

What You're Skipping at the Gym, and Shouldn't Be

Going to the gym to meet with a personal trainer, take a class or pump iron on your own often takes a great deal of self-motivation. Thinking about engaging in five to 15 minutes of warming up and cooling down before and after your main routine takes even more!

But both are *extremely* important, and it's my aim in this post to make you a little more excited about them.

I'll be completely honest with you: Warm-ups and cool-downs are definitely not my favorite parts of fitness. I mean, when I walk into a gym or CrossFit box, I don't want to waste a second; I want to start lifting weights, jumping on boxes, swinging kettlebells and pulling myself up on bars immediately! Jogs, lunges, sit-ups and skips as well as myriad other drills that compose a temperature-raising, muscle-pumping "dynamic warm-up" are dusty, dry Old English poems in comparison to high-intensity workouts and sports activities, which are more like riveting Stephen King page-turners ... or the latest Marvel superhero movie, if reading's not your thing.

But alas, poetry-dodgers, warm-ups are ever so necessary and in fact offer several likable features, such as:

- Elevated body temperature
- Increased blood flow in the muscles
- Improved efficient cooling
- Improved range of motion
- Reduced incidence and likelihood of musculoskeletal injuries
- Supplied adequate blood flow to heart
- Provided rehearsal of movements present in the workout

- Help to prepare mentally for the main workout

And cool-downs, comprising various static stretches and mobility exercises, are equally as important as their pre-workout counterpart. A few benefits include:

- Bringing your breathing, heart rate, and body temperature slowly back to normal
- Aiding in the dissipation of waste produce, like lactic acid
- Helping to reduce soreness in the following days
- Reducing the chances of dizziness brought on by blood pooling at the extremities

Can't wait to get started? Good—I was hoping you'd say that!

Now I'd like to share with you my favorite warm-up and cool-down routines for preparing for and recovering from a full-body, weight-training workout (there are specific, specialized exercises for long-distance runners, sprinters, discus-throwers, etc.).

Warm-Up, Part 1:

Note: I recommend completing the following portion of the warm-up before every weight-training workout because it effectively improves range of motion, activates muscles fibers and increases blood flow. The next section will vary depending on the specific muscle groups you'll be training on a particular day.

Perform this series five times:

- 10 walking lunges
- 15 jumping jacks
- 5 push-ups (either the modification on your knees or the standard version on your toes in a plank position)
- 10 squats
- 5 sit-ups

Warm-Up, Part 2

Now move to your free weights and/or machines you'll be using for your individual workout. Before jumping into your routine, perform 6 to 8 repetitions of your first planned exercise with 50 percent of what you can do for a single repetition. Rest about 30 seconds, and then grab a heavier weight (about 70 percent of what you can do for a single repetition), and perform 4 to 6 repetitions. Using lighter weights before the main event (the "gun show," if it's biceps day!) wakes up your muscles and informs them of their task ahead.

Repeat this pattern for every new muscles group that will be targeted in your workout.

That's it! Not so bad, was it? Your body will thank you for preparing it so thoroughly, I promise.

Now on to the cool-down ...

Cool-Down, Part 1

Note: There's a reason we didn't do any yoga-type stretches in the warm-up—your muscles weren't warm! Now that you're nice and warm from your tough workout and preceding warm-up, your muscles are elastic and pliable, ready for static stretches. Yay! The following section contains stretches that I love to do after just about every workout.

Perform the following sequence of stretches, holding each for 10 to 20 seconds:

Hip/Glute

- Lie on your back and cross your left foot over your right knee.
- Grasp hands behind right thigh and gently pull thigh towards you, keeping the body relaxed.
- Hold, then switch sides.

Hamstrings

- Sit on the floor and extend one leg out straight.
- Bend the other leg at the knee and position the sole of that foot against your opposite inner thigh.
- Extend your arms and reach forward over the straight leg by bending at the waist as far as possible.
- Hold, then switch legs.

Inner Thigh

- Sit on the floor with feet pressed together.
- Keep abs pulled in as you lean forward.
- Keep leaning until you feel a nice stretch in your inner thighs.

Chest and shoulders

- Standing, interlock fingers behind your back, arms straight.
- Keeping hands together, lift them as high as you comfortably can.

Upper back

- Clasp your hands together in front of your chest, arms straight.
- Round your back towards the floor, pressing your arms away from your body to feel a stretch in your upper back.

Triceps

- Standing, bend your right elbow behind your head and use your left hand to gently pull the right elbow in further until you feel a stretch in the back of your arm (tricep).
- Hold, then switch sides.

Spine twist

- Lie on the floor and place your right foot on left knee.
- Using your left hand, gently pull your right knee towards the floor, twisting your spine, keeping hips and shoulders on the floor, left arm straight out.

Well, that's a wrap! I hope you all have a new appreciation for the unpopular, often overlooked facets of fitness. I'm confident that after a week of warming up and cooling down consistently, you'll find yourself having more productive workouts and better recovery periods afterward.

If you'd like full workout routines, check out my book *Fit for Faith: A Christian Woman's Guide to Total Fitness*.

"I can't wait to get to the gym and warm up! Ooh! And then that cool-down. ... That's icing on the cake!"—said no one, ever.

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For the original article, visit [creationhouse.com](#).

Author Asks, 'Is Pope Francis Too Radical for His Flock?'

For more than three decades, the **Vatican** of Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI operated on a version of the conservative maxim, "No enemies to the right."

While left-wing theologians were silenced and liberal-to-moderate bishops were shunted aside in favor of hard-liners,

liturgical traditionalists and cultural conservatives were diligently courted and given direct access to the apostolic palace.

But in a few short months, **Pope Francis** has upended that dynamic, alienating many on the Catholic right by refusing to play favorites and ignoring their preferred agenda items even as he stressed the kind of social justice issues that are near and dear to progressives.

“I’ve personally found many aspects of this papacy to be annoying, and struggled against that feeling from the beginning. I’m hardly alone in this,” Jeffrey Tucker, editor of the New Liturgical Movement blog, wrote as Francis basked in the glow of media coverage of his recent trip to Brazil.

“Every day and in every way we are being told how glorious it is that the bad old days are gone and the new good days are here,” he lamented.

Tucker and other traditionalists who are dedicated to high church rituals have been especially miffed at Francis’ simple—they might say simplistic—style since the moment the former Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio was introduced to the world as the new pope back in March.

“How can I love a pope who doesn’t even want to be Pope?” Katrina Fernandez, a popular conservative blogger, wrote in a column about her disillusionment.

Since Francis’ election, the anxiety on the right has only mounted as he has continued to model a radically different pontificate—preaching about the evils of the globalized economy while repeatedly reminding his followers to care for the poor and marginalized.

Indeed, he barely mentioned abortion directly or even gay rights until he was asked about gay priests during an impromptu press conference on the flight back from Brazil and,

in a line heard round the world, he said, "Who am I to judge?"

Catholics on "the right wing of the church," Philadelphia Archbishop Charles Chaput said on the eve of the Brazil trip, "have not been really happy about (Francis') election." Chaput, a vocal conservative in the U.S. hierarchy, told the National Catholic Reporter that Francis "will have to care for them, too, so it will be interesting to see how all this works out in the long run."

In fact, the risks for Francis in disappointing **Catholic conservatives** are high given their disproportionate presence in the pews and in the upper echelons of the church.

"They have loyally supported the church with donations and activism and can be expected to oppose any change in direction of the sort Francis has signaled," Michael D'Antonio, author of a book on the clergy abuse scandals, wrote in a Foreign Policy magazine essay that asked, "Is Francis too radical for his flock?"

"But this constituency cannot sustain the church in the long term," D'Antonio said, "and the church now needs a figure able to bridge the gap between its rightward movement and the reality that Westerners are leaving the church in droves. That problem requires a wily pope with the skill and charisma to pull off the high-wire balancing act of unifying these two disparate impulses."

Not everyone on the right, however, is willing to concede that their influence may be on the wane or even that Francis is really any different than Benedict.

Instead, many are advancing detailed arguments that they say show Francis doesn't actually mean what the media and public think he means, adding that the pope's honeymoon will get a cold shower when liberals see that Francis is just as orthodox as his predecessors.

Some even think, as writer Elizabeth Scalia explained in the conservative journal *First Things*, that Francis may be manipulating journalists in order to insinuate traditional Catholic teaching into mainstream press reports.

“Unlike Pope Benedict XVI, who was already despised by the press as Cardinal Ratzinger, Francis is the surprising, not-quite-known entity with whom the press is still unfamiliar and thus only marginally prepared to counter,” said Scalia, who compared the pope’s tactics to those of the ancient Chinese military manual, “*The Art of War*.”

Others, like EWTN’s Raymond Arroyo in the *National Catholic Register*, are recycling a narrative from the latter days of Benedict’s troubled papacy and pointing the finger of blame at Francis’ aides, saying that “as much as they distance the pontiff from his people, handlers can protect the pope from this sort of misinterpretation.”

But other Catholic conservatives say these read more like excuses than explanations. The handwriting is on the wall, they say—which might not be such a bad thing for a Catholic right that was so accustomed to preferential treatment that they often identified the pope with the church itself.

“To the extent that conservative Catholics in the United States find themselves actively disagreeing with Pope Francis’s emphases ... it might help cure them/us of the recurring Catholic temptation toward papolatry,” wrote *New York Times* columnist Ross Douthat.

“The papal office has been occupied by many more incompetents than geniuses,” he concluded, “and there’s a reason why so few occupants of the chair of Peter show up in the litany of the saints.”

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Christian Persecutor Boko Haram Under Investigation for Crimes Against Humanity

At least 1,200 people have been killed in the last four years in Northern Nigeria by the militant Islamist group **Boko Haram**, according to a preliminary investigation by the International Criminal Court.

The court's chief prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, said on Monday the ICC is investigating Boko Haram for "crimes against humanity" through "widespread and systematic attacks," the scale and intensity of which have increased over time.

The initial ICC report is based on statistics leading up to December 2012. The ICC is now considering whether it merits further investigation.

The **International Criminal Court**, based in The Hague, tries cases of crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide when a country's own courts fail to prosecute. Nigeria agreed in 2001 to subject itself to the jurisdiction of the ICC.

Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor, president of the Christian Association of Nigeria, agreed that the rate of attacks is intensifying.

In a recent speech, he said: "In my first term, about 3,000 Christians were killed. Last year alone averaged over 100 every month. In March 2010, about 500 Christians were slaughtered in one night on an attack on their villages. In

April 2011, our members lost over 500 churches, thousands of homes and businesses in a 48 hour period, and in 2012 about 70 percent of all Christians killed worldwide were in northern Nigeria alone.”

Oritsejafor added that he doubted Boko Haram were ready for constructive dialogue and called upon Nigeria’s Islamic leaders to condemn recent attacks and redress misinterpretations of the Quran.

“The real Islam that CAN knows [about] should make true leaders of the faith to rectify the contradictions of arbitrary knowledge of the Quran to remind those pushed out of the line to seek the good of all,” he said.

Boko Haram, which among other demands wants the imposition of **Shariah law** in Nigeria, has claimed responsibility for many of the attacks across the country.

Despite the imposition of a curfew and a declaration of a “state of emergency” by the federal government in affected states, Boko Haram and affiliated terrorist groups have continued their attacks, especially in the north-eastern states of Borno, Yobe and Kano.

Boko Haram has also rejected a proposed ceasefire by the Nigerian government. Bensouda said the ICC is considering whether the government has done enough to prevent the attacks and to bring the perpetrators to justice.

World Watch Monitor reported last week that at least 12 people were killed in a bomb blast in the Christian-dominated Sabon Geri area of Kano on July 29. The death count has now been doubled.

At least 20 people were killed on July 27 in an attack in the northeastern state of Borno. Boko Haram is suspected to have carried out both attacks.

In response, some of Borno's youths have joined together to form a vigilante group to thwart attacks, while the establishment of a similar group has been proposed in Kano state, in Nigeria's north.

Tobias Idika, president of community group Ohanaeze Ndi-Igbo in Kano, told World Watch Monitor a vigilante group would guard areas especially likely to be targeted by terrorists, such as public spaces and places of worship.

"We are fine-tuning the arrangement and reaching out to all stakeholders and the government to stop the endless blood-letting," he said. "The vigilante will include professionals and will work with other security agents. Our goal is to protect the people within the ambit of the law," Idiaka said.

He said the vigilante group would work in conjunction with the police, carrying weapons approved by the police and providing them with intelligence.

The intervention of the Borno Vigilance Youth Group, which carries sticks and knives but not guns, in preventing attacks by Boko Haram has been hailed by both the state government and tribal leaders.

Governor Kashim Shettima, who said the military task force and police support the youth initiative, said it is "divine intervention in bringing an end to the incessant massive attacks and killing in the state".

Tribal leader Abubakar El-Kanemi, the 'Shehu' (meaning sultan) of Borno, also praised the efforts of the youths, but cautioned them not to take the law into their hands.

Bishop Ransom Bello, chairman of the Kano chapter of CAN, said the formation of the community vigilante group will be a positive development, but that they should not carry guns.

"What we are against is arming them with guns and ammunition,"

Bello said. “As Christians, we don’t believe in retaliatory attacks or any form of violence. The truth is that what we have is not a case of the Muslims fighting Christians. It is an Islamic group that is fighting everybody. We are doing our best to educate the people to be vigilant, keep praying and be patient as we all collaborate to ward off the attackers.”

Thousands of people are fleeing northeastern **Nigeria**. In June, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reported that more than 6,000 have left for neighboring Niger.

Assemblies of God Partners With Billy Graham on Evangelism Campaign

Alton Garrison knows there are “millions of testimonies” when it comes to lives changed by Billy Graham’s ministry.

But the one story Garrison—the Assemblies of God assistant general superintendent—shared while introducing Franklin Graham at Wednesday’s discipleship luncheon wasn’t just one in a million.

It was one that hit very close to home.

Just before Franklin Graham took the podium to share his vision for November’s My Hope America With Billy Graham outreach, Garrison briefly talked about how the direction and spiritual destiny of his wife and ministry partner, Johanna, was forever changed.

It was 1954 in Amsterdam when Johanna’s mother, Jan, was rescued from a dark life when she accepted Christ as her

Savior at a Billy Graham crusade.

“We wouldn’t be here if that hadn’t occurred,” Garrison shared. “I know there are millions of testimonies like that, but when it’s up close and personal, it means a lot.”

Talk about a segue. “Up close and personal” is perfect shorthand to describe what My Hope America is all about: sharing Christ in a close and personal environment.

“Instead of in a stadium, this will be in your living room,” Franklin Graham explained of the nationwide event, which culminates on Nov. 7, Billy Graham’s 95th birthday.

Franklin Graham, the CEO and president of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, shared his heart for reaching America with more than 400 Assemblies of God pastors at the 55th General Council, held at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Fla.

Graham shared stories about his father, the famous international evangelist, whom he visits nearly every Sunday for lunch at his Montreat home. He talked about his father’s burden for this country at the age of 94. He gave an account of the humble beginnings of Operation Christmas Child, which celebrated its 100 millionth shoebox this year.

But Franklin Graham was never more focused or passionate than when he talked about the impetus of My Hope America.

“Our nation needs a touch with the Lord Jesus Christ,” he said. “We’re in a battle. All you have to do is turn on the media and see how they treat Christians. Or look at Hollywood and see how they portray Christians.

“We have an opportunity to do battle in our living rooms.”

Each pastor received a packet to sign up for My Hope America, which more than 18,000 churches have already done across all 50 states. Also given out was a DVD of one of the three 28-

minute evangelistic My Hope America programs called *Defining Moments*, which weaves three life-changing stories around powerful messages from Billy Graham. The second program, *Lose to Gain*, can be seen online, while *The Cross* will be released on TV and online on Nov. 7.

"The gospel is so clear, and it's so well done," Franklin Graham said about the *Defining Moments* program. "Take this DVD. Watch it and show it to your church."

Both Garrison and Dr. George O. Wood, the Assemblies of God general superintendent, were already sold on My Hope America.

In the opening welcome at the luncheon, Wood called it a "wonderful opportunity," while Garrison said he "knows it will work."

"We're very excited to be a part of My Hope," Garrison said. "We are confident that this relationship evangelism is coming at a perfect time for our country."

In fact, November can't get here soon enough, according to Franklin Graham.

"I don't know how much longer we'll have a window of opportunity to preach the gospel in this country," he said, adding, "The gospel is simple, and it works."

"It's fun telling others about the Lord Jesus Christ, then giving an invitation and letting the Holy Spirit take over."

And that's My Hope America in a nutshell.

"It's a way to tell your family and friends about Jesus," one of the My Hope regional coordinators, Robert T. Schlipp, shared with one of the pastors.

Schlipp has been canvassing the southwest U.S. for months, sharing about the My Hope project, but was excited to be on hand to hear Franklin Graham share his passion for this

country.

“When Franklin shares his heart and his father’s heart, it resonates with the hearts of the pastors,” Schlipp said. “Having Franklin here makes My Hope personal. He communicates the project in a relevant way the pastors can apply to their congregations.”

And many pastors, leaving the fourth-floor ballroom Wednesday afternoon, had their minds spinning about the possibilities.

Pastor Brian Corkum, of First Assembly of God in Salem, N.J., loves that My Hope America is “all about relationships” and the fact that “some people will come to your house before they’ll ever come to church.”

Pastor Barney Walker, of First Assembly of God in Elkhart, Texas, calls it “outstanding,” adding, “I’m taking the lead and going to try to get the First Baptist Church involved too.”

Coming from the panhandle of Florida, pastor Gueary Clendening hadn’t heard much about My Hope America, but his eyes started to light up a little when he thought about how his church was in the process of refocusing their mission on discipleship.

“We’re not seeing people saved in services, so this may work,” he said. “I’m going to go back and share this with our vision team.”

Wes Bartel, the national discipleship ministries director, closed out the luncheon, encouraging all the Assemblies of God churches to get involved.

“It’s the neighborhood concept,” Bartel said. “What was shared today could have the biggest impact our country has seen.”

Click here to read the original article on .

The Moral and Intellectual Bankruptcy of the Pro-Abortion Movement

In the wake of a rising tide of **pro-life** sentiments and sensibilities in America, the utter bankruptcy of the **pro-abortion** position is being revealed, especially in its more militant forms.

The pro-abortion side is now faced with:

- The beautiful reality of 3-D and 4-D ultrasounds, making clear that the fetus in the womb is really a carefully formed, developing baby. It is now impossible to deny that the little one seen with such clarity on the screen is a human life that is about to be snuffed out.
- The brutal reality of the “houses of horror” run by men like **Dr. Kermit Gosnell** (and others), with the unavoidable conclusions that: 1) The same doctors who killed babies in the womb had no problem killing babies outside the womb; and 2) There is virtually no moral difference between killing a 20-week-old baby in the safety of its mother’s womb and killing it seconds after it emerges from the womb.
- Moving stories from **abortion survivors** like Gianna Jessen. They even have their own network called .
- A younger generation that values fairness, equality and the rights of the victim. Although this is often more gut-level rather than rational (leading to many young people getting on the wrong side of the homosexuality debate), it also explains why so many are becoming pro-life.

- Court rulings siding against Obamacare's **pro-abortion** mandates.
- Undercover videos by **Lila Rose** and others, revealing the greed and heartlessness of abortion providers.

What has the **pro-abortion** side offered in response?

- **Planned Parenthood** dropping its "pro-choice" moniker, once considered an impregnable (no pun intended) winning concept, in favor of the hopelessly self-defeating "Your Baby Will Thank You" (but only, of course, if the baby manages to escape the Planned Parenthood clinic alive).
- Completely inane statements by the media, like this one from MSNBC host Melissa Harris-Perry, who said: "When does life begin? I submit the answer depends an awful lot on the feeling of the parents. A powerful feeling—but not science. The problem is that many of our policymakers want to base sweeping laws on those feelings." (Aside from the ludicrous nature of saying the parents determine when life begins—where does this kind of thinking lead?—the question remains: Which lawmakers are trying to "base sweeping laws" on feelings alone?) Yes, this was the same TV host who recently wore tampon earrings to protest the Texas abortion laws.
- Absolutely murderous statements by so-called medical ethicists, leading to outlandish headlines like this, in Britain's *Telegraph*: "Killing babies no different from abortion, experts say." (Yes, the headline really says "experts say.") The article continues, "Parents should be allowed to have their newborn babies killed because they are 'morally irrelevant' and ending their lives is no different to abortion, a group of medical ethicists linked to Oxford University has argued."
- Pathetic ads, like the one celebrating the 40th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* and featuring black actor Mechad Brooks. The ad was so dreadful that Eric Metaxas commented, "When I first watched this ad, I

thought, this HAS to be a spoof. It employs the ugly racial stereotype of a smooth-talking [black] predator celebrating his freedom to use women at zero cost to himself: Hey, baby, hook up with me—and then go have an abortion. Are they kidding? No; this was no spoof.”

- Despicable protests in Austin, Texas, against legislators who were simply voting for a ban on abortions after 20 weeks as well as for heightened health regulations at abortion facilities. As Katie Pavlich reported, “Apparently chanting ‘hail Satan,’ ‘f*ck the church,’ ‘bro-choice’ and holding signs that say ‘hoes before embryos’ just wasn’t enough for pro-abortion protestors in Texas. According to reports on the ground, police have confiscated bricks, tampons, pads and condoms protestors planned to throw at pro-life lawmakers.” The police “also confiscated jars of urine and feces.”
- Students on campus videotaped as they signed a petition to legalize “aborting” *fourth-trimester* babies (meaning already born, full-term babies—but who said college students were good at math these days?).
- The rise of the “bro-choice” movement, as young men, surely moved by altruism alone (forgive the sarcasm), are now taking a stand. As expressed by Ben Sherman, “For those of us guys who like girls—you know, *like them* like them—and want to have relationships with them, that may last anywhere from a few minutes to many years, we need to think about how this bill (Texas HB 2), by curtailing the bodily autonomy and sexual freedom of women, hurts us, too. We need to stand with women in their fight to control their own bodies.”

It is little wonder, then, that the pro-life tide continues to rise.

Yet a recent Pew Research poll indicates that far less Americans think abortion is an important issue today as

compared to just seven years ago, with most Americans still opposed to the complete overturn of *Roe v. Wade*—all of which means we have our work cut out for us. And so, rather than congratulating ourselves prematurely, we need to increase our efforts to expose the bankruptcy of the pro-abortion position along with continuing to emphasize the precious **sanctity of life**.

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4 Ways to Get Over the Walls That Hinder Your Progress

What happens when you hit a brick wall going 60 miles per hour? Your car ends up in pieces, you end up battered and bruised, and it hurts.

How can you pick yourself back up when you've hit a wall?

Peter was going top speed with Jesus, ministering at every opportunity, dining with the Master and learning new things every day. Jesus even lifted him up to be one of the chosen three, one of Jesus' closest friends.

Then, right when Peter thought everything was going great, Jesus was arrested.

First, Peter tried fighting back—but Jesus told him not

to. Instead, Peter followed from a distance, ready to run to Jesus' aid if the opportunity arose—but then the weirdest thing happened. People offered him an opportunity to speak up, and every time, he denied his calling in order to save his own skin. Peter denied he even knew Jesus. Peter truly hit a wall.

Peter's wall was two parts:

1. Jesus didn't do what Peter expected. Jesus died.
2. Peter didn't act the way he expected himself to. Peter failed to support his friend.

Have you ever hit that kind of a wall? God doesn't do what you expected, life doesn't turn out like you thought it would or, even worse, you don't act the way you thought you would.

Peter not only survived smashing into the brick wall, but just a short time later he came back strong, standing up and being the person God called him to be.

Let's look at Peter's recovery and see what we can learn.

1. Get some time alone. After Jesus rose from the dead, the angel told the women, "Go tell the disciples and Peter ..." It appears Peter was not with the others. He got away by himself—probably to lick his wounds and beat himself up for a while. Time alone is important. Just like time in the hospital after a real accident, time alone will help your brain adjust to your new reality and rest from the shock.

2. Forgive God. It feels like we should never need to forgive God—He is God, after all, right? Yet when He doesn't act like we think He should, we hold it in, afraid to let Him know we are disappointed and hurt. A real relationship is one where you can admit your hurt, your frustration and your anger. Let God know what you are thinking!

David and Jeremiah are particularly good at this. They wrote what we call laments—prayers that say, "God, You said You'd do

this, or this is who You are, but this is my reality—they don't match. I need you to show up!"

As long as you keep it bottled up, you aren't able to let God fix the problem. Instead, talk to Him and let Him know your heart. Yes, God does know what is going on in your heart, but you need to say it.

Remember the last time you had a real fight with a loved one? Not the kind where you yell it out and get over it, but the kind where you get mad and then keep up appearances? That is what our fights with God look like. We pretend everything is all right, waiting for the anger to go away. God wants something more. He wants your heart. He wants you to share your anger, pain and frustration with Him. Then wait. He will meet you there.

3. Let God restore you. One day, while Peter was busy at his old job, fishing, Jesus showed up on the seashore. What a delight! Peter jumped into the water and raced for Jesus. By this time, Peter understood that Jesus' death wasn't the end. Yet Peter needed Jesus to help him go deeper. Later, after breakfast, the real work happened: Jesus took Peter for a walk. In ways we don't fully understand, Jesus restored Peter to Himself. Peter had to forgive himself, and in the midst of that walk, the pain and anguish of failure fell away. Peter became again the person he was created to be.

4. Wait for new direction. When you hit a brick wall going 60 miles an hour, you have some questions. Was that wall an obstacle you need to get around? Was it caused by something you did wrong? Does that brick wall mean God is taking you in a new direction? All these questions will be answered in time. The important thing for you to do is to let the Healer do His work. Even if you ran into the wall because you were running from God, He put that wall there, and He will help you find what comes next.

A few weeks later, Peter was in the upper room when the Holy Spirit fell. Jerusalem was full that day. Many of the people who just 50 days before had cried, "Crucify Him," were back for another festival. When the 120 in the upper room spilled out into the street, a crowd formed.

This time, when the people in the crowd noticed something was different about Peter, he didn't shy away, hoping not to be noticed. The same man who had denied his calling 50 days earlier got up and preached the sermon of his life. Peter preached with power, knowledge and conviction. He stood in anointing of the Holy Spirit and proclaimed the saving power of Jesus to all who would listen. Three thousand people came to know Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit and the voice of one who knew the devastation of hitting a brick wall and finding God's restoration.

God knows where you are. If you've hit a brick wall, it is because God is at work and He has great things for you. Take time to heal, tell God how you feel, let Him restore you and wait for new direction. It will be worth it!

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Our Vows to the Lord Must Not Be Violated!

One of my daughters recently made the commitment of her lifetime. The young man was almost speechless as he returned the perpetual pledge. Jeri and I wept as we watched these two young Christians dedicate themselves to one another in front

of a massive crowd of witnesses both here and in heaven.

What was really happening? What brought on this flood of emotion? Can anyone accurately define this heavenly bond?

The bond of marriage is a covenant not to be entered into lightly. Scripture implores us to consider carefully who we would join ourselves to in holy matrimony. Scripture then instructs us to guard that relationship by not bringing someone else into the blessed union, thus violating the vows of marriage.

Marriage is the greatest earthly illustration of the relationship we are to enjoy with the Lord. We have made precious personal vows to Him and have become one with our King. Those vows must not be violated!

In 1828, Noah Webster defined the word **violate** as such: "to break; to transgress; as ... to violate the divine commands; to violate one's vows or promises."

Before I became a Christian, there were absolutely no standards in my life. Even when given a clear and direct command, I would do whatever I pleased whether it was right or wrong. It made no difference if it was a parent, a principal or even the police. I would violate their authority without giving it a second thought.

This behavior was the source of much of the trouble I found myself in as a young man. Occasionally I would escape the consequences of violating the rules. When I was caught, I showed little remorse. More than once, the outcome of my disobedience led to a stint in jail or some other serious repercussion that would drag on for many months.

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Israel and Palestine: Here We Go Again

Israel and the Palestinian Authority were back in Washington last week as the long-dormant peace talks resumed, prompting some observers to ask, “Why are these peace talks different from any other peace talks?”

I think it can be fairly stated that no people have spoken about peace so often, written about it so extensively, but experienced so little of it in recent history. Israel’s intense thirst for peace coupled with the Jewish state’s lack of it is indeed one of the great paradoxes of modern times.

Peace is, at its core, an essentially biblical concept, deeply rooted in the ancient religious texts of Israel. The word *shalom* is found 376 times in the Torah, or the Tanach—the Jewish Bible, known to most of the world as the Old Testament.

The word is used in many different contexts with a variety of meanings. However, the sheer number of times the word *shalom* appears in the Bible makes it abundantly clear that peace is a central biblical and universal value that all nations are advised to pursue, but specifically the nation of Israel, who presented the Torah’s lofty concepts to the entire world.

“Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it” (Ps. 34:14, NIV).

With the return to the peace table, Israel seems to be acting according to its biblical instructions by seeking peace. The problem with this perception is that the biblical guidelines don’t encourage peace negotiations that are based on faulty premises, such as handing over Israel’s God-given land to an

armed band of terrorists.

Secretary of State John Kerry has called for Israel to accept the establishment of an additional Arab (primarily Muslim) state based on the indefensible pre-1967 borders, which would place Israel's Ben Gurion International Airport easily within range of enemy missiles.

According to this proposal, in exchange for freeing terrorists now and eventually surrendering its high elevations, the mountains of Samaria and the Judean hills (often referred to as the West Bank), Israel would receive written promises of peace from the Palestinian Authority, backed by the Obama administration.

This "land for peace" formula has been the standard for some 40 years of summits, talks, negotiations and shuttles that seem to go nowhere and have only increased the ravenous appetite of Israel's enemies, resulting in a sharp increase in terrorism and the frequency of war.

The new talks are destined for a similar fate, despite the promotion and despite the hype. Apparently, we will continue to play this dangerous game for a few more years, until we start listening to the following words that were spoken long ago in anticipation of today's events:

"For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, 'Peace, peace'—when there is no peace" (Jer. 8:11, NKJV).

"Peace is that brief glorious moment in history when everybody stands around reloading." —Thomas Jefferson

David Rubin, former Mayor of Shiloh, Israel, is founder and president of the Shiloh Israel Children's Fund, established after he and his 3-year-old son were wounded in a terrorist shooting attack. He is the author of three books, including his new book, *Peace for Peace: Israel in the New Middle East*,

available on or at .

The Moral and Intellectual Bankruptcy of the Pro-Abortion Movement

In the wake of a rising tide of **pro-life** sentiments and sensibilities in America, the utter bankruptcy of the **pro-abortion** position is being revealed, especially in its more militant forms.

The pro-abortion side is now faced with:

- The beautiful reality of 3-D and 4-D ultrasounds, making clear that the fetus in the womb is really a carefully formed, developing baby. It is now impossible to deny that the little one seen with such clarity on the screen is a human life that is about to be snuffed out.
- The brutal reality of the “houses of horror” run by men like **Dr. Kermit Gosnell** (and others), with the unavoidable conclusions that: 1) The same doctors who killed babies in the womb had no problem killing babies outside the womb; and 2) There is virtually no moral difference between killing a 20-week-old baby in the safety of its mother’s womb and killing it seconds after it emerges from the womb.
- Moving stories from **abortion survivors** like Gianna Jessen. They even have their own network called .
- A younger generation that values fairness, equality and the rights of the victim. Although this is often more gut-level rather than rational (leading to many young people getting on the wrong side of the homosexuality

debate), it also explains why so many are becoming pro-life.

- Court rulings siding against Obamacare's **pro-abortion** mandates.
- Undercover videos by **Lila Rose** and others, revealing the greed and heartlessness of abortion providers.

What has the **pro-abortion** side offered in response?

- **Planned Parenthood** dropping its "pro-choice" moniker, once considered an impregnable (no pun intended) winning concept, in favor of the hopelessly self-defeating "Your Baby Will Thank You" (but only, of course, if the baby manages to escape the Planned Parenthood clinic alive).
- Completely inane statements by the media, like this one from MSNBC host Melissa Harris-Perry, who said: "When does life begin? I submit the answer depends an awful lot on the feeling of the parents. A powerful feeling—but not science. The problem is that many of our policymakers want to base sweeping laws on those feelings." (Aside from the ludicrous nature of saying the parents determine when life begins—where does this kind of thinking lead?—the question remains: Which lawmakers are trying to "base sweeping laws" on feelings alone?) Yes, this was the same TV host who recently wore tampon earrings to protest the Texas abortion laws.
- Absolutely murderous statements by so-called medical ethicists, leading to outlandish headlines like this, in Britain's *Telegraph*: "Killing babies no different from abortion, experts say." (Yes, the headline really says "experts say.") The article continues, "Parents should be allowed to have their newborn babies killed because they are 'morally irrelevant' and ending their lives is no different to abortion, a group of medical ethicists linked to Oxford University has argued."
- Pathetic ads, like the one celebrating the 40th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* and featuring black

actor Mechad Brooks. The ad was so dreadful that Eric Metaxas commented, "When I first watched this ad, I thought, this HAS to be a spoof. It employs the ugly racial stereotype of a smooth-talking [black] predator celebrating his freedom to use women at zero cost to himself: Hey, baby, hook up with me—and then go have an abortion. Are they kidding? No; this was no spoof."

- Despicable protests in Austin, Texas, against legislators who were simply voting for a ban on abortions after 20 weeks as well as for heightened health regulations at abortion facilities. As Katie Pavlich reported, "Apparently chanting 'hail Satan,' 'f*ck the church,' 'bro-choice' and holding signs that say 'hoes before embryos' just wasn't enough for pro-abortion protestors in Texas. According to reports on the ground, police have confiscated bricks, tampons, pads and condoms protestors planned to throw at pro-life lawmakers." The police "also confiscated jars of urine and feces."
- Students on campus videotaped as they signed a petition to legalize "aborting" *fourth-trimester* babies (meaning already born, full-term babies—but who said college students were good at math these days?).
- The rise of the "bro-choice" movement, as young men, surely moved by altruism alone (forgive the sarcasm), are now taking a stand. As expressed by Ben Sherman, "For those of us guys who like girls—you know, *like them* like them—and want to have relationships with them, that may last anywhere from a few minutes to many years, we need to think about how this bill (Texas HB 2), by curtailing the bodily autonomy and sexual freedom of women, hurts us, too. We need to stand with women in their fight to control their own bodies."

It is little wonder, then, that the pro-life tide continues to rise.

Yet a recent Pew Research poll indicates that far less Americans think abortion is an important issue today as compared to just seven years ago, with most Americans still opposed to the complete overturn of *Roe v. Wade*—all of which means we have our work cut out for us. And so, rather than congratulating ourselves prematurely, we need to increase our efforts to expose the bankruptcy of the pro-abortion position along with continuing to emphasize the precious **sanctity of life**.

Michael Brown is author of *The Real Kosher Jesus* and host of the nationally syndicated talk radio show *The Line of Fire* on the Salem Radio Network. He is also president of FIRE School of Ministry and director of the Coalition of Conscience. Follow him at AskDrBrown on Facebook or @drmichaellbrown on Twitter.

Our Vows to the Lord Must Not Be Violated!

One of my daughters recently made the commitment of her lifetime. The young man was almost speechless as he returned the perpetual pledge. Jeri and I wept as we watched these two young Christians dedicate themselves to one another in front of a massive crowd of witnesses both here and in heaven.

What was really happening? What brought on this flood of emotion? Can anyone accurately define this heavenly bond?

The bond of marriage is a covenant not to be entered into lightly. Scripture implores us to consider carefully who we would join ourselves to in holy matrimony. Scripture then instructs us to guard that relationship by not bringing

someone else into the blessed union, thus violating the vows of marriage.

Marriage is the greatest earthly illustration of the relationship we are to enjoy with the Lord. We have made precious personal vows to Him and have become one with our King. Those vows must not be violated!

In 1828, Noah Webster defined the word *violate* as such: "to break; to transgress; as ... to violate the divine commands; to violate one's vows or promises."

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