

My Wake Up Call!

BY DON MACLAFFERTY



In 1999, on a cold winter night in Michigan, I heard Elijah's call to turn my heart back to my children. I did not hear this call through the preaching of a sermon from the pulpit or from a chapter in a book. I heard Elijah's call through the cries of my children.

I was gathering my papers and briefcase so that I could run out the door to an important meeting to plan the building of a larger church. I was in a rush. My children, Jason and Julie, were 6 and 3 years old. They heard me getting ready to leave. They ran up to me, questioning, "Where are you going, Daddy?"

"I am going to a meeting," I replied factually.

"Daddy, stay home tonight!" they pleaded. "You are always gone! Daddy, you never play with us anymore!"

I leaned over to give my son and daughter quick hugs and kisses. Their little arms wrapped around

me tightly. When I tried to stand up, they would not let me go! They clung to me with desperation. They were trying to keep their over-committed daddy home.

I had to gently pry their arms off my neck so I could go. They started crying. "Daddy, just tonight! Please stay home!"

I backed out of the house and closed the door. As I walked out into the snow, the picture of my children crying and reaching out to me lingered heavily on my heart. As I trudged through the snow to my church meeting, God spoke to my heart. He called me by name. I stopped in my tracks. On that night, as the snow silently fell around me, God called me back to my children. He had first spoken through the cries and the love of my children: "Daddy, stay home!"

That was a very difficult call for me. I was often out seven nights a week, helping others while neglecting my own children. It was a painful call yet a call of mercy that led to healing between me, Jason, and Julie.

From that day forward, I began to say no to many requests so I could say yes to my family. It was not easy! God helped me to begin safeguarding time with each child, just as my wife, April, and I had prioritized our time together.

At first, my kids were not interested in spending time with me. I had said no to their requests to play too many times. Often, I felt like a failure. But the call of Elijah comes with the healing power of the Lord. The Lord helped my children to forgive me. He literally turned my heart to them and their little hearts back to me. Praise God!

John, with the same Holy Spirit power of Elijah, prepared the people for the coming of the Messiah. Like Elijah, John called for revival. He preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2).

John, like Elijah, called the hearts of the fathers

back to their children. Today, we are commissioned to do likewise.

John prepared the people of the first century to receive Jesus as the Messiah. Today, we are called to prepare people to receive Jesus as the King of kings who will come in the clouds!

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World Church Prayer Requests

JANUARY 3 — 9, 2025

- Keep praying for the 10 Days of Prayer that will be running January 8-18, 2025. Pray that many churches and groups around the world will take part. To learn more, click here: www.tendaysofprayer.org.
- Pray for rain and that draught will not hinder the spread of the Gospel in southern Zambia. Many of the church members in that area are farmers and depend on rain for survival. Pray that their prayers and praises will be a testimony to others in their communities.
- Pray that the Mount Olivet SDA Church in the United States will be inspired in their mission of serving their community. Pray that they will share the gospel of Christ through the messages of health and the Three Angels' Messages.
- Pray that we will reflect the love of Jesus and be His lights of hope to all those we meet as we begin 2025.
- Please pray that God will help us know how to effectively reach our loved ones, neighbors, and communities with the good news of Jesus' soon coming.