

# ReAwakening



## THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

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Bladensburg, MD

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## The Power of the Gospel

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# 1

## **Your Eternal Identity**

Have you ever wanted your life to count for something? If you had only one day left to live, what would you do? Everyone is motivated by something. Life is a precious gift, but if you were standing at death's door right now, would you be able to define why you lived your life the way you did? Was it because of family? Money? Fame? Take as much time as you need to answer that question, because what motivates your life determines your destiny.

How will your children remember you? How will anyone remember you? Will anyone remember you at all? What will your epitaph read? Ponder those questions for a moment and write down how you want the world to remember you. You can even go a step further and write what you would want people to hear in your obituary. The legacy you leave will impact your eternity.

The biggest factor in determining your legacy can be found in your identity, that which shapes your life, behavior, and character. I write extensively about this in my second book, *Identity Cri-*

sis. I highly recommend that book for more in-depth study. Unfortunately, most of us find our identity in our hurts, fears, and failures. Or, maybe we find our identity in bad parents, bad teachers, or bad examples. Sometimes, the worst crisis in our lives makes us create protective walls around our lives so we don't get hurt again. This is not our true identity. Crisis takes our power away. It is our kryptonite.

The greatest fear in our world today is death, and the fear of death renders us powerless. Many of us live with a great fear of death, but death helps us understand where our power lies. There are two kinds of death: physical and spiritual. We see physical death every day, not only on television programs filled with violence but also in our daily lives as the result of murder, sickness, and accidents. That is the death we fear, and it is only a temporal death. Spiritual death, on the other hand, is what we experience when we refuse to submit to the God of all creation due to our rebellious, sinful nature, which causes us to turn to the temporal things and away from the eternal things that give us the power we were created for. Spiritual death is eternal. If the world's greatest fear is temporal death, how much more should we fear eternal, spiritual death?

There is Good News (Gospel) of great joy for all the people. Death loses its power over our lives when we believe the Gospel and ReAwaken our power-filled identity. Eventually, every person will realize the world of sin we live in will never be able to provide eternal life, the true identity that God has written on the hearts of all people (Eccl. 3:11). At that point, we will turn from the temporal world

of sin that guarantees death and ReAwaken to the God who promises eternal life (Eph. 2:1-2). The bottom line is that we all have only one life to live, and when we ReAwaken to the life God created us for, we find power.

Turning from the natural life that we all have experienced and ReAwakening to the eternal life that God provides is the only way we can experience a life characterized by power, fulfillment, contentment, purpose, and meaning that extends beyond the grave. Living for this temporal life will only produce an identity characterized by a powerless life, as well as a lack of purpose and meaning. In other words, “You will never ReAwaken unless you find something worth dying for.” Living for the eternal life that God provides will give you something worth dying for and living powerfully for.

Many of us may find dying for something a difficult concept to digest. But soldiers give their lives to protect their countries every day. Servants of worldly leaders are willing to die for their kings. In his book *True Discipleship*, Christian missionary and preacher William MacDonald records a letter written by an American college student who had been converted to Communism in Mexico that demonstrates how loyal Communists are to their cause. The letter was read by Billy Graham:

*We Communists have a high casualty rate. We're the ones who get shot and hung and lynched and tarred and feathered and jailed and slandered and ridiculed and fired from our jobs, and in every other way made as uncomfortable as possible. A certain percentage of us get killed or imprisoned.*

*We live in virtual poverty. We turn back to the party every penny we make above what is absolutely necessary to keep us alive. We Communists don't have the time or the money for many movies, or concerts, or T-bone steaks, or decent homes and new cars. We've been described as fanatics. We are fanatics. Our lives are dominated by one great overshadowing factor, THE STRUGGLE FOR WORLD COMMUNISM. We Communists have a philosophy of life which no amount of money could buy. We have a cause to fight for, a definite purpose in life. We subordinate our petty, personal selves into a great movement of humanity, and if our personal lives seem hard, or our egos appear to suffer through subordination to the party, then we are adequately compensated by the thought that each of us in his small way is contributing to something new and true and better for mankind. There is one thing in which I am in dead earnest and that is the Communist cause. It is my life, my business, my religion, my hobby, my sweetheart, my wife and mistress, my bread and meat. I work at it in the daytime and dream of it at night. Its hold on me grows, not lessens as time goes on. Therefore, I cannot carry on a friendship, a love affair, or even a conversation without relating it to this force which both drives and guides my life. I evaluate people, books, ideas, and actions according to how they affect the Communist cause and by their attitude toward it. I've already been in jail because of my ideas and if necessary, I'm ready to go before a firing squad.<sup>1</sup>*

If Communists give their lives for Commu-

nism, how much more should Christians pour themselves out in complete obedience to their Lord and King? McDonald said, "Surely if the Lord Jesus is worth anything, He is worth everything." <sup>2</sup> If we as human beings are willing and able to die for something temporary, how much more should we be willing to die for something eternal?

Many of us live our lives with an incredible emptiness because we never fill that God-shaped hole in our hearts with the one thing that is worth dying for. It is a gruesome feeling, always trying to fill our God-shaped hole with sex, drugs, rock n roll, the perfect job, the perfect spouse, lots of money, and whatever we think will make us happy. When none of these things fill that God-shaped hole in our hearts, we begin sensing something is missing. A powerless life. As a result, we begin asking ourselves a very important question: "What is my purpose in this life?" We begin feeling an overwhelming sense of gloom as we try to figure it out. We continue to spin our wheels through a life of crisis, going through the same old routine day in and day out with no real power. In the meantime, that God-shaped hole is always intrinsically sensing that something is missing. I am reminded of an old song, "There is a God-shaped hole in all of us that can only be filled by You." If we don't fill our God-shaped hole with the correct identity, we will never ReAwaken to that one thing that is worth dying for.

ReAwakening your power-filled identity cannot be found in the physical world but in the spiritual world that Jesus Christ has enabled us to enter through His life, death on the cross, and resurrection. When we ReAwaken to the spiritual king-

dom, we bring the manifestation of God's kingdom power to the physical realm.

It is the only way we can impact lives and leave a lasting legacy. It is the only way we will ReAwaken our power-filled identity and discover rest for our souls. As Saint Augustine once said, "You stir man in taking pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."<sup>3</sup> ReAwakening our lives for eternity will make us people who "truly live" without fear or regret of the temporal life. When William Wallace's life was coming to an end in the movie *Braveheart*, he said, "Every man dies, but not every man truly lives."

We were created for eternity, and as we grow in that identity, we become reflections of the power of that kingdom that attracts others to want to be citizens of eternity. Our lives today should reflect that eternal home. As Maximus said in the movie *Gladiator*, "What we do in this life echoes in eternity." Receiving eternal life gives us the power to leave a lasting legacy. Will we capture that moment?

A ReAwakening can only occur by faith alone in Jesus Christ. The Bible says it is impossible to please God without faith (Heb. 11:2). If we don't believe in something, it will never happen. When I was going to seminary, I was just about ready to drop out. I went to the little chapel in the middle of the school and asked God for help. I asked God to appear to me. I thought seminary was just too hard if God is not real. As I prayed, God began to fill my mind. I realized it wouldn't be just for Him to appear to me and not to appear to those who have gone before me. It is by faith and

not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7), and more blessed are those who believe and have not seen (Jn. 20:29). This is the message I received: "How would I live my life if He did appear to me?"

How would you live your life if Jesus appeared to you? God wanted me to live my life by faith as if He had appeared to me. When we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny himself (2 Tim. 2:13). Jesus cannot deny His perfect life that He has credited to us. Jesus tells us all you need is a mustard seed of faith (Matt. 17:20). Even with my tiny mustard seed of faith, I vowed to try to live the rest of my life as if He had appeared to me. He has appeared to me every day since. Always by faith. My faith has allowed me to believe that He will, in His timing, unleash a supernatural Reawakening.

I realized I experienced a lot of miraculous things from God. I define the miraculous as something God did in my life that was amazing but technically could still be explained away as being a coincidence. But by faith, I believed it was a miracle of God. Then I thought about what it means to experience the supernatural. I define the supernatural as something that breaks through the natural world and leaves no doubts that it was from God. What I call "A Road to Damascus Experience." I have never experienced the supernatural. God wanted me to live by faith as if the supernatural occurred in my life. I still desire to live a supernatural life like the early church. I still want God to appear to me supernaturally. But until it happens, I will patiently wait by faith on His perfect timing. What a Reawakening it will be!

The one thing that changed my life forever

was trusting the one life that made the most powerful eternal impact in this world. It was by faith in the supernatural life of Jesus, the death of Jesus, and the resurrection of Jesus. The greatest power the world has ever seen, the one life that revealed the greatest identity—the one man who left the greatest legacy, the real Superman. I believe in Him by faith, not by sight. That man's Good News of His life, death, and resurrection has ReAwakened a power in me to stand against the crises in our world and give me the hope that the supernatural power of God is still available for today. To have faith in our power-filled identity is vital for living a life of hope in the coming supernatural power of a ReAwakening. When we live by faith, the supernatural power will become a reality. To be Reawakened to a life of power that counts for eternity changes everything.