mothers. These saints freely meditated on God while engaged only in simple tasks. But if the Christian conception of work includes discerning God's presence and kingdom in our ordinary occupations, then everyone—biblical patriarchs, ancient monks and modern adults—has an equal opportunity to grow spiritually.

Uniting the Sacred/Secular Split

Although work is the dominant reality in our waking lives, it is generally given little spiritual reflection. How often do

we seriously consider the purpose and meaning of our work? What, apart from wages, an A on a test, or a thank you from a family member, do we receive for our efforts? How does work contribute spiritually to our personal, family and community lives? Is something “more” going on when we work? If we view work as wholly practical, rooted in the necessity to provide for self and family, we may conclude that there is nothing “larger” going on when we work.

Work and spirituality now appear as opposites. The latter seems distant and generally irrelevant to this major component of our lives. On another level, some connection between the two is possible either by recalling meaningful, work-related moments or by hoping for future encounters with God and His kingdom while engaged in our labors. Yet, this reflection and anticipation can never focus our attention on the here-and-now spirituality rooted in our daily affairs. The former practice is inadequate because it relegates the spiritual component of work to past memories, whereas the latter practice is deficient because it keeps us from discerning anything spiritual in our work until our next inspiring experience.

Unfortunately, in our hesitation or unwillingness to seek spiritual meaning in our immediate tasks and duties, we ghettoize the kingdom of God by restricting it to the religious arena. This sacred/secular orientation has made it difficult for many of us to integrate our ordinary work with Christ’s charge to put the kingdom of God first in our lives ([Matt. 6:33](#)). In addition, we may fault certain clergy and monks for making an artificial distinction between “secular” daily labor and “sacred” religious practices, yet we tend to do the same when we look for spiritual meaning in “Christian” endeavors rather than in our everyday work.

While a people-helping profession such as homemaking, social work, education or health care is the answer for some people, many of us believe that “ministry” begins only when we perform some type of church-related work or, better yet, when we are

“divinely summoned” into a full-time, paid ministry in the church. Regrettably, as Pierre Teilhard de Chardin vividly points out, this hierarchical understanding of the spirituality of work is widespread among Christians.

I don't think I am exaggerating when I say that nine out of 10 practicing Christians feel that man's work is always at the level of a spiritual encumbrance. In spite of the practice of right intentions and the day offered every morning to God, the general run of the faithful dimly feel that the time spent at the office or the studio, in the fields or in the factory, is time spent away from prayer and adoration.

This conviction inevitably forces us into a kind of schizophrenia in which our everyday, active life is disconnected from our spiritual life and God's presence. As a result, our “Christian work” and private devotions are seen as all the more necessary if we are to mature spiritually and experience God. This perspective is one of the major causes for the under-investment in work among Christians.

In light of this false dichotomy, how can we make our daily work a less secular experience? We could take an extreme approach and forsake our daily affairs for church-related or monastic pursuits. More feasibly, we could step back periodically from family, occupation, and community obligations in order to reconnect with God. Yet, while the practice of “work and retreat” is a legitimate spiritual regimen (a busy Jesus withdrew at times for prayer, (e.g., [Luke 5:16](#), [6:12](#), [9:18](#), [11:1](#); [Mark 1:35](#), [6:46](#); [Matthew 14:23](#)), it does little to help us overcome the artificial distinction between sacred and secular activities.

Nor can we find the basic answer in thinking that we bring the presence of God into our workplace or household. This type of spirituality is inevitably patronizing. In this scenario, we

look inwardly for the divine presence as we go about our daily activities, because God and His kingdom are not found in our everyday tasks as much as God is brought to remembrance in all that we do. Although this is also a commendable spiritual practice, it does not deal directly with the potential sacredness of ordinary activities and the qualities of God's kingdom hidden within them.

Ultimately, the key is to discern God and His kingdom in our everyday affairs—be they raising a family, running a home, giving a business presentation or writing a school paper—and not apart from them. To this end, we need to show reverent attentiveness to the task at hand rather than practice an ancient, monastic withdrawal from it. By carefully focusing on the present moment, we can not only deeply engage this activity with our five senses but also see and hear through it to the even greater reality underlying it. Now, in the midst of our routine chores and special tasks, we have an opportunity to find the qualities and values of God's kingdom without withdrawing our hearts and minds away for prayer and meditation.

Several ideas relate to this heightened awareness. In order to live and work in the present moment, we must believe that there is nothing more important than the here and now. It is not easy, though, to remain focused on what is before us. Our minds keep pulling us away from the immediate issue. If we are to overcome this inclination, we must develop an ongoing attitude that enables us to view our work within a larger framework as we submit ourselves to God moment by moment. Two and one-half centuries ago, the Jesuit priest Jean-Pierre de Caussade made the point:

The present moment is like a desert in which simple souls see and rejoice only in God, being solely concerned to do what he asks of them. All the rest is left behind, forgotten and surrendered to him.

De Caussade implied that those of us who rest in the present moment are like the ancient monks who renounced everything for God (specifically, those who dedicated their lives to contemplation and practiced rigorous self-denial). We, too, forsake all distractions concerning the past and future that divert us from obeying God's immediate will. For example, by reverently attending to our tasks, we can overcome the desire to escape our daily lot. When work seems overwhelming, destructive, futile, or of little value, we are to trust that, with God's help, we can make some sense of the situation, work to create new possibilities, discern the hidden and often mysterious aspects of His kingdom, and mature spiritually in the process. Finally, this here-and-now spirituality provides a useful correction of desert monastic thought on work. Rather than thinking about God as we work (as did the Desert Fathers and Mothers), we can find God in our work.

Work, Self-Denial, and God's Presence

The sacredness of the present moment is a truth that is not realized quickly. Only slowly does it move from a pious idea to a reality that is recognized within our every action. It is discovered through spiritual disciplines, one of the best of which is so ordinary that it is generally overlooked: work. If we live even in a minimally conscious way, we soon realize that life offers us numerous opportunities for self-denial. Accordingly, we begin not with the monastic practices of fasting, night prayers and strict work practices, but with reverent attention to our ordinary activities. When we focus entirely on the classic spiritual disciplines of abstinence, we fail to see that the primary locus of self-denial is in our everyday activities.

Indeed, if we never exercised self-denial at work, we would be a constant plaything of our whims and thus do real harm to others. What if mothers only fed their infants when it was convenient, or fathers only paid bills when nothing interesting was on television? What if homemakers only cleaned

and sorted when they felt like it? We can see where this would lead family life. Likewise, employees who long to tell their bosses that they are making life miserable for them may exercise self-denial for the sake of their jobs and workplace harmony.

Work is its own spiritual discipline. Choosing to stay late at work to help a peer complete a project, telling the truth when our job is at stake, studying for a test instead of talking on the phone with a friend, shuttling the kids around town all afternoon so that they can participate in sports or take music lessons, taking the trash out rather than pressing it down in the wastebasket, focusing on a particular task so it is done with excellence, volunteering to deliver meals to the homebound once a week in place of playing golf—these acts of self-denial are basic expressions of Christian spirituality and, more significantly, the kingdom of God.

This point brings out a key difference between monastic and modern forms of abstinence. The ancient desert monks tended to purposely orchestrate situations in which they used simple, non-distracting forms of manual labor to free their hearts and minds for meditation. This approach was adopted because they believed that routine, everyday activities generally blocked communion with God and, thus, spiritual development. We, on the other hand, can use the ordinary, day-to-day demands and frustrations of work as opportunities to exercise self-denial. As such, they are sandpaper for our souls and the seedbed for God's kingdom rule and reign in our lives. {eoa}

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You Can't Afford Not To Be Driven in This Area of Your Life

One of the buzzwords in business and success talk is *hustle*, emphasizing a life of constant focus and drive. The intention behind this is not all bad. Dedication, consistency and hard work need to be emphasized in order for a person to live an effective life.

To be successful, we are taught to have an unrelenting drivenness in pursuit of our goals and dreams, no matter what it takes.

But at what cost?

The benefits of living a non-stop can lead to business success, more financial gain and recognition of "success." Yet the costs are life threatening.

The Cost of Drivenness

Every day, I sit down with people who have lived a life of drivenness and constant hustle. Yet in the trail of their endless pursuits, they have left their marriage, children and emotional health in the dust. They often come to me when the nervous breakdown occurs. A lot of this is because they have lived a life where drivenness took over.

Constant busyness and never-ending driven living is like a drug. Get some sales, make some money and get some attention and you can get sucked into the vortex of that lifestyle. You can easily become deceived into thinking that those areas will fulfill the emptiness in your heart. But at some point, the driven pursuit of success will spit a person out at some point. Because it does not provide the fulfillment we hope it can.

Yet the problem is, once you engage the driven level of living, it can be very hard to turn it off or throttle it down. That is because most people find their identity and validation in living a driven life. Without those achievements and accomplishments, there is very little identity left apart from those things.

The One Area Drivenness Is Needed

The Bible teaches a lifestyle of rest and there is a great deal of urgency connected to this. Hebrews 4 tells us “let us labor therefore to enter that rest” (Heb 11:11a). This basically means, “hurry up and get into rest!”

Sounds a bit strange, but it's true. You need to labor as hard as you can to enter into rest—all day, every day. To use modern day terms, “hustle to get into rest.”

That's how important divine rest is to your life. Wanna finish the race strong? Hurry up and get into rest every day.

I know this the potential to overwhelm so many who live in a daily grind of stress and only know to be driven to perform. But it is a kingdom mind-set that must be established in us if we are to defeat the fear that propels us to stay in drivenness.

The assignment for our hearts, every morning, is to diligently enter into the rest of God, which will have an effect in every part of our life. Yet this goes counterculture to how most

people around you live. Beware, lest you get sucked into a motivation that will leave you empty.

Pulling back the layers of drivenness allows us to examine what is really going on in our hearts:

- Who am I apart from my accomplishments?
- Do I really trust in God's ability to work in my life?
- Is the pressure of life all on me?
- Do I really believe that God has my back?
- Where do I find my security and validation?

We won't change our lifestyle unless we are willing to face those questions.

If you are ready to face yourself and what is really going on in your heart, then make the changes. It may be challenging at first, but there is no better way than to live in His rest. It's here. It's available.

Run into it as fast as you can. {eoa}

Mark DeJesus has served as an experienced communicator since the 1990s. As a teacher, author, coach and radio host, Mark is deeply passionate about awakening hearts and equipping people towards transformational living. His message involves getting to the core hindrances that contribute to the breakdown of our relationships, our health and our day-to-day peace. He is well-versed on struggles that originate within our thoughts. Through his own personal transformation, Mark is experienced in helping people overcome and live fruitful lives. He is the author of five books and hundreds of teachings. He hosts a weekly radio podcast show called "Transformed You" and blogs at markdejesus.com. His writings have been featured on sites like charismamag.com.

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Faith Moves Our Feet

I recently read a devotion from *My Utmost for His Highest* by Oswald Chambers. He said: “But God will not give us good habits or character, and He will not force us to walk correctly before Him. ... To take the initiative is to make a beginning—to instruct yourself in the way you must go.”

The first principle a leader must teach about taking initiative is to make the first step. The hardest step is the first one.

We are a nation of steps—12 steps for this and 21 steps for that. The problem with steps is that many of us will skip to step 12 and start there. Step 12 is 11 steps too far.

Love-driven leaders should teach the importance of a good start. The first step creates momentum if it is properly supported.

I think one thing is certain about the process to achievement—if we skip steps in favor of a shortcut solution, we will lose the “best” of the process. If a process consists of foundational steps, when steps are skipped, the foundation is weakened.

Leaders must teach the importance of step one. Teach your team to take one action step immediately.

I believe the Lord expects us to move as soon as His Spirit draws us. Following the lead of the Holy Spirit is not a “wait until tomorrow” thing.

I believe God requires instant obedience. The Holy Spirit gives the nudge to take the first step—now.

Drawing nearer to Him requires a move.

One of the Scariest and Most Overlooked Dangers of Halloween

I grew up in a preacher's home, but we celebrated Halloween with gusto. As I got older, I wondered why we did that when I had devout Christian parents. As an adult, I saw it as the devil's holiday because it was a time when we encouraged children to dress up as ghosts, goblins, witches, devils, vampires and anything evil. That was scary, but there was still something even scarier about Halloween.

When my son was around 2, he was extremely scared of gorillas, gorilla masks or anything big, loud and hairy. There was an ad on television with a man dressed up as a gorilla and anytime it came on he cried, ran and hid.

That year at Halloween an adult family member came up to the front door wearing a gorilla face mask. My son was in the living room and saw the gorilla just as it growled. I was afraid he was traumatized for life.

I think that was the first time I thought, *Why do we have a holiday that scares our kids to death?* It didn't make sense. I was also concerned about the increasing number of entirely wicked costumes that seemed to be everywhere on every size kid from tiny to large.

Even though I weighed over 300 pounds at the time and loved anything sweet, I was also concerned about the amount of candy

a child could collect and consume in the course of one evening and what that might do to him or her. Then, there was the entire debate about whether or not it was even right for Christians to celebrate Halloween.

Is Halloween Christian?

Some say Halloween began as a celebration of All Saints Day and All Hallows Eve combined. It's said to be the time the church remembered the saints, those martyred for the faith and those who have departed this earth, according to History.com and Wikipedia.

It was a time for lighting candles and placing them on the graves of the dead, abstaining from meat and eating vegetarian foods like apples and soul cakes.

Soul cakes are small cakes filled with cinnamon, allspice, and raisins or currants. The baker would make the mark of a cross on the top of the cake. These were baked on Oct. 31, All Hallows Eve, as an offering to the dead. The next day, All Saints Day, children would go from door to door begging for the cakes, a precursor of sorts to collecting candy as is done today.

Is Halloween Pagan?

Others say the origins are in a Celtic festival commemorating the end of summer and harvest and the start of winter. It was said to be the time when the boundaries of the worlds of the living and the dead became blurred, according to History.com.

During this festival, people would light bonfires to ward off ghosts. They also made sacrifices to the Celtic gods to protect them through the winter, wore costumes and attempted to tell each other's fortunes.

The Scariest Part of Halloween

The origins of Halloween may have been Christian at one time,

but to me, the overemphasis on evil costumes, scary stories and such has taken it out of the realm of being a Christian holiday. Churches, though, that hold parties that allow fun costumes, games and family atmosphere are great alternatives.

But even they still have the scariest part of Halloween. They still give away candy, concentrated sugar, the more the merrier.

Remember the early Christians baked soul cakes, which children went around begging for? The soul cake was sweet, but it was not the like the candy we give children today. This emphasis on sugar is truly the scariest part of Halloween.

How Sugar Ruins Halloween

Did you know that over one-fourth of all candy in America is bought at Halloween? Therefore, one must logically assume it is given to the most vulnerable of us all—our children.

It really was quite uncommon when I was growing up in the 1950s and 60s to have an obese child or teen in my school. In 2017, the American Heart Association (AHA) says one in three American children and teens are overweight or obese. These statistics have more than tripled since 1971. Today, childhood obesity is the number one health concern of American parents. It has topped drug abuse and smoking.

Obesity can lead to many diseases that in previous years weren't seen until adulthood. These can include heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and elevated blood cholesterol. Then, there are psychological effects like low self-esteem and negative body image.

When we find out one of our children has a disease that can take his or her life, it will take the sweetness out of any celebration.

What Can We Do?

The AHA has tips for helping overweight children. Many of them have to do with limiting sugar or eliminating the access to foods with concentrated sugar and increasing meats, vegetables and fruits.

The correlation between sugar addiction and Halloween is something I know all too well. I endured nights of running through the rain in a ghost costume with a plastic mask over my fogged up glasses, going up to doors with adults in vampire costumes playing scary music from loudspeakers just to be able to fill my bag full as much candy as possible.

It was the one time of the year we could eat all the candy we could gather. Perhaps my mother thought it would make us so sick, we'd never want candy again. I really wish that had worked. It would have saved me years of super morbid obesity.

Halloween Is Not to Blame, We Are

Children will eat what we make available to them. If there is a current supply of fresh fruit or nuts, cheese sticks, yogurt without sugar, they will choose those.

As neighbors and friends, we can help turn this around starting with Halloween. At our house, costumed children will receive cutie oranges, goldfish snack packs, Christian or positive stickers and other similar items. Every year I've done this, parents have looked me in the eyes and said, "Thank you for not giving candy."

The truth is, we can make this holiday what we want it to be. It can be a fun time for children to celebrate in a positive way or we can contribute to a sweet tooth that in later years can lead to a full-blown addiction and possible early death.

What will you choose? {eoa}

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This article originally appeared at teresashieldsparker.com.

4 Shocking Ways Evil Spirits Deceive—And How to Avoid Them

Deceitful, unclean spirits are always lurking in the shadows, looking for some way to dissuade us from faithfully following God. We need to be on our guard at all times. Their insinuations are deceptive, manipulative, seductive and alluring. Demons lure people from a position of stability into instability in an attempt to capture them in their web of lies.

“The Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith and pay attention to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils” (1 Tim. 4:1).

We can count on the Holy Spirit to help us discern and detect the presence and tactics of enemy spirits. The brilliant light of heaven not only shines like a beacon to guide us, but it also exposes whatever is hiding in the darkness. By this light, we can both discern deceitful spirits and elude their manipulations as we pursue the one true God.

By growing in discernment, we can learn to recognize and expose demonic tactics. Demons operate in different ways in

different circumstances, perpetrating error in the most advantageous way possible, using a number of strategies. Have you seen the following four tactics of the enemy at work in your heart or life? If so, root them out by the light and love of God!

By Exaggeration—Truth Wrapped in a Lie

Much of the seductiveness of the enemy's lies comes from the fact that they contain a kernel of truth. "You are sad, aren't you?" he whispers. "You will never get over that thing your brother did to you. It's really affecting your personality. Why not do something about it? Why not get even with him, hmmm?"

It is true that your brother did something hurtful to you. It is true that you are sad. But the rest is an exaggeration and the beginning of an accusation. Soon a supposed "truth" is ringing in your head, and you lose sight of the real truth. An insinuation turns into a motivation to retaliate. You may have begun the day as a faithful follower, only to end it off in the weeds.

Paul was exasperated with the people of the church in Galatia because they so often fell for this trick of the devil, in which truth is mingled with falsehood. He wrote: "O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth? ... Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" (Gal. 3:1, 3).

By Exalting a Special Revelation Above the Word of God

Uh-oh. This is a tricky one for people who are zealous to know God's revelation. If they do not watch out, they start holding the latest prophetic word higher than the Word of God.

"That was revealed to him by an angel, so it must be reliable!"

“The Bible can’t cover everything; that’s why God sends extra-special revelation like this.”

“Get outta my way! Personal experiences don’t lie!”

Obviously, I believe that God does send special revelation to His people—but never, ever should it be held in higher esteem than the written Word of God. Even though I myself have had a number of angelic visitations and supernatural experiences that are almost indescribable, I want to remain open to correction at all times, and I return to the “main and plain” message of Scripture all the time. The extras are just extra. My happiness, and especially my salvation, do not depend on them. God helping me, I will always take seriously these warnings of Paul to the believers under his care:

Do not let anyone cheat you of your reward by delighting in false humility and the worship of angels, dwelling on those things which he has not seen, vainly arrogant due to his unspiritual mind, and not supporting the head, from which the entire body, nourished and knit together by joints and sinews, grows as God gives the increase” (Col. 2:18-19).

I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ to a different gospel, which is not a gospel. But there are some who trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ. Although if we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel to you than the one we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so I say now again: If anyone preaches any other gospel to you than the one you have received, let him be accursed (Gal. 1:6-9).

People too easily fall for the appeal of an exciting new message or its messenger, or they begin to say, “Oh well, if I can hear God for myself, then I don’t have to pay as much attention to God’s Word and what I already know to be true,

because now I can just listen, and He's going to direct me." They may even back this approach up with a proof text such as this one: "Your ears shall hear a word behind you, 'saying, This is the way, walk in it,' whenever you turn to the right or to the left" (Isa. 30:21). But again, remember that the Holy Spirit never contradicts God's Word.

Sometimes we become more susceptible to deception because of desperation. We so badly want healing or some kind of miracle for ourselves or for someone else that we will cling to a "word" that did not originate with God. Our emotional weak spots can become points of vulnerability for the enemy's alluring, fraudulent messages.

It is a slippery slope. One mild-sounding deception leads to worse ones. How else do you think people end up in cults or seriously off-balance?

By Prideful Self-Promotion

The devil loves to persuade people that they are better than others. Even though the Bible says clearly, "Do not forsake the assembling of believers" (see Heb. 10:25), such people become convinced that they are too big (too elite, too important, more educated, above criticism) to fellowship with ordinary Christians in an ordinary church. They position themselves above accountability, exalting their own giftedness or experience level.

Or they may buy into some trend in the church, even a genuine move of God, and make their association with it a source of personal pride. Eventually, they can become what I call "parked cars" in a cul-de-sac of yesterday's move of God. They have not moved forward with the Holy Spirit. They have not learned humility. They have not reached out to others with God's love.

The only cure is humility. "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6, quoting Proverbs 3:34). Oh by

the way, God does not humble us. He calls us to humble ourselves. Humility is our task, restoration and favor is God's!

Through Hero Worship

Another subtle deception of the enemy is hero worship. Along comes a preacher with a golden tongue, and blessings accrue to him. Soon he has a ministry, a slot on television or radio, and a new wardrobe. When he goes on the speaking circuit, people flock to hear him and, if they can get close enough, to take selfies with him.

It is the people I am concerned about, more than the so-called hero, because hero worship has a way of taking worship away from the only one to which it belongs, God Himself. Another concern is that even if the hero slips into error, the people often do not want to hear about it. For now, I will push pause on specifics names of people and ministries and stay with the principle that there are gifted people who start off great but finish off-course, often due to their error or pressure to perform by those surrounding them.

We have had too much of this in church history. So watch out when you see someone drawing too much attention to himself or herself, or to gifts and experiences. It can happen again and it will. There is nothing new under the sun.

“Now the Spirit clearly says that in the last times some will depart from the faith and pay attention to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their consciences seared with a hot iron ...” (1 Tim. 4:1-2).

Reaching for a Higher Realm

Paul wrote, “And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment” (Phil. 1:9). The noblest use of our discernment is for it to enlighten the love that God pours into our hearts. Then we will walk in a

spirit opposite to self-glorification and pride: “For in Him lives all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And you are complete in Him, who is the head of all authority and power” (Col. 2:9-10).

God gives us grace to live in His love: “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, righteously, and in godliness in this present world” (Titus 2:11-12). You can regain your place in that grace if you’ve lost it, but only if you surrender your claim to know what is right apart from God’s written Word.

I want to be a person who starts well by grace—and who also finishes well. Don’t you? So let’s recognize and expose these subtle deceptive tactics of the enemy, and instead grow in discerning good and evil in Jesus’ great name.

Cindy Jacobs: This Will Be a Watershed Moment for the Prophetic Movement Worldwide

When I first wrote my book, *The Voice of God* in 1998, there were only a few books in print that could be considered a teaching guide for emerging prophets. John and Paula Sandford had written their cutting-edge one, *The Elijah Task*, and Bishop Bill Hamon came out with his *Prophets and Personal Prophecy* in 1987.

While we have come a long way in both the raising up of many people who prophesy, it is still difficult today to find what can be called the prophets to the nation. For years, I have

made it a regular practice to ask the leaders of the nations where I preach—and I have been to more than 100 of them—“Who do the leaders of this nation recognize to give a credible, national word?” I have rarely had any of them even able to think of a name. Of course, this is not to say that they are not there, but most of them are not very visible.

With this in mind, for the last year, I have been scouring the world, trying to find any prophetic voice to gather together for a consultation. Many leaders are helping many here in the U.S. because there are a number of credible voices. Other nations such as Canada, England and Australia as well as Latin America have started roundtables of their own and, as a result, are beginning to issue prophetic words.

In 2015, at the U.S. gathering of prophets called the Apostolic Prophetic Council of Prophets Elders, which was formed in 1999 under Dr. Peter Wagner, I was given a prophetic word by James Goll that I was to host an international gathering of prophets in 2017 at Trinity Church in Cedar Hill, Texas.

We have obeyed that word as our ministry, Generals International, and 36 of the most respected prophets in the nation will gather together in an invitation-only consultation.

After this consultation, we will have an open event called the “Global Prophetic Summit” in which these leaders will share on the most cutting-edge prophetic teaching. Subjects include dream interpretation, the seer gift and more. There will be a room for the attendees to have their dreams interpreted as well as receive personal words of the Lord.

This is the first of its kind. It will be a watershed moment for the prophetic movement worldwide.

This hinge-of-history moment will open the door for prophetic revelation on a level that has not been known in a collective

way.

For details, please go to globalpropheticsummit.com. {eoa}

Cindy Jacobs is an author, speaker and teacher with a heart for discipling nations in the areas of prayer and prophetic gifts. She and Mike—her husband of 43 years—co-founded Generals International in 1985.

7 Guidelines for Guys and Girls as Taylor Swift Releases Scandalous Video

As a father and a grandfather it grieves me to convey some breaking news regarding music superstar Taylor Swift. This multi-gifted artist has now decided to advance her career further by disrobing to a nearly nude image in her just released music video, “Ready for It.”

This sweet young starlet who’s been a role model and inspiration to millions of youth portrays a sci-fi cyborg prancing around in a state of seeming undress. I viewed the “shock” presentation once in order to raise awareness and caution moms, dads and youth leaders.

Scripture says, “I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before my eyes”(Ps.101:2, KJV). Therefore I quickly confessed a moment of uncleanness in viewing this “push the envelope” presentation before passing along the insights that follow.

Many of us, upon reading this, ask the legitimate question, “Why is Taylor doing this? Her persona has always been

distinct from that of a Miley Cyrus, Katy Perry, Nicki Minaj or Beyoncé. We always felt comfortable recommending her music, posters and YouTube videos. Why?"

Your guess is as good as mine, but in today's competitive music world, compromises and concessions are made for fame and fortune. It's a sad reality.

What's unsettling is Taylor is doing this in light of her past statements affirming modesty and responsibility to young girls who admire, imitate and look up to her in such an adoring way.

Remember when she was interviewed by [Billboard](#) magazine and she said," The reality is what you wear matters. If you're a singer and on TV and in the living room of some 12-year-old girl, and she's watching what you're wearing and saying and doing... there is a big responsibility and I take it seriously."

Or how about her interview in [The Telegraph](#) when she in no uncertain terms disavowed immodest, sensual pictorials? "It's just a life decision... I don't feel comfortable taking my clothes off! I wouldn't wear tiny amounts of clothing in real life so I don't think it's necessary to wear that stuff in photo shoots."

I live in "Music City USA," so I interact with lots of musicians and artists. The worship leader in our church was one of the finalists on *The Voice* recently. Here is what I share with those committed to glorify God through their life and appearance.

7 Guidelines to Honor God Through our Appearance

How we dress is addressed by God so we can look attractive without inviting lustful looks which can cause others to stumble. Many Christians are not deliberately dressing immodestly but rather drift into alluring clothes out of ignorance or a desire for acceptance. Modest attire starts in the heart, not the hemline, with a sincere desire to glorify

God, not a legalistic dress code to inhibit man.

1. Romans 12:1-2 (MEV) directs us “Do not be conformed to this world” but “present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service of worship.” We should look sharp, not seductive. We can dress cool, without appearing cheap.

2. We should never wear clothing that draws lustful looks, causing others to “stumble” into sin (Matt. 18:6) or commit adultery in their heart by fantasizing after viewing us dressed provocatively (Matt. 5:28).

3. Modesty is a positive principle emphasizing inner beauty and character over outward vanity and sensuality. “I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly...” (1Tim. 2:9, NASB). This applies equally to men who can fall prey to sexy Speedos, lowrise pants and extra tight T-shirts.

4. We are “called to liberty. Only do not use liberty to give an opportunity to the flesh, but by love serve one another” (Gal. 5:13, MEV). In other words, we have the privilege to defer to rather than defraud the opposite sex through immodesty. “Defraud” is arousing sexual desires in another person that cannot be righteously satisfied (1 Thess. 4:6).

5. The Bible tells us to steer clear of all sensuality (see 1 Pet. 2:11) which is basically planned appeal to the physical senses for personal gratification.

6. When there is a question concerning an article of clothing, length of skirt, level of neckline, size of shorts, sheerness of a fabric or tightness of leggings, etc. follow the following:

* Doubt – do without (Rom.14:13).

* “Flee youthful lusts” (2 Tim. 2:22, KJV).

* “Honor your father and mother” (Eph. 6:2, MEV).

7. Determine to be countercultural, radical, charitable and courageous in holding biblical convictions, living life to the hilt for the glory of God! “My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent ... my son, do not walk in the way with them, keep your foot from their path” (Prov. 1:10, 15).

While we pray for Taylor Swift and other prominent pop-culture personalities, may these guidelines help us in this time considered

the “undressing of America.” We must not allow ourselves to become desensitized to God’s liberating and beautiful message of modesty today.

“Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman [or man] who fears the Lord, she shall be praised” (Prov. 31:30).

To repeat Taylor’s title, are you “Ready for It?”