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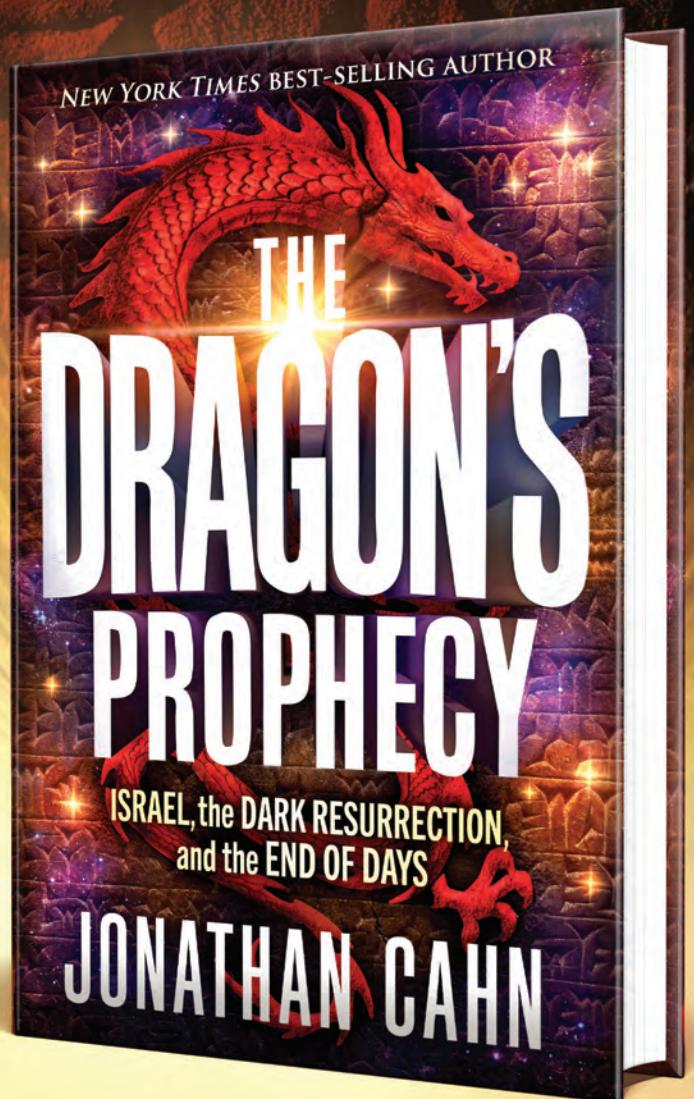
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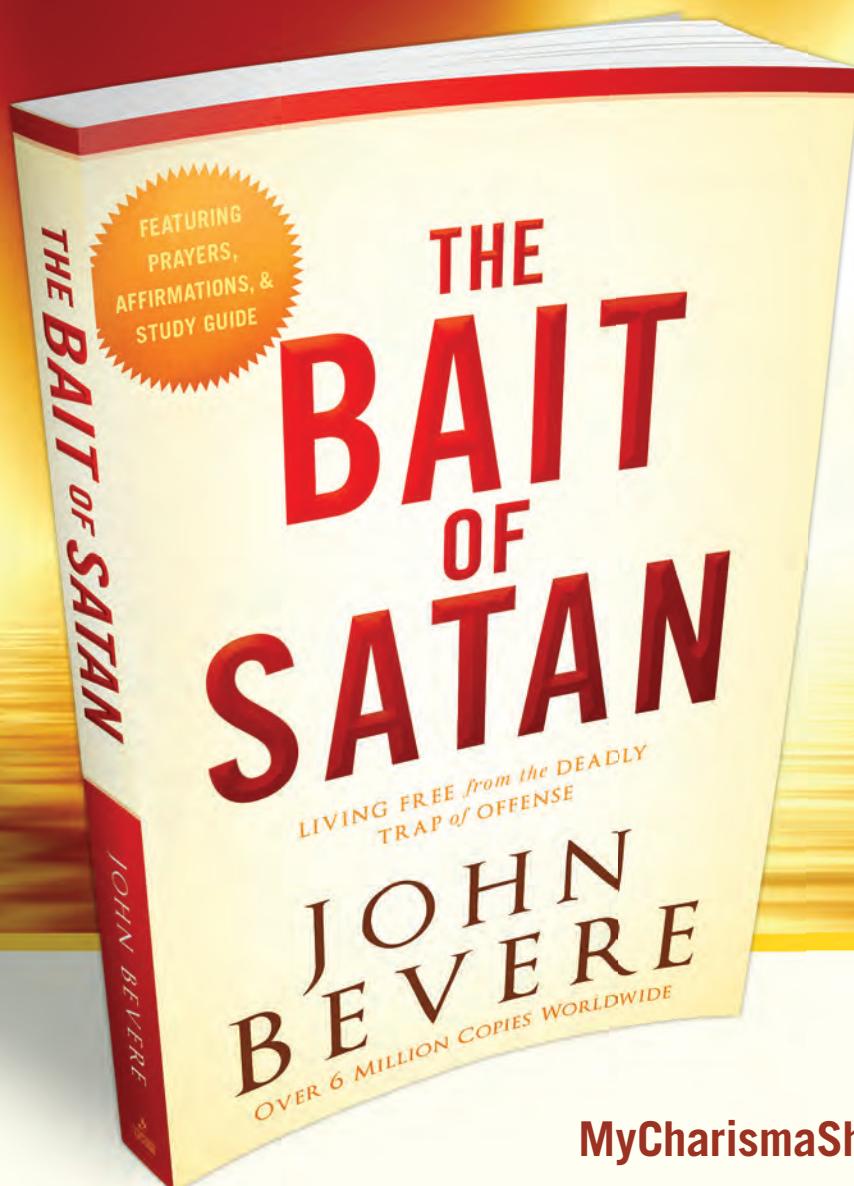
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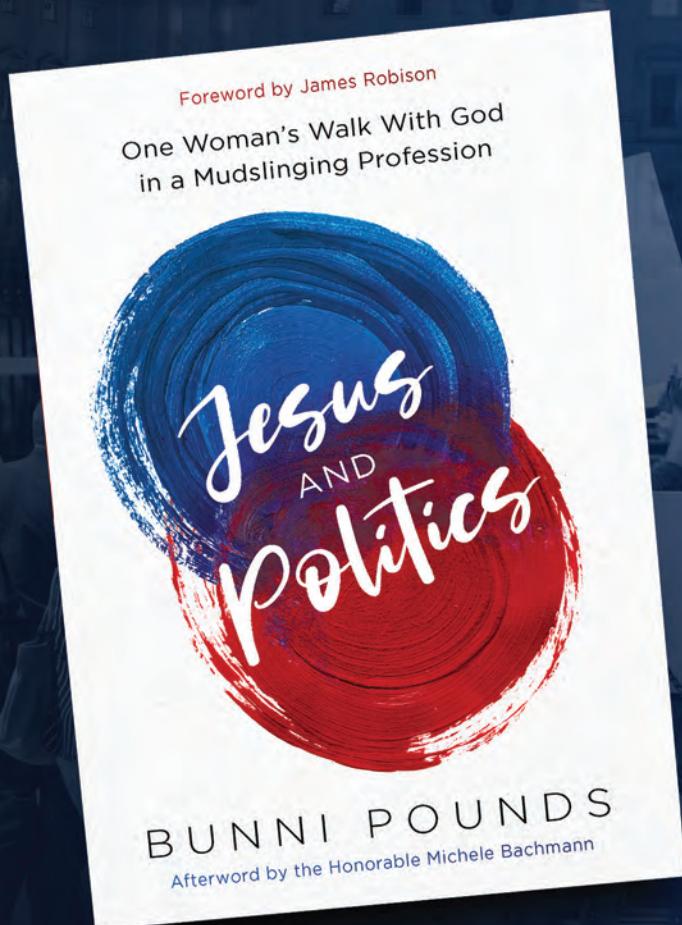
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PRAISE

THROUGH THE PAIN

SINCE LOSING HIS WIFE TO CANCER LAST YEAR, PASTOR, GOSPEL ARTIST AND WORSHIP LEADER MARVIN SAPP IS REDISCOVERING WHAT PRAISING GOD REALLY MEANS

BY DEWAYNE HAMBY

When you're a pastor who's expected to deliver the "good news" every Sunday, what do you do when sorrow enters your life? For Marvin Sapp, a pastor, best-selling gospel artist and worship leader who's been through a year of personal pain, hope has come through living what he preaches.

"It's one thing to get up and encourage others with your messages, and it's another to live off what you've taught," Sapp says. "As preachers, a lot of time we study to preach, but some of us study to live. When the rubber met the road in my life, I was glad I had stuff for what God knew we were going to endure."

On Sept. 9, 2010, Sapp's wife of 18 years—MaLinda—lost her battle with colon cancer. Suddenly Sapp the pastor, gospel artist and worship leader was also a single dad and had to carry on, not only with his ministry but also with raising his family of three alone.

MaLinda had been a presence in his life for virtually his entire life—ever since the two met in third grade. She served alongside him at Lighthouse Full Life Center Church in Grand Rapids, Mich., where she was a pastoral staff member and professional counselor.

"I couldn't have found anyone better," Sapp says. "MaLinda was a



NEVER WOULD HAVE MADE IT: Marvin Sapp says his late wife, MaLinda, was his “hero” and dependable “partner in ministry in every way.” They were married 18 years and even had been friends since the third grade. Says Sapp: “I couldn’t have found anyone better.”



partner in ministry in every aspect, in every way.”

Her “fingerprint” is evident, he says, throughout the Lighthouse church they pastored together. She was a savvy businesswoman who was able to negotiate contracts with major corporations and serve on community boards. She was a preacher who delivered the Word. Most of all, she was a wife and mother to the couple’s children: Marvin II, Mikaila and Madisson.

“She had the ability to multitask like nobody I’ve ever seen,” Sapp observes. “She was still a homebody. Her passion was to make sure her husband was pleased. Whenever I was home, she cooked dinner. She didn’t want a housekeeper. She wanted to keep her own house clean.”

When Sapp was honored in January by the gospel music industry—named Artist of the Year at the 26th annual Stellar Awards ceremony—he found the experience that normally would have been a time of rejoicing to be “bittersweet” instead.

“It was bittersweet because the person who stood with me 18 to 20 years was not there,” he says. “This was the first major event I did without my wife. It was difficult.”

Determined to Keep It Moving

Sapp describes his late wife as his

personal hero, saying that after her final prognosis was delivered “she never complained; she was at peace.” During her final weeks, MaLinda met with the church board so she could “pour [herself] into them,” Sapp says. Her concern was not for herself but for the church, and for her family, he notes.

“Not one time did I hear her do any complaining or say anything other than, ‘Make sure you take care of Marvin,’” he says. “Not one time did she say, ‘Pray for me.’ She was at real peace with where she was. She didn’t want us to worry.”

The Sapps founded the church in 2003 with 24 people in a restaurant facility Sapp still owns, called Praise Place. Today the church has 1,500 members meeting at three locations—one in Los Angeles and two in Michigan. Centered on ministering to the “holistic” person, the church focuses both on spiritual needs and also on development of life skills and tutorial programs.

“My passion is inner-city ministry,” Sapp says. “I want to see people grow and become the best that they possibly can.”

Before her prognosis, MaLinda had been working on gathering funds for a new facility that would focus on the performing arts. Sapp says plans for the new building are still moving ahead. Losing MaLinda could have been a devastating blow to the thriving ministry and congregation, but Sapp says he’s found

confidence and comfort in a motto the couple held on to for years—“Keep it moving.”

“This is one of the last things she said, ‘Keep it moving,’” he says. “That’s what we’re determined to do.”

Tears in Public

For members of the church, the public loss of their first lady and wife of their pastor has been a challenge, but Sapp has been determined to be transparent with his feelings.

“Mourning in public, of course, is a two-sided coin,” he says. “People are looking at your response and looking at how you act in the midst of what you’re dealing with. As a pastor, having parishioners—a thousand people who submit to my authority—they are looking to see how I was going to respond. My response would set the tone for our entire ministry. I had to be transparent enough to shed tears.”

Months after the funeral, which was attended by more than 1,000 people and viewed online by more than 100,000, the process of moving on is still a daily thing for Sapp. But he has no qualms about sharing the challenges with his members.

“I want to be open and honest and transparent about the mountains and valleys and ups and downs. I am going to be real and honest. How we deal with it and how we handle it—that’s important.”

To the average churchgoer, Sapp says

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his loss has no doubt made his message and ministry more “relatable.”

“Before, they might have known me based on my music or preaching. Now they have a more intimate relationship based on my bereavement,” Sapp points out.

Strengthened by Praise

As a celebrated worship leader and accomplished gospel artist, Sapp also credits the power of praise as a means of healing. “What I’ve found is music and preaching has been extremely therapeutic for me. You have to praise God to maintain your sanity. To be honest with you, I don’t know how people go through situations without God. I can’t understand how anybody could go through losing someone you love and making it without God,” he says.

“So I found myself singing songs and worshipping God. I knew that we needed to stay as close to Him as possible. What better way to stay close than in worship or in praise?”

Sapp remembers most the burden of grief at his wife’s homegoing service, but he was able to relinquish the

heaviness of it by standing in praise. “I had to surrender, because I felt so weighty,” he said. “The only way I could think of doing it was I just lifted my hands and gave God the most unrestricted praise I could give Him.”

Sapp, who released his eighth album, *Here I Am*, on Verity Records last year, has an impressive gospel music pedigree. In 1991, he received an offer from Fred Hammond to replace Keith Staten in the popular group Commissioned. He spent six years with the group until a crowded schedule and family obligations, including a pregnant wife, steered him toward a solo career.

His self-titled debut disc released on Word Records in 1996. Subsequent releases solidified his presence in the industry, including a general market crossover hit with “Never Would Have Made It” from his 2007 album, *Thirsty*.

The singer-songwriter/pastor definitely knows what it’s like to hear listeners share their stories of a song that connects with them in a powerful way. “When I write songs, I pray that they are blessings to people,” he says.

He made his own personal connection with a song—“Let Go and Let God” by P.J. Morton—as he drove home to see MaLinda on her final day. “That is the song I listen to daily,” he says. “I sing it on a consistent basis every morning and even every morning before I preach. That song literally was my story.”

He pauses to recount the lyrics that have meant so much to him: “I couldn’t even fall asleep, there was so much on my mind / I said, ‘Lord, help me praise’ / As soon as I stopped worrying about how the story ends / I let go and I let God have His way.”

Although Sapp hasn’t begun work on a new project yet, he wants his next one to carry the hope that has sustained him these last few months. “I want to make sure my music is uplifting and deals with those who are hurting,” he says. “If I’ve never understood before how people can become hopeless, I understand it now.”

As he continues to find his way without his partner in life and ministry, Sapp is determined not to let his family or church suffer in the process. When asked how he’s managing the responsibilities at home, in the pulpit and on the road, Sapp responds: “I prioritize. I start by knowing that my first responsibility is to my family, the next one is to church, and the next, musical career.”

It’s his way of allowing God to place all the details and work everything out for the good. “If you honor God and you honor your family, He’ll honor your career,” he says. “That’s what we’ve done. I’m home every Sunday, every Tuesday for Bible class. It’s difficult having a career and being able to do what I do, but I have a great support team of leaders, a great staff.”

Sapp says the message of hope and salvation in Christ is stronger than ever for him today. “I know Him now more than before,” he says. “My faith is stronger than before. I still believe He’s a healer—and still preach it with conviction.” ◀

DEWAYNE HAMBY is a freelance writer and serves the Church of God of Prophecy in Cleveland, Tenn., as publications coordinator. Find him online at facebook.com/dewaynehamby and twitter.com/dewaynehamby.



BEHIND THE WORSHIP

LEELAND MOORING: Worship in a Lincoln Town Car

Leeland Mooring, frontman for the band Leeland, is only 22, but he’s already preparing for the day when he no longer performs before big crowds and receives the attention that follows. Maybe that’s because his second home was once his family’s Lincoln Town Car. His parents had a band, Majestic Praise, and traveled with two evangelists, conducting revivals around the country. “We did that for 2-1/2 years. I was 11, my brother was 13, and my sister was 9,” Mooring says. “We

weren’t sure whether we’d be able to pay the bills, and it was then as kids that we began to see the sufficiency of God, the power of God.” Mooring’s parents eventually started a church in Baytown, Texas, with Leeland as the unofficial youth-group worship leader. These days his band has the ability to make a leap into mainstream pop music, but Mooring says of the group: “Ultimately (praise and worship) is what comes out of us.” And as for all the attention? He could live without it. “If all this was taken away, I could go back to Baytown and continue to pursue God’s purpose in my life.”

Simply Christ

Gospel Insight

with Keith Surface

No Condemnation

The Bible tells us *"by one man sin entered into the world."* Romans 5:12. That man was Adam, and all the death, destruction, misery, and iniquity of human history is connected to his great disobedience.

Adam's transgression did not merely bring sin into the world, but his actions caused all of those who were born thereafter to be sinners. The Apostle Paul told us, *"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners..."* Romans 5:19.

Added to the horrors of sin itself was something which accompanied the sin Adam brought in. That something was called *"death."* The Bible says, *"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."* Romans 5:12. We know that physical death entered as a result of sin, but the *"death"* spoken of in this passage is much more than this. It is a sentence of eternal death, or, damnation.

The Apostle Paul calls this death sentence *"condemnation."* He wrote, *"Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation;"* Romans 5:18. The Greek word translated *"condemnation"* means *"an adverse sentence."* This *"condemnation"* is the sentence of damnation which came upon every person because of sin.

In the 6th chapter of Romans, the Apostle Paul reveals how Jesus Christ delivered us from this death sentence by fulfilling it upon our *"old man"* of sin. He writes, *"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, (Christ) that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin."*

Romans 6:6-7. Through faith in Jesus Christ, the death sentence we were under is carried out upon the sinful nature which entered our hearts through Adam's transgression. Consider the power in this one gospel passage. Our old man is crucified! The

body of sin is destroyed! And we no longer serve sin because *"he that is dead is freed from sin!"*

You cannot kill a dead man again. Since, through faith in Jesus Christ, the sentence of death has been fulfilled upon our old man of sin, we are no longer under condemnation. Just as Christ *"died unto sin once"* and *"death hath no more dominion over him"* Romans 6:9-10, damnation has no claim on those who are already dead with Christ. The word of God is clear: The redeemed are in fact *"dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."* Romans 6:11.

Paul confirms this deliverance from the sentence of death, saying, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus..."* Romans 8:1. This passage is simply telling us there is not a death sentence upon those who are in Christ. It is not saying a person should not feel guilt over sin in their life, but that the condemnation is gone because Christ has taken the sin away.

Paul again explains how we are delivered from both sin and its condemnation, saying, *"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."* Romans 8:3. The Law of Moses could kill the sinner, but it could never kill the sin which was in the sinner. This is exactly what Christ did upon the cross. He *"condemned sin in the flesh!"* The death sentence, which was due the sinner, Christ fulfilled upon the sin that dwelt in their heart and nature, and in doing so, he not only delivered us from sin, but from damnation also. For those whom Christ has made free, there truly is no condemnation!

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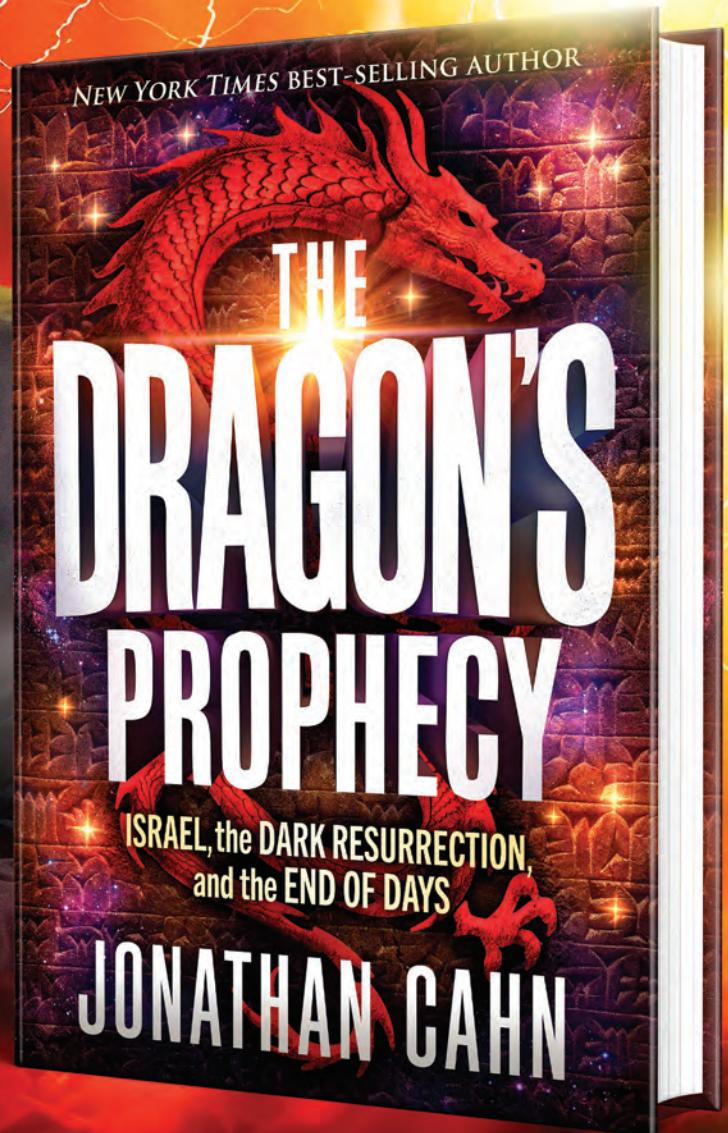
Knowing
the
TRUTH



"Ye shall know the truth
and the truth shall make
you free." John 8:32

Message by: Leroy Surface

THE GRAND FALL

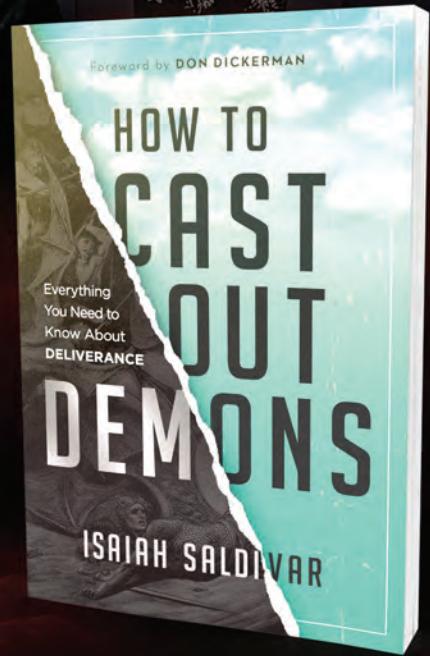
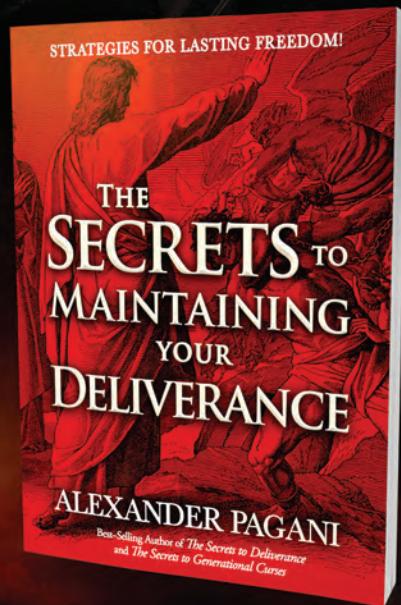
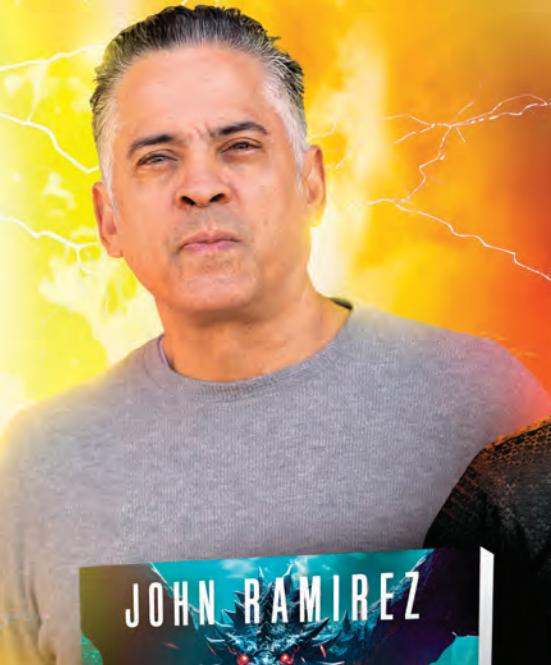


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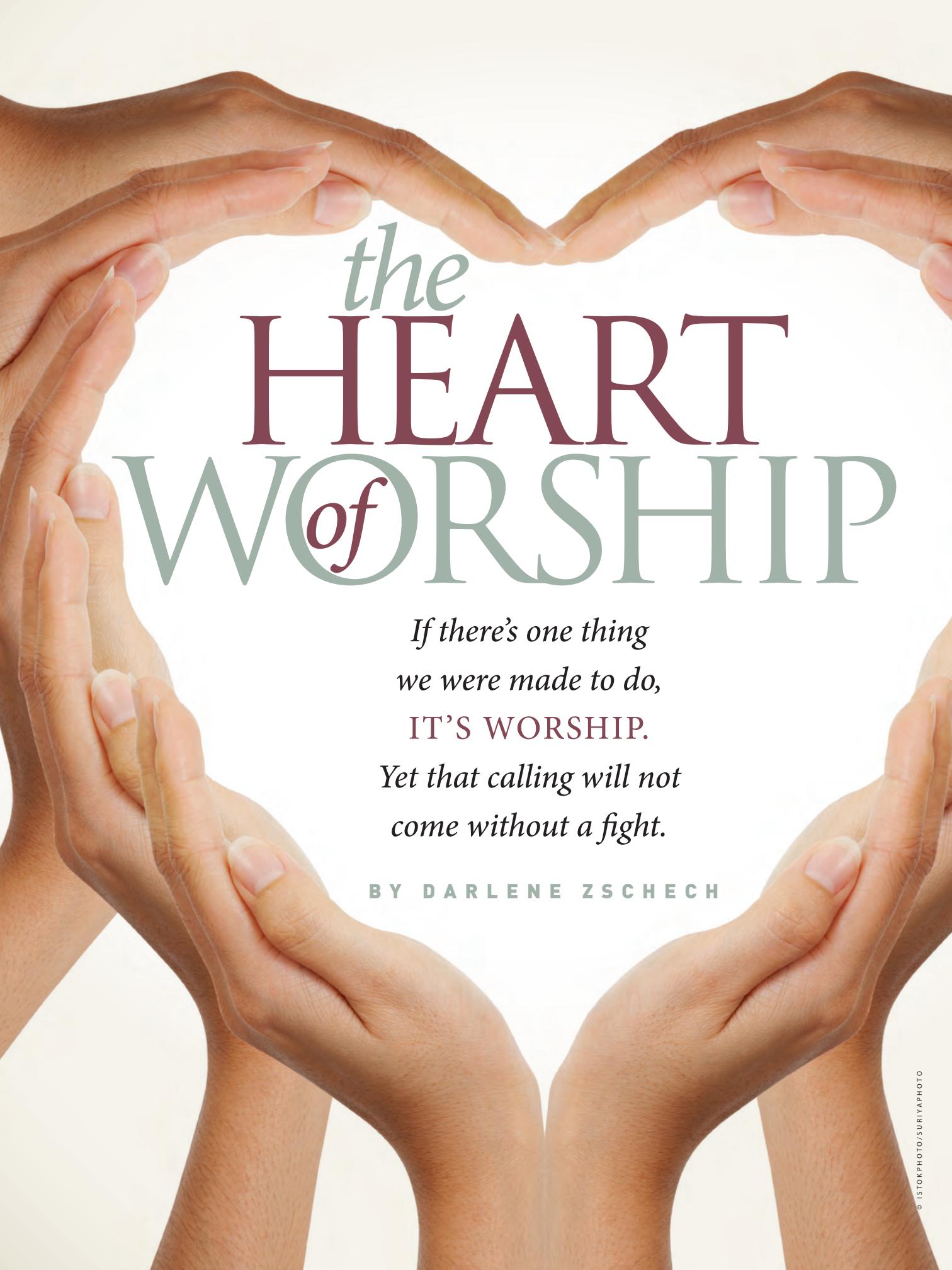


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Four hands are positioned to form a heart shape, with the fingers pointing towards the center. The hands are light-skinned and appear to be of different ages or ethnicities. The background is a plain, light color.

the HEART *of* WORSHIP

*If there's one thing
we were made to do,
IT'S WORSHIP.
Yet that calling will not
come without a fight.*

BY DARLENE ZSCHECH

I will never forget walking into a church service for the first time after I had received Christ. It was like hearing the music through a brand-new set of ears. It seemed so different to how I'd heard it before!

The church that day was singing the old song, "I Hear the Sound of the Army of the Lord." People from all walks of life—all ages, different denominational backgrounds and differing musical preferences—sang together, and here it was: the sound of one voice, one heart, one song, a sound more spiritual than musical but so beautiful. It's still etched on my heart today.

It was the sound of the church at worship. A song of the heart, not just the mouth. A song that had a measure of eternity woven throughout it. A sound that included us all and valued us all. A sound we were born to recognize and contribute to. The sound of grateful hearts.

I've given my life to this heavenly song.

A Sound Like No Other

Music is created to give voice to the human condition. It's a powerful vehicle of expression for the human heart. It communicates the cries, elation, anguish, joys, highs and lows. When mere language is insufficient, music speaks on.

In Psalm 71, David says, "When I open up in song to You, I let out lungsful of praise, my rescued life a song" (v. 23,

MSG). This is where the praise of God is unlike any other music you'll ever hear. It's not about style, volume or methods. It's about genuine thanksgiving being released from grateful hearts.

Matthew 7:6 in *The Message* says, "Don't be flip with the sacred." Yale professor Nicholas Wolterstorff once said, "Each people group, each generation, needs to be able to express its sense of worship in its own voice, in a way that resonates deep in the soul." Just because a sound is not our style, that doesn't mean that it isn't sacred.

If worship isn't dependent on a particular style or sound, then what *is* worship?

The simplest explanation is that it is the giving of due worth to God. The word *worship* would be an appropriate way to describe the act of worship, for God alone is worthy of all worship, honor, glory and praise. Worship is the inevitable result of the created—you and me—catching a glimpse of the reality of Christ and then responding.

Unfortunately, the word *worship* gets flattened out all the time and reduced to a set of neat songs that make us feel good. But this isn't even the starting point for truthful worship. Truthful lives of worship involve our entire existence (Rom. 12:1-2). Music, melody, art, dance, creativity—all these things give voice to the mystery and hiddenness of the human heart. Our cries, prayers and journeys, formed into

songs, allow the heart to be expressed in a tangible way.

In our natural bodies, when our hearts shut down, our lives shut down. The same applies to the power of praise and worship in song. When our praise shuts down, our hearts become small and stifled, and it affects our whole lives. Our lives are the substance of the song we sing, living in tune with the great Orchestral Himself.

Lamentations 5 describes a people who feel forgotten by God and a moment

when they had no worship: “The elders have ceased from the gate, the young men from their music. The joy of our heart is ceased; our dance is turned into mourning” (vv. 14-15, ASV).

Even in the most challenging times, the art and discipline of lifting our voices to the truth of the Word of God is part of the miracle of praise, remembering that we cannot even utter the words “Jesus is Lord” and mean it but by the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 12:3). And so we lean into His breath and His power every

single time we praise, bringing forth life through gratitude.

A Choice Rooted in Humility

Worship has always required choice and change. It identifies which kingdom you belong to, and it has always been about the glory of God.

Isaiah 43:7 says we were all created for His glory. The entirety of humanity was designed to adore and connect with the fullness of God. This means our need to worship is built into us—it’s part of our DNA. It is the ultimate expression that our existence craves.

Furthermore, if we *don’t* worship our Lord, we will end up in idolatry, which is the act of placing our affections on anything higher than God. Usually we do this because we want to control the outcome. Yet as Eugene Peterson writes, “God cannot be fit into our plans, we must fit into his.”

We can’t use God—He is not a tool or an appliance or a credit card. *Holy* is the word that sets God apart and sets Him above our attempts to enlist Him in our wish-fulfillment fantasies or our utopian schemes for making our mark in the world. *Holy* means that God is alive on God’s terms, alive in a way that exceeds our experience and imagination. *Holy* refers to life that burns with an intense purity and transforms everything it touches into itself.

There are countless millions who cannot play a note of music but are incredible worshippers. Conversely, there are many others, extremely gifted in music and song, who are poor worshippers.

Worship is not about operating in our gifts and feeling fulfilled, but it has always been and will always be an anthem of the heart.

Jesus Himself said that true worship must be in spirit and in truth, and the only way this is possible is through grace. Not one of us could ever claim we don’t rely on His grace to stand before His throne. Only by the cross—only by the blood—can we freely enter this glorious place of worship and adoration, thanksgiving and praise.

The Father seeks for us to worship Him (John 4:24), and He will continually teach us to worship Him. This is



SHOUT TO THE LORD: Darlene Zschech intentionally writes songs that echo a heavenly chorus of praise

Why Should We Shout?

Understanding the divine power behind loud praise

When I started leading worship years ago, I was inhibited to shout praise to God. Not wanting to draw attention to myself, I let my insecurities dictate my expression and response to Him.

It wasn’t until a revelation of God’s worthiness grew inside of me that my inhibitions began to diminish, as God’s Word continued to teach me about how my response to His great love would never be found in a manual or textbook. Instead, my response would come out of my inner being as His love grew in me.

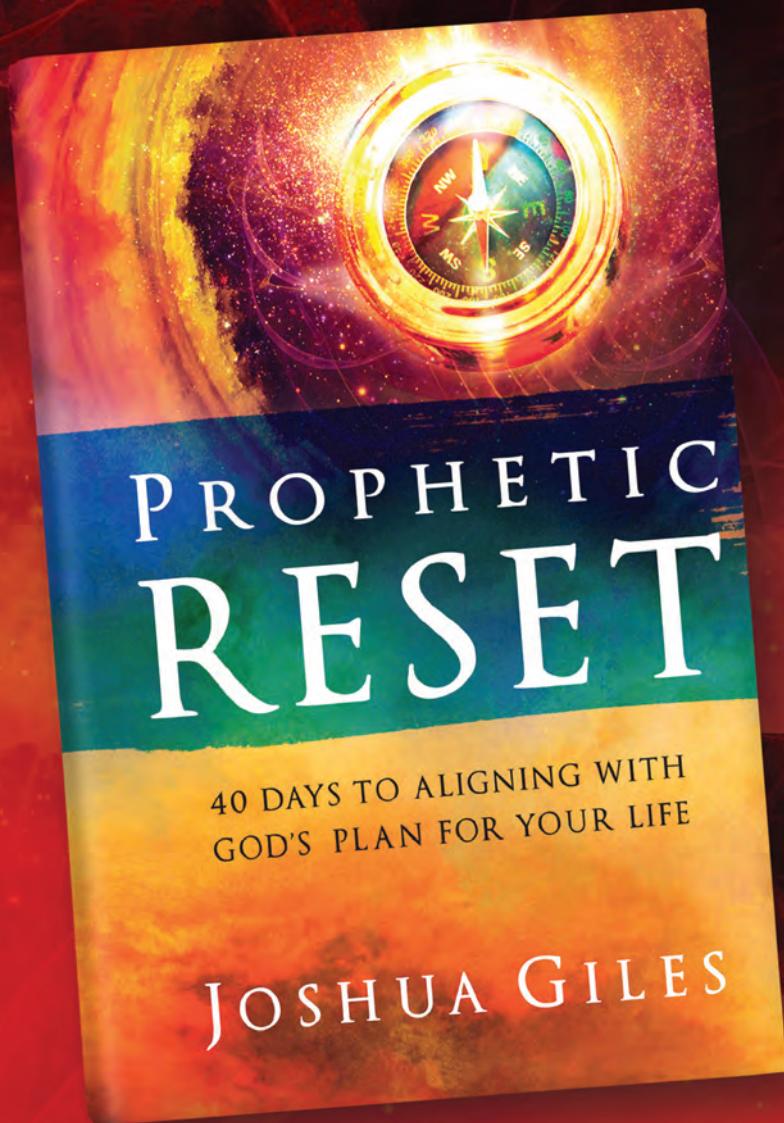
Now I find it impossible to hold my praise inside. I love to shout praises to my God—and for many reasons. I love that the atmosphere, however heavy and dominating, must bow down to the praise of my God. I love that the shout often carries the seeds of prophetic insight, as we shout out what we see in the spiritual, regardless of circumstance or prevailing emotional strongholds. I love that the shout requires us to be confident in the reality of Christ, for the shout never goes unnoticed—on earth or in heaven. There is incredible victory in the shout of the redeemed!

Psalms 47—a psalm every worship leader should study—declares that “God has gone up with a shout” (v. 5). We know God inhabits the praises of His people (Ps. 22:3), yet when He shouts, all creation listens. Jesus entered earth’s domain surrounded by the greatest heavenly music, and He will return amid the great trumpet blast. This is the shout of triumph, the shout of victory, the shout of splendor and majesty. This is a shout like no other! Football stands full of raging fans have no idea how grand a shout can be compared to the shout that accompanies the praise of our heavenly Father.

God’s praise and our obedience are an incredible combination. Often, though, our obedience requires an element of faith, of seeing what has yet to appear. Faith hears the shout before it is even there! So let the sound arise, and let His enemies be scattered.

—Darlene Zschech

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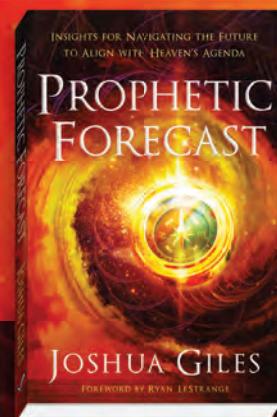


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said beautifully in Geoffrey Bingham's book, *The Way and Wonder of Worship*: "Something of our fallen humanity—our human flesh—mingles with the worship that the Spirit inspires. Yet this does not mean that such worship is unacceptable to God. Worship is commanded and, as we have said, is offered through grace, and so is accepted by grace. Therefore, we



Because strength and joy are found in God, it's no surprise Satan works so hard to try to silence our song.

can be at peace concerning the worship we offer to God."

A Step Up to the Truest Life

Psalm 100 tells us to "enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise" (v. 4, NRSV). We are meant to sing a new song. Sing, sing, sing!

Yet because strength and joy are found in God's presence, it's no surprise the enemy works so hard to try to silence our song. In Matthew 4, Satan tries to lure Jesus by his cunning words and empty promises. "Kneel down and worship me," he says.

You see, Satan has always craved our worship. In Isaiah 14:13, we learn the deceiver said in his heart, "I will ascend to the heavens, higher than God." Satan is always trying to exalt himself first in our life, followed by any other idol he possibly can get us to worship—the kingdoms of this world, the culture, the

values, the seductions.

Yet to love God and worship Him with our lives is our ultimate satisfaction. When you have positioned yourself in His presence, it doesn't take long for the reality of the world and its heaviness to fade in the glory of God and His promise over our lives.

So how do you begin to live this way? For starters, always remember that God is not looking for an outside-in, performance-based or talent-based offering. He has always been looking for an offering of the heart.

When it comes to our personal journey of worship and praise, you have to remember this is a journey of faith. Without faith, we rely on our own ability and understanding, our own skill level and our own favor—and living like this makes it impossible to please God. Coming to Him in worship takes faith. Leading others in worship takes faith.

Revelation 4:1 says, "Come up here,

and I will show you what must take place after these things" (NASB). This is one of the great worship passages in Revelation. And it surprises me that even as this great prophecy is being revealed to John, as he's gazing at an open door in heaven, still he is required to take a step up—to "come up here."

In Exodus 24, the Lord says the same thing to Moses: "Come up" (v. 1). He asks Moses to step out of his limitations and come up the mountain to worship.

Always, faith is required.

We take a step from the temporal to the eternal. We take the song of the soul and join it with the great anthem of the Spirit. We take a step from the emotional realm to the truth realm. We put on a garment of praise for our spirit of heaviness. Yes, we need to *come up*.

Taking a step up takes energy, a yielding of the will and a willingness to step out of the boat. And even though

this first step forward makes you feel vulnerable, it's the safest place in the world to be.

As we come up, we take others with us and teach their hearts to trust. I've heard many times from onlookers that they've learned trust in worship through watching our lives—by watching us continually grow through trials and fall into the arms of an ever-loving God. It's part of the beauty of His body. As I observe people in developing nations and watch them connect with God, they really take on this command to come up—it is literally life to them.

So come up, come up, come up!

A Gift of the Greatest Presence

One thing I know is that the earth is desperate for the presence of God—as am I! The raw dynamic of His Being and Person stepping into our existence is something you never want to be without.

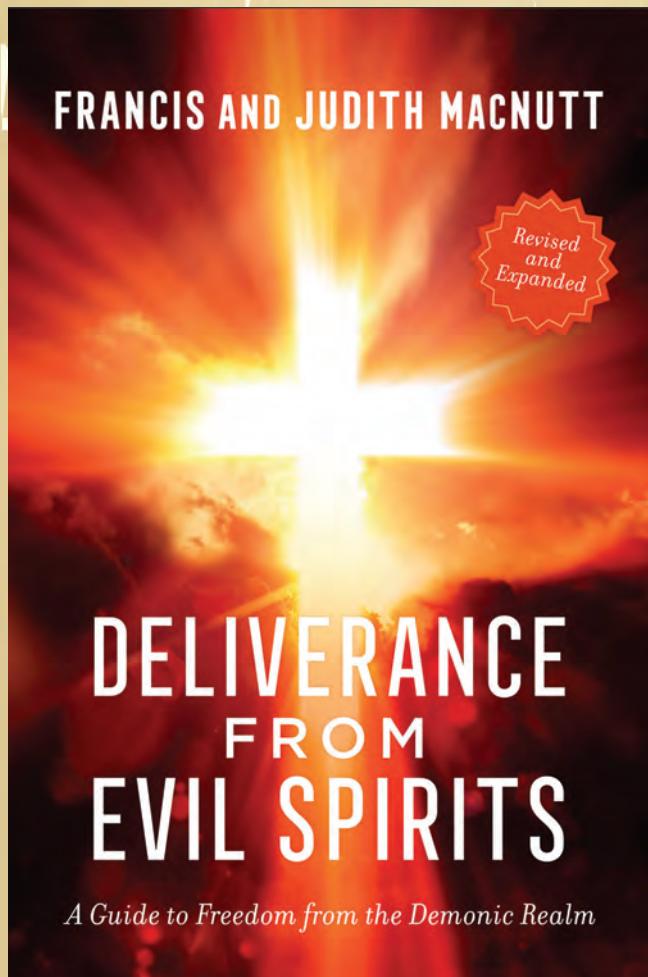
The tender presence we become aware of in worship is God's abiding presence—a nearness that is often evident to the redeemed. Even today, as I spoke to a friend who is critically ill, she shared with me her lack of fear. She explained, "It's not that I'm brave. It's just that I am so aware of God's love and kindness toward me. I sense His constant presence."

So, dear friends, I pray you catch my heart for you today. I encourage you to lean in to all that God Himself is offering you today through His Son Jesus Christ and to allow the breath and power of the Holy Spirit to fill you afresh as you simply and wholeheartedly worship Jesus.

His love for you is immeasurable. His glory is rising across the earth as the water covers the seas. I pray that we, His sons and daughters, will continue to see our lives poured out in response to His great love—for this is our spiritual act of worship. ◀

DARLENE ZSCHECH was the worship pastor of Hillsong Church in Sydney from 1996 to 2007. In addition to "Shout to the Lord," Zschech has written more than 80 songs published by Hillsong Music Australia, including those on her latest album, *Revealing Jesus*. She and her husband, Mark, are now senior pastors of Hope Unlimited Church in New South Wales.

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When healing doesn't happen, it can be disheartening.

When Healing Doesn't Come

**We know Jesus can heal. We always want to pray in faith.
But how do we respond when a miracle doesn't happen?**

BY SARAH BOWLING

My daughter needs a miracle.” Several years ago I heard these words in a phone call I received late one night from a man in our church. I had known him for many years, and he was like a brother. His daughter was barely 2 years old. I told him we would be praying and asked where they were and if it would be OK for my husband to come to the hospital. I couldn't go since our two kids were infants and sleeping at that time.

This story ended in tragedy. I still feel the memories of that journey: believing in faith for her healing, listening to the discouraging doctor's reports, doing a church-wide prayer vigil, walking with the family through the experience and wrestling with God when this beautiful little girl died.

Perhaps this experience is seared into my soul because my kids were similar in age to the little girl who died. I desperately wanted her to be healed—for a witness to the doctors, for comfort to her parents, for evidence of the power of faith, for God's glory and many more justifiable reasons. Nevertheless, she died, and my family and my church family faced a challenging journey filled with intense grief.

When healing doesn't come, the hurt can run deep. After going through this crisis, I found myself angry, frustrated, confused, disappointed and uncertain about God. I even felt disconnected from Him. Some of my rants went like

this: “Since You didn't heal this little girl, why would I continue to put my faith and trust in You? You don't seem very trustworthy right now. How can You say You're loving when You let an innocent little girl suffer so horribly?”

I spoke some harsh words to God, and as I look back on this journey, I'm grateful I was so real and raw.

If you're reading this article, I suspect you may have had some negative experiences with healing, or you may know someone who finds it difficult to trust God because of a healing dilemma. Perhaps you have some of these questions:

» **Is it possible to constructively reconcile what the Bible says about healing with some of our modern experiences?**

» **What do we do when we face dissonance between a healing deficiency in our lives and what we read about in the ministry of Jesus, who healed all kinds of people in all kinds of situations?**

» **What do we do when we ask God to heal, but nothing happens?**

» **Why didn't healing happen?**

» **How can we trust God amidst disappointment or devastation?**

Let's wrestle with this healing predicament using the familiar questions—why, who, where, how and what—since “When Healing Doesn't Happen” is the springboard for our journey.

continued »

“We can choose to remain faithful to God no matter what happens with healing or miracles.”

Marilyn Hickey
and her daughter,
Sarah Bowling



Why?

When we wrestle with these questions, it's only natural to ask, "Why?" Why didn't I get healed? Why didn't my relative or friend get healed? Why didn't I get the miracle I was believing God for? Why does the Bible tell me to pray and ask for healing if God isn't going to heal?"

"Why?" seems like a reasonable question, one commonly asked when we're disappointed. As we wrestle with this, we must also discover what the Bible says about the absence of healing. Here are some ideas and verses to consider:

» **The struggle to believe:** "And He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief" (Matt. 13:58). "Immediately the father of the child cried out with tears, 'Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief!'" (Mark 9:24).

» **The need for obedience:** "But his servants approached and spoke to him, 'My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more when he said to you, "Wash and be clean?"' (2 Kings 5:13).

» **Sketchy motives:** "You ask, and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your passions" (James 4:3).

» **A lack of compassion:** "Whoever

shuts his ears at the cry of the poor, he also will cry himself, but will not be heard" (Prov. 21:13).

Ultimately, the "why" question is tricky because we can work on all the reasons to get healed and still not receive healing. Let's also consider that healing and miracles don't happen from guaranteed formulas—if we do steps No. 1, 2 and 3, God will wave His healing wand, and healing will magically appear. When we have this mentality, we may be setting ourselves up to be disappointed. If you find yourself in this quicksand, I want to encourage you to wrestle with God rather than disappear into your frustration, anger, disappointment, pain, grief and questions. In raw honesty, I don't know why healing doesn't always happen.

Who?

The question of "who" comes up in two ways—directly and indirectly. We ask the direct question "Who is God?" when healing doesn't happen. Perhaps we have been taught and believe that God is all-powerful and loving, so when healing doesn't happen, we find ourselves questioning His identity. We try to reconcile our earthly living, with its pain, grief, disappointment and

questions, with God, who is supposed to be loving, compassionate, omnipotent, gracious, healing and caring.

Who is God? Is God really who He says He is? Is God loving? Compassionate? Engaged? Concerned? When healing doesn't happen, let's watch how that might affect our perceptions and beliefs about God's identity, keeping in mind that Satan always wants to distort our view.

The "who" question also comes into play indirectly with believers around us who might be less than compassionate or gentle. This common experience has occurred since the onset of human existence. I remind you of Job's friends, who sit with him in the worst experiences of his life. When they first observe Job's suffering, they remain quiet for seven days. In my opinion, these are their most helpful days as Job's friends. Once they start talking (Job 4-37), the situation moves from harsh to horrendous.

Job's friends want him to own up to his failures and shortfalls as the reason for his immense suffering. I don't understand how that would be either constructive or compassionate. Yet there is no shortage of Christians who blame and criticize fellow believers when they suffer, accusing them of wrongdoing and erasing any compassion or empathy from their conversations. I pray that the goodness of God would confront such critical people, leading them to repent and align more authentically with genuine love.

Where?

When we think about the "where" question, our thoughts may automatically travel to the actual location where healing didn't happen. Perhaps we think about the hospital, church, prayer group, home situation or other place where we petitioned God for His intervention.

Though we can associate a location with the emotions we experience from the lack of healing, I'd like to ask another "where" question you might find helpful: Where does a lack of healing position you (or your relative or friend) on the faith journey?

Sometimes I think we look at healing as the ultimate destination in

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our path of faith. When and if healing doesn't happen, perhaps the development of our faith takes a hit or suffers a catastrophic collapse. I've met loads of people who park in the disappointment, anger, frustration, pain, discouragement and various emotions that arise.

Mary, Lazarus' sister, is someone who feels disappointed in Jesus for not healing her brother. She falls at His feet in a puddle of tears (John 11:32-33). As I read this chapter, I don't see Mary get up and follow Jesus to Lazarus' tomb. In contrast, her sister, Martha, goes with Jesus to Lazarus' tomb and sees her brother raised from the dead and bursting from the grave. We must allow ourselves to experience the healthy array of emotions that can accompany disappointment in a lack of healing. But let's determine to keep walking with Jesus rather than remaining parked in despair.

If you're walking alongside someone who is wrestling with the absence of healing, I'd encourage you to be gentle, patient, kind, compassionate, steady and present with this person.

How?

How can we reconcile our belief in God with the absence of healing? There's no shortage of Bible verses that talk about healing, encouraging us to be persistent in our petitions to God and keep strong in faith. While I recognize that the Bible has valuable insights related to healing, endurance and more, I think we would be wise to keep some core principles embedded in our hearts and thoughts.

Here are some truths for reflection:

» **God's character doesn't change regardless of the presence or absence of healing.** "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no change or shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

» **Genuine love is our highest priority.** "If I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing" (1 Cor. 13:2).

» **We can choose to remain faithful to God no matter what happens with healing or miracles.** Shadrach,

Meshach and Abednego demonstrate this when they are confronted with the fiery furnace and the option to surrender their faith to keep their lives. "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods, nor worship the golden image which you have set up" (Dan. 3:17-18).

What?

What should we think about healing when it doesn't happen? Should we quit praying for the sick? Should we keep our distance from the subject? Should we warn others about impending disappointment? What can we do when healing doesn't happen?

These are all good questions, along with heaps more. For some answers, let's begin with some essential and unchanging truths that can anchor our souls. Scripture tells us God is all-knowing, and His ways are higher than our ways (Isa. 55:8-9). We must come to terms with the reality that God chooses to do things differently than we would often desire.

It's also important to consider that God's character remains stable in our dark valleys. Remember what David says in Psalm 23:4, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me." Understanding that God's lovingkindness endures forever (Ps. 136) has been a steady anchor for my soul. Let's remember that no matter what we go through or how we feel, God is genuine love and nothing less (1 John 4:8).

We must also remember that Satan always wants to deceive us. Part of his plan includes distorting God's character and identity from who we perceive Him to be. Satan's schemes include telling us God doesn't care or that He is unkind, impatient, unforgiving, unloving, callous and detached. Let us determine to keep walking with God and reject Satan's lies, remembering that Satan is the father of lies, and deception is his native

language (John 8:44).

Finally, when healing doesn't happen, I believe true intimacy with God demands that we wrestle with Him in gut-wrenching honesty in our disappointment, pain, frustration, anger and grief. I say this because of reading the psalms David wrote and how honest he was with God. It's possible that God calls David "a man after His heart" (1 Sam. 13:14b) because he is so vulnerable with Him. Being transparent with God postures us for greater connection and intimacy, and this may be God's endgame. Perhaps God has hardwired each of us for doing life with Him in deep connection.

When healing doesn't happen, it can be disheartening. It can also bring us to a crossroads in our walk with God, where we choose to keep walking with Him even through some somber seasons. I've concluded that while I don't like hardship, and I certainly don't understand His reasoning, I can still keep walking with God, showing up day by day with honesty—frazzled, even limping at times. Let's recall Genesis 32, where Jacob walks away from his wrestling match with God with not only a lifelong limp but also a new name and transformed identity.

I leave you with this thought as I reflect back on the journey I referenced at the beginning of this article. My friend's daughter died, and her death left a sadness lingering in my heart for a very long time. During that time, I wrestled with God, spilling out my heart and emotions, sometimes being angry and disconnecting myself from Him. But I also settled into the reality that God wants to help us in our most unraveled existence, even when we struggle with healing that doesn't happen. In these situations, let's bring God all of our struggles and choose intimacy with Him instead of isolation from Him—even in our darkest days. ◀

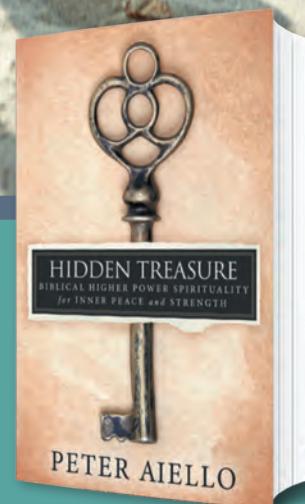
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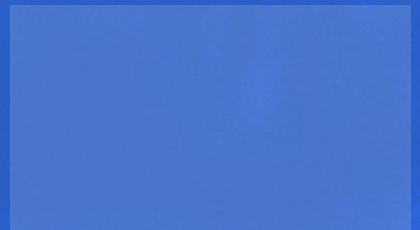
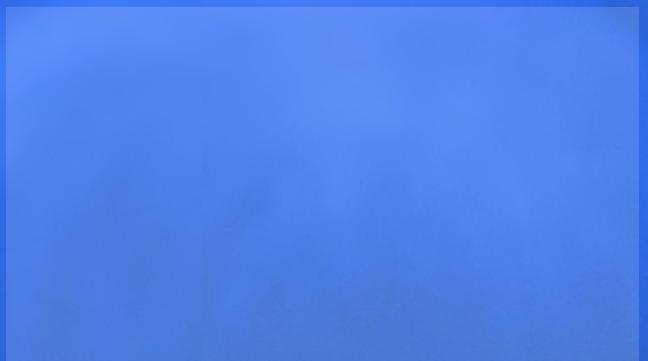
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UP CLOSE *and* PERSONAL

BY KARI JOBE

Worship implies **INTIMACY**—a true relationship with the God of the universe—and is meant to invade every corner of our lives

It's too easy to take for granted. We're too prone to become numb to the pure wonder of it. How amazing it is to consider that when we lift our voices to God in praise—as Psalm 22:3 reminds us—He inhabits our praises. Think about that. The God of all creation is moved by us, His children, when we worship.

However, I've discovered that true worship is more than music or a song. At the heart of worship is the Lord's desire for relationship and communion with us. Another word to describe this would be *intimacy*.

Worship of the Father and intimacy with the Father go hand in hand. We can't really have one without the other. In order to pour out our hearts to Him—not just with music, but with our lives—we must pursue a real relationship with God.

It requires transparency. True and loyal relationship carries the weight and responsibility to be honest and completely yourself with the other person—and God, more than anyone, wants our honesty and truth in worship. As Jesus declared in John 4:23, "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks" (NIV).

This kind of honesty with God will throw open the door for a real and transformative relationship with Him.

You'll experience real intimacy and all the amazing benefits that flow from it. As astonishing as it sounds, God's greatest desire is ... us! And the more we experience real communion with Him, the bigger our desire grows for His glorious manifested presence.

I suspect that for some, the word *intimacy* is a little scary. Rejection, pain and disappointment from the past can cause us to shy away from vulnerability and transparency in relationships—even a relationship with one we know is loving, like our Father God. We can't help but guard ourselves against being

how we came to know His love and grace, but one thing is true for all of us. Somewhere along the journey of our lives, we had an encounter with God—an encounter in which we fell in love with the fact that the God of the universe hears us when we worship.

We've experienced that miraculous moment of His coming and filling a room with His presence. He wants that intimate experience of His nearness and glory to be not a rarity, but a daily part of our lives—not something we experience only in church, but also in our

Worship of the Father and intimacy with the Father go hand in hand.

hurt again. But may I encourage you with this? Find healing in that place, and don't allow those deep hurts to rob you of the riches of a real relationship with the Lord.

Whether you're a worship leader, a church leader or someone who's simply reading these words because you love the Lord and long to know Him in a more meaningful way, I am confident you'll benefit from pursuing great levels of intimacy with the Father.

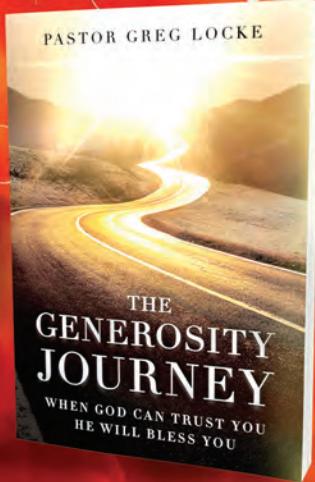
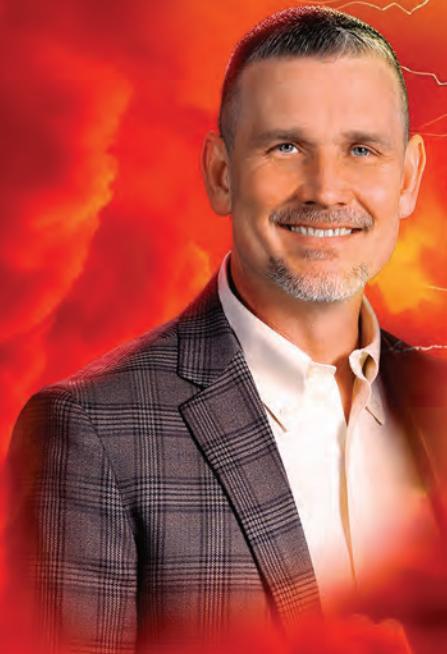
Each of us has our unique story of

most common moments.

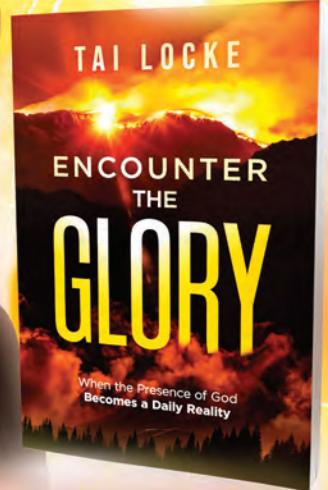
Yes, God is so very good. Let's respond to that goodness by letting our worship be vulnerable, transparent and real. And let's live with the breathless expectancy that our amazing God can and will invade our days. ◀

KARI JOBE is a Dove-award-winning artist and was nominated for a Grammy for her most recent album, *Where I Find You*. She is a worship pastor at Gateway Church in Southlake, Texas.

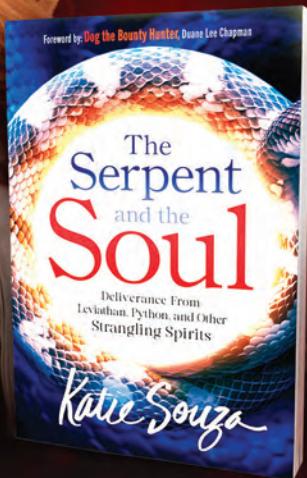
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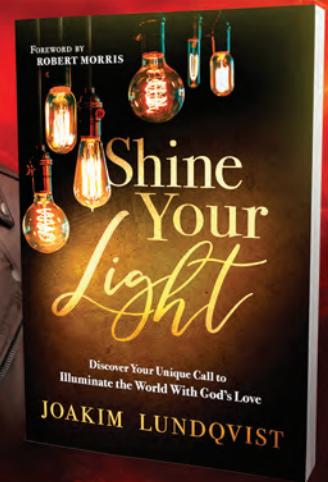
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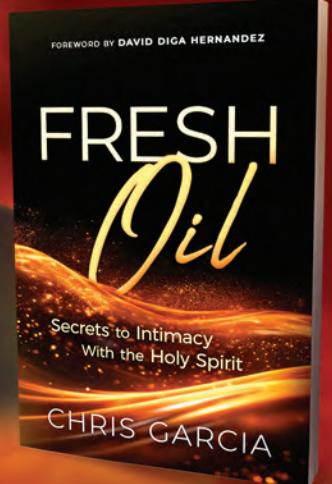
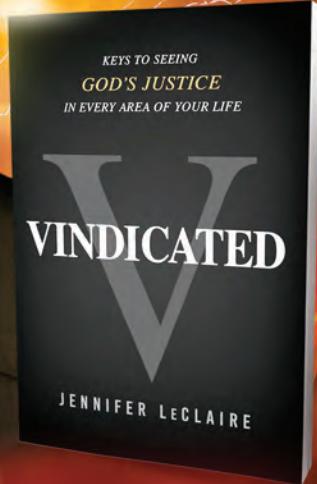


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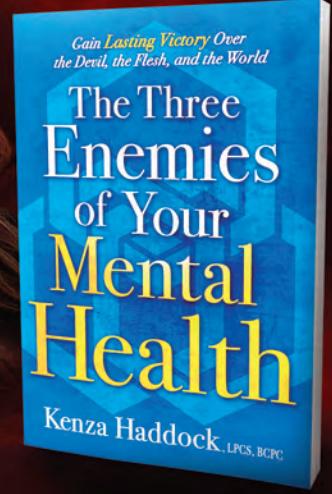
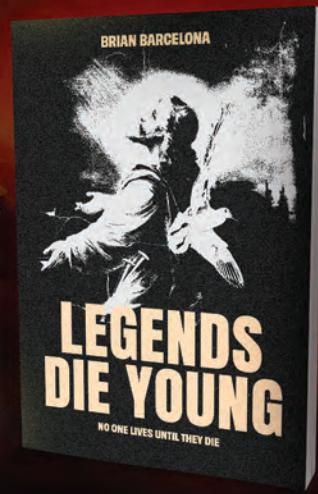
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Reckless Love

The writer of the hit worship song breaks down the theology behind the lyrics



Cory Asbury had no idea “Reckless Love” would be such a hit.

BY CORY ASBURY

When I wrote “Reckless Love,” I had no idea it would go on to be one of the most popular Christian songs in recent history. I had no idea it would go viral in a matter of hours after hitting YouTube. I had no idea it would break *Billboard* records and receive numerous Dove Awards and even a Grammy nomination. I had no idea it would become the most frequently sung worship song in the church worldwide—and certainly no idea its theology would be so hotly debated. I just knew those lyrics were exactly what my heart needed to sing to the Father in that particular season of my life.

When I sent the demo to my (now) manager at Bethel Music, I included the note, “I think I just penned my opus.” While I had no idea my “opus” would be so widely received, I knew it was born from the depths of my being, from the very core of my raw, imperfect but beautiful walk with the Father.

At that point in my life, I was so hyper acquainted with my own brokenness that the reality of God’s desire and love for me even in that vulnerable place was absolutely wrecking me (in the best way possible). He kept showing up at the doorstep of my heart when I least expected it: after another loss in the battle against lust, after blowing up at my kids (undoubtedly over something inconsequential), after yet another fight with my wife (in which I was undeniably in the wrong). It seemed as if I just couldn’t outrun His grace, and I couldn’t “outfall” His kindness.

In that place of surrender to His goodness, the refrain of the chorus was born: “Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending, reckless love of God.” These words were the banner over my very existence. Isn’t it just like God to use a season like mine to birth a song that heals a multitude? Isn’t it just like God to turn disappointments into dance floors? He really is better than we’ve imagined. I’m constantly overwhelmed by His tenderness in my life.



“God’s longing to be loved isn’t a suspension of His power; it’s evidence of the incomprehensible fury of His love.”

Looking at it in retrospect, I believe most people who took offense at the word fall into two main camps.

Intentionally Reckless

People in the first camp hold the notion that nothing can happen outside God’s foreknowledge (since He’s omniscient); therefore, none of His actions could ever be deemed reckless. These people would call Jesus’ death on the cross “calculated” and “intentional.” I would offer this rebuttal: Jesus knew Lazarus would rise again in John 11, yet He still wept for Him. Why? Because omniscience (or precognition) doesn’t negate the pain of the foreseen event. In other words, just because you know something painful is going to happen in the future doesn’t mean it’s not going to hurt when it does.

We must remember: Jesus was fully God and fully man, which means, like us, He carried the capacity for deep emotion—empathy, sadness, sorrow and suffering. Describing the cross as calculated because it was always part of His plan doesn’t make it any less grueling. It would be like knowing you are going to the dentist tomorrow to get a root canal—without anesthesia. Just because you’ve got it on the calendar doesn’t mean it’s not going to hurt like crazy. So while the adjectives “calculated” and “intentional” are certainly true of our Savior’s work at Calvary, they don’t intrinsically preclude the application of the word “reckless.”

In other words, someone could be “intentionally reckless.” Allow me to illustrate this idea in two analogies.

In the first, a father named Richard

I’ve received tens of thousands of emails and messages about how the song has touched people’s lives. One of my favorite testimonies came on the day Justin Bieber sang the song on his social media platforms. Boy, did my phone blow up that day. I was inundated with messages from friend and foe alike excitedly telling me that Bieber had sung my song. To be honest with you, I completely freaked out too. I didn’t expect to be so giddy and star-struck, but I was.

That day, I received thousands of messages from random people who had heard the song because of Bieber’s posts. The one that impacted me the most came from a young man who was planning to commit suicide that very night. When he heard Bieber singing the words to my song, the Father came close and spoke sonship and belonging over him. He gave his life to God that

same day and was saved. It’s amazing what Jesus can do with just a little tune, huh?

I’ve been asked countless times how and why I would choose to use a word like “reckless” to describe the love of God. Some critics have been gracious, and some have been less than gracious (to put it lightly). While I understand that my choice of words is undoubtedly bold, I believe in a God whose love is infinitely beyond the bounds of our English Rolodex of descriptors, a God who lives so far outside the confines of human language that words fail to describe even the edges of His complexity.

At the height of the controversy surrounding the song in 2018, it seemed as if its opponents made it their goal to disprove the idea of God’s reckless love. I can’t tell you how many internet blogs, news articles and social media posts tagged me in their publications.



Cory Asbury and his son, Gabriel

plans to surprise his son, Jesse, with the gift of a lifetime: a brand-new car for his 16th birthday. For the sake of making this illustration more relatable (and more dramatic), let's say this car is a red Lamborghini Aventador S. This model retails for almost half a million dollars, but hey, Richard really loves his son, you know?

At first glance, do you as an outside observer think it is wise of Richard to give his son such an expensive vehicle at such a young age? Do you think it's a sensible thing to do?

I suggest that, in light of what we know about the general temperament of most teenagers, it is not sensible. Plus, the latest data tells us the leading cause of teen death is accidental injuries, such as car-crash injuries. Perhaps the 740-horsepower engine of the Lamborghini might tempt Jesse to drive a little faster than the speed limit one night. What if he gets careless with his friends and loses his life in a tragic accident? Was the car a wasted

gift? Was it just a foolish gesture? Again, I'd like to suggest that it was not.

You see, God doesn't give gifts according to our ability to steward them perfectly or on our worthiness to receive them. Neither did the father in this story. God gives according to one criterion—His ridiculous kindness. He hands out good gifts left and right like it is Christmas morning all year round because it's just who He is. It's His nature; He cannot be any other way. His character is overflow. There's no caution in His kindness; there's only lavishness.

Our second illustration examines one of God's greatest gifts to humanity: the gift of children. In this scenario, a newly married young couple, James and Rachel, just found out they're pregnant with their first child—a little boy. Sadly, James isn't as excited as he should be at the news. You see, he was sexually abused as a child and still hasn't found the courage to tell his wife. The shame of his prior experience

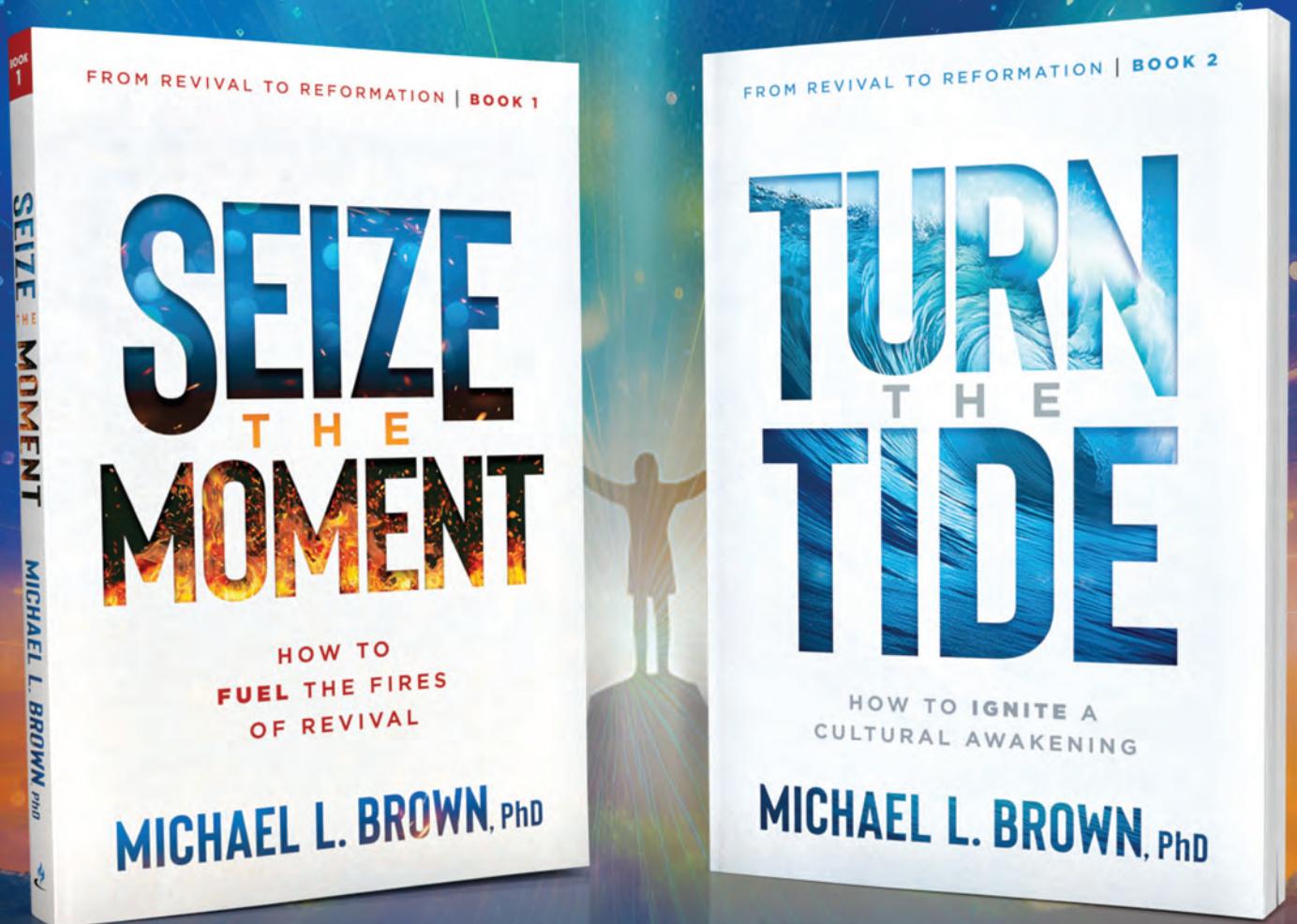
clouds his ability to feel the hope and joy that should accompany such a mountaintop moment. He's scared, and rightly so. Bringing a child into this world is a weighty thing. James worries that he's going to fall into the unfortunate patterns of his childhood and end up hurting his son.

Now let's ponder something. Is it foolish for God to allow James—a broken, sinful human being with a less than perfect past—to bring a child into this world? Probably. I mean, if anyone is acquainted with humanity's propensity for darkness, it's Almighty God. Yet He affords James the gift of a child anyway because He's just that good.

Is there not a strong possibility that James might affect the life of his little boy in a negative way? Absolutely. But what if God in His infinite wisdom knows this is a divine opportunity for healing and redemption? What if God knows this is where the power of the

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“God is too wonderful for prose, too beautiful for poetry and too brilliant for love songs. He is altogether indescribable.”

cross can purify James' past and send his shame packing once and for all? What if becoming a dad could somehow heal the scars of his childhood? Did God think through the vast number of outcomes for this father-son relationship? Has He predestined it, or does James have a choice in the matter?

I believe James has a choice, and his choice is the canvas on which to display his gratitude for God's "foolish" gift, His intentionally reckless display of love. Therein lies the beauty of the entire equation of life: God lets us choose how we'll respond to His preposterous mercy, to His scandalous grace. Almost overlooked amid all the trappings of the Father's generosity, our free will might be the greatest and most reckless gift of all.

Positively Reckless

This leads to our second camp of opponents: those who say God's love can't be reckless because their associations with the word "reckless" are negative. In other words, since the word typically carries negative connotations, it can't be ascribed to God because He's altogether positive. Consider this: Scripture says that God is a jealous God, yet "Thou shalt not covet" (Ex. 20:17a, KJV) is one of the Ten Commandments. How can this "paradox" be?

The answer is that word association does not equal word definition. Preconceived notions of a word—positive or negative—do not determine that word's function or meaning.

The idea that God could be reckless

in His pursuit of humanity also threw many people off. They felt it implied that He needed our affection in return—and obviously the God who has everything doesn't need anything. In their estimation, this notion painted God as weak, whiny, whimpering and love-scorned. It made Him look needy, and most Christians—especially those only outwardly familiar with the Jesus of the Bible—prickle at this notion, because to them, God is only ever big, strong and barrel-chested.

But God—the same God who created heaven and earth—gives Himself away in desperate hopes that we'll return His love. He is that vulnerable and humble, and His heart is that tender.

It's not weakness as many misperceive. God's longing to be loved isn't a suspension of His power; it's evidence of the incomprehensible fury of His love. A. W. Tozer says it like this: "[God] waits to be wanted." He's not a sad schoolgirl wallowing like a wallflower at the high school dance; He's a Father, fierce in love, coming after His sons and daughters with reckless abandon.

To support the second camp's position that a negative word can't characterize God, a lot of articles and blog posts cited synonyms for "reckless" in an attempt to discredit the song. They cherry-picked the words that served their purpose while neglecting the others. The inexactness of this logic is quite shocking. It reminds me of arguments I often see on social media—usually between Christians and non-Christians—in which the debaters pick and choose which Scriptures they want to use as ammunition for their empty squabbles, regardless of the actual context of the verses.

Just for fun, here are a few synonyms for "reckless" using the same (dubious) method: audacious, carefree, daring, adventurous, headlong, wild, adventuresome. And here are

a few antonyms: afraid, careful, cautious, reserved, shy, discreet, timid, wary, fearful.

I don't know about you, but I don't serve a God who's anything close to afraid, fearful, shy, timid or reserved. My God is wild, full of life and much more like a lion than a domesticated cat.

This exercise demonstrates that our vocabulary is too limited to describe an ineffable God, a mysterious God who lives outside of time and space. The God who created the cosmos and its languages cannot be contained within their constructs. We seek words that fall infinitely short of the Creator of the universe. Yet as writers and artists, we still have a responsibility to make Him known, both as descriptively and as precisely as possible. Our language is too feeble, yet we must try.

We find ourselves smack-dab in the middle of a glorious quandary. God is too wonderful for prose, too beautiful for poetry and too brilliant for love songs. He is altogether indescribable. Lifetimes could be wasted trying to create something worthy of His incomparable splendor, and they would be wasted most nobly.

My friend, Glenn Packiam, said it best: "The point of using the word 'reckless' is that it shows us that by all accounts, God's loving us was not what we'd call a wise investment. We were a risk, even a waste. Yet He loved us anyway. New Testament scholar John Barclay calls this 'the incongruity of grace'—God's love for us is not congruent with our worth or our state. From conventional wisdom, it is reckless. A reckless use of money is to give an inheritance to someone who squanders it; it's to give a feast to someone who deserves to starve; it's to give a robe and a ring to someone who should be wearing a ball and chain. But the wisdom of God is foolishness to the world. And the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of the world. Thanks be to God!" ◀

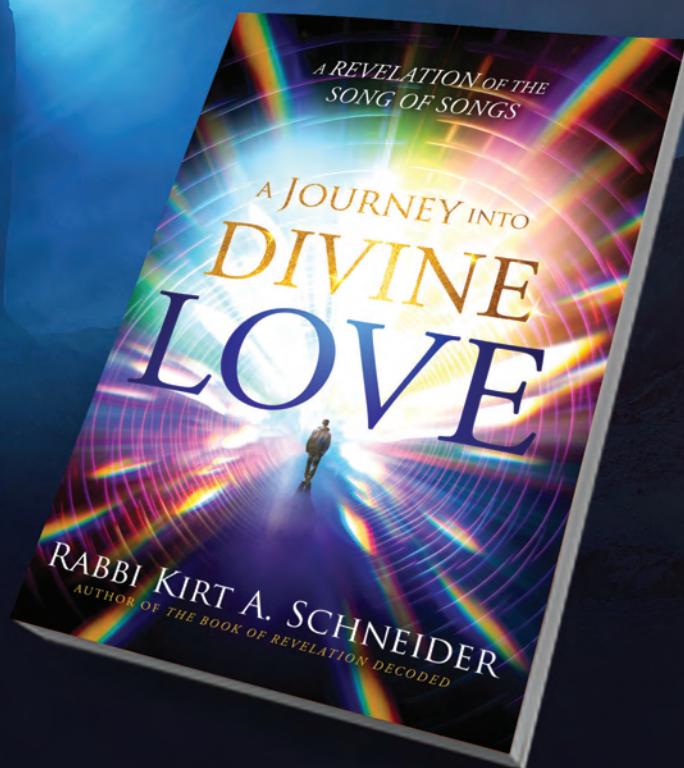
CORY ASBURY is a songwriter and worship leader who joined the Bethel Music Collective in May 2015. He serves as a worship pastor and artist-in-residence at Radiant Church, located near Kalamazoo, Michigan, and leads worship at events across the globe.

MORE INFORMATION

In this 40-day journey, Asbury delves into the heart of his popular song, sharing its underlying themes and the stories behind it.



What if the point of the cross
wasn't just to be saved but
to be loved?

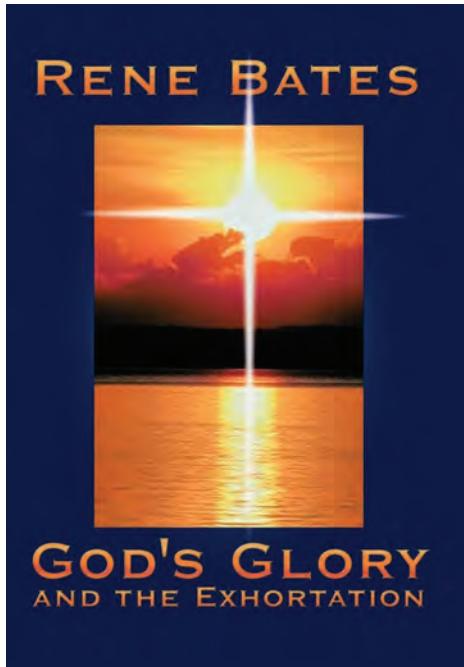


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A Warning from God to the Saved and Lost.

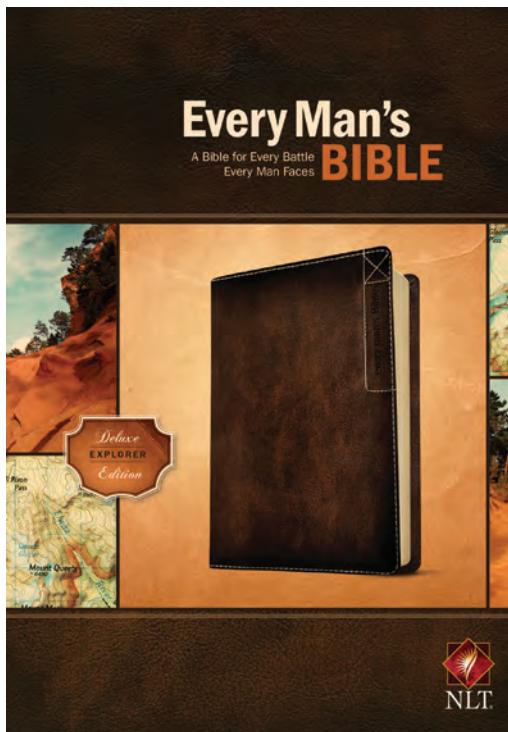
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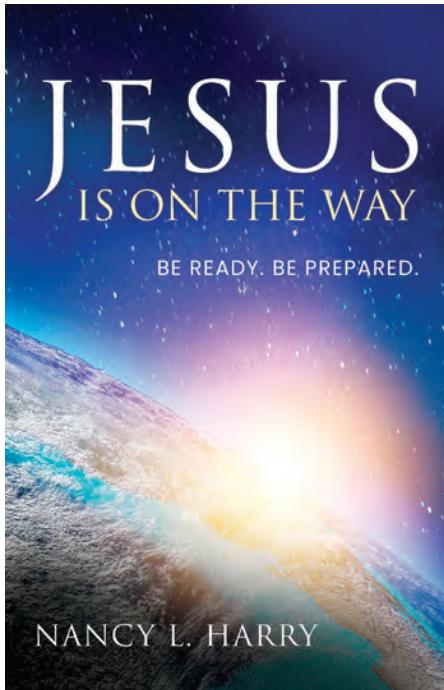
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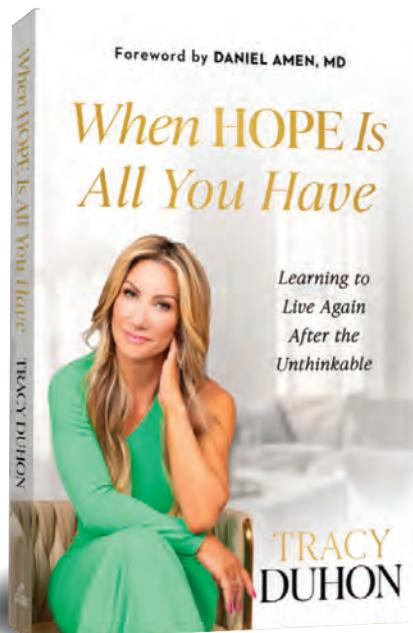
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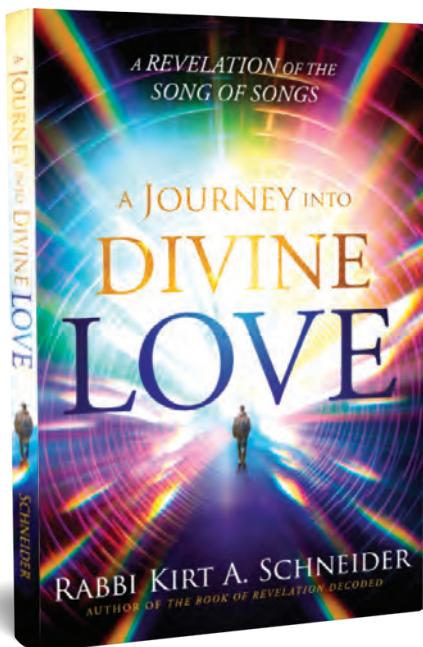
When Hope Is All You Have by Tracy Duhon

What if your greatest pain could point you to your greatest purpose? Tracy Duhon's *When Hope Is All You Have* is about looking back on the moments you cannot imagine you survived, but you did. It is realizing that from the depths of that pain came your purpose. From the depths of darkness, came light. From the place of hurt, came hope. It is the story of unwavering faith and trusting in God, and holding onto a hope that does not disappoint, even when you walk through the unthinkable. With God as your anchor, there is always hope—even during your greatest pain *when hope is all you have*. By reading this book, you will not only gain a hope for your future but also view the world from God's perspective instead of your own. Ultimately, you will witness how God is working all things together for good.

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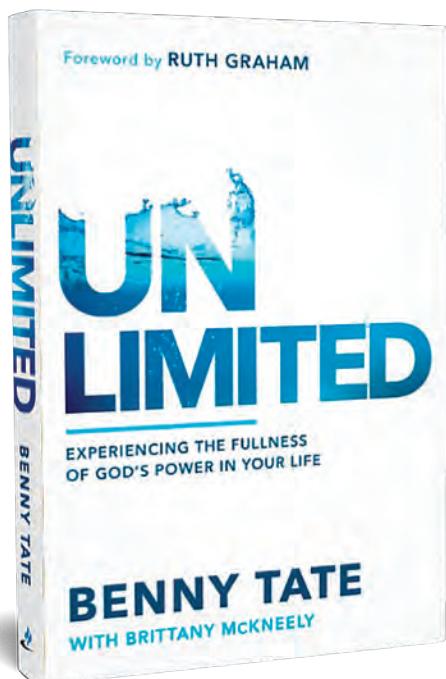
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A Journey Into Divine Love by Rabbi Kirt A. Schneider

What if the point of the cross wasn't just to be saved but to be loved? Rabbi Kirt A. Schneider's *A Journey Into Divine Love* draws from his deep understanding of Scripture to unlock the mysteries of one of the most beautiful portions of God's Word—the Song of Songs. In what he considers one of the most important teachings the Lord has ever given him, Rabbi Schneider will help you discover new depths of intimacy with the Lord to better understand how much God loves you. The Song of Songs (or the Song of Solomon) is not just a poetic love story but also a prophetic message of God's love for His church. Throughout *A Journey Into Divine Love*, you will see the purpose and power behind a deep and meaningful relationship with Christ and find the spiritual refreshment that you need to walk forward in your faith.

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Unlimited by Benny Tate

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After seeing God's limitless power and love for them, readers will find true growth and meaning with the Holy Spirit.

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Spirit-Led Living in an Upside-Down World by Stephen Strang

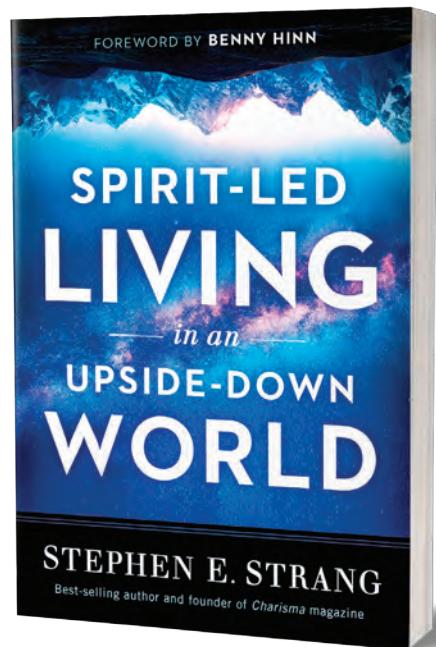
Best-selling author and founder of *Charisma* magazine, Stephen E. Strang's newest book will guide you to walk confidently in the power of the Holy Spirit for a life of abundance and joy. When he was a young newspaper reporter, Strang experienced this power in a way "exceedingly abundantly above" all he could have asked or thought (Eph. 3:20), and you will too.

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SteveStrangBooks.com



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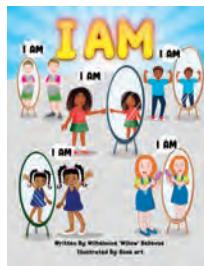
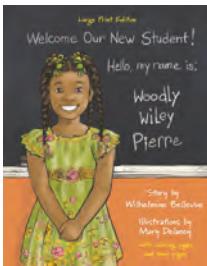
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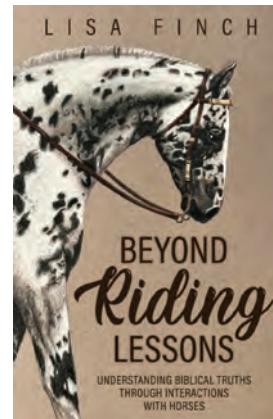
Woodley Wiley Pierre: Starting over in a new world, Woodley Wiley Pierre embodies what it means to be rejected. She is an immigrant who will inspire laughter and love as she takes you along on her journey.

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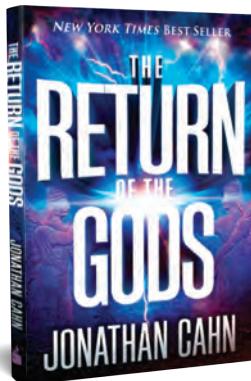
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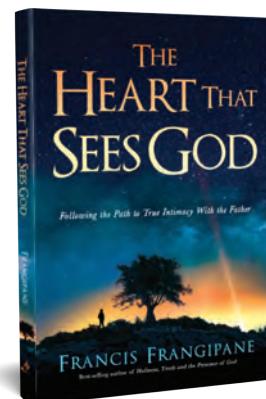
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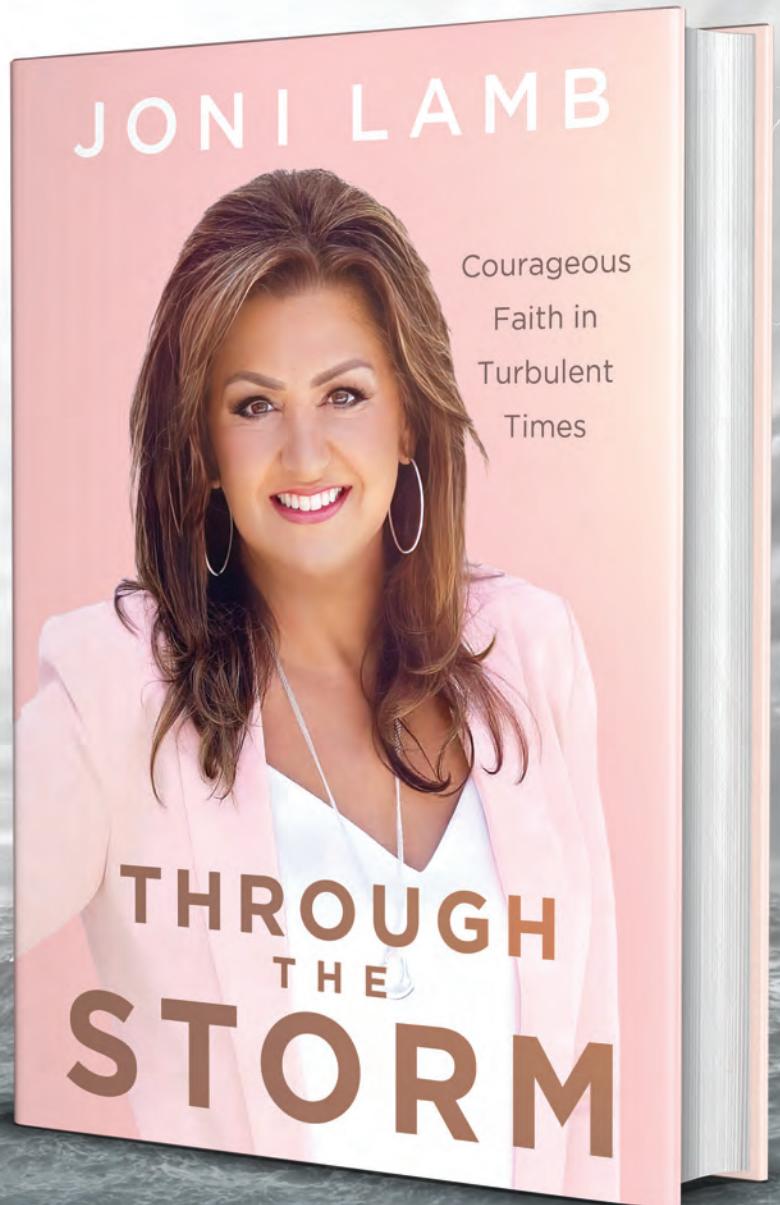
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