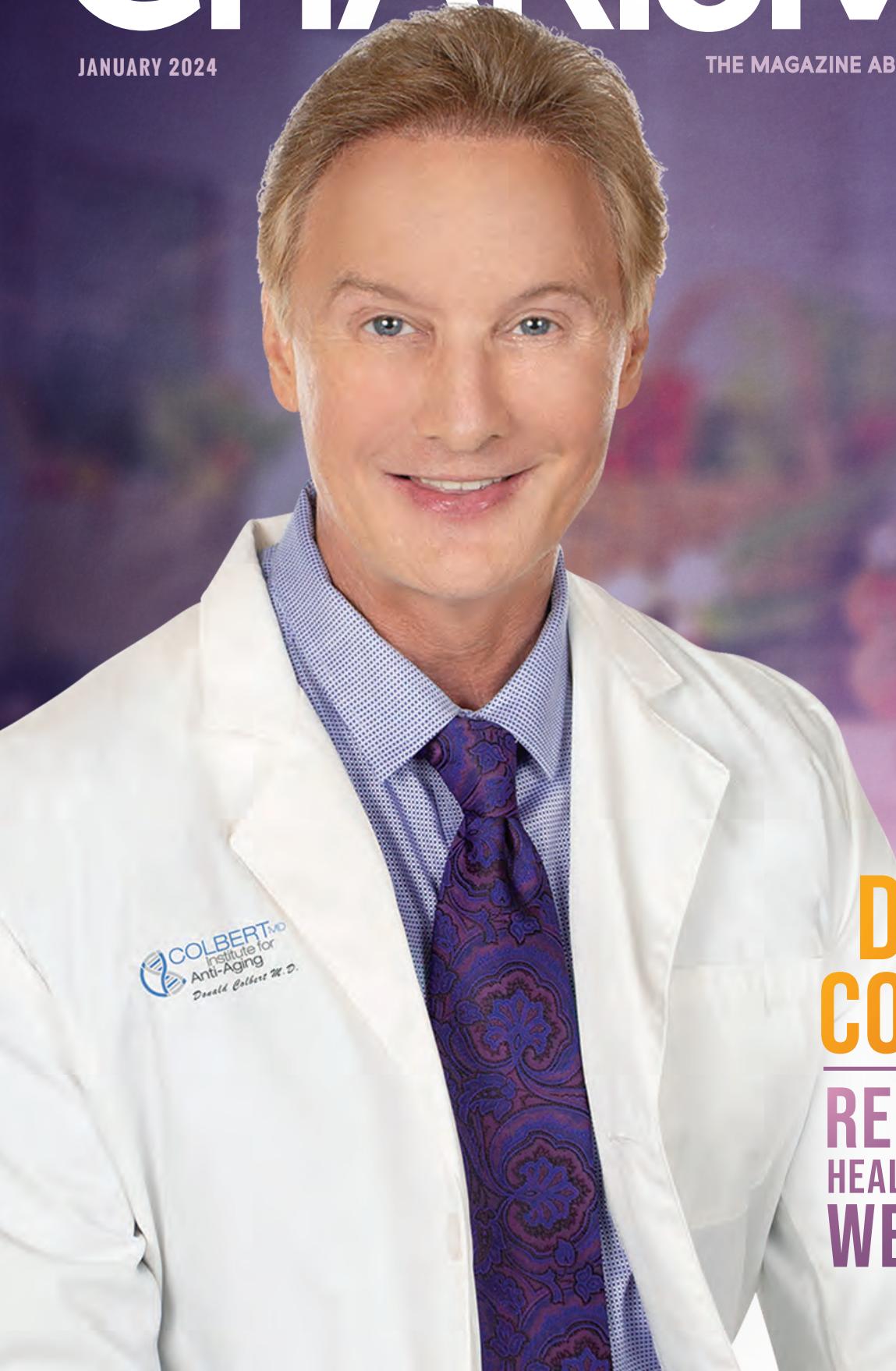


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JANUARY 2024

THE MAGAZINE ABOUT SPIRIT-LED LIVING



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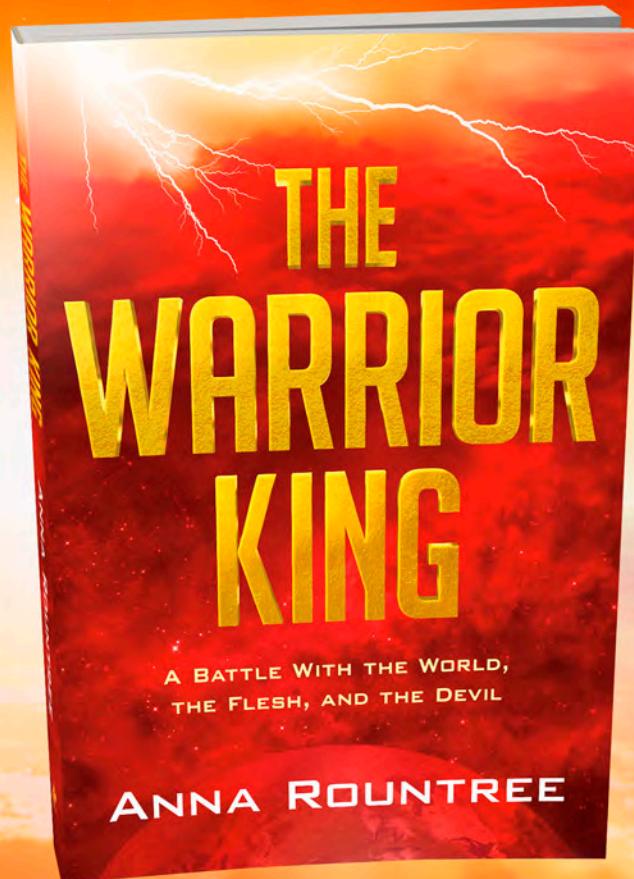
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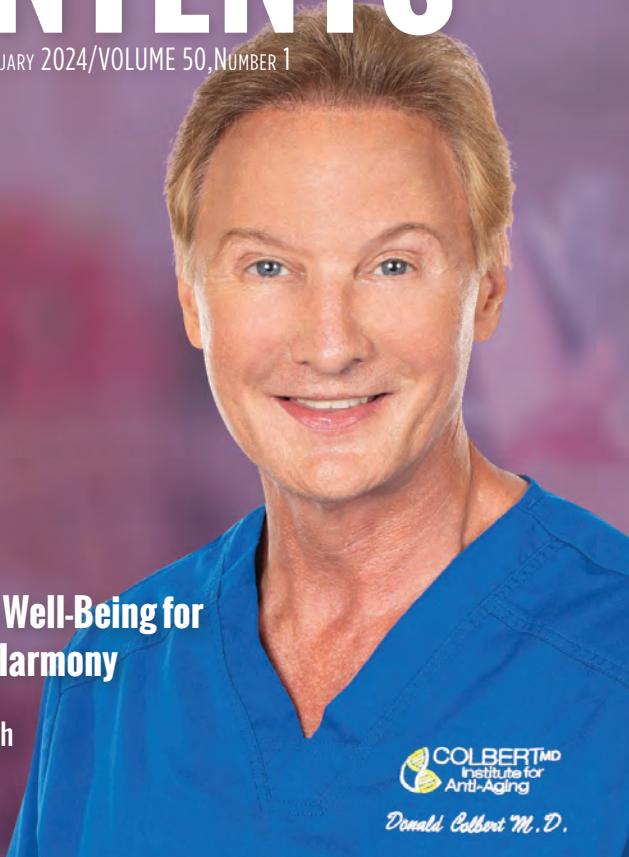
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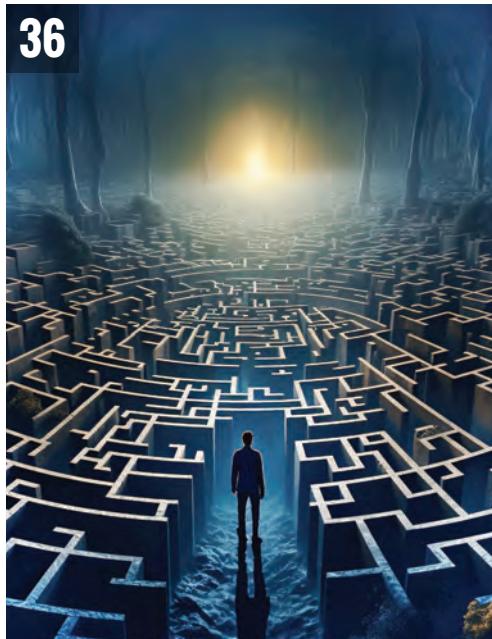
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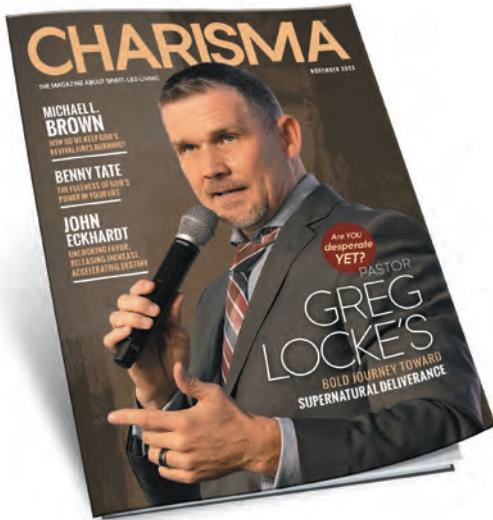
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*"...he's spot-on in gospel grounding and love for the Lord."*

*—Brenda Hale,  
Portland, ME*

## THANKSGIVING SPIRIT

The article about Thanksgiving was very nice, I'm glad to see the spiritual grounding of this beloved holiday get some visibility, since Christmas has such an obvious spiritual foundation ("Thanksgiving Is Not a One-Day Celebration," Charisma Magazine Online, November 2023). I hope you explore this idea more next year.

**Milicent Gordon, Tallahassee, FL**

## BABYLON MESSAGE

Todd Coconato's testimony was such a fun article to read, I cannot wait to buy a copy of his new book ("Leaving Babylon Behind," Charisma Magazine Online, November 2023). It seems like the church does not talk about these amazing occurrences that much. Hopefully this story will spark a new movement in testimonies and God's calling for each of our lives.

**Aaron Zeilthorne, Cleveland, TN**

## 'DESPERATE FOR YOU'

Greg Locke is so right, it's all about how desperate we are for the things of God that He has for us, especially His Holy Spirit ("Are You Desperate for the Holy

Spirit Yet?" Charisma Magazine Online, November 2023). I know some people used to think Greg Locke could be little bit over-the-top sometimes, but you gotta hand it to him, he's spot-on in gospel grounding and love for the Lord. I'd love to see more things like this from *Charisma*.

**Brenda Hale, Portland, ME**

## GREAT TO SEE JOHN ECKHARDT

I wish there was more stories from John Eckhardt ("Here Are Your Keys to Unlocking Abundant Life," Charisma Magazine Online, November 2023), his books are so usable and helpful.

**Tamara Warner, Sacramento, CA**

## REVIVAL FIRE ON AFTERBURNER

Dr. Brown could write a whole book about taking care of revival whenever God chooses to bless His people ("Stewarding God's Holy Flames of Revival" Charisma Magazine Online, November 2023). His story on it is convenient to use, almost like a 'how-to' guide and makes you even more excited for God to bring more Holy fire.

**Jerome Davidov, Staten Island, NYC**

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## If You Want New Wine of the Spirit, Get Rid of Stale Religion

**L**ate in 2023 I spoke to a group of pastors in El Salvador. These leaders face many spiritual challenges in their culture: Drug addiction among youth, alcoholism, idolatry and rampant witchcraft. But I had to tell them that the biggest challenge to their churches isn't something outside. It's something inside the church.

Religion opposes biblical preaching, resists the Holy Spirit, persecutes those who truly love God and turns vibrant faith into empty formalism. And most of all, it sterilizes churches until they die from barrenness.

The apostle Paul warned Timothy that the time would come when people who claim to know Christ would "[hold] to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power," (2 Tim. 3:5a, NASB). Religious people sing nice songs about God, recite nice prayers, dress in nice clothes to listen to nice sermons and even give money to build nice buildings. But this show is devoid of life.

And when the Holy Spirit comes to bring new life to the church, and to revive us from the deadness of the past season, we must break free from the control of a religious spirit. We are in this season now. The Spirit wants to blow His refreshing wind into our barrenness. When He does, the dead roots and brittle branches of lifeless religion will be pruned away—and supernatural fruit will appear.

Have you been infected by dead religion? You can take your own test by examining these eight characteristics of a religious person and determine whether any apply to you:

**Religious people view God as a harsh taskmaster. When Jesus wanted to show people who the Father really is, He told the story of the prodigal son.** He described a compassionate father who forgave his wayward son, embraced him and welcomed him back home even though he had been living in a pig pen. Religious people struggle to understand God's mercy. They would prefer to punish the prodigal!

**Religious people do outward things to prove God accepts them.** Some Christians believe their dress codes, music styles or doctrinal positions make them better than others. I knew of one church that taught that people who wear wedding rings aren't saved. Another denomination taught that women shouldn't wear

makeup. Religious rules ostracize people and turn Christians into legalists.

**Religious people develop traditions and formulas.** Formalism chokes out the work of the Holy Spirit. If we trust in rote prayers, vain repetition or dry ceremonies, we quench the Spirit. If we want the life of the Spirit, we should sing a new song, preach a fresh word and experience fresh fire.

**Religious people lose their joy.** When religion takes over a church, love turns cold, smiles turn into frowns and church members become critical and gossip about each other. And visitors certainly don't feel welcome in that environment. One of the best ways to overcome dead religion is to ask God to restore your joy.

**Religious people become judgmental toward sinners.** Religious people rail against the evils of society but rarely notice their own flaws. And their pharisaical attitudes make it impossible for them to show true mercy. This is why religious churches don't do outreach. No one is good enough for them!

**Religious people refuse to embrace change.** Many Christians become so focused on what God did 50 or 100 years ago that they become stuck in a time warp and can't move forward when the Holy Spirit begins to open new understanding. When a church refuses to shift with God's new directives, it becomes an old wineskin that is stiff and inflexible (see Mark 2:22).

**Religious people persecute those who disagree with their self-righteous views.** An angry religious person will even use slander to assassinate other peoples' character. You would be shocked by the kind of behavior professing Christians are capable of when they are driven by a religious spirit.

**Religious people won't see conversions.** Sinners will rarely find Jesus in a toxic religious environment. When religion takes over a church, fewer and fewer people visit the altar, tears of repentance are rare and the baptismal tank stays dry. The congregation ages; there are no children in the nursery, the youth group dwindles and eventually the church closes. Religion is deadly.

If the poisonous tendrils of religion have contaminated your walk with God, ask Him to pour a fresh understanding of His grace into your heart—and then expect His new life to flow through you. Let's welcome the fresh wind of God.

*The Spirit wants to blow His refreshing wind into our barrenness.*

J. Lee Grady was editor of *Charisma* for 11 years and now serves as senior contributing editor. He directs [The Mordecai Project](#) an international ministry that protects women and girls from gender-based violence. His latest books are *Follow Me* and *Let's Go Deeper* (Charisma House).



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## God's Power Through Grace and Faith

**G**od has a great plan for each person's life, and He wants us to enjoy every day of our lives. But we can't do it if we live in fear and lack confidence. Confidence is the belief that you're able to do what you need to do. God gives us confidence, but we need to know how to access it by faith.

God-given confidence is actually the grace of God. We usually hear grace defined as God's undeserved favor or God doing something for you that you don't deserve. But it's really more than that. It was life-changing for me to learn that grace is also God's power, freely given to me, to enable me to do with ease what I could not do on my own with any amount of struggle or effort.

Think about this for a minute. Everyone who accepts Jesus as their Savior is taught that we're saved by grace through faith. Ephesians 2:8-9 (NKJV) says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." But the same way we are saved is the way we are supposed to live. In other words, once we are born again, God wants us to do everything in life by grace through faith.

This has been one of the greatest revelations of my life. I remember how exciting it was to realize that God is not just there to help us when we have an emergency. God wants to be involved in every single thing we do on a day-to-day basis.

There's nothing you're involved in that God doesn't care about, and He wants you to pray and ask Him to help you with every detail of your life. He doesn't want you to live striving in your own effort to do anything. God wants to be your close, personal, intimate friend.

I was a Christian for years before I learned how to access God's grace, or power, to live my everyday life. First, I had to get an understanding that once I was saved, God didn't expect me to live right by my own strength. Just as I couldn't "earn" salvation through my own works or effort, I also couldn't really change my heart or behavior in my own strength. Jesus says in John 15:4 (NIV), "...No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in

the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me."

Every day we need to come to God and tell Him, "God, I can do nothing without You. Nothing in my life is going to work without You. Apart from You, there is nothing good in me. My confidence is in You. I need You all the time. I believe You and trust You, Lord." When we humble ourselves before God and ask Him for help, we can access His grace through faith.

So, to help you do that, I want to share three things that commonly short-circuit our faith, cutting off our access to God's power: complaining, self-pity and pride.

» Complaining is a negative attitude that keeps us from being thankful for all God has done, is doing and will do. It is a sin we need to repent of, and then be determined to thank God in all things, at all times. His grace and blessings always outweigh the things we think are wrong in our life.

» Self-pity is simply a "poor me" attitude. It is a form of idolatry because it causes you to focus on yourself and think, "What about me?" But we can't be pitiful and powerful at the same time, so let's decide to give up all self-pity.

» Pride takes credit for what God has done and steals His glory. It makes us independent of God, and

we can't bear good fruit apart from Christ.

Before I learned how to live my life by God's grace, I was a mess. I was a nagging wife, a manipulator, and controlling. And I wasn't satisfied living like that. Then God helped me by opening my eyes to see that I couldn't really change until I started taking His Word seriously and trusted Him to change me. When I made a firm decision to pray and study the Word in areas where I was weak, then God's grace gave me the power I needed to overcome the things that were wrong.

And I keep going forward in my journey with God the same way today.

God has all the power you need to do anything you need to do. He loves you and wants to give you His power to live your daily life with joy. Lean on Him with absolute trust in His wisdom and goodness, and live with God-given confidence.

*Lean on Him with  
absolute trust in His  
wisdom and goodness,  
and live with God-  
given confidence.*

Joyce Meyer is a *New York Times*' bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries Inc. She has authored 130 books, including *Battlefield of the Mind* and her newest devotional, *Quiet Times With God* (FaithWords). She hosts the *Enjoying Everyday Life* radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information,

visit [joycemeyer.org](http://joycemeyer.org).

# Simply Christ

## Gospel Insight

with Keith Surface

### Paul's Agony

In the 7th chapter of Romans, the Apostle Paul vividly describes the events which led to his conversion to Jesus. He begins the chapter by speaking of the Law's dominion and tells of his efforts to serve God under the Law. He describes this time as being *"in the flesh."* He says, *"For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death."* Romans 7:5. He had lived his entire life under the Law and *"in the flesh,"* and for the most part had done fairly well. Sin was no great problem for him, and he viewed himself as exceedingly righteous. In fact, he looked back to his life under the Law and said, *"...touching the righteousness which is in the law, (he was) blameless."* Philippians 3:6.

Yet something began to trouble this *"righteous"* Pharisee, as the tenth commandment began to speak to him in a way he never considered before. The first nine commandments dealt with his actions, but he began to see that the tenth commandment dealt with the content of his heart. He said, *"I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."* Romans 7:7. Paul (then known as Saul of Tarsus) had always viewed himself as a righteous man because he kept the deeds of the Law. Now he was faced with the realization that sin in his heart made him a commandment breaker. It seems Saul thought he could remedy this by taking control of his thoughts and desires, just as he controlled his actions, but this is where sin deceived him! Romans 7:11.

When Saul recognized that sin in the heart was in fact sin, he endeavored to purge this iniquity from his own consciousness. However, the more he struggled with it the more he discovered its grip upon his soul. The harder he fought, the more pronounced the sinful desires became. Romans 7:8. Sin, which for most of his life Saul had kept subdued, and thought was dead, revived! Romans 7:9.

Saul became so *"exceeding sinful"* Romans 7:13 in his own sight, that he was forced to acknowledge something which shattered his great religious self-image. I can imagine the horror which gripped this great *"Hebrew of the Hebrews"* who believed himself to be spiritual above

others, when he had to admit to himself, *"I am carnal, sold under sin."* Romans 7:14. These words do not describe a child of God. Those who are born of God are not carnal (unregenerate), they are *"spirit"* because they are *"born of the Spirit."* John 3:6. Neither are the people of God *"sold under sin."* God's children have been *"redeemed from all iniquity."* Titus 2:14.

Listed below is the evidence Saul considered about himself which forced him to acknowledge that he was not spiritual, but was in fact a slave to sin.

***"For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I."*** Romans 7:15. A slave is forced to do the things he hates and cannot do the things he desires to do.

***"...for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not."*** Romans 7:18. A slave will live his live longing to do certain things which his master will never allow him to do.

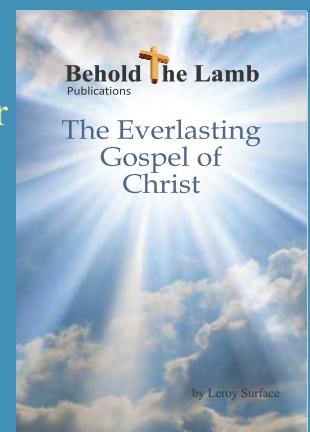
***"For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."*** Romans 7:19-20. Saul could no longer deny it. He was controlled by something more powerful than himself. Sin was his master and he was its slave! Jesus had spoken of this slavery, saying, *"Whosoever committeth sin is the servant (slave) of sin."* John 8:34.

This was Saul's condition when he met Jesus on the Damascus Road. The *"pricks"* he was fighting were destroying him. In his heart he was crying, *"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"* Romans 7:24. He tells us he found that deliverance *"through Jesus Christ our Lord!"* Romans 7:25. He discovered that Jesus Christ truly does wash sin from the human heart. His promise is still true: *"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."* John 8:36.

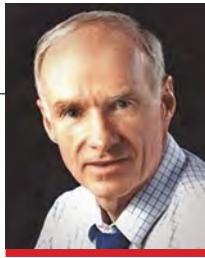
We are constantly told we are all sinners, and nothing can change that reality. But consider this: Since Jesus said, *"the truth shall make you free"* John 8:32, how can anything which says you can never be free from sin be *"the truth?"* It simply cannot be!

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## Learning to Lean (March 1984)

I was a senior in college before I committed my life to Jesus Christ. But it wasn't a full commitment. Even though I intended to trust God, I felt I needed to trust my own understanding also—and my ability to work things out. After all, I had never trusted anyone completely, and this was a big step.

What I did was share my trust with God. In short, I planned to do my best and let God take care of the deficiencies. That kind of partial trust was not based on a lack of desire to trust Him, only a lack of ability.

One has to *learn* to trust God. Just as we've learned to distrust human nature because we've been disappointed by people who have let us down, just as we've learned the hard way that no piece of equipment is fully trustworthy, so we have to learn to trust God.

Much of the problem lies in what we have to unlearn. Since I have learned to distrust people, since I know my car battery or alternator could betray me at any moment, since I know through experience that the airlines are often late—I am not willing to trust God fully.

Perhaps, I think, God can handle the big things such as the end of the world or the outcome of good over evil. But when it comes to trusting Him with relatively minor things—like providing me with enough money to live on—well, I'm not so sure. I have to learn He can be trusted by trusting.

For the past 40 years Eunice Pike has worked with the Mazatec Indians in southwestern Mexico. The Mazatec people seldom wish anyone well. Not only that, they are hesitant to teach one another, or to share the gospel with each other. Eunice says this odd behavior stems from the Indian's concept of "limited good." They believe there is only so much good, so much knowledge, so much love to go around.

A lot of Christians seem to think this way, too. They trust God, but deep inside they suspect God is not an unlimited resource. True, they believe God owns the cattle on a thousand hills, but they suspect His herd may be running thin. After all, a lot of people are eating beef these days. Therefore, they lean on their own

understanding and pen up a few cattle in their backyard, just in case they go to God's meat market one day and find the cupboard bare or the truckers have gone on strike and aren't delivering anymore.

I battle with this constantly when it comes to money. Since God is like my Father, I was taught, then there is always a possibility I may go to Him one day with a request for funds (as I often did to my Dad) only to be told there are other needs more pressing.

Believing, therefore, that God is a limited resource, I am guarded on how much I give. I want to give more, but if I give God's money away, there is a chance it will never be replaced.

I remember Pat Robertson interviewing a wealthy celebrity following the celebrity's conversion to Christianity. The man alluded to this same concept, saying he gave everything to God, but he did hold back about \$200,000 in case of a rainy day. Pat's

comment was the man must have been expecting a second deluge.

We want to trust, but have been taught that God is like man—stingy, disinterested, self-centered and surely with limits on His resources.

It's best summed up in the slogan that came out of World War II: "God is my co-pilot." In other words, I'm captain of this ship. It is under my control. God is welcome aboard. In fact, I'm delighted for Him to sit in the co-pilot's seat in case

there is an emergency. But I'll not call on Him until I need Him, and even then I want Him to remember I'm still in command.

We apply the same concept in our ministries. We have church committee meetings, mission board meetings, or we plan grand schemes to win the world. We analyze, consider from every angle, use the counsel of men and make judgments which we feel are God's will or program. But we are really trusting ourselves. We trust our ability to take a certain business (or Scriptural) formula and apply it to the kingdom of God to raise money, to recruit volunteers, to build a mailing list, to increase attendance, to insure monthly donations. "Do it this way and it will work every time," we're told.

But the question haunts me: What if we took all our abilities and laid them humbly on the altar and trusted God?

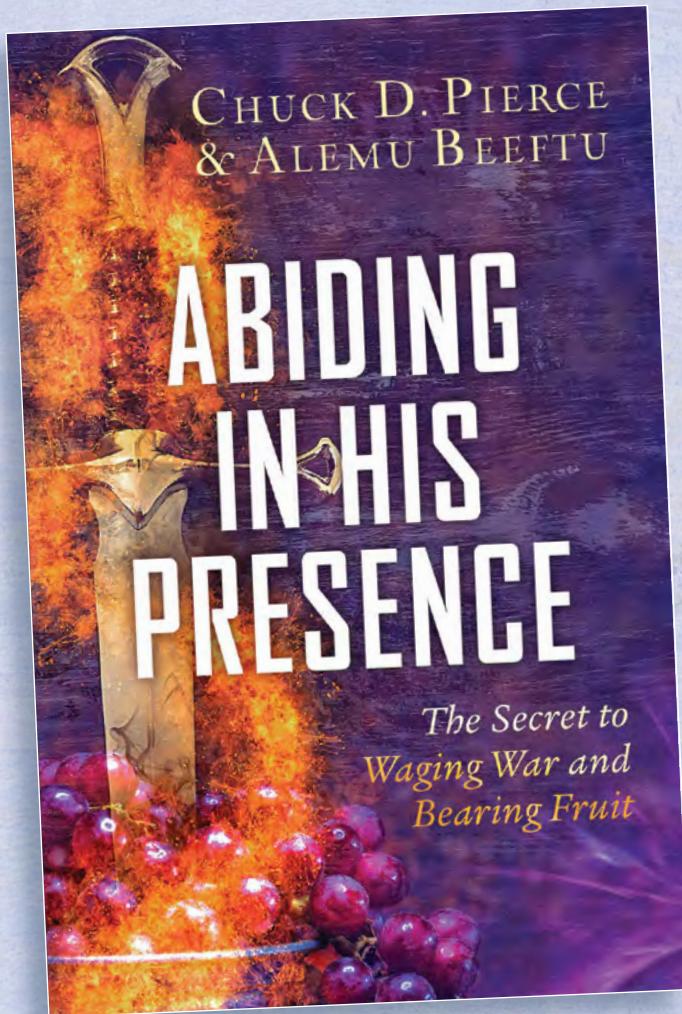
It's worth a try. And how else will we learn to lean?

*What if we took all our abilities and laid them humbly on the altar and trusted God...how else will we learn to lean?*

Jamie Buckingham wrote 153 columns for *Charisma* over 13 years, first known as "Dry Bones" but later as it's most recognized "Last Word." His singular voice was animated by a heart for Jesus baptized in the power of the Holy Spirit in 1967 at a Full Gospel Businessmen's convention. Buckingham provided a steady force during the scandals of the 1980s, penning the seminal article on the PTL scandal, "God Is Shaking His Church" in May 1986.

# REVEAL THE **FULLNESS**

## OF GOD'S GLORY



Offering healthy doses of hope, global prophetic leaders Chuck D. Pierce and Alemu Beeftu reveal that **THE KEY TO A LIFE OF PURPOSE AND POWER LIES IN THE HIDDEN PATH TO ABIDING IN CHRIST.**

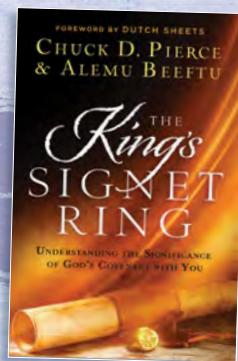
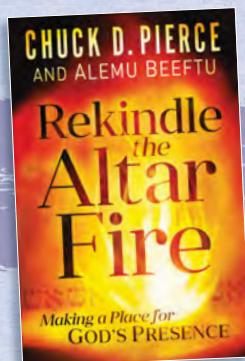
Through sound biblical teaching, prophetic insight, and real-world application, they guide you through the process of walking with him and remaining in his presence, including how to

- be set apart
- link godly desire to faith
- embrace your covenant relationship with God
- overcome the deception of the enemy

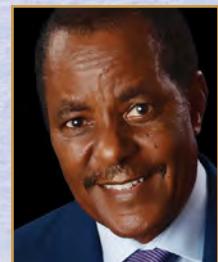
In the coming days, it's vital that we, as the Body of Christ, **LEARN TO ABIDE**, making presence-driven lives our reality—and

**BEARING THE SUPERNATURAL FRUIT THIS WORLD SO DESPERATELY NEEDS.**

### FREQUENTLY BOUGHT TOGETHER:



CHUCK D. PIERCE



ALEMU BEEFTU

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## Upon Reflection of 2023

Reflecting on the whirlwind of 2023, the encapsulating phrase “It’s both” paints a vivid picture of the myriad experiences that defined this remarkable year. A unique year that for me and probably many others had ups and downs, a year in which you may have questioned all that God had said or even wondered if those prophecies you received would ever come to pass.

At the forefront of this year’s narrative was the profound journey of the church. Nationally, what we saw at the Asbury revival unfolded as an extraordinary manifestation of a divine intervention. A genuine move of God that drew thousands to a Christian university in a region that would not normally attract such a crowd without the usual famous speakers and preachers. It illuminated a critical truth: a hunger for God precedes His movement, transcending the influence of music or well-planned events. Hunger for God seemed not to be something any one person could produce or manufacture. It arrived as Christians became desperate to see God move inwardly and outwardly.

The fervent hunger for God among Gen Z was palpable. This spiritual zeal coincided with global turmoil, notably in Israel and the ongoing violence in Ukraine, prompting introspection on the significance of these events leaving the question: are end time signs increasing? Simultaneously, our nation weathered political crises, economic shifts and a crescendo of societal needs. We bid farewell to Loren Cunningham, a monumental figure who catalyzed 500,000 missionaries. *The Send* reverberated with the passion of thousands of Gen Zers, resulting in numerous life-altering salvations. Witnessing “Gen Z For Jesus” gatherings in Los Angeles, united under the banner of “Jesus,” was an awe-inspiring testament to the power of faith and community. From salvations to baptisms, we saw many meet Jesus near the very place Aimee Semple McPherson held her gatherings and flipped Los Angeles for the cause of Christ.

Personal paradigms shifted as I once believed that blessings meant an absence of troubles and that revival unfolded flawlessly with countless testimonies of God moving. Now, I grasp that revival often sprouts amid societal upheaval, and global discord can ignite a fervor for personal spiritual growth. Tragedy and revival share the same lane,

as they head the same direction and God seems to use these moments in history to catalyze the church forward.

Lou Engle, my spiritual mentor, famously said, “Underneath the rumble of riots rumbles revival.” This year, I bore witness to God’s unwavering presence in turbulent times, an anchor of faithfulness during the storm. In an era in which faith seems to wane, where societal norms distort truth, God’s movement persists. History will tell in time about those who witnessed only what God did not do and those who discerned His hand amid the darkest hour. This is the juncture where we cling to God’s promises, when our natural sight falters in the face of adversity. It’s a time where we affirm that His promises are unwavering, a resolute truth that God cannot and will not lie.

On a more personal note, I witnessed an amazing season for someone dear to me, broken free from the shackles of sex trafficking and rediscovering their faith in God. The tumultuous journey of breaking addiction and reconciling identity in God despite struggles was one of the greatest miracles I was blessed to witness.

Too often, I have seen the moment when many abandon their divine calling just seconds before the breakthrough. A mere ounce of courage or encouragement might have rewritten their narrative.

In navigating my own path, I’ve embraced God’s calling despite the persistent urge to surrender to my discouragement. As the world darkens, our light shines brighter. If we are the world’s light as the Bible says, then darkness becomes the place we were made for. As we embrace the upcoming year, may we embrace the duality encapsulated in the phrase, “It’s both.”

It’s the year of hardships and divine encounters, victories and midnight struggles, the fulfillment of God’s promises alongside the closure of doors.

This past year affirmed that crises don’t dismantle us; comfort does. When comfort reigns, the Comforter remains at bay. Yet, in discomfort, His presence becomes our resting place. May you find yourself leaning more onto His ability to do all He said than even your ability to fulfill all you have promised God. May this year unveil moments where we encounter God in valleys and mountaintops.

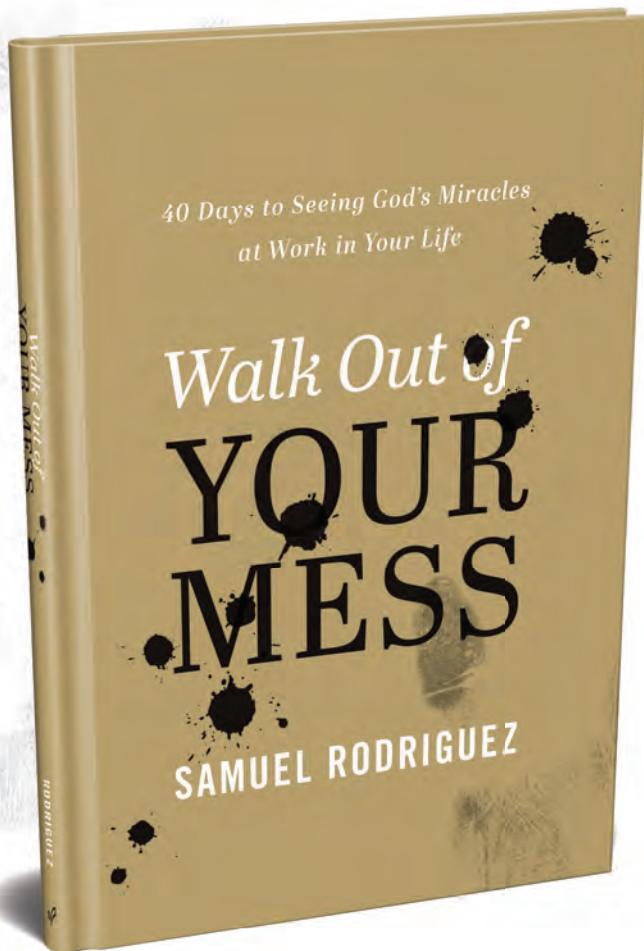
Perhaps sometimes in both at once.

*If we are the world’s light as the Bible says, then darkness becomes the place we were made for.*

**Brian Barcelona** is the founder of One Voice Student Missions and The Jesus Clubs. Since 2009 Brian has been a leader of youth evangelism calling high school students to surrender their lives to Jesus. Barcelona lives with his family and community in Texas.

# STAY STRONG

## AS YOU CONTEND FOR YOUR MIRACLE



Inspired by the story of the blind man in John 9, Pastor Samuel Rodriguez shows that sometimes Jesus makes your situation a muddy mess first—and out of that mess **emerges a miracle**.

Helping you navigate the messy season of waiting for breakthrough, Pastor Sam takes you deeper into the life-changing biblical truths from his bestselling book, *Your Mess, God's Miracle*. Each entry in this 40-day devotional immerses you in God's promises, daily infusing you with hope and the **audacity to replace fear with faith**, wash away the mud of the past, and walk through your mess into God's miracle.

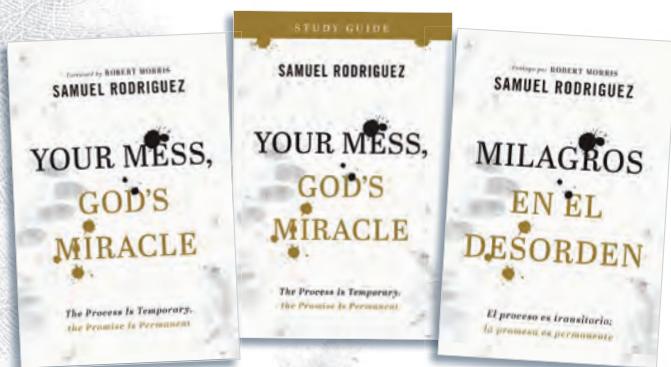
Your pain and struggles are not punishments to endure. They're **opportunities to showcase God's glory**.

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Samuel Rodriguez

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Apostle Bible Davids, with  
Pastor Greg Locke

## Dallas Mass Deliverance 2 Event Yields Outpouring of Divine Power

The Holy Spirit still has the power to set captives free

**A**n extraordinary outpouring of supernatural power took place on Nov. 18, 2023, at the Dallas Mass Deliverance 2 event, held at the Pavilion at Toyota Music Factory in Irving, Texas, and organized by Bible Davids Ministries.

Speakers included Apostle Bible Davids and his wife, Prophetess Rebecca Bible-Davids, leaders of Bible Davids Ministries and Supernatural Life Center. Pastor Greg Locke, Apostle Alexander Pagani, Malachi O'Brien and Isaiah Saldivar joined them for the Spirit-filled event. The team brought powerful spiritual energy to the platform, intent on carrying out their mission:

guiding believers toward an authentic experience of freedom and deliverance.

Apostle Davids' explosive altar call resulted in thousands committing their lives to Jesus Christ, and the fiery teachings set the stage for an unprecedented outbreak of deliverance. The ministry team cast out demonic spirits as the Holy Spirit swept through the congregation, liberating souls and setting captives free.

A nationwide Mass Deliverance Campaign is already being planned for 2024, promising a movement that will touch lives, communities and cities across the nation.

## Debate Controversy Ends in Peace, Respect

Pastor Greg Locke shuts down Flat Earth event

Amid what escalated to an argument, Pastor Greg Locke made the difficult decision to shut down a planned debate between himself and Pastor Dean Odle over the flat-Earth controversy. The Dec. 2 event at Locke's Global Vision Bible Church in Mount Juliet, Tennessee, ended in an abrupt halt, police intervention and a shattered sense of unity.

Locke, who supports the spherical Earth theory, ultimately decided that Odle and his fellow flat-Earth supporters had "not come in good faith," per a statement released by Locke's ministry. Thankfully, a few days later Locke and Odle buried the hatchet, "I reached out to Pastor Dean Odle, and yes, we do not agree on some massive areas and this thing got stirred up a little bit more than it should have, but we decided life's too short to disagree about secondary issues and not at least be friendly, so we apologized to each other," Locke says. "We're not enemies in the gospel...I think what the church needs to figure out is the shape of its heart."



## New Year's Legacy

Telemachus gives his all for the cause of peace

When we think of the long-ago gladiators, we think of their strength and ferocity. But the man who put an end to their bloody battles had a spirit that was just the opposite. On Jan. 1, A.D. 404, Telemachus, an ascetic hermit and monk, resolved to interrupt a colossal gladiator contest set to be held in the Roman Coliseum in celebration of Rome's defeat of the Goth king Alaric in northern Italy.

Thousands had gathered in the arena to observe the brutal display, crying, "*Habet, hoc habet*" (He has had it!) every time a fighter was mortally wounded. But as Telemachus jumped from the crowd into the arena, he offered a cry of his own: "Do not requite God's mercy in turning away the swords of your enemies by murdering each other!"

As the crowd roared its disapproval, Telemachus turned from



one gladiator battle to another, stopping each pair of participants in mid-fight. His passionate work ended when, irritated by his one-man crusade, someone pulled a sword and thrust it deep. Telemachus fell, and the crowd multiplied the defeat by throwing stones at the injured figure before them.

As word spread of the death of the man bent only on peace, Rome was shocked. Soon afterward, gladiatorial battles were banned from the Coliseum.

Telemachus may have lost his life, but he won the war.

## 'More Than a Spark'

Evangel University receives second \$10 million gift from Green family

President Mike Rakes of Evangel University in Springfield, Missouri, has announced the receipt of a \$10 million gift from the Green family, owners of Hobby Lobby and Mardel. Affiliated with the Assemblies of God, Evangel has now received two such gifts from the Greens in the past two years, the largest donations received in its history.

"We are grateful to the Green family for their continued

support of EU," Rakes said. "This second gift from the Greens is more than a spark; it's an affirmation of Evangel's impact on this generation."

Set up as a matching fund, the gift allows for contributions of university donors to be doubled up to \$10 million over the next year. It will be used to support several presidential initiatives, including completion of the much-anticipated Valor Center.

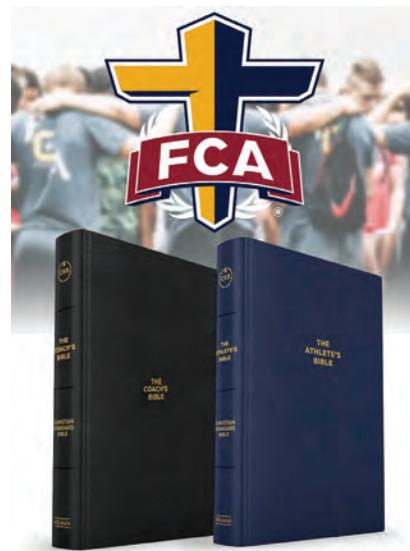
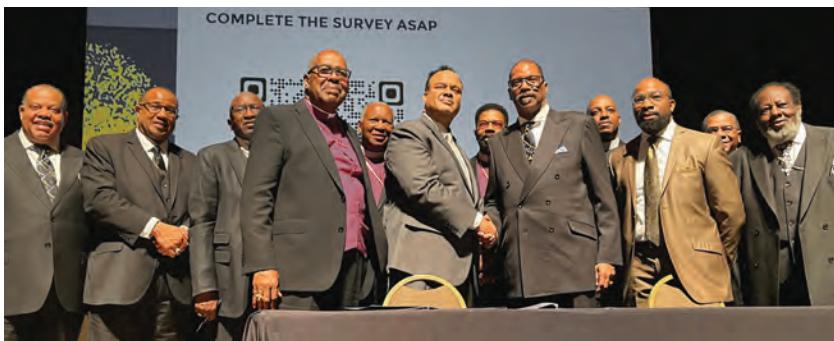


## COGIC Partners With Enterprise Community Partners to Build 18,000 Affordable Homes

**A**t Church of God in Christ's 115th Holy Convocation this November, COGIC Community Economic Development Corporation and Enterprise Community Partners announced a new collaboration to train 200 COGIC congregations in faith-based community development. The partnership will yield an estimated 18,000 new and affordable rental and homeownership opportunities and 72 community facilities—such as adult day care, childcare, health clinics and more—on vacant or underutilized church-owned property across the U.S.

“We are deeply concerned about the lack of affordable housing and quality medical care in our communities,” said COGIC Presiding Bishop J. Drew Sheard. “The COGIC will be a change-agent to alleviate the burden caused by these issues in urban and rural communities.”

Although Enterprise launched its Faith-Based Development Initiative in 2006, this is the first time the group has collaborated with a denominational entity at the national level. Through the new partnership, the denomination will launch multiyear cohorts with churches, providing training, technical assistance and early predevelopment grant support, with a total estimated development cost in excess of \$5 billion.



### ‘Committed to God’s Word’ FCA distributes 230,000 Bibles in 2023

**W**ith a firm commitment to evangelism through sports, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes uses tools such as soccer balls, goal posts and basketball hoops. But the ministry, set to celebrate its 70th birthday in 2024, is also one of the most dedicated Bible distributors in the world, giving away nearly 3 million Bibles globally in the past 15 years and 230,000 in 2023 alone.

“I believe one of the reasons God continues to bless the Fellowship of Christian Athletes is our focus on growing our Bible ministry,” said FCA President and CEO Shane Williamson. “We are committed to God’s Word and biblical truth, and we continue to be amazed at what God is doing to get His Word into the hands of coaches and athletes around the world. There’s a greater purpose to what we’re doing at FCA, and our mission goes beyond sports.”

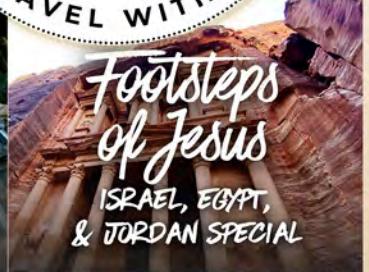
Beginning in 1956 with *The Athlete’s Bible* for FCA Camp, FCA prints and distributes more than 10 varieties of Bible resources in multiple languages today in addition to its digital reading plans, which have more than 2 million subscribers.

CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST / ADOBE STOCK / FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN ATHLETES

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# SUPERCHARGING YOUR WELL-BEING FOR VIBRANT HEALTH AND HARMONY



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# 5 Powerful Tools to Fortify and Nourish Your Gut Health

**BY DR. DON COLBERT**

I'm going to make a bold statement. Every day I see patients who are grappling with various symptoms, and I firmly believe that every one of them would likely see improvement if they took action to restore their gut health and adopted a diet rich in gut-friendly elements such as fiber, probiotics, prebiotics and polyphenols. The majority of symptoms would probably go away, usually carrying with them any underlying sicknesses and diseases.

That's how powerful the gut is. Once it's revitalized, it can potentially harmonize the rest of your body! If your focus is on enhancing your gut health, here are five "gut power tools," tried and true methods known to be profoundly beneficial for your gut.

## **Gut Power Tool 1: Fiber**

The first gut power tool is none other than good old fiber—not the kind derived from beans, wheat bran or grains laden with lectins, but rather psyllium husk powder. Although it might not seem exciting or cool, it takes center stage in the restoration of your gut health.

Few people get enough fiber in their diets. Scarcely any of my patients consistently meet their fiber needs, and a mere 5% of Americans fulfill the requirements for adequate fiber intake. Therefore, it's common to see patients with low-fiber symptoms such as constipation, inability to lose weight, low energy, hunger soon after eating and craving between meals.

Of course, you can't blame everything on fiber, as it's merely a single component within the intricate puzzle of a healthy gut. But consuming the right sources of fiber in the right amounts can potentially reset your gut health and may also help control blood sugar levels; lower blood pressure and cholesterol; make you feel full longer, causing you to reduce food intake and lose weight; normalize bowel movements; lower risk of heart disease; minimize hemorrhoids; and help prevent diverticular disease.

## **More to Know About Fiber**

Constipation is terrible news for your gut. To stop being constipated, taking one teaspoon to one heaping teaspoon of psyllium husk powder after breakfast and/or dinner will usually do the

**“Every day I see patients who are grappling with various symptoms, and I believe every one of them would see improvement if they took action to restore their gut health.”**

**“The world of health is vast and complex, but I'm here to simplify it for you.”**

trick if you are drinking enough water (at least eight cups per day). Eventually, aim for 25–35 grams a day, and you can't go wrong. Add that to sufficient water intake, and you will often begin to see the magic of fiber after a week or two.

We all need fiber, but if you suffer from IBS, small intestinal fungal overgrowth (SIFO), SIBO, or IBD, then fiber may cause bloating and gas. If you have colitis or Crohn's disease, fiber may cause a flare-up. What is the answer? Some doctors recommend avoiding fiber altogether until the patient's ailment, such as SIBO, is under control. Your gut needs the many benefits of fiber, but if it takes you a while to get there, that is fine.

## Gut Power Tool 2: Probiotics

The second gut power tool is probiotics. Probiotics are live microorganisms, typically bacteria or yeast, that offer potential health benefits when consumed in adequate amounts. Found in certain food and supplements, these beneficial microorganisms aim to support the balance of gut bacteria and promote overall digestive and immune health.

You can take probiotics as supplements in liquid, pill or powder form, but probiotics are also found in fermented food such as kefir, kimchi, kombucha, miso, natto, pickles, sauerkraut, tempeh, traditional buttermilk and yogurt. Dairy is harmful and inflammatory to many of my patients' GI tracts. If lactose intolerance is a concern, or you are sensitive to dairy, opt for coconut kefir or coconut yogurt, or goat or sheep yogurt or kefir.

Regardless of your preference, you have an abundance of options that are full of probiotics and extremely healthy for your gut.

## Common Probiotics

Here are the gut-friendly probiotics that are readily available in food or supplements.

1) **Lactobacillus acidophilus:** helps decrease bad bacteria growth, helps maintain gut bacteria balance, helps reduce yeast infections

2) **Lactobacillus brevis:** helps reduce lipopolysaccharide (LPS), strengthens gut wall, improves immune function

3) **Lactobacillus casei:** helps heal infectious diarrhea

4) **Lactobacillus gasseri:** helps treat *H. pylori*

5) **Lactobacillus plantarum:** helps heal infectious diarrhea, helps decrease inflammation, helps maintain gut bacteria balance

6) **Lactobacillus rhamnosus:** helps prevent diarrhea

7) **Lactobacillus salivarius:** helps reduce gas

8) **Streptococcus thermophilus:** helps digest lactose

9) **Bifidobacterium bifidum:** is beneficial for the immune system

10) **Bifidobacterium infantis:** helps with IBS

11) **Bifidobacterium longum:** helps prevent diarrhea and constipation, helps improve lactose tolerance

12) **Bifidobacterium lactis:** helps decrease bloating, strengthens gut wall, helps boost immunity

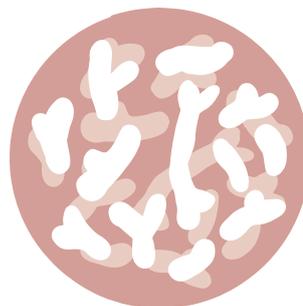
13) **Saccharomyces boulardii:** helps heal infectious diarrhea

Thousands of species of bacteria live in the world and in your gut—many of them good and beneficial. Probiotics crowd out the bad bacteria in your gut and stop them from colonizing. This minimizes ongoing damage to your gut while increasing the number of good bacteria. The good bacteria then have room to grow and multiply, bringing healing to your gut and body.

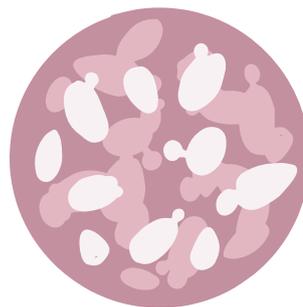
But probiotics are something that you continually need to eat or take as supplements. One glass of goat milk kefir or one helping of sauerkraut is good for your gut, but just as with fiber, you



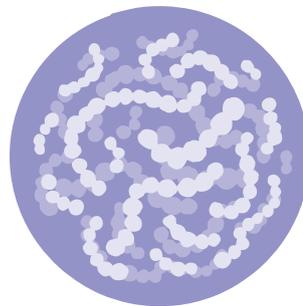
LACTOBACILLUS



BIFIDOBACTERUM



SACCHAROMYCES



STREPTOCOCCUS

need a daily intake of probiotics for your gut health.

As you work to include probiotics in your diet daily, keep in mind that it is good to shake things up a bit. Rotating probiotics after three to six months is recommended to keep your gut's microbiome diverse and healthy. The more you do this naturally with the food you eat, the happier your gut will be.

Probiotics help repair the gut lining, which immediately decreases inflammation. When the inflammation subsides, the symptoms usually disappear. This also typically helps reduce every related risk of disease. For most people, eating food with probiotics or taking probiotic supplements is more than sufficient. Probiotics may help boost one's immune system and protect one against infections. Statistics show that probiotics help train our immune system.

### Gut Power Tool 3: Probiotics

The third gut power tool is prebiotics. Like probiotics, prebiotics are incredibly beneficial to your gut's microbiome and your entire GI tract. Prebiotics are a type of dietary fiber that serve as nourishment for beneficial gut bacteria. They are nondigestible compounds found in certain food, particularly plant-based sources such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes. By providing a supportive environment for good bacteria to flourish, prebiotics indirectly promote gut health and overall well-being. Though prebiotics are available in supplement form, the most common way to get prebiotics is through the food we eat.

### Using Probiotics to Help Your Gut

Achieving gut health involves supplying your gut with the necessary nutrients once bloating and gas have been managed. This entails incorporating prebiotics, as these compounds fuel beneficial bacteria, enabling them to proliferate and contribute to holistic well-being.

Within our gut reside two primary types of microbes—Firmicutes and Bacteroidetes. Although it's crucial to maintain Firmicutes for the health of the gastrointestinal tract, overpopulation beyond Bacteroidetes usually results in weight gain. Conversely, when Bacteroidetes dominate, weight loss and a leaner

profile typically follow suit. A diet laden with sugar, carbs and starches but low in fiber tends to favor Firmicutes growth, correlating with weight gain. Conversely, a Healthy Gut Zone diet, rich in fiber and prebiotics while low in sugar, carbs and starches, promotes the dominance of Bacteroidetes and facilitates weight loss.

An added benefit of prebiotics is their role in generating butyrate, a short-chain fatty acid that holds significant benefits for your gut. Butyrate not only serves as fuel for colon cells but also exhibits anti-inflammatory properties. This reduction in inflammation can be transformative for many individuals, altering the course of their health. Butyrate also supports the immune system and safeguards against specific digestive tract ailments. The more butyrate in your gut, the better off you will be.

### Gut Power Tool 4: Polyphenols

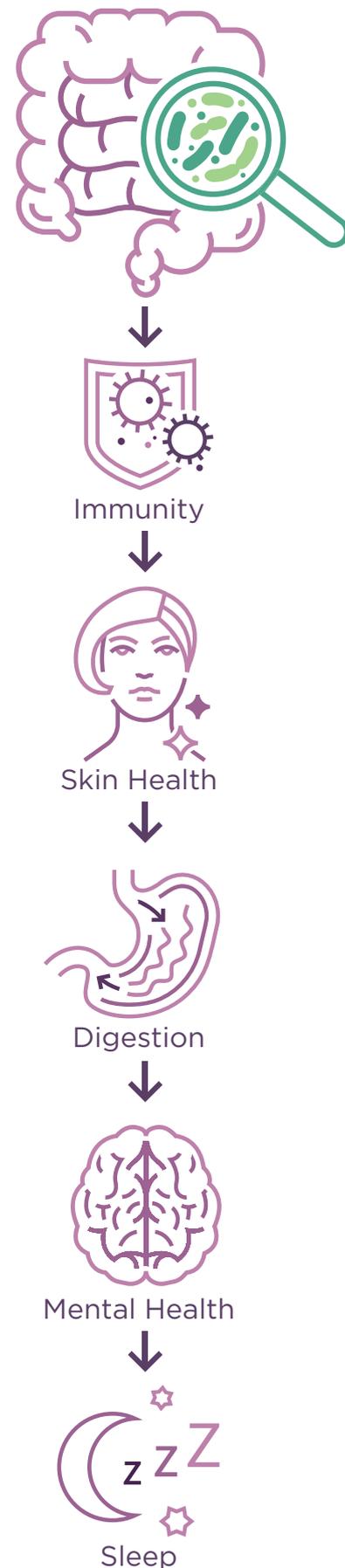
Polyphenols are a class of naturally occurring compounds found in various plant-based food. They are known for their potent antioxidant properties, which contribute to their potential health benefits. Polyphenols are abundant in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, tea and certain beverages such as red wine and coffee. Consuming food rich in polyphenols has been linked to various health advantages, including reduced inflammation, improved heart health and enhanced gut function. Polyphenols are natural antioxidant compounds that protect us from toxins, prevent blood clots, promote gut health, reduce cell damage and more.

### Olive Oil's Best-kept Secret: Oleocanthal

For me, extra-virgin olive oil is the primary source of polyphenols, as it makes the perfect salad dressing and can be drizzled over most cooked food and added to soup.

One of the many phenolic compounds is oleocanthal, one of the most powerful phytonutrients in the world. Because oleocanthal is so good for you, it has been highly investigated and researched. It was discovered in 1993, defined in 2005, and found (among many other things) to be like liquid ibuprofen. This oleocanthal is more active

## Gut Health Effects



than many medications, and it is an anti-inflammatory and a pain reliever. It's also 100% natural, which means you get the ibuprofen benefit without any of the side effects.

Interestingly, the only known source for this special oleocanthal polyphenol is extra-virgin olive oil. It is found nowhere else. Oleocanthal is found in the highest concentrations in extra-virgin olive oil from certain locations in Greece.

### Gut Power Tool 5: Resistant Starches

The fifth and final gut power tool is resistant starches. Resistant starches are a type of dietary carbohydrate that resists digestion in the small intestine and reaches the large intestine mostly unchanged. This unique characteristic allows them to serve as a source of nourishment for beneficial gut bacteria, promoting their growth and activity. Resistant starches are found in food such as undercooked potatoes, green bananas, legumes and some whole grains. They offer several potential health benefits, including improved gut health, enhanced insulin sensitivity and

better blood sugar control.

Not every carb is a resistant starch. In fact, decreasing your carb intake to lower sugars is a necessary part of giving your gut time to heal. The bad bacteria thrive in a sugar-rich environment, while the good bacteria need a low-sugar environment to thrive.

So where do you find these resistant starches? Familiar food sources include sweet potatoes, yams, green (not fully ripened) bananas, green mangos, green papaya and green plantains. When the fruit is fully ripened, both the sugar/fructose content and lectin content are high. Eating the green fruit bypasses the sugar/fructose and lectins and provides you with a great source of resistant starches. These fruits are good for your gut, but only when they are green. Sliced in bite-size pieces, they are a great topping on salads.

### Stewarding Your Good Health and Wholeness

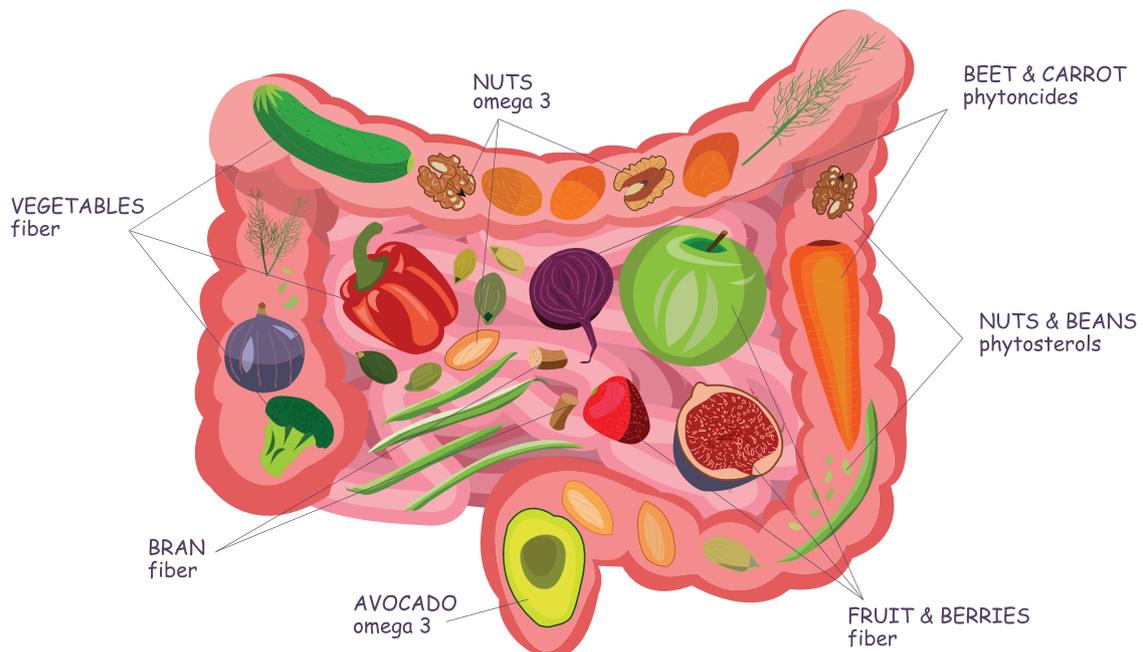
If you've ever felt overwhelmed by the flood of health advice, unsure of where to turn amid the countless theories and trends, rest assured that you're not alone.

The world of health is vast and complex, but I'm here to simplify it for you, to lead you into the health zone essentials of well-being where clarity, balance and vibrancy thrive.

Over the years, I've dedicated my medical practice to offering not just solutions but a road map to true health. I've sought to empower you with knowledge and wisdom, to help you take charge of your well-being in a world brimming with noise. Let me assure you, health isn't a collection of isolated fragments. It's a symphony of interconnected systems working together in harmony. ◀

**DON COLBERT, MD**, has been a board-certified family practice doctor for over 25 years in Orlando, Florida, and most recently in Dallas, Texas. He is also board-certified in anti-aging medicine through the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine. He is the author of several books including three New York Times bestsellers: Dr. Colbert's Keto Zone Diet, The Seven Pillars of Health and Dr. Colbert's "I Can Do This" Diet. His newest book is Dr. Colbert's Health Zone Essentials.

“Rotating probiotics after three to six months is recommended to keep your gut’s microbiome diverse and healthy.”





# Are You Ready?

## THE LORD IS PREPARING FOR A GREAT HARVEST IN 2024

He is asking “Are you ready?” Looking at the world today many are wondering if the Second Coming is imminent. Perhaps so, but we do not know. What we do know is that Jesus will not return until the number of the martyrs, and by extension the number of the Church, has been completed (Revelation 6:9-11). God is busy building His Church, and we should be also.

It has been prophesied that this is the time to harvest the low hanging fruit. Jesus said that we should pray for workers to gather His harvest (Luke 10:2). Are you ready to answer the prayer of Jesus?

This is a time of great shaking and people are afraid. But we have the answer: Jesus, and we should boldly show His love in word and deed (1 John 3:16-18). Be ready to give an answer for your faith, but with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15). And remember that your testimony is more convincing than any argument and has power to overcome the works of the Devil. (Revelation 12:11)

God is confirming His harvest time by sending His sign in the Heavens over America this year on April 8, a Solar Eclipse which will be visible throughout the land. The prophet Joel and the Apostle Peter pointed to Eclipses as prophetic signs, and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Acts 3:18-21).

**Please join us in the AMERICAN WAKE UP CALL on APRIL 8 to pray  
for America and reach out to the lost.**

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*Emerging from Hindu family roots, pastor and evangelist now bringing **HOLY SPIRIT FIRE** to the world's largest nation*

**BY DR. RATNA KUMAR SAJJA**

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**“In Vijayawada, India, the book of Acts is still relevant. Miracles still happen there. And the Holy Spirit still uses miracles to spread the gospel in a nation dominated by Hinduism.”**

**T**he Spirit of God approaches each person in mysterious ways. As my father walked in the Hindu religion, he repeatedly questioned other Hindus, including priests and sages, to ask whether they had ever seen god. He never received an encouraging word, confirming what Augustine said many centuries ago, that “the heart is restless until it rests in Thee.”

### **Out of 330 Million, One**

I give all the glory and honor to God and the Lord Jesus Christ for saving me, my family and for allowing me to participate in His kingdom work. I was born and brought up in an orthodox Hindu family in the state of Andhra Pradesh, in South India. Hindus claim to have 330 million gods and goddesses. My grandfather was a Hindu priest and my parents were staunch Hindus. My father was the most religious in my immediate family, getting up before dawn to perform family devotions and to observe Hindu rites such as taking a holy bath in the waters of a sacred river, reciting mantras and burning incense to the Hindu gods. My mother also clung to her idols, garlanding them morning by morning. As a family, we made pilgrimages to sacred temples to please the gods and to obtain divine favor.

Early in my childhood, I suffered from a fever which paralyzed my legs from the waist down. Just as you might have seen on TV, I had to drag myself around. I felt cursed. But God, in His mercy, used this evil and the natural love of my parents to

find a way, not just for healing, but for the salvation of my whole family and the extension of His kingdom.

My parents took me to various and famous doctors only to be told there was no remedy. They visited several famous Hindu temples in India, even taking a sacred vow to offer my hair if I was healed, hoping to gain favor or to make an expiation for some supposed transgression. Despite their desperation, sincere devotion and ceaseless worship, however, the Hindu gods never responded.

This seemingly hopeless situation was aggravated further by the appearance of a demonic spirit troubling my father at nights. The spirit would come like a rushing wind with intense power and fall on my father, making him breathless. To ward off these demonic assaults, my father would keep and read from the Anjaneya Dandakam, a Hindu religious liturgy. This too was no relief.

Then, mysteriously, a Christian gave my father a Bible to protect him against the demon. To my father's great surprise, the demon stopped bothering him. A seed of faith was planted in my father's heart.

Out of desperation, my parents took me to a Christian minister. This in itself was a momentous step. For centuries, the Hindu caste system has been stubbornly resistant to Christianity. Christians are considered to be outcasts and unclean, untouchable, unapproachable, restricted to the most degrading occupations and forbidden even to enter a Hindu temple. continued »

The Christian minister shared the gospel with my parents, telling them that my crippling disease was meant to reveal the glory of God. He prophesied my healing as a testimony to the nations, anointing my feet with oil, laying hands on me and praying for my healing. He told my parents to keep applying the oil and to keep praying. He also prophesied that my father would become a minister of the gospel, but my father responded by saying that this would never happen. Still, strangely, my father acknowledged that his son might become a Christian if in fact I was healed.

Since we were Hindus, we did not understand this minister or his prophecies. They did not make sense. Nevertheless, on that day, my mother responded to the gospel by accepting Jesus Christ as her Savior.

As for my healing, little by little, day by day, over three months, as my mother continued praying and anointing me with oil, my crooked feet were straightened and my paralyzed condition was totally healed. Though bound to a wheelchair for three years, today no symptom remains. Jesus healed me.

As a result of this miracle, my father renounced idol worship and accepted Jesus Christ. Also, many of my staunch Hindu blood relations saw this miracle and also came to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

### **Hearts Captured Into the Kingdom**

God does not forget His prophesies. Regarding my father, although he was engrossed in business, God kept pursuing him. On the 4th of December 1970, my father had an encounter with the Lord. In his own words, "I saw a dazzling light that filled the room that I was in. I heard a voice saying, 'You are ungrateful despite the miracle in your son's life.'" My father was gripped with the conviction of sin, wailing and weeping. The next morning, while having a cup of coffee, he was baptized in the Holy Spirit and began speaking in new tongues. None of us knew what was happening; we had never even been to a church. Some thought he was possessed by a demon. A local Pentecostal minister, however, said that

it was baptism in the Holy Spirit. On that same day, my father received the call of God to ministry and a commission to heal the sick, cast out demons, and proclaim the gospel to Hindus. My father left his business then and there to follow his call and has since been in the ministry for almost 50 years.

As it turned out, I was even more

testimony of His healing power to the nations. God opened my blind eyes and I accepted Him as my Lord and Savior.

Later, I too was called to the ministry. I attended an Assembly of God Bible College in India, then travelling to America to enroll in the Church of God Theological Seminary in Cleveland, Tennessee, and finally Luther Rice

**“Christians in India are experiencing significant persecution.”**

stubborn than my father. I considered Christianity as a western religion and Jesus as a god only for the downtrodden. I argued that India was the birthplace of two of the world's greatest religions, Hinduism and Buddhism, and that the Hindu gods were born in lofty palaces, whereas Jesus was born in a degraded manger. I mocked Christianity and was very nationalistic. Even as my parents went forward in Christian ministry, I accepted the traditional Hindu thinking that Christianity belonged to the low caste people.

Then there came a point in my life where I lacked peace. I heard the voice of Satan saying that I was worthless and hopeless, that there was no purpose for my life, and that I would not be successful. Satan prompted me to commit suicide and one day I decided to kill myself. It was the turning point in my life. My father and mother prayed for me and led me to the Lord. My father said: "Son, God has a great destiny for your life. That is why Satan is after you."

The minister who prayed for my healing prophesied that I will be a

Seminary in Lithonia, Georgia, where I received a Doctorate of Ministry. Subsequently, I spent 13 years with Charles Stanley at InTouch Ministries, including as the Director of International Outreach, travelling to many countries.

I had tried to resist God, but His grace goes far beyond the horizons of human comprehension. He sought me, found me when I was lost, set my feet upon solid ground, and through His

**“God opened my blind eyes and I accepted Him as my Lord and Savior.”**

Spirit graciously allows me to participate in His good works. I travelled to over 40 countries to share the good news of the gospel.

Since 2014, I have been pastoring in the city of Vijayawada, India, where

God has built a most beautiful church, touching thousands and serving the community. We have evidenced countless miracles. In 2015, my wife, Jyothi, and I returned to Vijayawada and began pastoring my father's church. It has now grown to more than 1,200 in weekly attendance—and thousands more curious seekers watch services on YouTube. We have been blessed to plant 12 satellite congregations of Messiah Fellowship in nearby towns.

### Awakening In India

My sincere desire and hope is that you are encouraged. God works in mysterious ways, bringing us to Him, and into deeper love and relationship. God has gone out ahead that we might fully participate in the glorious plans and future He has, here and now, and eternally.

Please pray with us as we pray for you, that we might reach the entire nation of India, many Hindus, that we would know His perfect will, complete His sufferings, finish the race well, advance from one degree of glory to another, and that many souls would be added to the Book of Life.

Please pray for the federal government and leaders of India, that our great and mighty God may visit them in mysterious ways, just as with my family, and turn their hearts to the gospel. Currently, Christians in India are experiencing significant persecution and the central government is controlled by extreme Hindu nationalists.

In Vijayawada, India, the book of Acts is still relevant. Miracles still happen there. And the Holy Spirit still uses miracles to spread the gospel in a nation dominated by Hinduism. I hope the American church will learn from our Indian brothers that we need both God's Word and His supernatural power to reach this generation. ◀

**DR. RATNA SAJJA**, is the senior Pastor of the Messiah Fellowship Church in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, India. God miraculously healed him and laid a calling to reach the unreached Hindus with the good news of the gospel. He is blessed with three daughters and a wife.

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CHARISMA 

# Through a Season of Healing and Discovery

BY BRENDA BRAVATTY

**M**y cancer process and story of healing began in July 2021 when I was at my gynecologist, and I shared information about my family health history, having two brothers who had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2019 and 2021. The doctor strongly suggested I should undergo genetic testing and I did.

I felt perfectly healthy, and had no indication of health concerns when I met Dr. Rajesh Keswani, director of endoscopy at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago. I met with him as a precautionary measure after genetic tests revealed I was at high risk for pancreatic cancer. He decided to do screening tests immediately.

## Difficult Path Ahead

My name is Brenda Bravatty, I am a wife, mother, pastor and woman in ministry. I have been married to my husband, Enio Bravatty, for 34 years and together we have two wonderful children and a loving daughter-in-law.

It's hard to say who was more taken aback by the pancreatic cancer diagnosis, me or Dr. Keswani. After the procedure, Dr. Keswani sat with me and my husband and shared the shocking news. I remember he was

surprised because what he found was so small and almost undetectable. He called the next day and said the biopsy had shown I had pancreatic cancer. I'd never had any health problems, and now I was learning I had a serious disease. I could hardly believe what I was hearing. This was so unexpected and difficult to process in my mind. After watching my brothers undergo pancreatic cancer treatment and being at their side during the process, I knew the path would be very difficult.

The MRI screening results had been normal, but Dr. Keswani knew that early-stage pancreatic cancer does not cause symptoms and is hard to detect with medical imaging. He then performed an endoscopic ultrasound to look for even the smallest sign of the disease. I truly believe this was God intervening and leading him to do more testing.

Although Dr. Keswani regularly performs advanced procedures to screen for pancreatic cancer, he shared it is rare that it is caught as early as mine. He said, "I was really dismayed during her endoscopy. Brenda had a recent scan that didn't show anything, and it hits you that you're about to diagnose someone with something that

is life-altering. That is very humbling."

The God of miracles was already working. I remember the first appointments were devastating. There were times when I cried and cried at the doctor's office, listening to the diagnosis and potential treatment options.

Dr. Devalingam Mahalingam, MD, PhD, Oncologist at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, led the multidisciplinary team that developed my care plan. He said the

early detection of cancer gave me an advantage as I began treatment.

"It's hard to detect pancreatic cancers early, and 80% of patients present with advanced disease that is not able to be curatively treated," Dr. Mahalingam said. "Pancreatic cancer's symptoms are quite insidious, vague abdominal pain, and new-onset diabetes. Often, those don't immediately indicate the need for a pancreatic cancer evaluation."

I underwent a complicated surgery called a Whipple procedure and then took several weeks to recover. When I felt stronger, I began a rigorous course of chemotherapy that included a cocktail of three intravenous drugs administered every two weeks. There were moments when I felt like

“Go and tell the world”

I was sinking into a deep pit, remembering what my brothers had endured before me.

When I heard I needed chemo, I was shaken and fearful. The chemo for pancreatic cancer is intense, so I relied on my faith in God, my family and my friends to get through it. I was shocked, but I never questioned why it was happening to me. I understood that if God allowed me to go through it, it is because He had a greater plan.

A couple of months after completing chemotherapy, I asked Dr. Keswani a question that would change my perspective. I asked him “How often do you find pancreatic cancer this early?” He replied, “Never.” He explained to me that in its early stages, pancreatic cancer is silent and hidden. The fact that it was

The Bible was my daily companion—promises of the Word of God gave me strength and were light on this dark path that I had to endure. Bible verses, such as Psalm 118:17 became life to me, “I will not die; instead, I will live to tell what the Lord has done.” I learned to embrace suffering, a concept that was unknown to me. I had to surrender my life and my journey to His will for me. Throughout those dark days, I was intentional about seeking the Lord. There were moments where I had no strength, where the side effects were debilitating, but it was in those same moments where I had to rely on His Strength and His strong hand to lift me up each day.

During the process, I encountered many roadblocks that tested my faith.

happened to be my birthday. I was so concerned, praying for a miracle, that the masses would disappear. I remember the day of the appointment with Dr Waggoner, I was hoping to hear that the ovaries were clear, but instead of that he said that the masses could be seen by the CT scan. I began to cry, and the doctor took my hands and encouraged me saying, “Do not lose your hope, a year from now you will look back and you will ask yourself, why did I worry so much? Chemotherapy will be over, and you will be fine.”

This moment and that day were promises that the Lord was speaking over my life which have come to pass.

Despite the diagnosis, I made the decision to trust in the Lord and not worry because I knew that my life was in His hands. The Lord continuously spoke to me in various ways, and He gave me peace throughout the process of waiting.

I vividly remember one morning during the beginning of my chemotherapy treatment, I was praying at home, it was still dark outside. Suddenly I had a vision, where Jesus was holding my hand, He was walking me into the infusion therapy area at the hospital. That morning, God touched my heart, and a peace surrounded me.

That experience changed my perspective about chemotherapy. I no longer had fear, but instead, felt peace. Every hospital visit for chemotherapy treatment became a new opportunity. While I was in the waiting room, I saw people who were crying, full of hopelessness. I spoke to them about the love of Jesus and shared with them that I was going through the same journey. I prepared encouragement cards to give to patients to motivate them to have faith because I knew God cared about them. I had wonderful experiences while sharing the gospel. My heart was full of compassion, just as God has shown compassion to me.

Every time I went to chemotherapy or a doctor’s appointment, I was very positive and full of faith. I can say that the source of my strength and positive attitude was God, His presence and His power. Also, the loving care of my family and my church family were crucial to walking through this battle. The love shown by the body of Christ really

“I truly believe God was intervening and leading my doctor to do more testing.”

found early is a miracle. I understood that my life is a miracle, and I began seeing my process as an opportunity.

### Overcoming the Disruptions to Regular Life

My diagnosis started a year of treatment that would keep me away from the church and ministry for about 10 months. It was a difficult experience as my life as I knew it, came to a sudden halt. It felt like I was at a peak of my life with family and ministry, but unexpected events happen, and life can suddenly change, just like it did for me.

I struggled to find hope in my diagnosis. This difficult experience reinforced my faith in God, my only hope.

After the Whipple procedure, I had additional scans done and the oncologist shared that they had found masses in my ovaries and that there was a high probability that I also had ovarian cancer, secondary to pancreas cancer. The doctor explained that they could not confirm the diagnosis in the moment, but that we would need to wait seven months until chemotherapy was completed in order to undergo another surgery to remove the ovaries. I was devastated with the potential diagnosis.

I remember going to Cleveland Clinic hospital for a second opinion regarding the ovarian diagnosis. I met with Dr. Steven Waggoner, Gynecologist Oncologist. I was there on Feb. 2, 2022, which



impacted my life. This was a great opportunity to experience that loving kindness.

I had chemotherapy treatment biweekly and there was always an opportunity to encourage the medical staff and share the love of God with them. Every time a nurse performed a procedure on me, I would encourage them in their work.

I finished 12 rounds of chemotherapy in July of 2022. In September, I underwent a surgery to remove my ovaries at Cleveland Clinic. The surgery was a success, and the surgeon reported to me that there were not masses found in the ovaries. Another great miracle! Specialists were shocked at the report, members of the Oncology team at Northwestern stated that they had never seen something like this! I knew God was giving me the victory every step of the way. On Sept. 28, 2022, I was declared cancer-free!

### **Beauty and Purpose Out of Trials**

Throughout this process, I learned many valuable lessons for my spiritual and emotional health which changed my life and ministry as a whole. After 10 months of treatment, I slowly returned to my normal family and ministry activities. God gave me a second chance of life. Understanding how deadly pancreatic cancer is, I am certain God used

the medical science combined with His miraculous power to extend my life for a purpose.

Dr. Keswani and I have been interviewed by several media outlets and news channels, because of the miracle of early detection and complete healing. He has shared that, “It’s hard to say someone is lucky when they have pancreatic cancer, but with Brenda you have to recognize the blessing of early detection,” he added “It’s a story of hope because medicine is advancing. Brenda was proactive, and it has changed her life.”

### **“Go and Tell the World”**

I know God led me to the right doctors who would perform the necessary tests. Dr. Keswani encouraged me to “Go and tell the world what happened to you.”

My life and my ministry are not the same. I now understand that each day is a gift from God, who changed my heart through the process. I aim to live every day to the fullest! Although I give glory to God for my healing, my life is not perfect. In May 2023, my youngest brother, Vinicio, passed away due to pancreatic cancer. This process has allowed me to understand the sovereignty of God. He extended my life, but took my brother home. My eldest

brother, Gilberto, is alive and healthy.

The passion of my life is to love and serve Jesus, preach His Word and serve those in need in my community. We continue serving God as senior pastors of Casa de Misericordia Church in Chicago. In 2005, I founded *Mujer Victoriosa* Ministry, which is a Christian non-profit organization that aims to bring hope and healing to the hearts of women. After enduring the hardships of this process, I feel more equipped to assist women and to provide compassion to people going through difficult circumstances. I am currently in the process of writing my second book, *Through the Valley*, a devotional for cancer patients.

I have been through a difficult process. And God has been faithful. As a result, I desire to help other people through my experience. ◀

**BRENDA BRAVATTY** received Jesus as her personal Savior in 1978. She and her husband of 34 years, Pastor Enio, have been senior pastors at Casa de Misericordia church in Chicago since 1998. Brenda is passionate about Jesus and preaching His Word. She has a bachelor's degree in nutrition and a master's degree in food science, and has her ministerial credentials with the Assemblies of God.



# UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES

**T**he conditions in the world have deteriorated substantially in the last few years. Wars and rumors of wars. Economic hardship. Freedoms under attack. People are again wondering if we live in the times of the Second Coming.

There are few things more important than understanding the times you live in.

In the Old Testament men from the Tribe of Issachar were commended because they understood the times and knew what to do. They helped bring about the ascension of King David and the establishment of Christ's lineage. On the other hand, the generation who rejected Christ was criticized for not knowing the signs of the times, and they destroyed their nation. So it can be seen that understanding the times is the key to destiny.

One of the reasons that Jesus was so critical of His generation was their ignorance of the book of Daniel. Daniel's prophecies described the nations of Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome which came into power over Israel. He described the desecration and rededication of the Temple. And, most importantly, His prophecy of the 70 7's pinpoints the year when Jesus began His ministry and dated His atoning death

3 ½ years later. Daniel wrote the history of the nations, Israel, and the ministry of Jesus almost 600 years before it happened. The signs were there for anyone to see.

Our generation also has a prophetic book which records the history of the nations and Israel, and of the coming of Christ. Our book also tells of a new prophetic player, the Church. This book spans a period of almost 2000 years with amazingly detailed pictures of the nations, the church, Israel, and the second coming of Christ. We can look to the book of Revelation for the signs of our times.

Let us start with the nations, whose history is written in the vision of Babylon in the 17th chapter of Revelation. Here the book shows a seven headed beast which we are told represents seven great empires. Five, being Babylon, Egypt, Assyria/Babylon, Persia and Greece, had fallen when the book was written. The sixth was Rome, which ruled when the book was written. The seventh is believed to be the reconstituted Roman Empire under the Popes. By now, of course, the sixth and seventh kingdoms are in the past along with the other five.

The vision next describes 10 Kings, which would be the European nations which formed after the Popes lost their

power. These 10 nations became the great colonial empires and they, and their offspring, did in fact rule the world until the middle of the 20th century. Just look at a world map in 1914 to see the accuracy of the prophecy from Revelation.

But then two world wars broke out and led to the dissolution of the colonial empires. The 10 Kings are no longer in power, but they will make way for the 8th King, whom we call the Anti-Christ.

So, in the history of the nations, we are at the twilight of the era of the 10 Kings and are awaiting the appearance of the 8th King, the Anti-Christ. He is not here yet, and we know he is coming, but this is no time to hide out in fear as some are suggesting. We are not yet in the time of the end.

The times of the Church can be understood from the vision of the Seven Seals, which are opened by Christ because He purchased the Church with His sacrifice. The first four seals, popularly known as the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, actually represent four false religious systems which have attacked the Church. The white horse represents persecution under pagan Rome, the red horse war with Islam, the black horse persecution by the Secularists, and the pale horse persecution by the emerging New Age movement. All of these are present in the world today, with the New Age movement making its national debut in Hitler's Nazi Germany.

The fifth seal answers the question of when God will bring an end to the persecution of the Church. It will end, says He, when the number of the Church has been completed. In other words, God is holding back the end while He is building His Church. And, if you look around the world today, God is building His Church by millions and hundreds of millions. This is the Great Age of the Harvest, the most glorious and exciting time in the history of the Church. And we who understand the times must forget about hiding in the hills and instead partner with God in His Great Harvest as this Age is winding down.

Time is also winding down for Israel, and its history can be told from the vision of the Seven Trumpets. The first four trumpet visions describe the effect of the Church's enemies on Israel. Thus, the Romans drove them out of the land, the Islamism's took the blazing Temple Mount, the Secularists persecuted the Jews, and the New Age Nazis killed one third of the "Sun, Moon and Stars," a prophetic description of the Jews. As with the Church, these four trumpet visions are now history.

The fifth trumpet vision describes a people who worship a meteorite, are told not to harm the trees or grass and who have the key to the Abyss. This is an amazing description of the Arabs, who are prophesied to wage a 150 year war on Israel. This war, which began with Israel's nationhood in 1948, would last until 2098 if the 150 year prophecy is correctly understood. Thus, there will be no peace in the Middle East as the world marches on toward the end of time.

The Bible tells us that after our times the Anti-Christ will arise on the strength of a new religion similar to the New Age religion. He will start a world war and will be victorious, establishing a totalitarian state which persecutes Christians and Jews. The Church will be "raptured" to meet Jesus, but only after He has destroyed the Anti-Christ in the battle of Armageddon. The Church is instructed to have patience, endurance and faithfulness during this time.

So we, too, should have patience, endurance, and above all faithfulness as we understand our times. It is true that the dark times of the Anti-Christ are coming, and the world will be unstable because Israel will be at war with the Arabs until then. However, this is also the Golden Age of the Church and the greatest time ever to be alive for Christians.

Our calling, and our destiny, are to partner with God in His Great Harvest until the number of the Church is completed and Jesus comes to take us home.

It is our prayer that, like the men of Issachar, we will understand the times and know what to do.

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# LORD, DELIVER US FROM EVIL





## Jesus warned us that times would grow dark—but *He also gave us the words to pray*

BY J. LEE GRADY

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**I**n November 2023, a high school teacher in Queens, New York, was forced to hide in her office because rampaging students attacked her. What made the students so angry? The woman, who has been a teacher for 23 years, had posted a picture of herself on social media. She was holding a sign that said, “I STAND WITH ISRAEL.”

Because of her stance, the students—who were waving Palestinian flags and calling for a riot—wanted to lynch her. New York City’s mayor, Eric Adams, called the incident “a vile act of anti-Semitism.” The incident forced authorities to close the school for a few hours.

What’s happening in our country? What would radicalize teenagers to the point that they would riot in the halls of a school?

### Welcome to America in 2024

*Forbes* magazine announced two years ago that organized retail theft is currently costing retailers \$100 billion in losses. The trend is so bad that Walmart announced in late 2022 that the rise in theft will result in higher prices and that some stores will close. The CFO of Target, Michael Fiddelke, said a 50% rise in theft in 2022 has resulted in a \$400 million loss for his company.

In California, where shoplifting has been rising dramatically, thieves who steal \$950 or less in merchandise are only guilty of a misdemeanor—and they are rarely charged. This is why we now see videos of people brazenly walking into stores, filling garbage bags with merchandise and walking out without paying.

What would make thieves so brazen that they would empty store shelves in the sight of cashiers? This is the world we live in now. Up is down, wrong is right, good is evil and evil is good.

» Hamas terrorists who decapitate babies and rape and butcher women are viewed as the good guys. Israel, the only true democracy in the Middle East, is viewed as an enemy of freedom.

» Parents who want to protect their children from transgender ideology are called “hateful,” or even “Nazis.” Meanwhile, teachers who believe it is their right to show kids pornographic books in class are portrayed in the media as “inclusive.”

» Pro-life activists who say it is wrong to abort a baby during the third trimester are often called “fascists” or worse.

» Citizens, including African-Americans, who believe repeat criminals should be reported to police are called “white supremacists.”

continued »



**We live in evil times. But we can have hope because the light of Jesus shines the brightest in the dark.**

Isaiah 5:20 says: “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!” This verse helps me understand what is happening in our culture today. Words have been weaponized. Definitions have been changed to manipulate and control.

What’s behind this? It is the spirit of Lucifer himself, who comes to “steal and kill and destroy.” We may not think of theft as being as serious as murder or mayhem, but Jesus listed stealing as a violent and diabolical act that the devil inspires.

Jesus also warned us that people won’t respect the enforcement of laws in the last days. He said in Matthew 24:12: “Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold.” Satan uses lawlessness to spread chaos, confusion and hopelessness. Lawlessness is what unravels a culture until it collapses.

What should our response be? Conservative Americans say we must stop being soft on crime, and elect leaders who believe in strict law enforcement. On the flip side, liberal Americans say we must apply compassion by addressing the problems of poverty and family

breakdown that lead youth into crime.

The truth is we must address this problem from both sides of the political divide. But we will not solve our crime problem until we pray and work for a spiritual revival. America is unraveling because we need Jesus. The spirit of lawlessness will only be defeated when the Holy Spirit changes hearts from the inside.

We need some desperate prayers. I’m praying like this: “Lord Jesus, our nation seems to be slipping into an abyss. Forgive us for our rebellion against You. Deliver us from the evil of lawlessness. Let Your justice roll down like waters, and let it touch every community and every race. Send a visitation of Your Holy Spirit to awaken us. Instead of hatred, racism, cruelty, crime, violence, sexual immorality and family breakdown, give us peace in our streets, love in our homes and the healing of families. Amen.”

### Identifying the Anti-Christ Spirit

Back in the 1940s, people believed Adolf Hitler was the Antichrist because he twisted words and definitions in such a way that people actually accepted the genocide of Jews. Then in 1976, the popular movie *The Omen* fueled the idea

that the Antichrist might emerge from the United States.

I’ve never believed the Antichrist is just one man. That’s because I know from history that Christians have suffered under evil dictators since the first century. In fact, early Christians believed the Roman emperor Nero was the Antichrist.

One verse in the Bible gives us a clue that the Antichrist shouldn’t be viewed as one individual. The apostle John wrote: “Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour,” (1 John 2:18, NASB).

This verse indicates that a spirit of antichrist has been working in the world from the beginning, manifesting in various eras. And throughout the book of Revelation we see that this Antichrist figure works in tandem with the devil and the false prophet to wage war on God and His people.

The Antichrist is part of a demonic trinity—a counterfeit of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The spirit of antichrist works inside certain people to carry out Satan’s mission. The devil has been working overtime because he’s furious that his days are numbered. He is mustering all his forces because he knows heaven is about to unleash the greatest outpouring of the Holy Spirit in all of history.

We shouldn’t focus our attention on the devil, but the Bible says clearly that we should not be ignorant of his crafty schemes (see 2 Cor. 2:11). The fingerprints of the Antichrist are everywhere around us today, and if you aren’t aware of his strategies, you could come under his influence. Here are six ways to identify the antichrist spirit:

#### 1) The antichrist spirit hates God.

The devil hates all righteousness and goodness. He wants evil to triumph. This is why people who hate God celebrate sin. And this is why we see in our own educational system a systematic attempt to replace Christian values with atheism.

#### 2) The antichrist spirit hates life.

The devil doesn’t have the power to create because he himself was created. No wonder the devil loves it when people abuse alcohol and drugs; he fuels hatred in people so they will kill others. Isn’t it obvious that only Satan would convince

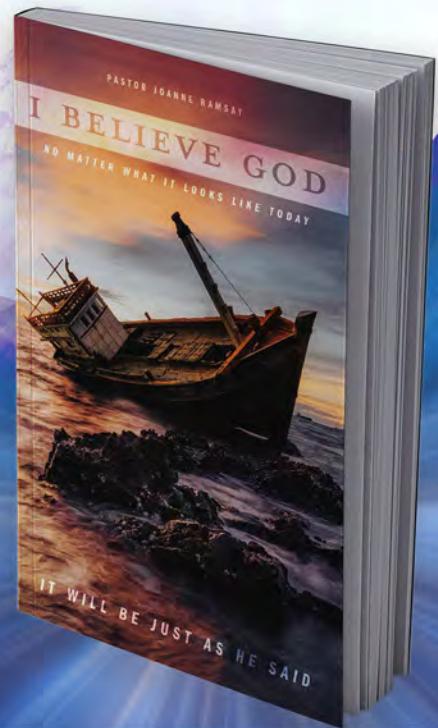
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people that killing an unborn child, even up until the moment of birth, is acceptable?

**3) The antichrist spirit hates the family.** Not long ago, secular psychologists would have all agreed that children thrive when they have a mother and a father. Today our universities have become breeding grounds for hostility to anything traditional, including the simple scientific fact that there are only two genders. The antichrist spirit twists and perverts what is normal.

political correctness.

**6) The antichrist spirit hates the church.** I have friends overseas who live in fear, either because their own government is closing churches or terrorists are killing Christians. I recently heard from a man in Nigeria whose wife and two children were killed by Muslim militants. I pray we never see such violence in the United States, but the spirit that is slaughtering Christians in Africa is already lurking in our midst.

increase. Anxiety, depression and serious mental disorders have turned many people into ticking time bombs. Lord, deliver us from this wave of mental illness!

**3) Deliver us from media deception.** It's no secret that some world leaders are busy using their wealth and influence to plot evil. And sometimes the media—which is supposed to broadcast the truth and expose evil—is actually in bed with the evildoers. Pray that we will not be misled or manipulated by lies and cover-ups.

**4) Deliver us from perversion.** Immorality has taken deep root in our nation—and this includes the pervasiveness of pornography, the horror of human trafficking and the wickedness of full-term abortion. And now, doctors are making their fortunes by performing sex-change operations on minors who are confused about their gender. Lord, deliver us from this evil!

**5) Deliver us from racism.** We as a nation still struggle with pervasive prejudice against certain minorities—and in many cases racism exists in the church. We need deep repentance and freedom from our hatred of people who don't look like us. Racism also has prevented the church from taking the gospel to certain communities, and from caring about orphans, foster kids and prisoners. Lord, deliver us from this hatefulness!

**6) Deliver us from greed and materialism.** The Bible warns that “the love of money is the root of all evil,” (1 Tim. 6:10). This evil is entrenched in our banking systems, pharmaceutical companies, universities, media corporations, hospitals, high-tech companies and governments. Deliver us from greed!

We live in evil times. But we can have hope because the light of Jesus shines the brightest in the dark. Be brave. Live loudly. Share the gospel with courage. Challenge the culture around you. And pray fervently that the antichrist forces will lose their grip on our nation. ◀

**J. LEE GRADY** was editor of *Charisma* for 11 years and now serves as senior contributing editor. He directs the *Mordecai Project*, an international ministry that protects women and girls from gender-based violence. His latest books are *Follow Me and Let's Go Deeper* (Charisma House).

## Welcome to America in 2024.



**4) The antichrist spirit hates authority.** In Romans 1:30 the apostle Paul refers to hardened sinners as “insolent”—which means, “showing a rude or arrogant lack of respect.” In Paul's description of the deeds of the flesh, he also mentions “revilers” (1 Cor. 6:10). A reviler is “one who uses abusive or contemptuous speech.” When you see hordes of people marching through our streets vandalizing property, spray-painting crude words on walls and screaming curse words, you can be sure the antichrist spirit is near.

**5) The antichrist spirit hates the prophetic word of God.** When Elijah called down fire from heaven, and God proved He was real to the nation of Israel, Jezebel got very angry. She was hell-bent on killing the prophet before he could preach again. This is why we must pray for all ministers in this challenging hour. We need the courage to speak, especially when God asks us to break the rules of

### Six Specific Ways to Pray

I find a lot of comfort when I pray for the United States using Matthew 6:13. Jesus told us we should pray: “Father ... deliver us from evil.” Jesus recognized that there is evil in the world—and nobody can twist the definition of evil and make it good. I've been asking that Jesus will deliver us from evil in six areas:

**1) Deliver us from lawlessness and violence.** In some American cities today, murder rates are skyrocketing, and stores are closing because of rampant theft. In San Francisco and Philadelphia, for example, certain companies are pulling out of the cities altogether because local authorities won't prosecute thieves. Lord, restore peace to our streets!

**2) Deliver us from a mental health breakdown.** Statistics show that deaths caused by alcohol, drugs and suicide have now reached their highest level ever in the United States. The deadly spread of fentanyl is only one of the causes of this

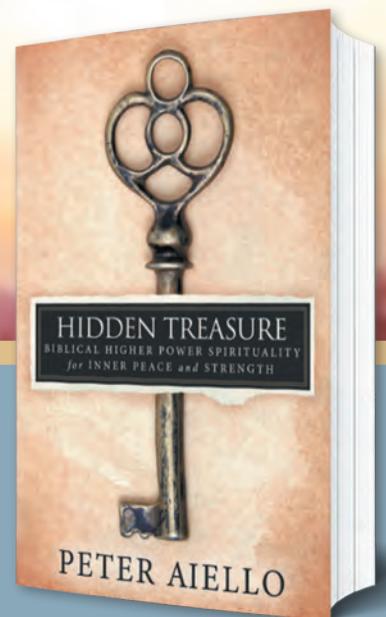
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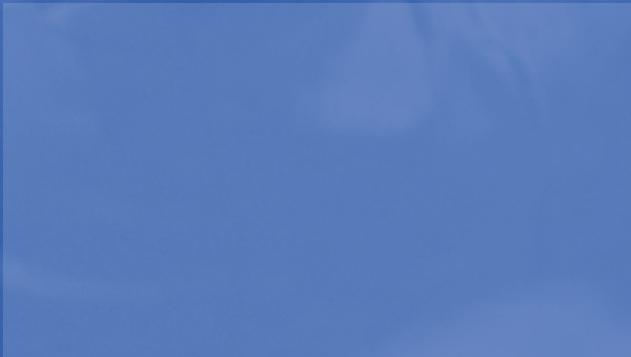


This book is about my personal testimony of how God taught me to surrender to Him through the instruction from the Bible. It told me to be anxious for nothing by casting all of my care on Him. *Hidden Treasure* shares my insights on Biblical spirituality and how to walk in the Spirit.

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*Peter Aiello*

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# NEGOTIATING THE FUTURE BY SUPER

## Holy Spirit's Prophetic Line of Communication

**BY APOSTLE BIBLE DAVIDS**

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**A**s each year concludes, the Holy Spirit confidently leads me into a realm of prophetic alignment. It's not a vague experience; it's a direct connection, delivering clear and confident prophetic words for the upcoming year. In those moments, it feels like the Holy Spirit is providing a precise roadmap, shaping the journey ahead with unwavering confidence and clarity.

As the dawn of a new year approaches, a time traditionally marked by resolutions and aspirations, there exists a profound opportunity for us to transcend mere wishful thinking and stand on the prophetic edge of time to negotiate the future through the help of the Holy Spirit. Beyond the excitement of the celebration of the New Year, let us tune our consciousness to the frequency of the Holy Spirit and seek to unravel God's prophetic blueprint for this season. Prophecy is not a distant echo of ancient wisdom but a living force that resonates with the beating heart of our present and the uncharted potential of our future.

Negotiating the future, from a prophetic standpoint, invites us to unravel the mind of God concerning the uncertainties of the new year, so we can navigate it with a conscious awareness and become active participants in the divine unfolding of our destinies. We can escape the mainstream of coincidences and walk the ancient pathway illuminated by the timeless truths of God's Word, revelation and assurance that comes from the Holy Spirit through faith and prayer as we align our steps with the rhythm of the Spirit in the unfolding year. *continued »*

# NATURAL WISDOM

IN 2024, THE  
LORD IS SENDING A  
CLEAR IMPERATIVE  
ECHO FOR TRUE  
BELIEVERS: "PUT  
OIL IN YOUR LAMP."

## Harmonious Synergy in Prophetic Inquiries

Delving into Habakkuk 2:1-3, we discern the harmonious synergy of prophetic inquiries and the divine download of directions. The prophet, assuming the spiritual posture of a watchman and prophetic gatekeeper, exemplifies an unwavering commitment to vigilance and spiritual alertness.

In verse 1, he boldly exclaims, “I will stand my watch, set myself on the rampart, and watch to see what He will say to me, and what I will answer when I am corrected.”

This beckons God’s people to respond to a clarion call, an invitation to ‘come up higher’ and stand at the intersection of eternity and time through prophetic intercession. Here, we receive glimpses of the future. On this frequency of the Holy Spirit, we interchange the echoes of the eternal in dialogue with the present, guiding us as we navigate the uncertainties of the unfolding journey.”

## Prophetic Insights into 2024: The Year of Shift

The Lord has been speaking about the year 2024 and if I were to encapsulate the essence of the year 2024 from a prophetic standpoint in a single word, I would choose “SHIFT.” It is a year marked by divine interjections and interventions, where God’s involvement will decisively alter the trajectory of natural events. On the global scene, there is a shaking coming. The year 2024 will not be an uneventful year, but will be marked by many distinctive global shakings.

## Catalysts of Change: Unveiling Distinctive Global Shifts in 2024

At the forefront, feminism and the discourse surrounding women’s rights will take center stage. As unfolding events escalate, the conversation on the true definition of womanhood will resound prominently, echoing across the globe.

## Rising Tensions: Escalations and the Specter of Global Conflict

In the current geopolitical landscape, military tensions are steadily escalating in numerous parts of the world. The escalating military activities are not isolated events but rather interconnected threads in complex spiritual dynamics. Various regions are witnessing increased militarization, territorial disputes and geopolitical rivalries, contributing to an atmosphere of instability. The intensity of these escalations reflects a precarious balance that would bring the world

to the brink of global conflict in 2024. Our focus shifts particularly to Asia, where we establish a territorial watch, specifically praying against a potential military outbreak between certain super powers. As tensions rise in this region, our collective prayer becomes a spiritual sentinel, seeking

divine intervention and fostering a climate of peace. This prophetic watch is a call to spiritual action, aligning our intentions with the overarching desire for peace. It transcends political affiliations and national boundaries, uniting us in a shared hope for stability and harmony in the Asian region.

## The Digital Economy Spotlight: Anticipating 2024’s Center Stage

In the unfolding prophetic narrative of 2024, the digital economy takes a

commanding position, poised to dominate the center stage of global affairs. A pivotal aspect of this digital shift revolves around the ongoing battle for a no-currency policy, setting the stage for a transformative and potentially disruptive year in economic landscapes.

The digital economy’s ascent signifies a paradigm shift, where technology and interconnected networks play a defining role in economic transactions and financial systems. As traditional currencies face challenges, the debate intensifies regarding the feasibility and implications of embracing a currency-free approach. This battle is not just about digital currencies but encompasses broader discussions on the future of monetary systems, financial privacy and the decentralization of economic power.

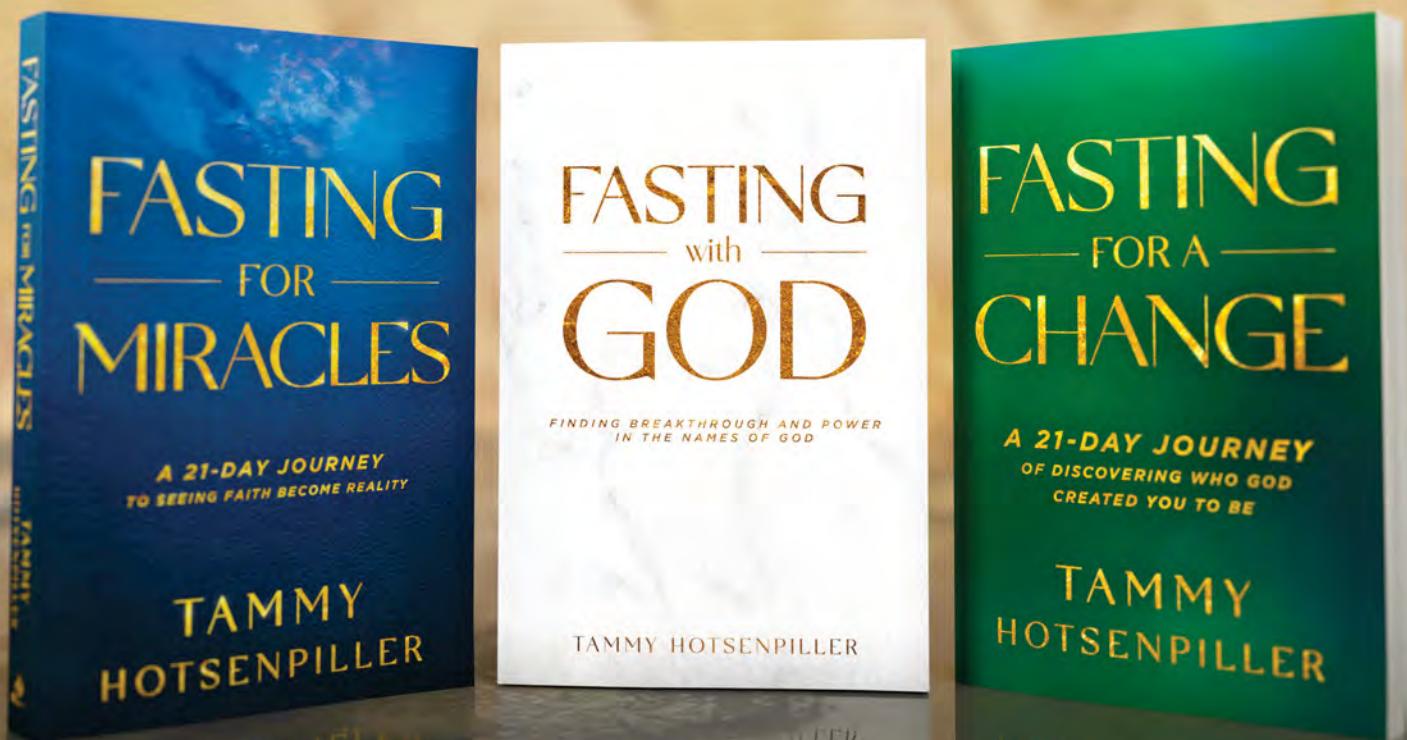
In the crucible of this digital revolution, 2024 emerges as a testing ground for economic ideologies and policies. The outcomes of these battles will shape the trajectory of nations, influence financial structures and redefine the nature of commerce. It’s a year where the clash between traditional and digital economic philosophies will echo across boardrooms, governments and the daily lives of individuals, setting the tone for the economic landscape in the years to come.

## Election Dynamics Unveiled: Global Tensions and Economic Currents

In the intricate dynamics of the upcoming U.S. presidential elections, two dominant threads emerge—global military tensions and the pressing issue of inflation. These compelling narratives will not only shape the discourse but become defining factors in the decision-making process of

**If I were to encapsulate the essence of the year 2024 from a prophetic standpoint in a single word, I would choose “SHIFT.”**

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voters. The spotlight on global military tensions underscores the interconnected nature of the world and the impact of international affairs on domestic policy. Voters will scrutinize candidates' stances on diplomatic strategies, global alliances and their ability to navigate and defuse potential conflicts. The unfolding global military landscape will serve as a backdrop, influencing the electorate's perception of leadership and stability.

Simultaneously, the specter of inflation takes center stage, resonating deeply with citizens' economic concerns. Candidates proposed economic policies, their understanding of inflationary pressures and strategies for economic recovery will be under intense scrutiny. The ability to address economic challenges effectively will become a pivotal factor in winning voter trust. Adding a layer of intrigue, the emergence of plan B candidates injects a historical twist into the electoral arena. As these alternative contenders' step into the spotlight, the dynamics of the race will take unexpected turns. Their entry into the fray brings new perspectives, potential policy shifts and challenges the established narratives, creating a more dynamic and unpredictable electoral landscape.

### **Geopolitical Tensions: Fires in Israel and Escalating Protests in the United States**

As the ongoing fires continue to blaze in Israel, a prophetic anticipation emerges, indicating that these geopolitical events may be on the verge of triggering escalated and widespread protests across the United States. The catalyst for these protests is foreseen to be strategic attacks on America, further intensifying tensions on both a local and global scale.

The fires in Israel, symbolizing not only a physical blaze but also political and ideological conflicts, cast a shadow with far-reaching implications. The geopolitical ripple effect extends beyond borders,

potentially influencing diaspora communities, political discourse and public sentiment. In this intricate dynamics of events, strategic attacks in America become a flashpoint, inciting protests that echo the concerns and solidarity of various groups.

As 2024 unfolds, watch for the delicate balance between expressing legitimate concerns and maintaining societal harmony. The events in Israel reverberate across continents, shaping narratives and actions in unexpected ways. The prophetic lens offers a glimpse into the potential unfolding of these interconnected events, urging vigilant observation and prayerful spiritual engagement with the complexities of our globalized world.

### **Open Doors and Divine Wealth Transfer: The Prophetic Landscape of 2024**

The prophetic window of 2024 also releases a supernatural swing of open doors and a significant transfer of wealth to God's people. This pivotal shift in the spiritual and economic realms signifies an era where believers will witness unprecedented opportunities and experience a divine redistribution of resources. The rule of engagement in this season demands the activation of a covenant walk and unwavering faithfulness in giving to God's work. As believers align themselves with the principles of covenant and demonstrate steadfastness in supporting God's purposes, they become catalysts for the release of divine blessings. The faithful giving of God's people sets in motion a distinct mark of blessing and prosperity that transcends mere material wealth.

These open doors are not just opportunities for personal gain but strategic portals for advancing God's kingdom agenda. Believers, empowered by a sense of purpose and divine favor, will find themselves at the forefront of transformative initiatives, impacting communities, nations and spheres of influence. The transfer of wealth

is intricately connected to a larger narrative of stewardship and responsibility in God's redemptive plan. As 2024 unfolds, watch for testimonies of divine provision, unexpected opportunities and supernatural breakthroughs. The activation of covenant principles and faithfulness in giving will not only unlock individual blessings but contribute to a collective manifestation of God's goodness. It's a year marked by open doors, wealth transfer and a profound demonstration of God's faithfulness to those who walk in covenant alignment and generosity.

### **Paradigm Shift: Outbreak of Deceptions That will Shake Religious Systems**

In the unfolding prophetic blueprint of 2024, religious systems will find themselves at the epicenter of a paradigm shift, stirred by the revelation of so-called new discoveries from unconventional sources. These revelations, emerging from extra-terrestrial realms, open up conversations that create widespread debate about the conventional understanding of the meaning of life. The very foundations of religious paradigms will be shaken as a new surge of deception enters mainstream discourse. While this wave of deception may sway many, it acts as a refining fire for true believers who possess a deep spiritual understanding of God's Word. Amidst the clamor of unconventional revelations, those grounded in the truth of divine principles emerge as beacons of stability. The unfolding events serve to strengthen the convictions of those who anchor themselves in the unwavering foundation of biblical truth, providing a steadfast compass amidst the tumultuous seas of uncertainty.

In this prophetic landscape, the year 2024 becomes a crucible where faith is tested, and believers are called to discernment. It is a time for spiritual fortitude, anchored in the eternal truths that transcend the fleeting waves of extraterrestrial revelations, ensuring that amidst the unfolding mysteries, genuine believers stand firm in their unwavering commitment to the unchanging Word of God.

### **Prophetic Imperative: Fueling the Flame in 2024**

In 2024, the Lord is sending a clear imperative echo for true believers: "Put oil

in your lamp.” This timeless admonition underscores the urgency for believers not to be lukewarm or complacent in their walk with God. As the coming of the Lord draws near, a resounding call resounds for believers to fuel the flame within, to let their spiritual fire burn incessantly. The symbolism of putting oil in one’s lamp speaks to the intentional cultivation of a vibrant and unwavering faith. It’s a call to actively nurture the spiritual flame within, ensuring that the light of one’s faith burns brightly in the midst of the surrounding darkness. This admonition encourages believers to be vigilant, to guard against spiritual apathy or complacency that can dim the fervency of their relationship with God.

The exhortation to let your fire burn incessantly emphasizes the dynamic and continuous nature of the believer’s spiritual journey. It’s a call to seek after God’s presence, to engage in fervent prayer and to immerse oneself in the Word of God. In doing so, believers cultivate a passionate and enduring relationship with the Father, fostering a flame that withstands the challenges of the times. As the year 2024 unfolds, this prophetic imperative serves as a guiding principle for believers. It’s a call to be spiritually alert, to invest in the oil of

**In this prophetic landscape, the year 2024 becomes a crucible where faith is tested, and believers are called to discernment.**

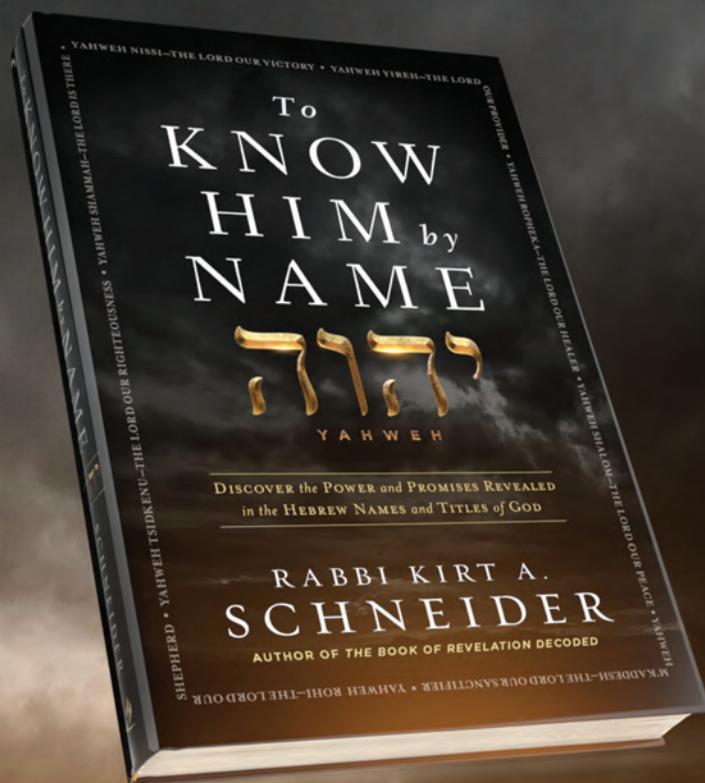
devotion, prayer and intimacy with God. In this preparation, believers not only navigate the challenges of the present but also eagerly anticipate the imminent coming of the Lord, keeping their lamps burning bright until the glorious moment of His arrival. ◀

*Apostle BIBLE DAVIDS is leading a spiritual revolution in America. His Mass Deliverance Campaigns draw thousands, becoming a focal point for a fresh move of the Spirit and a widespread revival. He is the Founder of Supernatural Life Center and Bible Davids Ministries in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, Texas.*

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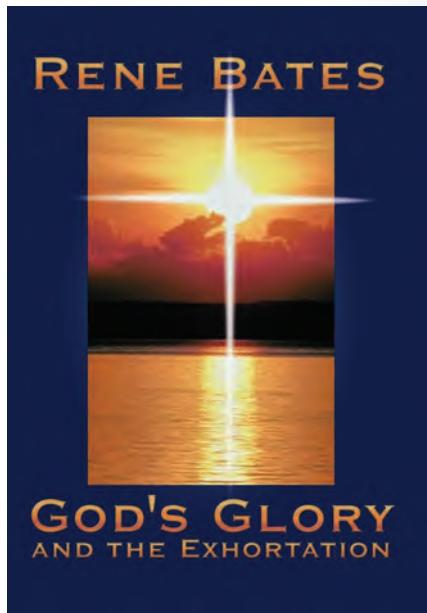
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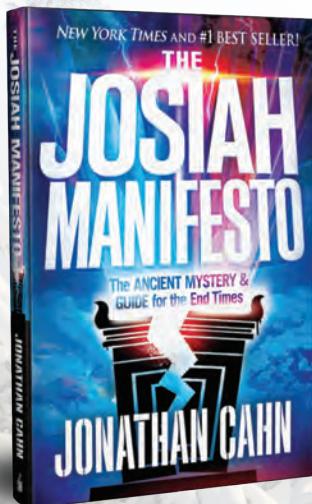
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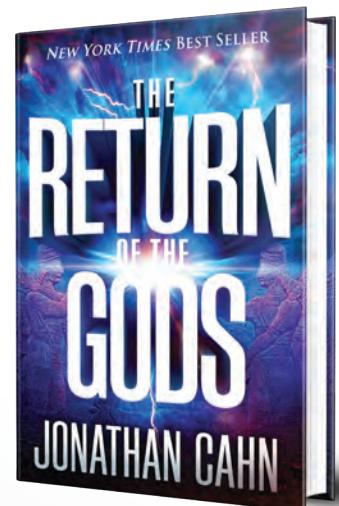
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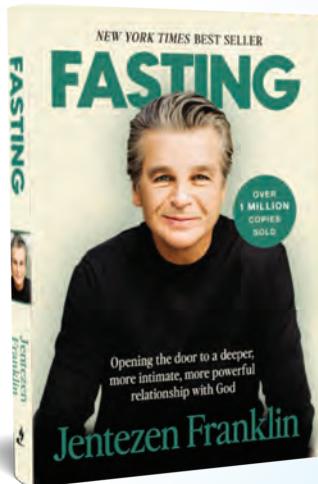


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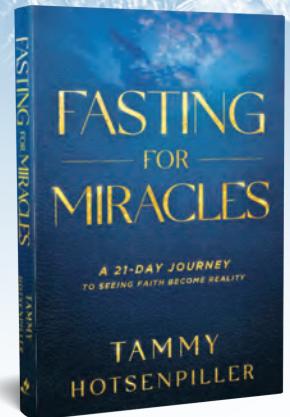
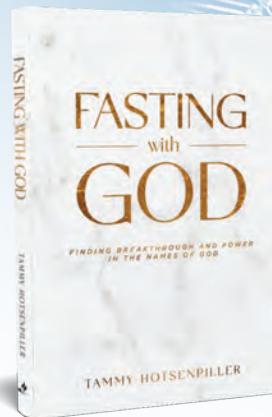




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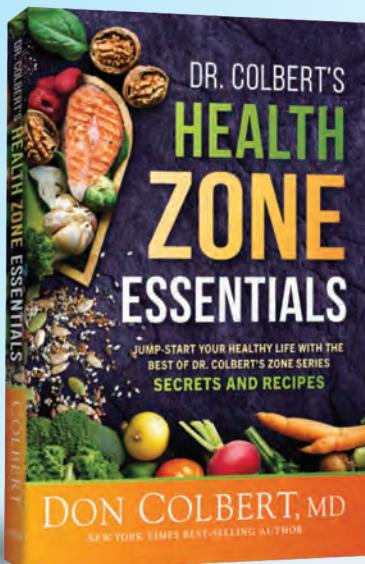
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## Receiving the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

The baptism of the Holy Spirit has long been the subject of much debate within the evangelical church. In fact, for decades this doctrine separated Pentecostals from their evangelical brethren. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is, Pentecostals believe, a renewal of first-century Christianity, when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the church on the Day of Pentecost. This gave the disciples such power and boldness that within one generation they had turned the known world upside down.

It gives a believer access to the power source that enables us to live pure, godly lives that are pleasing to the Father. It does not eliminate the need for the spiritual disciplines, such as prayer, Bible reading and fellowshiping with other believers. Nor does it immunize a person from sin. But there is something within the baptism of the Holy Spirit that confers power.

Ten days after Jesus ascended to heaven, on the Day of Pentecost, the people heard a sound like a mighty, rushing wind and saw something over each person's head that looked like tongues of fire. And as they prayed, they did so in languages they didn't know. People from around the world were in Jerusalem, and they heard the men and women in that Upper Room speaking in their native languages.

The Holy Spirit came with mighty power and transformed the lives of every person in that Upper Room. The second chapter of Acts tells us the disciples began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. That encounter with the Holy Spirit gave them power to then leave that Upper Room and boldly proclaim the gospel in their city, their country, and even the world. In describing the work of these early believers, Acts 17 says they "turned the world upside down."

The power Peter, John and the rest of the 120 received in that Upper Room enabled them to heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out demons, spread the gospel and establish churches. Once the Holy Spirit resided in their lives, they were fearless in life and in the face of death.

I know there is vast power available to help us change—it is the power that comes from the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Not only

does the baptism give us the power to change, but it also gives us power in many other areas. These include:

- » power to hear God's voice
- » power to pray and see results
- » power to manifest the fruit of the Spirit
- » power to love
- » power to minister
- » power to speak beyond what you know
- » power to take authority over circumstances
- » power to take authority over the evil one
- » power to see people delivered from the evil one
- » power to do miracles.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is available to all believers, not a select few. Just as we receive new life in the Son of God

by a definite act of personal faith, so we receive supernatural power in the Spirit of God by an act of conscious faith. Bible scholar John Rea created a simple acronym, "READY," that can serve as an aid in remembering various important steps.

**R—Repent.** Those who seek to be baptized in the Spirit should first of all repent of any and all sin and accept Jesus Christ as their Savior.

**E—Expect.** Because the Holy Spirit is appropriated by faith, those seeking the baptism in the Spirit must have an expectant attitude, believing God will fulfill His promise to them.

**A—Ask.** Candidates for this baptism should come to Jesus in prayer, asking and expecting Him to pour out the Spirit upon them.

**D—Drink.** Jesus gave us this great invitation: "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink."

**Y—Yield.** Those seeking to be baptized and filled with the Spirit must be willing to yield control of every part of their being to Him.

The Holy Spirit gives us the power to live the overcoming life. His power in my life has helped me step confidently into the destiny God has for me. I do not have to wonder every moment of the day if I am really going to make it or fear that right around the corner is the big temptation that will be too hard for me to withstand. God's power has taken away the fear of failure and replaced it with "power, and love and self-control." He can do the same for you.

*The Holy Spirit gives us the power to live the overcoming life.*

**Stephen Strang** has seen major changes in the church, the culture and technology since he founded *Charisma* magazine in 1975. In addition to being CEO of Charisma Media, he hosts a Strang Report podcast live on YouTube and Rumble at 4 p.m. EST every Tuesday and Thursday. His important new book *Spirit-Led Living in an Upside-World* is available wherever fine Christian books are sold including online at [mycharismashop.com](http://mycharismashop.com).

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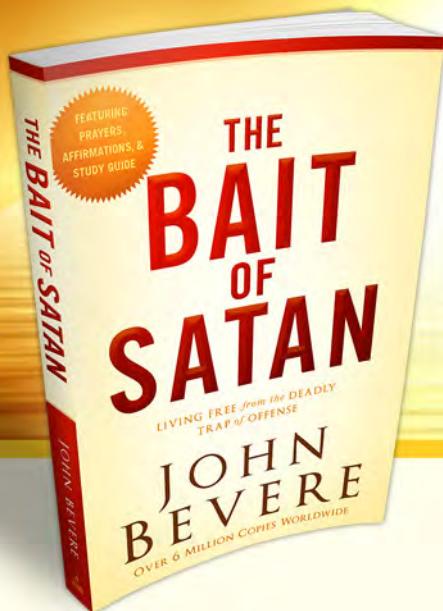
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## BIBLE READING GUIDE

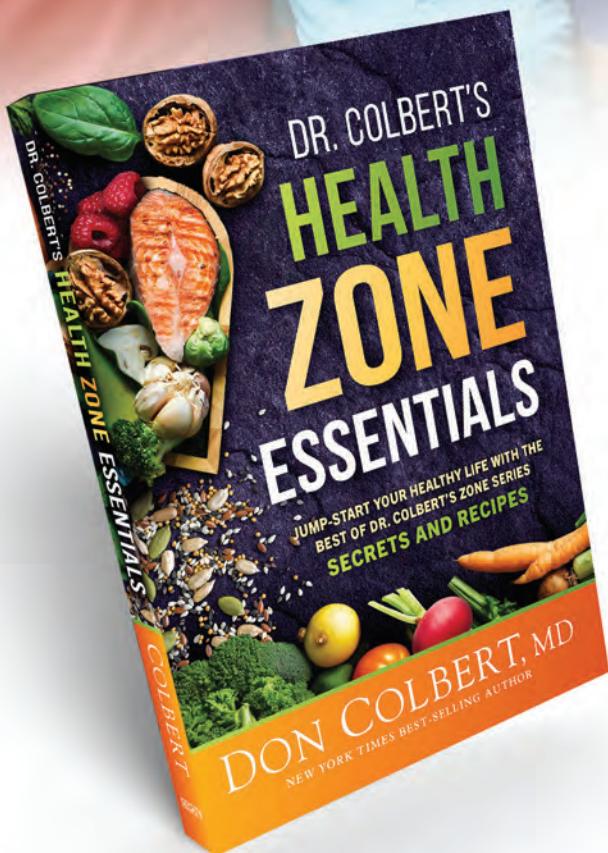
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*“Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”—Isaiah 55:1*

### JANUARY

Jan. 1	Gen. 1-2; Luke 1
Jan. 2	Gen. 3-5; Luke 2
Jan. 3	Gen. 6-8; Luke 3
Jan. 4	Gen. 9-11; Luke 4
Jan. 5	Gen. 12-14; Luke 5
Jan. 6	Gen. 15-17; Luke 6
Jan. 7	Gen. 18-19; Ps. 3; Luke 7
Jan. 8	Gen. 20-22; Luke 8
Jan. 9	Gen. 23-24; Luke 9
Jan. 10	Gen. 25-26; Ps. 6; Luke 10
Jan. 11	Gen. 27-28; Ps. 4; Luke 11
Jan. 12	Gen. 29-30; Luke 12
Jan. 13	Gen. 31-33; Luke 13
Jan. 14	Gen. 34-36; Luke 14
Jan. 15	Gen. 37-38; Ps. 7; Luke 15
Jan. 16	Gen. 39-41; Luke 16
Jan. 17	Gen. 42-43; Ps. 5; Luke 17
Jan. 18	Gen. 44-46; Luke 18
Jan. 19	Gen. 47-48; Ps. 10; Luke 19
Jan. 20	Gen. 49-50; Ps. 8; Luke 20
Jan. 21	Exod. 1-2; Ps. 88; Luke 21
Jan. 22	Exod. 3-5; Luke 22
Jan. 23	Exod. 6-8; Luke 23
Jan. 24	Exod. 9-11; Luke 24
Jan. 25	Exod. 12-13; Ps. 21; Acts 1
Jan. 26	Exod. 14-16; Acts 2
Jan. 27	Exod. 17-20; Acts 3
Jan. 28	Exod. 21-22; Ps. 12; Acts 4
Jan. 29	Exod. 23-24; Ps. 14; Acts 5
Jan. 30	Exod. 25-27; Acts 6
Jan. 31	Exod. 28-29; Acts 7

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