

Beware of These Unbiblical 'Freedom Theologies'—Part 2

Editor's Note: Be sure to check out Part 1 of this series [here](#).

We Must Dive Into the Deep

"To the angel of the church in Sardis write:

"He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars says these things: I know your works, that you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.² Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain but are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfected before God" (Rev. 3:1-2).

Unbiblical "freedom theologies" reject the call to the deep. I've had people actually tell me that going deep is unnecessary. Others have called people out of the prayer rooms! They argue it's an unnecessary practice if we truly understand that there is nothing left to be done. They say we just need to rest in our fully resolved position in Christ. Still others reject prayer movements like IHOPKC because their devotion to intercession is a devotion to unnecessary works.

I'll be honest with you; I never thought I'd see entire movements of supposed Spirit-filled Christians standing in opposition to prayer!

Someone connected with me on Facebook recently and shared her desperation to see a prayer movement emerge in her region. She actually said she's been involved in a church that's all about revival, but they haven't had a prayer meeting in 10 years. I simply responded by confirming her suspicions: You can't be a revival church without a fervent, consistent and supernatural culture of prayer. It's impossible.

The Submarine Dream

My wife and I were in a military-grade nuclear submarine following behind a second submarine that contained my father and mother-in-law.

I was analyzing the situation, trying to gain understanding on what exactly were were doing while my wife was playfully looking through the periscope. Both submarines were staying at the surface of the water, and they were being used as tour vessels. The atmosphere was playful and carefree.

After a short time, everybody was done playing, and we decided to park the submarines alongside a long pier. We climbed out and walked down the pier and onto an oceanside boardwalk. There were people everywhere enjoying a beautiful sunny day. The restaurants and shops were full of activity.

We walked onto the sandy beach which was about 100 yards from the submarines.

As we gazed out over the water, both submarines suddenly began leaving. They headed out toward deeper water.

My in-laws immediately started running into the water, giving chase to the submarines. As they did, I was thinking that it was impossible for them to get anywhere near to the fast-moving vessels and I didn't understand why they had tried.

Then my wife ran into the water as well.

What I saw next can't easily be described in a way that is true to the emotion I felt. The water immediately began erupting as if a powerful hurricane were upon us. I was terrorized as I frantically tried to devise a plan to help. What I saw next drained every bit of hope from my being. A whirlpool opened up underneath my in-laws and sucked them under. Then, a second whirlpool took my wife.

I was screaming for help. A few people gathered around but

could offer no help whatsoever. I called 911 and all I heard was this recording, "We can't send help for an hour. We can't send help for an hour."

It looped over and over. I knew that *this* was the hour. I couldn't wait! The emergency was upon us.

As I stood on the beach, hopeless, the scene changed.

Only a few days had passed yet it was now bitterly cold and the water had frozen over. There was at least 10 feet of snow on top of the ice.

I started moving slowly, though as quickly as I could, through the snow in the direction of where the whirlpools were.

I started digging ferociously, and what I saw next will forever be seared in my memory.

It was my wife, frozen. She was gone.

I ran back to the boardwalk and into a restaurant. I saw someone who had tried to help previously behind the counter of a sports bar. He was a volunteer firefighter in addition to working at the restaurant. I yelled, "Help! Help! I found her! I found her! Come quickly!"

He just casually said, "Sorry man; I'm working."

What? I couldn't believe what I heard. I said, "No, you don't understand! I found my wife! I need help!"

He just said, "Sorry." and then looked at a customer and said, "How can I help you?"

I ran back to the snow where my wife was buried. I thought that maybe, just maybe, since she was frozen, there was a chance she could be revived. I've heard of people freezing and their heartbeat is slowed to almost nothing before being brought back.

As I was thinking about this, I looked down at her, and there was a piece of paper right next to her frozen face.

I picked it up. All it said was, "Wake up and strengthen what remains and is about to die."

Then I woke up.

Interpretation

When I woke up, I was shaken to my core.

As I started to pray and analyze the dream, the following is what was highlighted to me:

- **The submarines:** *Vehicles represent ministry, and I believe the submarines represented the church. The church is not meant for casual play at the surface of the water. It's a military weapon of war designed to move into the deep as it advances toward enemy targets. When the submarines left on their own, that represented the truth that the church will most certainly advance on its mission with or without us. We can be left behind as we continue our focus on entertainment and leisure if we so choose.*
- **My family:** *Of course, this was a hard-core part of the dream. The first reaction is to do everything I can to ensure those close to me are doing well and burning hot for Jesus. Beyond that, symbolically I feel they represented familiarity and presumption. It's very easy to presume those who are close to us are most certainly doing well in their relationship with Jesus—and then to model our lives after theirs. What happens so often is that we can adopt their pace and their level of passion instead of staying locked in, on alert and advancing in the fire of God. The pressure of maintaining civilities and false-unity can result in a marginalized, lukewarm, casual disposition.*

This verse best represents what I am communicating: “I know your works, that you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead” (Rev. 3:1b).

We must be careful not to presume that we are alive and that others are alive simply because of the preceding reputations. There are many people with both a spiritual legacy and a name for being zealous who are doing little more than playing—and it’s possible that those people may be some of our closest friends, family, pastors and other personal heroes. Don’t measure your life by their grid. We must calibrate to the truth in scripture that will bring light to every issue of our heart.

Then, we can be true awakeners. If we think people who are are asleep are already awake, then we will have no need to step into our roles as end-time prophetic messengers.

- **911:** *I was sounding the alarm in a variety of ways including by calling 911. I also ran into the sports bar looking for help. Both rejected the alarm. It’s clear that the hour is now for awakening though even those trained as emergency responders won’t see it. What was the alarm? Those that have a reputation of being alive are dead! Wake up!*
- **The storm:** *It was sudden, violent and out of place. It didn’t make sense, but it wasn’t obligated to explain itself. If we had been in the submarines and in the deep, the storm would not have touched us.*
“Concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark” (Matt. 24:36-38).

The Call

So, what's the call?

It's simple, and it's directed to the church, to those who are to be in the deep:

"Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain but are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfected before God" (Rev. 3:2).

"You have a few names even in Sardis who have not soiled their garments. They shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments. I will not blot his name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev. 3:4-6).

God instructed me to wrestle with Revelation 3:1. I've been burning hot for Jesus for over 20 years, yet is it possible that my devotion is not as deep as I might think? Yes, it is possible.

God didn't accuse me of being dead. He didn't reveal that my passion was false. He simply wanted me to always consider the possibility that my reputation will always be at risk of being more intense than my reality" "I know your works, that you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead" (Rev. 3:1b).

It's time to go deep, to be awake and alert and then to awaken the sleepers, many who may have a reputation of being very much alive, but are not.

It's time for revival, not the promotion of selfish "freedom theologies." This is the hour. {eoa}

John Burton has been developing and leading ministries for over 25 years and is a sought out teacher, prophetic messenger and revivalist. John has authored ten books, is a regular contributor to Charisma Magazine, has appeared on Christian television and radio and directed one of the primary internships at the International House of Prayer (IHOP) in Kansas City. A large and growing library of audio and video teachings, articles, books and other resources can be found on his website at www.johnburton.org. John, his wife Amy and their five children live in Branson, Missouri.