

JUNE 2023

# inspiration

M A G A Z I N E



*Everyday*  
**SUPERNATURAL**

A Glimpse  
of Eternity

The Rock of  
Certainty

Fall in Love  
with Jesus

Everyday Supernatural



PAGE 10



Are you actively expecting God to do the miraculous? Check out David's article on **page 5** where he shares that you don't have to wait for His supernatural power—you can expect Him to act when you step out in faith. Take a look at the special THANK

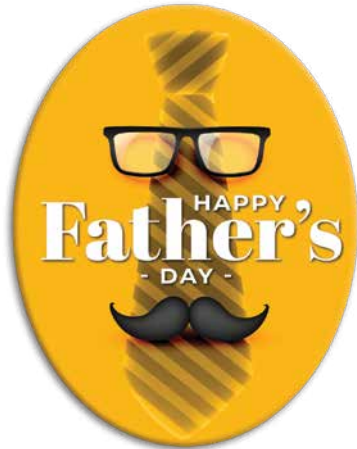
YOU GIFT we want to send you that will strengthen your expectations (see **page 28**).



PAGE 16



PAGE 18



EDITOR'S CORNER



Roone Acree

Do you believe God truly wants to touch you with His miracle power? This month's *INSPIRATION MAGAZINE* contains truths that will blast away the doubt and make way for your breakthrough!

We need to remember that God is a God of miracles. His gifts of healing, hope, and courage are ours if we walk in faith and obedience. If you've experienced His supernatural touch, please send me a note at [editor@inspiration.org](mailto:editor@inspiration.org). I want to hear how God has unleashed His power in your life!

10 A Glimpse of Eternity

By Ian McCormack

If you were an atheist standing between Heaven and hell, would you change your mind about God?

16 God Healed My Daughter

A concerned mom called our prayer center to intercede for her daughter battling serious health issues.

18 The Rock of Certainty

By John Piper

Is your house built on the rock or on the sand? Instead of playing the odds, make sure you're putting your hope in the eternal power of Jesus!

19 Your June Devotions

Experience the supernatural power of God by checking in with God's Word daily.

52 Forgiveness

In Pursuit of God's Promises

Before we can claim any promises God offers us in His Word, we must claim His promise of forgiveness.

54 Fall in Love with Jesus

By Ben Cerullo

Although there's no formula for having an intimate, personal relationship with Jesus, Ben shares biblical patterns and examples you can follow.



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# Be a **Warrior** and a **Winner** in **Christ!**

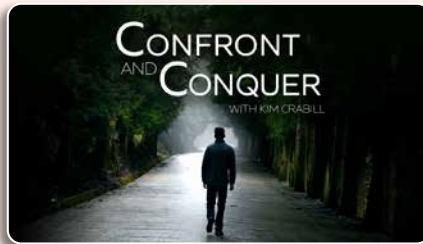


## June 26–July 7

Ever wonder what your purpose is in this crazy world? God has chosen you to be His warrior! Join Kim Crabill and Casey Gomes as they tackle what that means and how we can be more than conquerors. The power of God in your life can break negative, generational cycles and turn you into a warrior for Christ!

## May 29–June 23

If you long to live victoriously, overflowing with peace and joy, join David Cerullo as he explains the Holy Spirit's vital role in transforming lives. You'll learn how to be filled with the Spirit's power and why that's so critically important in today's world. Be enriched as this 15-day series unravels the mysterious third person of the Godhead.



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# UNLEASH Your Supernatural FAITH!



**STRENGTHEN**  
*your walk*  
with David Cerullo

Are you expecting God to do the miraculous in your life today? Before you answer that question, notice what I didn't ask:

- Whether you believe miracles happened in Bible days
- Whether you've ever seen a miracle in your past years
- Whether you believe God will do any miracles in the future

While all those might be good questions, I want to focus on your expectancy for the Lord to do supernatural things in your life today. You see, God responds to your faith. And if you're truly walking in faith, you will have a great expectancy each day that supernatural power will follow you everywhere you go.

In his great chapter on faith, the writer of Hebrews warns, *"Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe*



that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (11:6). That’s strong language, isn’t it? He’s saying that if you want to PLEASE God, you must BELIEVE God.

And in the first verse of the chapter, he also provides a vital key to what miracle-working faith looks like: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (11:1). Notice that the very first word in this chapter on faith is “NOW..” True faith isn’t focused on the past or the future. It’s always in the present tense—a “now” relationship with the living God.

You don’t have to wait for breakthrough in the sweet by and by, my friend! Look what Paul wrote about laying hold of the full privileges of your salvation today:

*“In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you.” Behold, NOW is the accepted time; behold, NOW is the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2–3).*

When speaking of salvation, Paul wasn’t only referring to going to Heaven when you die. He used the Greek word *sōtēria*, which includes healing, deliverance, peace of mind, and safety. Today is the day, and now is the time to believe God’s promises for every area of your life!

### **ONLY BELIEVE!**

I’ll never forget sitting as a young boy in my dad’s evangelistic crusades and seeing the demonstration of God’s miracle-working power. I vividly remember an old song the choirs used to sing, “Only believe, only believe, all things are possible, only believe!”

In Mark 9, a man brought his son to Jesus to be healed. The boy was demon possessed and

unable to speak. The root of his speechlessness was not physical but rather spiritual. Jesus said to the boy’s father, “If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes” (v. 23).

With tears streaming down his face, the father replied, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” (v. 24).

Breakthroughs from God are the result of bold, obedient faith—the exact *opposite* of fear, doubt, and passivity. Instead of being afraid or timid, we must release our faith and boldly confront the mountains in our lives. We need to cry out, “Lord, with You all things are possible. Lord, if Your Word says it, then I believe it. Lord, help my unbelief!”

When we exercise our faith and cry out to God in this way, our faith will rise up to overcome the obstacles that stand in the way of our destiny. Jesus tells us to *speak* to the mountains in our way and expect them to move! He doesn’t tell us to sit back and let our life drift with the wind—He tells us to take action and confront our spiritual enemies with an unconquerable confidence in God!

Today, Satan is launching a major assault against our faith, trying to instill fear and get us to waver in our trust in the Lord. He wants us to put our eyes on our circumstances or the world’s economy rather than on God’s faithfulness to His Word.

If you keep your eyes focused on your problems and the mountains in your way—whether they are financial, physical, or relational—the enemy will use your circumstances to plant fear and doubt in your mind and spirit. He will use your circumstances to accuse God and try to discredit His Word. Instead, keep your eyes focused on the Lord, on His Word, and on His ability to do ANYTHING!

**Keep your eyes focused on the Lord, on His Word, and on His ability to do ANYTHING!**

**Today is the day, and now is the time to believe God’s promises for every area of your life!**

## TAKE A STEP OF FAITH

I continue to pray for you this month, asking God to touch every area of your life with extraordinary favor. I believe in the power of prayer, and I've seen the Lord give breakthroughs to countless partners when they contacted our International Prayer Center to intercede for their needs. (See contact information on page 16.)

But I've also seen another spiritual principle at work in the pages of Scripture and in my own life:

**Sometimes a step of faith and obedience is needed in order to release God's breakthroughs!**

People in the Bible were sometimes asked to do unusual things to receive their breakthrough. Things like dipping seven times in the Jordan River...giving their last bit of food to a prophet...stretching out their withered hand...washing in the pool of Siloam...or sowing a sacrificial financial seed. But whenever a person exercised their faith and obeyed the Lord, He did *miracles* in their life!

What step of faith is God asking *you* to take today? If you are looking for Him to release His supernatural power, He may be waiting for you to draw near to Him. Or He may be looking for you to repent of something or forgive someone of an offense they caused you.

When you want to release more of His favor, a seed of some kind is always involved. It might be a seed of repentance, forgiveness, or obedience. Or it might involve faith, kindness, love, time spent with Him, or some other kind of seed.

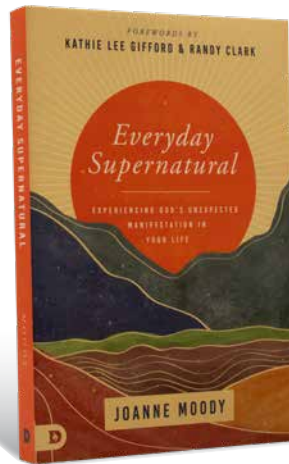
I'm convinced that as you seek the Lord and sow seeds of faith, expectancy, and obedience, a great harvest of blessing will come into your life.

I'm praying for God's miracle power to be released in your life and circumstances in an extraordinary way today!

God bless you,

*David*

P.S. Turn to page 28 to see the life-changing THANK YOU GIFT I want to send you this month.



# How to Bless Your Family

Fathers, want to be like the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Want to bless your children like they blessed their children?

One way is by verbally praying over them, like Moses did with the Israelites in Numbers 6:24–26:

*The LORD bless you and keep you;  
The LORD make His face shine upon you,  
And be gracious to you;  
The LORD lift up His countenance upon you,  
And give you peace.*

Another way is by leaving a spiritual heritage of being an online missionary! By partnering with Inspiration Ministries, you can ensure that your finances continue to help point people toward the Gospel even after you've passed on from this life. After all, you have been blessed to be a blessing to others:

*And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, **so that you will be a blessing** (Genesis 12:2 ESV).*

Pass down a legacy your children will be proud of!

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Our Planned Giving Advisors can help you create a lasting spiritual and financial heritage for your family that includes sharing the Good News through Inspiration Ministries' media outreaches! Contact us today for FREE information.

# A Glimpse of **ETERNITY**



What Ian saw  
may change your  
life forever.



What would it take to transform a cynical atheist into a spirit-filled evangelist? For Ian McCormack, it took a descent into hell, an encounter with divine love, and an escape from death itself.

The transformation began in the dark depths of the Indian Ocean on a night dive for lobsters where Ian found himself surrounded by a swarm of box jellyfish.

“Something smashed into my forearm like thousands of volts of electricity,” recalled Ian. “I couldn’t see a cut or anything, so I decided to continue my dive. Divers can’t panic about things.”

Within minutes, though, Ian was stung again, and this time he saw the jellyfish. Realizing the possible danger, he sought out a fellow diver and then received two more venomous stings. Simon, a local, knew Ian was in trouble. One sting from a box jellyfish can kill someone—and Ian had been stung five times.

“By the time an ambulance arrived, my body was paralyzed,” Ian said. “My life began to flash before me. As I lay there dying, I saw my mother in a vision, encouraging me to pray.”

*Ian, no matter how far from God you are, no matter what you’ve done wrong, if you cry out to God from your heart, He will hear you, and He will forgive you.*

Ian felt at a loss. A self-described “devout atheist,” he didn’t know who to pray to or how to pray. Thoughts flooded his mind: *Is there a God? There are thousands of gods. Buddha? Kali? Shiva? Yet I didn’t see Buddha or Krishna standing there, I saw my mother—and my mother followed Jesus Christ.*

As the poison spread through his body, Ian struggled to recall the only prayer he had ever learned. *Forgive us our sins.* An overwhelming awareness of his sinful, self-centered living fell upon Ian. In deep regret, he begged God for forgiveness and cried out for mercy.

He breathed easier when *Forgive those who have sinned against you* popped into his mind. “I don’t hold grudges, so that felt easy. But then the faces of those who refused to help me get to the hospital came to mind, and I thought, *You must be joking!*”

But with his resistance to forgive others, Ian’s mind stayed blank. When he released his bitterness, *Thy will be done* floated to mind. As his heart agreed with those words, Ian felt as if he was released from his body.

“I didn’t feel dead; I was fully aware of being in a terrifying darkness that held a cold, evil presence. Weeping, I cried out to God, *Why am I here? I’ve asked you for forgiveness. I’ve turned my heart to you. Why am I here?*”



Ian glimpsed a light emanating from a tunnel then, a light that pulsed with life and power. He could look straight at the light even though it was brighter than anything he'd ever seen. The light felt like the source of everything—and he felt it draw him into itself.

“Successive waves of light started traveling up the tunnel towards me. The first wave gave off an amazing warmth and comfort—as though it was a living light that transmitted an emotion. The light passed into me and filled me with a sense of love and acceptance. Halfway down, another wave of light entered me, creating a total and complete peace.”

Ian realized this was what he had been seeking all his life. The foreboding darkness he first entered had been so deep he couldn't see his hand in front of his face. Now his body was full of light, completely transparent, yet filled with peace. Uncertain of what was happening, Ian began to wonder if this was what Buddhists called the life force or karma. Then the light spoke—and called him by name.

“Ian, do you wish to return? If you do, you must see in a new light.”

Stunned by the experience, Ian didn't respond. Uncertain where he was or where he would return to, he didn't know how to

reply. Then a memory of an old Christmas card began to put the pieces together. Two phrases from the card dropped Ian to his knees:

Jesus is the light of the world.

God is light, and there is no darkness in Him.

He knew! ***THIS is God!** He is light...and He knew my name. He knew the secret thoughts of my heart and mind. I felt totally exposed and transparent—ashamed and undone.*

Fear followed on the heels of those thoughts. Ian did not want to go back to the darkness or lose the peace that filled him. Then another wave of pure, unconditional love flowed over Ian pushing against the fear. He responded with a confession of sin that intensified his awareness of God's love.

“I was being washed with pure, undeserved love. It began filling me from the inside out, and I wept uncontrollably as the love became stronger. This love was healing my heart, and I began to understand that there is incredible hope for humankind in this love.”

When Ian asked for God's forgiveness, the door to His love and mercy opened wide. Drawn by the irresistible love and light, Ian found himself standing before a man clothed with dazzling robes of light whose arms were outstretched in welcome. Beyond the man, Ian

glimpsed a world of great beauty...a place he had longed for and now never wanted to leave. Turning to say one last goodbye to all that was behind him, Ian saw his mother standing there.

Grief washed over him as he realized she would be certain his death delivered him straight to hell. Fearing that would destroy her, he knew he needed to return. God began to show him masses of people and told Ian to share what he had seen. Then God instructed Ian to open his eyes.

Ian obeyed, which brought terror to the medical staff who later explained he had been clinically dead for the previous 15–20 minutes. Those few minutes brought eternal change to Ian and many of the millions he has shared his story with. Returning to his parents' home, Ian asked for a Bible and read it through in weeks. For the past 40 years, he has continued to share its truths and the love of God with all who will hear.

Will you let Ian's story change your life? ❖



**Ian McCormack's** deadly encounter brought drastic, lasting changes to his earthly life and eternal destination. He continues to minister around the world and shares his story freely on his website [www.aglimpseofeternity.org](http://www.aglimpseofeternity.org).

## How to start a new life with Jesus...

- **Admit your need.** (I am a sinner.)
- **Be willing to turn from your sins.** (Repent.)
- **Believe that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross and rose from the grave.** (Be saved by faith.)
- **Through prayer, invite Jesus Christ to guide your life by the Holy Spirit.** (Receive Him as Lord and Savior.)
- **Pray this prayer:**

“Dear God, I know I'm a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe Jesus Christ is Your Son. I believe that He died for my sins and that You raised Him to life. I want to trust Him as my Lord and Savior from this day forward. Guide my life, and help me to do Your will. I pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen.”

Visit [inspiration.org](http://inspiration.org) for more resources to help you grow in your relationship with God.

DAVID KEITH | COBY RYAN McLAUGHLIN | KEEAN JOHNSON



# HERITAGE FALLS

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON?

A basketball coach takes his bookworm son and dropout grandson to a rustic cabin for three hilarious, soul-searching days that will change them all.

Saturday, June 10 at 9 p.m. ET  
Sunday, June 11 at 5:30 p.m. ET  
Wednesday, June 14 at 9 p.m. ET

Watch the trailer at [inspiration.org/trailers](http://inspiration.org/trailers)



## Step Out in Faith This Father's Day!



Fridays at 9:30 p.m. ET

### House on the Rock

Paul Adefarasin is well known for his clear messages of hope, healing, and empowerment in Nigeria and around the world. Watch his latest sermons now!



Sundays at 8 a.m. ET

### The Potter's Touch

Named America's Best Preacher, Bishop T.D. Jakes goes directly to God's Word to offer powerful solutions to life's toughest issues.



Sundays at 4:30 p.m. ET

### COFFEE with Kim

What happens when a few imperfect people discover they believe the same lies about life and hide the same desires? Be encouraged by these faith-building conversations!



The World's Favorite Christian TV Network  
Watch free on [inspiration.org/tv](http://inspiration.org/tv) or the Inspiration Ministries TV app.



# God Healed My Daughter!

**Darlene received a turnaround breakthrough... and you can too!**

“I called to seek prayer for my daughter, who had been diagnosed with thyroid problems and two cancerous lumps on her breast. She was scheduled for surgery the following week, and the doctors said she must start chemotherapy treatments soon afterward.

“As her doctors prepared to run some final tests, I called the International Prayer Center. I felt a desperate need for someone to agree with me in prayer for God to do a miracle!

“The Lord calmed my heart when a dear prayer minister named Marilyn answered my call. She passionately agreed with me in prayer, asking God to restore my daughter’s health.

“When the doctors reexamined my daughter that day, they found no cancer or thyroid problems! **God gave my daughter a miracle!** Thank you for being there for me through your caring and anointed prayer ministers like Marilyn.”—DARLENE, Texas



## What God did for Darlene, He can do for YOU!

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**God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.**

John 3:16 NIV

Already this year, more than **2.6 Million people** have responded to the salvation message presented by Inspiration Ministries.

## 5.1 MILLION Souls in 2023

### YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD!

Wondering what impact you’re making through your partnership with Inspiration Ministries? So far in 2023, your generous giving has brought the light of Jesus to **2.6 MILLION** souls! Thank you for your faithfulness! As Jesus says:

*You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. [...] Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify*

*your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:14, 16).*

By supporting Inspiration Ministries prayerfully and financially, you’re helping to spread the Gospel to the darkest corners of the earth. Our media outreaches can go many places that traditional missionaries can’t.

Be blessed by this testimony of someone who was delivered from the darkness of witchcraft because of your giving:

“I want to give thanks to your ministry for praying for me. I was delivered from witchcraft at the hands of my mother and sisters. God has renewed my spirit and saved me. I feel so alive. May your ministry continue to pray for me, and I will do the same.”—Janet G.

### Help light up someone’s world with the Good News!

Contact us to sow your seed today:

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# The **ROCK** of Certainty

Versus the sands of probabilities.

Playing the odds is a fragile place to put your hope. Odds like 3% versus 10%, youth versus old age, self-isolated versus home meeting with friends. Playing the odds is not a firm place to stand.

There is a better way... a better place to stand: the Rock of certainty rather than the sand of probabilities.

I recall being told in 2005 that I had prostate cancer. For several weeks, all the talk was about odds. Odds with waiting to see. Odds with medications. Odds with homeopathic procedures. Odds with radical surgery. My wife, Noël, and I took these numbers seriously.

But in the evening, we would smile at each other and think, our hope is not in the odds. Our hope is in God. We did not mean, "It is 100% certain God will heal me." The Rock we are talking about is

better than healing.

Even before the phone call telling me I had cancer, God had already reminded me in a remarkable way about the Rock under my feet. The Bible, rightly understood, is the voice of God.

Here is my paraphrase of what He said to me: "John Piper, this is not wrath. Live or die, you will be with me" (1 Thessalonians 5:9–10).

It's all because of Jesus. Because of His death, there will be no wrath toward me. Not because of my perfection. My sins, my guilt, and my punishment fell on my Savior, Jesus Christ.

That is very different from playing the odds with cancer—or with the coronavirus. This is a firm Rock under my feet. It is not fragile. It is not sand. I would like it to be a Rock under your feet. ❖



**John Piper** is founder of DesiringGod.org, chancellor of Bethlehem College and Seminary, author of over 50 books, and former pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, MN.

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## Obeying God

BIBLE READING: JEREMIAH 37

Jeremiah had delivered God's Word: a warning that Jerusalem would be captured and God's instructions that His people were to cooperate with their enemy, Babylon. It was not the message people expected or wanted to hear. Instead of acting on the message, King Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah and asked for a different word.

Jeremiah sought the Lord, but He just gave the same message. The king was not happy and accused Jeremiah of collaborating with the enemy. He was put in a dungeon. At the king's request, Jeremiah sought God again, but His message did not change. This time Jeremiah was lowered into a cistern with no water.

A third time, Zedekiah called for Jeremiah. Again he sought God, but the message did not change. Jeremiah pleaded with the king to obey God, but he refused. When Babylon attacked Jerusalem, Jeremiah's prophecies came true. Since Zedekiah had not obeyed, his people weren't ready.

Many say they want God to guide and bless them but are not willing to do what He asks. They just want Him to confirm their desires.

Remember that God wants to bless and guide you, but this means believing His Word, obeying Him, and trusting Him. Be sure you have submitted your life to God and are not re-interpreting His Word to fit your desires. Commit yourself to do whatever He says, regardless of your preconceived ideas or what other people think.

Have you surrendered your will to God? What are you holding back?

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THURSDAY

June

1

*King Zedekiah sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah, and the priest Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah, to Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "Please pray to the LORD our God in our behalf."*

Jeremiah 37:3 NASB

### PRAYER:

Father, I surrender my will to You. Speak to me. Direct me. I commit myself to listen and obey You. In Jesus' name, amen.

*When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the way of God more accurately to him.*

Acts 18:26 NASB

## Accurately Taught

BIBLE READING: ACTS 18

Apollos had a powerful impact on believers in Ephesus. He was articulate and “*proficient in the Scriptures.*” He knew the Law and the Prophets and had been “*instructed in the way of the Lord.*” He was “*accurately speaking and teaching things about Jesus*” (v. 25). In fact, many treated him as an equal to Paul (1 Corinthians 1:12).

But there was a problem. Despite all this impact, Apollos had an incomplete knowledge of the Gospel. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they realized he needed a better understanding. Rather than rebuke him in public, they “*took him aside.*” In private, they “*gave him more detailed instruction*” (New Jerusalem Bible).

Any of us can be like Apollos. Even if we are effective ministers, we can always learn more. Even if we have followed Christ for years, there can be more we need to be taught. Even if we have read the Bible, there are more insights to be discovered. No matter how much we know, there may be some element of the Gospel that we lack. There also may be areas in which we need correction or more details.

Ask God to help you stay open to His Spirit. Never assume you have complete knowledge, but always remember there is more to learn and more God can teach you. Stay humble and hungry so that He might reveal more of His truth to you.

### PRAYER:

Father, I humble myself before You. Help me understand Your truth more clearly. Help me be a more effective minister of the Gospel. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Which passage of Scripture do you find difficult to understand?

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## Extraordinary Miracles

BIBLE READING: ACTS 19

Paul spent two years in Ephesus, one of the most important cities in the ancient world. During this visit, he taught the core principles of the Christian faith. As a result, “*all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord*” (v. 10).

But his ministry was not confined to teaching. He also demonstrated that God’s power was real and central to the Gospel and that God could work through His servants to solve problems in *supernatural* ways. People saw “*extraordinary miracles*” take place. The anointing was so overwhelming that the sick were healed just by touching a handkerchief or apron Paul had touched.

Paul was *proving* that God cared about every part of their lives—their minds and emotions, their health and finances—He literally could do *anything* for those who believed! In his letter to this same Ephesian church, Paul reminded them that God “*is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think*” and that His power “*works within us*” (Ephesians 3:20).

This power *still* is central to the Gospel and available to *all* believers. It is a power so great that *extraordinary* things can be done. Blind eyes can see. Deaf ears can be opened. The lame can walk again. Miracles can occur.

This power is available to you. Banish doubt and believe God for miracles. He is the same God who worked through Paul. Nothing is impossible for Him!

Compose a prayer asking God to let His power work in your life today.

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*God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out.*

Acts 19:11–12 NASB

### PRAYER:

Father, I commit these needs to You: \_\_\_\_\_.  
All things are possible. Perform miracles that others might believe in You. In Jesus’ name, amen.



*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.*

Ephesians 1:3 NASB

## Count Your Blessings

BIBLE READING: EPHESIANS 1

Johnson Oatman Jr. grew up listening to his father, who loved to sing. Johnson must have listened carefully, for he discovered how music could lift the spirits and even express theological truths.

Born in New Jersey in 1856, he became successful in business and an ordained minister. But he would be remembered primarily as the author of more than 5,000 hymns.

In one of his most beloved hymns, “Count Your Blessings,” he confessed his personal struggles. He described being “tempest tossed,” “discouraged,” and “thinking all is lost.” In those dark moments, he found the answer: “Count your many blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.”

He knew believers could feel “burdened with a load of care.” At those times as we count our blessings, we will find our doubts disappearing. Instead of being depressed or discouraged, we will focus anew on God and suddenly experience freedom and even joy.

Thinking about God’s Word, Johnson realized He promised “wealth untold.” No matter what we face, we must “not be discouraged” but remember that “God is over all,” sovereign.

Stop for a moment to count *your* blessings. Put aside questions and problems. Start naming His blessings one by one. Thank Him for what He *already* has done! Ask Him to change your heart and give you an attitude of expectation.

List as many blessings as you can think of.

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## Who Is Jesus to You?

BIBLE READING: EPHESIANS 1

Paul began his letter to the Ephesian church by focusing on the unique role Jesus played for Christians. Some might have thought that He was a philosopher like Plato or Aristotle. Perhaps He was a wise teacher or a political activist seeking converts to enforce His agenda. But Jesus is much more.

Through Him we have “*every spiritual blessing.*” God “*chose us in Him before the foundation of the world.*” Paul wanted Christians to know that their lives have a *purpose* because of Jesus, and He had a special calling for each believer. They were in the world and surrounded by people with many beliefs and personalities, but God desired that they live holy lives and be without blame before Him.

As believers throughout the centuries have discovered, Jesus changes *everything!* No matter what we have done, God will forgive and accept us! He is central to all life. He holds all creation together. We find meaning, purpose, and fulfillment when we base our lives on Him. Through Jesus, God provides us with an inheritance. He is our example and model.

Who is Jesus to you? A wise teacher? A prophet? A good man? Or is He your Lord and Savior? Dedicate your life to Him and spend time reading His Word. Fellowship with Him. Listen to His voice. Seek to serve Him with all your time, talents, and treasures.

Think about who Jesus is to you and how your life reflects that truth.

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*God...has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.*

Ephesians 1:3–4

### PRAYER:

Father, thank You for sending Jesus into this world. I declare He is my Lord. I dedicate myself to spreading the Gospel. In Jesus’ name, amen.

*Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God.*

Romans 8:38–39 NASB

### PRAYER:

Father, thank You for loving me. Help me share that love with others. Take away my burdens. Help me rest in You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Are you living as the beloved of God?

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## Love That Won't Let Go

BIBLE READING: ROMANS 8

Born with poor eyesight in Scotland in March 1842, George Matheson's vision deteriorated throughout his life. But he didn't let that disability keep him from serving God. As a pastor, he memorized entire sections of the Bible and delivered his sermons with such authority that many were not aware he was almost blind.

Then something *amazing* happened to him on this day in 1882. He was alone in his church when he felt God speaking to him. Words came flooding into his heart. He quickly wrote the words, and "the whole work was completed in five minutes." He later described how the words seemed to be dictated to him "by some inward voice."

This poem eventually became a popular hymn, "O Love that Wilt Not Let Me Go." God had given him a *message about love*. He felt the message was important, and he never felt the need to edit the text.

Because of God's love, we can rest our "weary souls" in Him. We can experience His "ocean depths" of blessing and, as a result, our lives will be richer and fuller. Matheson wrote about the joy that sought him through pain and light that followed him all his life. How could he not respond to love like this?

Remember that God loves *you* no matter what you have done. You can trust Him. Let Him use you to spread His supernatural love to others.

## The Sweet By and By

BIBLE READING: JOHN 14

Joseph Webster had a peculiar temperament. Although a committed Christian, he could be subject to depression. One day he seemed particularly moody when he visited Stewart Bennett's drugstore. When Bennett asked what the problem was, Webster responded, "It's no matter. It will be all right by and by."

Bennett recognized the spiritual insight of this comment. Working together, the two men collaborated on a hymn that soon gained popularity worldwide, "The Sweet By and By."

Thinking about the destiny of believers, they described "a land that is fairer than day." It's a land we can see by faith. It is a place God has prepared for us, and we will "meet on that beautiful shore."

Our life in eternity will be filled with joy. We will sing "the melodious songs of the blest." There will be no sorrow. Instead, our time will be filled with praise. We will give gratitude to the Father "for the glorious gift of His love and the blessings that hallow our days."

This hymn reminds us that Jesus promised to prepare a place for us. We may endure temporary problems here but will spend eternity with Him. We will have perspective on all the things we have gone through.

Remember that God has an eternal view of everything in the world and your life. Remember that Jesus has prepared a place for you. You can trust your life to Him.

How can you remind yourself of the eternal perspective?

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*In My Father's house are many mansions...I go to prepare a place for you...if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*

John 14:2–3

### PRAYER:

Father, I trust my life to You. Thank You for working everything out. In Jesus' name, amen.

*You were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.*

Ephesians 1:13–14

### PRAYER:

Father, thank You for sealing me with Your Spirit. Guide me by Your Spirit. Give me sensitivity to the Spirit. In Jesus' name, amen.

Write a prayer asking the Holy Spirit to reveal Himself to you.

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## Sealed by the Spirit

BIBLE READING: EPHESIANS 1

When Paul began his three years in Ephesus, the first issue he dealt with was the Holy Spirit: “*Finding some disciples he said to them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’*” (Acts 19:1–2).

He taught them the difference between John’s baptism and being “*baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*” After he laid hands on them, “*the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied*” (Acts 19:5–6).

Paul wanted them not just to know about the Holy Spirit but also to learn to draw on the presence of the Spirit in their lives. To understand the role of the Spirit, Paul mentioned the Spirit 11 separate times in his letter to the Ephesians.

Among the insights Paul taught, he wanted believers to realize they “*were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.*” The Spirit seals us in the same way a stone seals a tomb. This means that we are *secure and safe, hidden and protected*. Further, the Holy Spirit is “*the guarantee of our inheritance.*”

Remember that the Spirit is with you to guide you, give you wisdom, warn you of danger, and provide the power you need. Do not trust in your own strength but be filled with His Spirit. Call on Him. Listen for His voice. Become sensitive to His presence. You can depend on Him. He is with you, right now.

## Resurrection Power

BIBLE READING: EPHESIANS 1

Many people consider Christianity to be just a religion filled with rules. And many consider Jesus to be just a wise teacher. But Paul knew that the dimensions of the Gospel cannot be grasped by our human minds. They require a *revelation* from God.

Paul prayed for this kind of revelation for believers in Ephesus. He prayed they would have the spiritual understanding to realize that the Gospel is about the *riches* of God and a power of *surpassing greatness* that is available to *all* who believe.

Paul wanted them to grasp the *transformation* that took place when the Father raised Jesus “*from the dead and seated Him at His right hand.*” There, Jesus is “*far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named.*” He is above *everything* and everyone (vs. 20–21).

Many Christians go through life without ever experiencing the depths of these truths. They are satisfied with a mediocre faith and allow their lives to be dominated by trivial concerns. But Paul would want us to realize the *greatness* of God’s desire for us. Just think—Incredible power! Authority! Riches! Hope!—all available to us, right now *if we believe*.

Do not be content with less than God’s best for you. Ask Him to give you a fresh revelation to help you grasp the full dimension of His resurrection power. Ask Him to unleash His power in your life.

Write a prayer asking God to reveal the glorious power of His riches to you.

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*I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know... the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.*

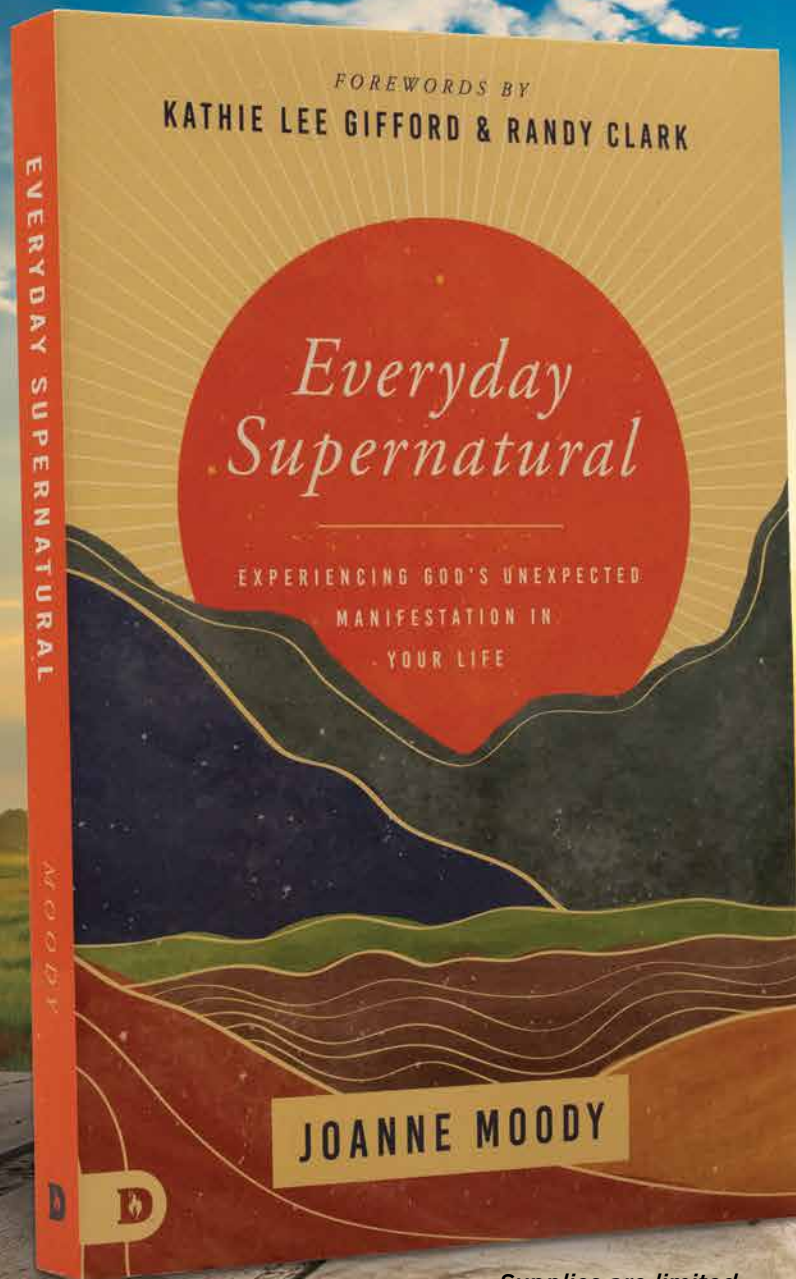
Ephesians 1:18–19 NASB

### PRAYER:

Father, help me know the hope to which You have called me. Release Your power in me. I want Your fullness! Thank You. In Jesus' name, amen.



# What if Every Day Could be SUPERNATURAL?



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*You were dead in your offenses and sins... you previously walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.*

Ephesians 2:1–2 NASB

### PRAYER:

Father, help me walk according to Your Spirit and Word. Grant me the power to be victorious over the enemy. Thank You for victory! In Jesus' name, amen.

How can you ensure that you aren't fooled by the schemes of the evil one?

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## The Power of the Air

BIBLE READING: EPHESIANS 2

Our perspective changes when we realize that the devil is *“the prince of the power of the air.”* This means he rules a real kingdom and his evil forces exercise power and influence.

His domain is *“the air.”* He works in the atmosphere. His ideas flow in conversations. He influences the images projected in the media. He uses television, the internet, cell phones, and social media.

As Paul wrote, the devil's spirit is *“working in the sons of disobedience.”* People can find themselves under this influence without even knowing it. When they are disobedient, they can become vulnerable, available for his manipulation, shaping *how* they think and what they believe.

We must be careful about what we allow into our minds through what we watch, what we listen to, and what we think about.

Satan's kingdom has limits, and he can be defeated. But we must not be *“ignorant of his schemes”* (2 Corinthians 2:11). We must understand his strategies and how he attacks us. We need to fill our minds with God's Word and be people of prayer. We must be sensitive to the leading of the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, and be careful of what we see and to whom we listen.

Ask God to help you stay alert to this prince. Be filled with the Spirit. Pray for discernment. Arm yourself with the Sword of the Spirit, God's Word. Exercise the authority He has given you.

## Saved by Grace

BIBLE READING: EPHESIANS 2

The mountain of Kailash is located north of the Himalayan passes on the storm-swept Tibetan plateau. Author Peter Hopkirk describes how this mountain is the subject of mystery and superstition. Both Buddhists and Hindus believe Kailash lies at the center of existence.

For hundreds of years, members of these religions have risked their lives to reach this remote mountain. Why? They believe going around this mountain washes away their sins.

But just *getting* to Kailash is difficult. Many have died as a result of cold temperatures or bandits. Many have starved. Yet people still come even today. Some carry heavy rocks as an act of penance.

We may mock the extreme effort made by these pilgrims, but many Christians act in similar ways. They continue to carry burdens throughout their lives and can't seem to believe that, because of Jesus, their sins have been washed away. They cannot accept the truth that Jesus died for them and God loves them *unconditionally*.

If you are like this, the Bible has a simple message: You are saved *not* because of *anything* you do but by grace through faith. Don't continue to carry your burdens. Commit them to God. Let Him take them away. Remember, He loves you. Jesus died for you just as you are. Accept His forgiveness for *all* your sins. Accept the full salvation that is yours.

Compose a prayer giving all your burdens to Jesus.

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*God saved you by his grace when you believed...you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done... He has created us anew in Christ Jesus.*

Ephesians 2:8–10 NLT

### PRAYER:

Father, thank You that I am saved by grace through faith and that You've set me free. Help me reach others with the Gospel. In Jesus' name, amen.

*You are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens... built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.*

Ephesians 2:19–20

## Your Place in the Body

BIBLE READING: EPHESIANS 2

During Paul's initial visit to Ephesus, he spoke in their synagogue for three months. Many responded positively, but *"some stubbornly refused to believe"* (Acts 19:9 NRSV). Forced to withdraw his ministry, he continued to teach and perform miracles. Yet there were further divisions in the city (Acts 19:8–20).

Perhaps we sense the hostility he faced in his letter to the Ephesian Christians. Here he stressed Christian *unity*. No matter their background or personalities, believers were no longer strangers but fellow citizens. *United* in Christ, they were *"being built together"* into one body. *Together*, they were the *"dwelling place of God."* They were like a building in which every brick is important. Each one of them was special with a vital role to play.

The Bible describes how Jesus is the chief *cornerstone* of this body. He is the *foundation* upon which our relationship is built. He brings unity to what can be a diverse group of people. He is the Lord of every believer, holding everything together.

Through Him we *"have access by one Spirit to the Father"* (v. 18). The Spirit is at work in all of us, accomplishing His work, giving us access to the Father, and pointing us back to Jesus.

Remember that you have a special call and unique gifts and talents. Remember that the body of Christ needs you. Confirm that Jesus is your Lord. Serve Him and your other brothers and sisters.

How are you using your gifts and talents to serve others and glorify God?

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## Deep Love

BIBLE READING: EPHESIANS 3

Samuel Francis struggled to find meaning. Born in 1834 near London, England, he grew up in a Christian home and was taught biblical truths. Yet he still had questions.

One day while in London as he crossed Hungerford Bridge, he felt challenged by this thought: "Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?" Pausing to consider this question, he responded, "I do believe." At that moment, he knew his life had changed. He had been born again.

The impact was so revolutionary that he dedicated his life to proclaiming the Gospel. He became an open-air preacher and joined the evangelistic outreaches of Dwight Moody, often leading singing for Moody's meetings.

Drawing on his experiences, in 1875 he drafted a poem titled "Oh, the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus." This poem has been adapted into a moving hymn. Through his experience, he knew Jesus' love was unlike normal human love. It was "vast, unmeasured, boundless, free! Rolling as a mighty ocean." It was a love that was "all around."

Francis was amazed that this love *never* changed. It was like "an ocean vast of blessing," giving rest to believers and lifting us into His presence.

We can easily become busy, wrapped up in daily problems or even religious activities. It is important to *remember* the love of Jesus, love Him, revel in His love, and share that love with others.

Write a love letter to Jesus, expressing your love for Him.

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*That He would grant you [...] to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled to all the fullness of God.*

Ephesians 3:16, 19 NASB

### PRAYER:

Dear Lord Jesus, thank You for loving me. I love You. Open doors that I might tell others this Good News. In Your name, amen.



*May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.*

Ephesians 3:19 NLT

### PRAYER:

Father, thank You for all You have prepared for me. I believe You for an outpouring of abundance. I will not limit You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Compose a prayer asking God to show you the glory of His bounty.

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## Overflowing Abundance

BIBLE READING: EPHESIANS 3

Paul had experienced the power of God and realized that *“eye has not seen, nor ear heard...the things which God has prepared for those who love Him”* (1 Corinthians 2:9 NKJV). He also knew many believers were content with *less* than all God has prepared for them, and God was ready to bless them with *more!*

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul prayed that believers would *“be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God”* (NIV). He wanted them to realize *God has a fullness, an abundance, a deep reservoir of riches* available for them. This fullness was so massive that it was *humanly impossible to grasp*.

To receive this fullness, we need to seek Him anew. We need to be filled with His Spirit and ask God to open our minds, hearts, and lives. We need to live with expectant faith and plant seeds with our time, talents, and resources.

Think about this fullness. Realize that God has prepared more blessings for you than you could imagine—blessings for your family and finances, your relationships and health.

Don't limit God or be content with a small portion of His blessings. Ask Him to give you a vision of His greatness and help you experience *more* of His blessings. Ask Him to reveal the *vastness* of His bounty and the *riches* He already has prepared for you.

## Choosing Freedom

BIBLE READING: ROMANS 8

The Magna Carta changed history. This document was signed on this day in 1215 by King John of England.

Like kings before him, John used English men and money to defend conquered territories. But by 1204, he had lost possessions the English controlled in France. To win back those territories, John tried to collect more money and increase military service. But many English barons revolted, and a civil war erupted.

In 1215, the two sides began to negotiate. The Magna Carta (Great Charter) was the result of these discussions.

In this document, John promised important freedoms and rights and limited the power of the monarchy. Many English legal traditions had their origins in the Magna Carta, including the right to trial by jury and equal access to courts for all citizens. These protections were later incorporated into the United States Constitution.

This pioneering document was inspired when the people of England realized that they had choices: They could remain in bondage or demand freedom.

There are parallels in the spiritual world. The Bible tells us that God has given us many choices. We can choose to be in bondage to sin, the flesh, and the world. Or we can accept the freedom He offers when we serve Him.

Remember you are God's child. You can cry out to Him as your Father and talk honestly to Him. Tell Him your burdens and cares. Accept the freedom He offers.

Reflect on the freedom you have in Christ.

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*You did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption...we cry out, “Abba, Father”...we are children of God, and if children, then heirs— heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.*

Romans 8:15–17

### PRAYER:

Father, thank You that I am Your child and a joint heir with Christ. I am free and no longer in bondage. Hallelujah! In Jesus' name, amen.

*Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us.*

Ephesians 3:20 NASB

### PRAYER:

Father, I pray the eyes of my heart would be enlightened, so I would know the boundless greatness of Your power. I believe! In Jesus' name, amen.

Recall a time when God did abundantly more than you imagined.

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## Another Dimension

BIBLE READING: EPHESIANS 3

During the three years he spent in Ephesus, Paul taught the believers there many basic truths (Acts 20:31). Yet the letter he wrote to them is filled with reminders of a *deeper dimension*.

Regardless of what they knew, there was much *more* to learn. Regardless of how much they understood, there was much *more* to understand. Regardless of what they had experienced of God's power, much *more* was available.

They might have thought they could imagine great things, but no matter what they had asked in prayer, it was *not big enough*. They were not *daring* enough. God was "*able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think*."

They might have thought these dimensions were possible only for great leaders like Paul, but he reminded them this power was available to *everyone*.

This theme continued throughout his letter. Paul had prayed they would experience "*the boundless greatness of His power toward us who believe*." He wanted them to realize this was true for *all* believers (Ephesians 1:15-23).

No matter what we have experienced, we have only *scratched the surface* of all God can do. There is much *more* to learn. We must shatter every limit we have imposed on Him, for He can do much *more* than we can imagine.

Pray that God would open *your* eyes so that you might be able to go *deeper* into new dimensions.

## Unity Among Believers

BIBLE READING: EPHESIANS 4

Differences among believers are inevitable (Romans 14:5-6). After all, we are a collection of people with unique backgrounds and experiences, different personalities and interests, different gifts and talents.

But the Bible reminds us that our goal should be to maintain the *unity* of the Spirit. This was the focus of Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Something that required effort and needed "*endeavoring*," this unity is preserved through "*the bond of peace*." Our unity is impossible without this commitment.

Paul named seven ways in which we are joined together in unity. First, all believers belong to the same body, with Jesus as the head (Ephesians 1:22). He is our Lord. Though there are gifts and manifestations of the Spirit, there is only one Spirit. He is not limited but sovereignly works in the lives of men and women.

There are many ways to express the hope we have as believers, but ultimately there is one hope for everyone. There is one faith and one baptism, one way to confirm our membership in the body. We all are saved by grace through faith. We all are called to submit ourselves to Christ. His work alone saved us. His blood alone cleanses us. Apart from Him, we are lost. Finally, there is one God. He is our Father, our Creator.

Ask God to help you be an instrument of unity among believers and an instrument of His peace.

How can you help heal divisions in the body of Christ?

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*Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace... one body... one Spirit... one hope... one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

Ephesians 4:3-6

### PRAYER:

Father, help me be an instrument of Your peace. Use me to heal divisions in the body. In Jesus' name, amen.

*Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.*

Ephesians 6:4

## Importance of Fathers

BIBLE READING: EPHESIANS 6

The Bible gives fathers the responsibility to raise their children *“in the training and admonition of the Lord.”* Statistics tell the sad story that many fathers fail to fulfill this role.

Millions of men have divorced their wives or fathered children out of wedlock. According to the US Census Bureau, more than 18 million children in the United States live without a biological, step, or adoptive father in the home.

Many fathers are not involved in their children’s lives. It has been reported that, on average, fathers spend less than 30 minutes one-on-one with their children. More than 40% of fathers never read to their children.

The absence of fathers in the home has a widespread impact. Children who grow up without fathers are more likely to fall short of their potential. Fathers are important in setting the moral tone and the standards of behavior for children.

Teenage girls say their fathers influence their decisions about sex. Children in single-parent families are more likely to get pregnant as teenagers. And fatherless children have a greater risk of drug and alcohol abuse.

More than ever, our families need godly fathers. If you are a father, ask God to help you to fulfill your God-given role. Seek to raise your children *“in the training and admonition of the Lord.”* If you have a father or grandfather who is alive, pray for them. Encourage them. Support them.

Write to thank God for being your Heavenly Father.

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## How We Walk

BIBLE READING: EPHESIANS 4

The Bible says people who do not know God walk *“in the futility of their mind.”* They don’t realize it, but their thoughts often are futile. Their minds are filled with things that are empty and don’t edify.

They are *“alienated from the life of God”* and cannot have intimate fellowship with Him. They are ignorant and do not realize the impact of what they do. Since they do not know God, they are spiritually blind.

They are so insensitive that they find themselves violating God’s laws without regret. They can act without restraint, doing things without shame or regard for morality, unconcerned about eternal consequences. They can become greedy and develop impure motives.

Christians should be different. But Paul warned that if we are not careful, we can find ourselves adopting the ways of the world. Our minds can become clouded with futile thoughts, imitating the habits and patterns of people around us.

Paul taught that we need to put off the *“old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.”* Rather, we are to *“be renewed in the spirit of your mind”* and *“put on the new man,”* always remembering that we find truth, not in this world but *“in Jesus”* (vs. 20–24).

Don’t walk in the ways of the world. Avoid the futility in which so many live. Fill your mind with God’s Word. Ask Him to renew you with His Spirit.

How has your spiritual walk been lately?

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*No longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them...the blindness of their heart.*

Ephesians 4:17–18

### PRAYER:

Father, I submit my thoughts to You. Cleanse me of anything that doesn’t please You. Help me be more sensitive to Your Spirit. In Jesus’ name, amen.



*The sheep listen to his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name [...] I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep [...] I know My own, and My own know Me.*

John 10:3, 11, 14 NASB

## Our Shepherd's Favor

BIBLE READING: JOHN 10

Dorothy Thrupp was born in England on this day in June 1779. Although the composer of many hymns, she normally used pseudonyms, letting her words speak for themselves. Demonstrating this concern, when she edited *Hymns for the Young*, all the music was given anonymously.

From the testimony of her hymns, we know that she realized how much she needed Jesus and what a personal relationship with Him meant to her.

In 1836, she wrote words that became a hymn that expressed the blessing it was that Jesus was her Savior and her shepherd. Called “Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us,” this hymn revels in the comfort of knowing the “tender care” Jesus provides. He will feed us in His “pleasant pastures” and has prepared blessings for us.

Through Jesus, we can *experience favor*. We can turn to Him, even though we are “poor and sinful.” Because of His mercy, He will “relieve us.” Through His grace, we can be cleansed and free.

He is “the guardian of our way.” He will keep and defend us and “seek us when we go astray.” How *wonderful* to know we belong to Him. We can be confident He hears us when we pray. “Blessèd Jesus,” she prayed, “Thou hast loved us, love us still.”

Remember that Jesus is *your* Shepherd. He is watching over you to protect and bless and grant you His favor.

Write a prayer thanking Jesus for guiding you through life.

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## Giving Place

BIBLE READING: EPHESIANS 4

Paul warned us not to give “*place*” to the devil. The Greek word here indicates a location that has been separated and marked off. The word topography, the study of the land surface, is derived from this word. It’s the graphic delineation in detail on maps, showing relative positions and elevations.

It can help to think of our lives as being like a territory we control. Like a nation, our territory has borders, and we have the authority and power to determine whom we will allow into that territory! A prudent nation guards those borders. Great confusion and danger are possible when defenses are weak or inadequate. The nation is most secure when the borders are strong and patrolled.

Just like a nation, we can determine who or what we will allow to have a place in our hearts and minds—what ideas, what emotions, and what attitudes. Tragically, many Christians actually “*give place to the devil*.” They allow him and his ideas entry into their hearts and minds.

Notice that this is something we “*give*.” This act is our choice. The devil can only have entry into our lives if we allow him to enter! To be freed of his influence, we must be vigilant, on guard, and stop him before he enters our lives!

Be careful what you allow in the territory of your heart and mind—what ideas, what influences, what people.

Where have you recently given place to the devil—even inadvertently?

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*Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil.*

Ephesians 4:26–27

### PRAYER:

Father, give me discernment in what I am allowing into my mind and heart. In Jesus’ name, amen.

*All bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and slander must be removed from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.*

Ephesians 4:31–32 NASB

### PRAYER:

Father, forgive me of pride. Fill me with Your Spirit. Help me be kind and show Your love in my relationships with others. In Jesus' name, amen.

Who do you need to forgive right now?

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## Kind, Compassionate

BIBLE READING: EPHESIANS 4

In the last half of his letter to the Ephesians, Paul turned to practical matters focusing on how believers lived. As followers of Jesus, they were to be different than the world around them. Following Jesus should make a difference that others can see.

But Paul wanted them to realize many were still acting as if *nothing* had changed. Some even had returned to their former lifestyles.

He warned about the destructive influence of attitudes like bitterness and anger. These needed to “*be removed*” and eliminated from their lives. They also needed to purge offensive words from their vocabulary and avoid using language that wounded others.

Paul provided principles to guide them in these relationships. First, they were to be “*kind*.” The Greek word came from a root that means to receive a loan or borrow. This meant remembering that all their resources, all their abilities, and *everything* they had was theirs on *loan*.

They also were to be *compassionate*, to *care* about others. They were to forgive others just as God had forgiven them. In all things, they needed to be careful not to be self-centered or dominated by pride or just think only about themselves. Instead, they were to *stay humble* and remember God’s mercy, favor, and forgiveness.

Ask God to help *you* to be kind and compassionate, a forgiving person, humble and surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

## Fill Me Now

BIBLE READING: EPHESIANS 5

For Jesus’ disciples, the Holy Spirit changed everything. Waiting in the Upper Room, weak and uncertain, “*they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with different tongues, as the Spirit was giving them the ability to speak out*” (Acts 2:4). Suddenly, God’s power flowed in their lives. Their weakness was replaced with supernatural strength and boldness.

The Spirit changed the apostle Paul when Ananias laid hands on him and told him he was to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17). Initially he may not have known what that meant, but he was to discover that all believers need the Spirit and should be “*filled with the Holy Spirit*.”

This message gripped the heart of Elwood Haines Stokes, who wrote a hymn called “Fill Me Now.” In the form of a prayer, Stokes asked Jesus to “fill me with Thy hallowed presence.”

His prayer was that the Spirit would “bathe my trembling heart and brow,” and that he would be filled with His presence. Stokes did not understand how this happened but knew that he needed the Spirit. He cried out for the Spirit to “cleanse and comfort” him, bless and save him.

Remember your flesh is weak, but the Spirit is willing (Matthew 26:41). He can do amazing things if you wait on Him. Seek to be filled with the Spirit, to live in the Spirit, and to be controlled and empowered by the Spirit.

Write a prayer asking the Holy Spirit for a fresh filling of His power.

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*Do not get drunk with wine, in which there is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.*

Ephesians 5:18 NASB

### PRAYER:

Dear Lord Jesus, I need Your Spirit in my life. Fill me with Your Spirit. Overwhelm me with Your presence. In Your name, amen.

*Obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear. Serve them sincerely... Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you... Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.*

Ephesians 6:5–7 NLT

### PRAYER:

Father, I commit these people to You: \_\_\_\_\_. Give me an attitude toward them that pleases You. In Jesus' name, amen.

How can you cultivate a godly attitude in your workplace?

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## Our Labor

BIBLE READING: EPHESIANS 6

Am I being treated fairly? Am I being paid enough? Am I overworked? Do I get the credit I deserve? Workers in every kind of job ask these questions. Concerns like these seem natural, but the Bible urges us to have a *different* perspective.

The context is Paul's letter to believers in Ephesus. They lived in the Roman culture, where slavery was *normal*. Paul wanted Christians to know the *right attitude* toward work and life and the way God wanted them to approach their relationships with others.

We are to approach our labor from a *spiritual* dimension, working "*with enthusiasm*," always seeking to do "*the will of God with all your heart*," and doing our best even if no one notices.

Some workers resent or dislike their supervisors or employers. But Paul said that we should *respect* them and seek to *please* them all the time. We should work with *sincerity* that comes from our hearts without any *ulterior* motives. We are to approach supervisors in the same way we approach God, with humility, remembering that He knows our hearts.

In all our relationships, Christians should be *different*, for we are God's *witnesses* and ambassadors (v. 20). Our goal should be to serve God, to please Him and do *His* will, and to be good examples.

What is *your* attitude toward others? Your church? Your pastor? Your family? Fellow workers? Your life?

## Familiar

BIBLE READING: EPHESIANS 6

Even the most successful musicians can take their skills for granted. They can let down their guard and rest on past accomplishments, not putting in maximum effort. This attitude can lead to carelessness, mistakes, and sloppy performances.

One respected orchestra conductor recognized the devastating consequences of this attitude by insisting on adequate rehearsal time, particularly for pieces that orchestras knew best. It was his responsibility to keep them from being half-hearted and making a marginal effort. He endeavored to get the most out of his musicians and draw out the best performances.

This is why so many great musicians practice relentlessly, reviewing and studying pieces they have played before, approaching each performance as if playing a piece for the first time.

These patterns can be true in our spiritual lives. Having achieved victory, how easily we can relax and become vulnerable. To stay victorious, we need to stay "*strong in the Lord*" and put on "*the whole armor of God*."

This means being prepared *every* day: praying and putting on God's armor; studying the Bible every day; always being equipped with "*the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*"; daily seeking the strength and anointing of the Spirit; and daily exercising the authority God has given you (vs. 10–18).

Stay vigilant. Don't let down your guard. Ask God to help you be armed and ready, today and every day.

Which piece of the armor of God do you especially need today?

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*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.*

Ephesians 6:10–11 ESV

### PRAYER:

Father, thank You for equipping me for battle. Thank You for victory. In Jesus' name, amen.



*Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God.*

Ephesians 6:12–13 NASB

### PRAYER:

Father, help me to be ready for the attacks of the enemy. Thank You for victory. I trust You. In Jesus' name, amen.

How can you reinforce your vulnerable places against attacks from Satan?

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## Strategy for Success

BIBLE READING: EPHESIANS 6

Paul used military terms to describe the Christian life. He knew we are engaged in a *real war* with serious consequences. Paul also described how to be prepared for this conflict if we want to be victorious.

Clearly there are parallels between spiritual warfare and military conflicts. Studying military history, Bevin Alexander discovered that great generals tend to *avoid direct attacks*. Instead, they were successful in attacking the enemy's *flank* or *rear*. These kinds of attacks *distract* an enemy and cut them off from their supplies and reinforcements. They lose their "confidence and sense of security."

Like one of these generals, Satan looks to attack us where we are *vulnerable*, where our defenses are *weak*, and where we are least *prepared*.

To be victorious, we must remember that Satan is a master of *deception* and the "father of lies" (John 8:44). He can attack our minds and emotions and even disguise himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). He can appear harmless and innocent, trustworthy and admirable. But he is constantly plotting destruction and defeat.

Make sure you are *prepared*. Follow Paul's warnings. Seek to speak the truth and do what is right. Always stand firm, and never give in to compromise. Seek to be a witness for the Gospel and an apostle of peace. Remember the power of faith and how it can function as a shield. Remember to be guided by God's Word.

## How We Stand

BIBLE READING: EPHESIANS 6

Paul wanted the Ephesians to recognize that we are in a spiritual battle. To win, we need to *stand*. But what does this mean? It means taking up "*the whole armor of God*." Spiritually, we're to have lives free of dishonesty and be committed to the truth. We're to have feet shod "*with the preparation of the gospel of peace*," being careful where we go.

We can't be spiritually lazy but always remember the devil has crafty methods and strategies. This is why we must act daily and be on guard continually. We cannot defend ourselves by our good works but by a shield of faith. We need to protect our minds and be careful what we read, see, think about, and listen to.

We should be ready to go on the offensive with the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. We need to be people of prayer, constantly in tune with the Father.

The key is to be sure that we have "*done all*"—that we are prepared and ready. If we have "*done all*," then we will be able to stand, commit the results to God, and trust Him. Put aside doubt and worry, fear and anxiety; be at peace, knowing we can trust Him.

How confident are you? Are you ready for battle? Make sure you have done all. Trust God and stand firm.

Are you armored up and ready for a spiritual battle today?

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*Take up the whole armor of God...Stand therefore...having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace...taking the shield of faith... the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

Ephesians 6:13–17

### PRAYER:

Father, help me be ready for spiritual battles. Help me to be armed and ready. I trust in You. In Jesus' name, amen.

*Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.*

Ephesians 6:24 NIV

## More Love

BIBLE READING: EPHESIANS 6

The daughter of a pastor, Elizabeth Prentiss became a published writer while a teenager and wrote many documents to help young people. As a teacher, she developed a deep concern for the spiritual well-being of her students and felt personal joy whenever she led one of them to Christ.

But no one would have been surprised if Elizabeth had become bitter. Born in Maine in 1818, she suffered frequent health issues throughout her life. While trying to present herself positively, privately she continued to struggle with what she called a “morbidly sensitive, melancholy temperament.” Yet she found strength and meaning in her relationship with Jesus.

In 1856 during a time of grief when she had just lost two of her children, she authored a poem called, “More Love to Thee.” This was the song of her heart: “More love to Thee, O Christ.” This was her prayer “on bended knee.” It was her “earnest plea.”

She described how she once craved “earthly joy” but discovered *everything* she needed in Christ: “Now Thee alone I seek, give what is best.” Her circumstances didn’t seem so important. She developed a real love to be in His presence.

Years later, she published the poem, and when composer Howard Doane read her words, he was inspired to compose accompanying music. Through the resulting hymn, her message has impacted people worldwide.

May this be the cry of your heart: more love to Jesus.

What can you do to show how much you love Jesus today?

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## Partner in the Gospel

BIBLE READING: PHILIPPIANS 1

Paul realized that spreading the Gospel was a *team* effort. He may have had the greatest visibility, but he knew his ministry would not have been possible without the *partnership* of people like the Philippian Christians.

Writing from prison in Rome, Paul recalled with joy how these Philippians had been “*my partners in spreading the Good News.*” How did they participate? One important way was through financial gifts. These made it possible for Paul to take the Gospel throughout the world.

He wrote, “*even when I was in Thessalonica you sent help more than once.*” This required *personal sacrifices*, but their gift was a sacrifice “*acceptable and pleasing to God.*” Because of their sacrifices, Paul stressed that God would bless them. They could be sure that He would supply all their needs (Philippians 4:16–19).

This same principle is true today. The burden of spreading the Gospel should be shared by the entire body of Christ. When we give to a ministry, we are partners in that ministry. We *share* in the *fellowship* of God’s call. We may not attract attention, but without the sacrificial gifts of individual Christians, the work of ministry could not take place.

Ask God to help you partner in the Gospel. You may be called to go or to give. But always focus on serving God. As He directs, give sacrificially, trusting Him to meet all your needs.

How is God asking you to give sacrificially toward the building of His Kingdom?

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*Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ.*

Philippians 1:3–5 NLT

### PRAYER:

Father, I commit my time, talents, and treasures to You. Use me to advance Your Kingdom so that others might be saved. In Jesus’ name, amen.

FRIDAY  
June  
30

*My circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known... the brothers and sisters... have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.*

Philippians 1:12-14 NASB

### PRAYER:

Father, I commit my life to You. Use me to spread the Gospel. Help me be a bold witness. In Jesus' name, amen.

How can you emulate Paul and encourage others?

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## A Bold Example

BIBLE READING: PHILIPPIANS 1

As a prisoner in Rome, Paul had every reason to be afraid and discouraged or to assume his ministry had ended. But he discovered his life still had an enormous impact even in prison.

He had the opportunity to write letters and help churches throughout the Roman world. He had a powerful influence on people around him that led to *“the greater progress of the gospel.”* His testimony became well-known throughout the Roman government. Throughout his life, the Gospel was spread to new places.

He also encouraged other Christians. Seeing his example, they became bolder, willing to witness for their faith.

Paul knew that God had a call on his life. He had given him gifts, talents, and a message to bring to the nations. He had given him opportunities. Paul never stopped being faithful, investing in God's Kingdom, and looking for ways to bless others with the power, anointing, and resources he had been given.

Think about how you can follow Paul's example. How are you reacting to the circumstances you face? Do you feel discouraged? Afraid? Worried? God is looking for people like Paul who *always* trust in Him; who *never* stop investing their time, talents, and treasures in His Kingdom; who have faith in *every* circumstance; who are *bold* witnesses; and who *always* believe that God can use them, in any situation, no matter what the world might say.

## Is God Calling YOU?

Answer His voice today by sowing into the Kingdom!

Do you remember the story of how God called the prophet Samuel in 1 Samuel 3? When he was just a child serving in the temple in Jerusalem, God called him:

*And he answered, “Here I am!” So he ran to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” And he said, “I did not call; lie down again.” And he went and lay down (vs. 4-5).*

This happened not once, not twice, but three times! Finally, Eli told Samuel that the Lord was calling him, so the third time, Samuel answered the Lord, *“Speak, for Your servant hears”* (v. 10).

Because Samuel listened, God blessed him and his ministry as a prophet and priest in Israel.

Think things like that don't happen today? Listen to what Sylvester experienced when he answered the Lord's calling:

“It is my belief that because I heard the voice of the Lord early one morning, and I arose from my sleep to give a contribution to the Inspiration Ministries, God has indeed given me an incredible harvest of blessing. This is a praise report that it is very true, that a person cannot beat God giving. For the first time in my 68 years of life, I am no longer financially stressed, and I make more now in retirement than I did the whole time that I was working.”  
—Sylvester H., VA

**Are you ready to answer God's call to sow into the Kingdom work of Inspiration Ministries?  
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# Forgiveness

The Gateway to God's Promises.

God makes many amazing promises in His Word—for believers. We have the keys to the Kingdom, and every good thing He offers is ours if we're first willing to accept His promise of forgiveness. It's the gateway for all other promises to flow into our lives.

The Word of God explains how simple it is:

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*  
(1 John 1:9).

God then throws our sins away “as far as the east is from the west” (Psalm 103:12). What an amazing cleansing of our sinful nature! But

here's the thing—we're still sinners, living in a fallen world. We will still sin until the day God takes us to Heaven. If we want to keep that amazing relationship with our Heavenly Father open and growing, we need to confess these ongoing sins as well. We need His cleansing power as part of a daily life of surrender.

David's prayer in Psalm 139:23–24 serves as an excellent role model for us to pray daily:

*Search me, O God,  
and know my heart!  
Try me and know my thoughts!  
And see if there be any grievous  
way in me, and lead me in the  
way everlasting!* (ESV).

The Bible often uses the word

repentance in discussing sin and forgiveness. It means to turn away from. That means that we can't sin and then confess with the intent to keep on committing the same sin! When we become aware of a particular sin in our lives, we need to do everything we can to avoid repeating the same mistake again.

If you feel like you've messed up so much that God couldn't possibly forgive you again, read Psalm 51, which David penned after sleeping with Bathsheba and then killing her husband to cover up his own sin.

So then, what impact should God's forgiveness have on our own lives? We should be eager to extend forgiveness to others who have hurt us. As Jesus reminds us:

*Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven*  
(Luke 6:37 ESV).

The iconic Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6 makes clear that we need forgiveness daily just like we need food daily!

Have you opened your heart to receive the promise of God's forgiveness? Are you praying daily for God to show you your ongoing failures, so you can confess them as well?

Meditate on these verses about forgiveness, and let us know how they change your heart! ❖

## Week One

*“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.”*

Romans 4:7 ESV

## Week Two

*“Have mercy on me, O God... according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.  
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!”*

Psalm 51:1-2 ESV

## Week Three

*“Our Father in heaven [...] Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”*

Matthew 6:9–13 ESV

## Week Four

*“If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”*

Matthew 6:14–15 ESV



# Fall in LOVE with JESUS

by Ben Cerullo

Jesus is the Lover of our souls, and He wants us to respond to that love by cultivating an intimate relationship with Him. We're promised that He will draw near to us when we make a commitment to draw near to Him (James 4:8).

Although there's no formula for having this kind of intimate, personal relationship with Jesus, the Bible gives us patterns and examples to follow:

**1. Regularly enter God's presence.** Just as with any relationship, you must spend time with the Lord and draw close to Him. The Bible explains how to do this: *"Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name"* (Psalm 100:4 NIV). Make this a daily habit!

**2. Develop a heart of devotion.** God-honoring, Spirit-led worship always involves expressions of gratitude, awe, and devotion. Like the angels in Heaven, true worshipers will have lives that declare, *"You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power"* (Revelation 4:11).

**3. Honor the Lord 24/7.** For many people, worship is confined to singing during a church service. But it's meant to be SO much more. The Bible tells us, *"Whatever you do, do ALL to the glory of God"* (1 Corinthians 10:31). This means our love for Jesus should be expressed through our entire lives: home, work, church, friends, and community.

**4. Hang out with others who are passionate for Jesus.** It's important to fellowship with people who share our love for the Lord. Jesus promised us, *"Where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them"* (Matthew 18:20). Do you have fellow believers in your life to spur you on to greater affection for the Lover of your soul? That's a vital ingredient for your spiritual growth and effectiveness.

My friend, I pray that you are enjoying a close personal relationship with Jesus today. Remember that He passionately loves you—shown by His death on the cross. Take time today to seek His face and cultivate a passionate love for Him as well. ❖



# A Merry Heart...

does good, like medicine. – Proverbs 17:22

## THE THINGS KIDS SAY!

When my daughter was about four, I overheard her talking to her younger sister, but she kept saying a word before "Jesus" that I couldn't figure out. Finally I asked her, and she said, "Jesus!" I replied, "I know, but what are you saying before Jesus?" She said, "George Jesus, His name." After I stopped laughing, I explained that people say Lord Jesus to honor Him, and His first name is not, in fact, George.

Thank you, Ann K.

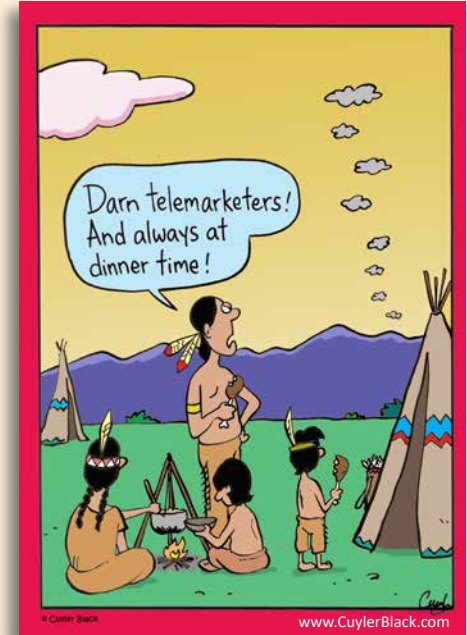
One Sunday morning during the sermon as the pastor asked the congregation to turn to a chapter in the book of Jeremiah, a boy called out, "Jeremiah was a bullfrog"! His embarrassed parents were obviously 70s rock fans.

Thank you, Roberta M.

Got some clean, Christian humor you'd like to share?

Email it to:

[MerryHeart@inspiration.org](mailto:MerryHeart@inspiration.org)

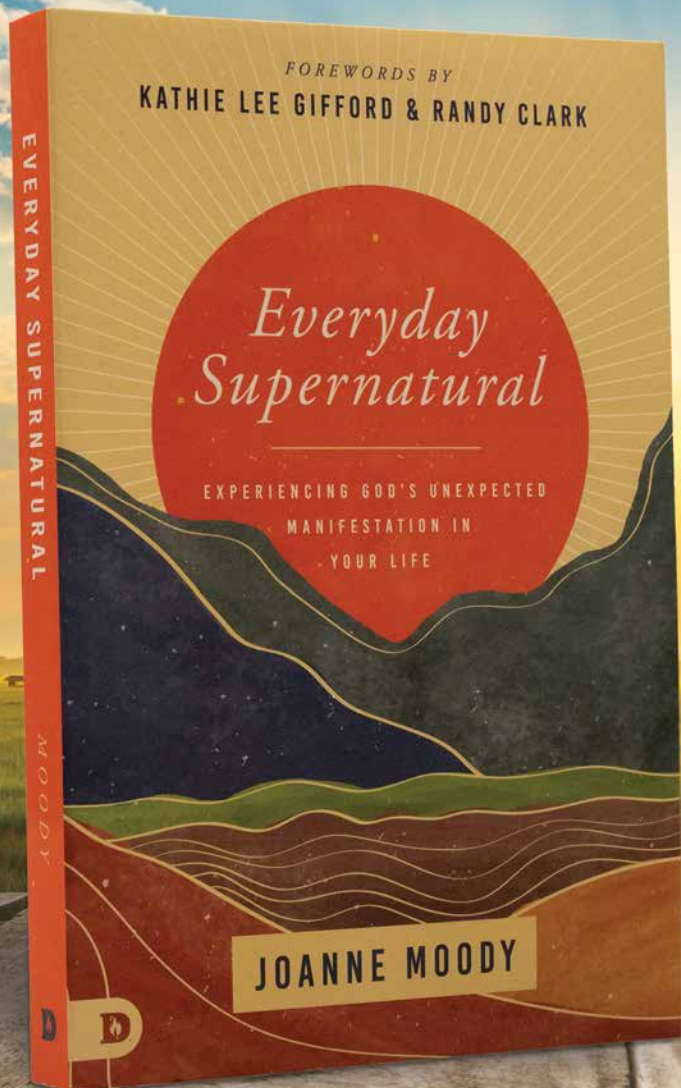


# Experience More of God!

Do you want a deeper relationship with God? Do you want to experience the supernatural? Do you want an adventure on your Kingdom journey?

Then you need to request your THANK YOU GIFT right away!

In *Everyday Supernatural: Experiencing God's Unexpected Manifestation in Your Life*, author Joanne Moody unleashes the power and intimacy of the Holy Spirit like never before.



See page 28 for details, and act quickly—supplies are limited!