

Supernatural Myth-Busters

Debunking the 10 most common myths about walking in the supernatural

One of the greatest hindrances to growing in new understandings in our journey with the Holy Spirit can be the way we receive a message contrary to our current understanding. Often we immediately search the Scriptures to find out whether it is false. But that is the scientific method, not the kingdom method.

Jesus tells us to receive the message with great eagerness and to search the Scriptures to see whether that message is true. When we assume falsehood out of a fear of being deceived, we open ourselves inadvertently to interpreting the Scriptures through a spirit of fear and not the leading of the Holy Spirit.

A premise based on a spirit of fear is simply a wrong premise in God's kingdom. Yet unfortunately, that's the basis on which many of us start when it comes to walking in the supernatural ways of the Holy Spirit. As a result, we end up standing on a myth rather than God's truth. One definition of a myth is "a widely held but false belief or idea." There are many of these floating around about the supernatural life in current-day Christendom. You can't journey too far without bumping into at least one of them.

Let's take a look at the 10 biggest myths concerning walking in the supernatural. They are in no particular order—and yes, I have at one time or another in my journey fallen into and/or butted against every single one of them.

Myth 1: Impressive gifts prove character.

I once attended a meeting with a visiting speaker who had a reputation for moving with great supernatural power and seeing

many people get healed. I went to the meeting eager to receive all that God had.

As worship began, I felt an expectation rising in the room. But there was something else I couldn't put my finger on. Something felt off. Still very new to corporate meetings such as this, I checked my reservation and shelved it till later.

The enigmatic speaker got up and started a 30-minute offering preamble. My spirit began to churn. It seemed so manipulative. The service went downhill from there. People did get healed in the ministry time, and my friends wanted to go down to the front for prayer. But because of some of the things I was sensing, I wanted to go nowhere near whatever was operating. Something felt wrong, but I didn't have the understanding to go with what I was picking up.

It turned out that even with people getting healed and God honoring people's faith and hunger in these meetings, this speaker had a lot of blatant issues in his life that came out later publicly. My heart felt saddened by it all. In the first place, spiritual manipulation—what I sensed was happening during that 30-minute offering preamble—is basically witchcraft. And in the second place, as a friend in those days used to say, "Gifts can take you where your character can't keep you." Gifts are given, but character is cultivated.

It's easy to be impressed by someone's supernatural gifting. I celebrate the gifts of others, but I refuse to be impressed by anything or anyone but Jesus.

Myth 2: Don't judge.

"Judge not, that you be not judged" (Matt. 7:1). How many times have we heard this Scripture phrase quoted? The problem is that it's usually quoted entirely out of context with little to no understanding of what true, godly judgment is.

I spent years beating myself up for the things I saw, thinking

I was being judgmental and harsh, attempting to shut down the very thing God was trying to grow me in: discernment. If we are going to walk in the supernatural reality we are created for, we need to understand what God says about discernment and godly judgment.

The full passage in Matthew says this: “Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye” (vv. 1-5).

When we read this passage in context, we can see it isn’t saying don’t judge; rather, it’s dealing with the context of judgment and the heart attitude behind it. An out-of-context “Don’t judge” can put so much fear in us that we shut down the very function of discernment God wants to mature in us and, in effect, shroud our ability to see in the supernatural realm. The pitfall in discernment isn’t often what we see but what we do with what we see.

Myth 3: “I could never hear God as you do.”

Have you noticed how utterly uncreative the enemy of our souls is when it comes to lying to us about our supernatural destinies? Lies have power only when we keep them in the darkness. But when we bring them into the light of God’s love, choosing to believe the truth, they rapidly fall apart in front of our eyes.

I am privileged to travel the world roughly one-third of the time to share about my journey. I have had many people come up and tell me they could never hear God as I do. That makes me

sad because it isn't true. What I walk in is available to anyone. How I walk it out and what it looks like might be unique to me, but the realm of revelation and intimacy I walk in is what Jesus died to open for all of us.

Myth 4: "If I embrace the supernatural side of God's kingdom, I might get a demon."

The demonic world would love to keep the body of Christ disconnected from her head and immobilized by fear about everything in the supernatural world. But again, any premise based on a spirit of fear is a wrong premise in the kingdom.

When we seek the kingdom of God and more of the Holy Spirit out of a place of intimacy and relationship with Jesus, we need not fear getting sidetracked by the demonic. If you go after supernatural experiences or power outside of relationship with Jesus, on the other hand, you most definitely *will* engage with the demonic world.

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). It is inside of who Jesus is that we find our access to the supernatural destiny for which we were created. It's all about relationship with Him.

Myth 5: Interaction with the angelic is dangerous.

Regular, everyday interaction with the angelic realm is 100 percent legal and normal in the kingdom of God. Hebrews 1:13-14 says, "But to which of the angels has He ever said: 'Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool'? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?"

If you are in Jesus, you are included in "those who will inherit salvation" to whom the angels are sent.

The Bible never says for believers not to talk to angels or

interact with them. Rather, it warns us not to worship them. The Scriptures are filled with angelic visitations and interactions. Early church history is packed with encounters with the angelic. It's clear from the book of Acts that the early church understood how to partner with the full provision of the supernatural realm for the purposes of God in the earth.

Myth 6: Miracles are only for places like Africa.

One dusty morning where I live, we loaded up our black four-ton truck we affectionately call Midnight Glory and piled in children, visitors and sound equipment. We headed out several miles into the bush. When we stopped, our vehicle spilled us out into a small village market.

One village elder we met was losing his eyesight. My kids and I gathered around him and began to pray, commanding his eyes to open and function properly. We stopped for him to test it out. A beaming smile spread across his face. He could see perfectly.

I tell stories like this of God faithfully bringing His kingdom when I travel and often I hear, "Yes, that's awesome, but you live in Africa."

So God works in Africa but nowhere else? That is not what you believe, is it? Somehow the enemy has sucker-punched the church in many areas into believing that the realm of the supernatural is primarily for missionaries in the bush of far-flung nations.

I have seen food multiply. I have been transrelocated (like Philip in the book of Acts). I have seen healings in America as well as in Africa and Asia. And I can just as easily step into the realm of God's kingdom in Europe or the U.S. as I can in Uganda or Uzbekistan.

God is not bound by geography. If we allow Him to transform us

by the making new of our mind-sets—literally changing the way we think and understand our world so that we are surrendered to Him—then the supernatural life we are created for will begin opening up all around us, regardless of our address.

Myth 7: The supernatural is always extraordinary.

I spent the last months of my teenage years somewhere in the rainy-season mud of rural Bangladesh. I was thousands of miles from anything remotely familiar, deposited as a wide-eyed teenager four miles past the middle of nowhere. I was utterly convinced that I had found the ends of the earth.

It was my first introduction to the raw truth that burns deeply: Miles do not a missionary make. All my flaws and weaknesses and need for grace were only magnified there. They hadn't miraculously disappeared somewhere over the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

At first I failed desperately. Each dawn came with new lessons in loving more deeply than language and laying down my right even to have an opinion. It was a beautiful, excruciating season of growth.

I needed to learn that sometimes the supernatural comes in very ordinary ways. One evening a knock came at my door as shadows stretched long across the floor. I was in my room longing for something, anything, familiar.

It was our sweet Saroti—a little, round woman who served far more than our meals and cooked far more than food. She loved me. She slipped into my room bearing biscuits and spiced tea. Her smile lit up the dim corners.

I began to learn through her that evening that some of God's greatest gifts are quiet surprises. Supernatural moments aren't always the most extraordinary ones. Some days they are wrapped in simplicity, hidden in swaddling clothes and born in unexpected places. We just have to have eyes to see them.

Myth 8: A supernatural gifting means you're supposed to be in vocational ministry.

We are not all called to vocational ministry. Our gifts will indeed make room for us, but just because someone can move in healing or see prophetically doesn't necessarily mean he or she is called to exercise these gifts in the sphere of ministry as a full-time occupation.

There seems to be a default button in some parts of the church that says the highest aspiration in the Christian life is to be in full-time vocational ministry. Jesus talked about this in a roundabout way. It's one of the most sobering things He ever said: "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matt. 7:22-23).

This passage was not directed at the unbelieving world but at those who were believers—even those who were walking in some awesome giftings. Hmmm. You mean gifts are not proof of being on the right track?

Supernatural gifts do not earn brownie points or impress God. It is about relationship and intimacy with Him, not performing for Him. We are all in full-time ministry, no matter what our vocation is. One of the most prophetic people I know happens to be a businessman. I celebrate the gifts and callings of others, but I desire just one thing: to walk fully in the mandate of heaven over my life and none other.

Myth 9: "If I can get just one more impartation ... "

I love impartation. I believe in it with all my heart. If God is moving powerfully in a place, I'll fly across continents to receive what He is pouring out. Impartation is awesome, right, good and holy, and I am not downplaying it in any way. I honor the dynamics of it and regularly seek to place myself in

positions to receive more from heaven. But sometimes a sneaky thought tries ever so hard to creep into my thought patterns: *If I can just get one more impartation, I will have what I need.*

I know this is a myth because I have had to deal with it in my own journey. And I know by experience that if I fall into its clutches, it can send me on an endless merry-go-round of chasing meeting after meeting, only to leave disappointed.

Some things in the kingdom can be imparted, but many, many must be cultivated. And there are two things that I know I absolutely cannot in any way successfully impart: 1) I cannot give away what I do not have or impart that which is not a part of me, and 2) I cannot impart to you my secret history with God.

If I can't give these things to someone else, then no one else can give them to me. That means I have to go after them and pursue them for myself. The question, dear reader, is how much do you want? How hungry are you? Sometimes Papa wants us to walk in what He has given, even while we eagerly set our desire for more of Him.

Myth 10: Bigger is always better.

Bells, whistles and tap-dancing angels. Who could resist those, right? Oh, we do live in a culture of comparison, don't we? Bigger is always better. I've fallen so often into the trap of thinking that the big, amazing ways God comes are somehow more important than the quiet, small ways. But that isn't so at all.

There's nothing wrong with desiring deeper levels of experience with Jesus. That's called hunger. We need to be hungry. It's what propels us onward in our journeys with Him.

The problem comes when we start comparing notes and measuring ourselves by others. Having bells, whistles and tap-dancing

angels in my supernatural experiences doesn't make me mature, more anointed or more loved. Likewise, your level of maturity isn't necessarily synonymous with the level or types of supernatural experiences you've had. It's what you do with them that counts.

In closing, remember that John 16:13 says, "When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come."

When we lean into God's Spirit of truth, He will show us if there is something that doesn't line up with His Word, ways or character. He is more concerned than we are with our getting it right!

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Michele Perry shares her miraculous testimony as a missionary in South Sudan at