

Dr. Michael Brown: A Word of Encouragement to the Global Prayer Movement

Believers around the world are hurting right now; in particular, charismatic believers involved in the global prayer movement. A key leader in that movement, a man known as a deeply devoted, godly believer, has credibly been accused of gross sexual misconduct, not once but a number of times.

How could this be? How could it be possible for someone to lead a double life on that scale, especially over the decades? This leads many to wonder if anyone can be trusted.

Pastors who lead prayer ministries have reached out to me, telling me of the agonizing struggles some of their people are experiencing. Their very acts of worship and prayer seem tainted. Was any of it ever real? Or were they just fooling themselves all the time, thinking they were making a spiritual impact when they were just singing to the walls and praying to the ceiling? The sense of upheaval is deep.

Other leaders have shared with me the depth of personal pain they are experiencing and the overwhelming sense of grief they're living with. This fallen leader was their friend. Others have expressed a feeling of spiritual schizophrenia. Their worlds have been turned upside down.

Many feel betrayed. Others feel used. All feel massive disappointment.

How do they rebuild their lives without becoming cynical? How do they regain that sense of childlike faith and purity? And even though they themselves may not have committed the same sins, how do they escape the feeling of being polluted? How do

we sort this out?

Let's start with this profound statement from Paul: "What if some were unfaithful? Will their unfaithfulness nullify God's faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every human being a liar. As it is written: 'So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge'" (Rom. 3:3–4, NIV).

As devastating as our unfaithfulness can be, especially when we are spiritual leaders, it does not nullify God's faithfulness. Rather, it underscores it: "Let God be true, and every human being a liar."

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The truth be told, as much as we may trust our closest family members or friends, there is an absolute, eternal trust that only God deserves. He alone is perfectly faithful, perfectly true, perfectly just, perfectly good, perfectly reliable. He alone has the power to bring His will to pass, and He alone is worthy of worship.

That's why we make a terrible mistake when we over-exalt people, fellow humans who themselves are flesh and blood.

We can show respect and give honor.

We can recognize those who have worked and served among us over the years, acknowledging the genuineness of their faith.

But we can never make them into some kind of godlike beings, as if they were on an entirely different plane than we are. To do so is to deceive ourselves and to set ourselves up for disappointment. As for those whom we over-exalt, we're not doing them any favors either.

To repeat: "Let God be true, and every human being a liar." The Bible tells us clearly that people will fail and fall,

even some leaders.

Of course, this does not excuse their sin or minimize their accountability. It simply reminds us that if our faith in God can be shaken because of human failure, then some of our faith was misplaced. Or can you really look Jesus in the eye, spiritually speaking, and say to Him, “You failed me!”?

He would rightly say to you (and me), “The only reason you have any faith is because I’ve been helping you. And had I not carried you through your weakest and worst times, you would have fallen away a long time ago. And have I not had great mercy on you as well?”

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There’s a reason that every one of us needs a Savior, that all of us need forgiveness, and that on the day we stand before Him, our only boast will be in Him.

It’s also important to remember that the prayer movement, including the 24/7 prayer movement, has been around for many centuries. The Lord may have used people over the centuries to help spark intercession or spread the fire of prayer. But He is the one who births and sustains these movements, and the worship that comes from our hearts and lips goes to Him and Him alone.

Why on earth would the severe failings of a human being—one of billions of people for whom Jesus died—get in the way of our worship and praise? How has the Lord become any less worthy of praise and adoration? And can we really afford to pray less when the needs of the hour are so great?

The fact is that God not only calls us to prayer and commands us to pray, but He actually appoints us to pray. *He* is the one who commissions *us*! To quote the Lord’s words directly, “I

have posted watchmen on your walls, Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the Lord, give yourselves no rest, and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth" (Isa. 62:6–7)

No person appointed you to pray. No church posted you as a watchman on the wall. No organization called you to worship. It is God Himself, the Creator of the universe, who gave you this sacred assignment, and it is to Him that your prayers and worship ascend.

The book of Hebrews exhorts us, "Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. 'Make level paths for your feet,' so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed'" (Heb. 12:12-13).

Your faithful intercession in prayer is needed more than ever! By God's grace, raise your voices once again.

I know you are hurting. I know your world has been turned upside down. But there is only one way forward: on our faces and knees before Him, pouring out our hearts, sharing our disorientation and pain, and leaning on Him alone. He will get us through!

Let the prayer of Jeremiah, who knew his share of spiritual agony, be yours today: "Heal me, Lord, and I will be healed; save me and I will be saved, for you are the one I praise" (Jer. 17:14).

He remains worthy still.

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