

5 Ways to Devil-Proof Your Marriage

The enemy tries to cause division in three areas of your marriage: communication, intimacy and finances—and communication typically triggers the problems in the other two areas.

Here's the challenge: Men and women communicate very differently, and that is by design. To understand why God created men and women with such different communication styles, we must look to the Garden of Eden. After God created the man, He planted a garden and placed Adam there (Gen. 2:8). God gave Adam a home. Then the Bible says He gave the man a job, which was to tend the garden (Gen. 2:15).

God stepped back from this situation and made a startling comment. In Genesis 2:18, He says, "It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helper suitable for him."

We need other people in our lives. Whether married or single, it's not good for anybody to be alone.

Because it wasn't good for the man to be alone, God decided to make him a "helper." Notice that phrase. It does not say God decided to make the man a helpmate. The Darby Translation uses the word "helpmate," but most modern translations use "helper," and the King James Version uses "help meet." The word helpmate implies that the woman was made to be Adam's assistant—that she was there to wait on him and follow him around doing his laundry. In many countries around the world, women are treated as second-class citizens.

But when you see the intent God had for the creation of woman, you will see that nothing could be further from the truth. The definition of the word helper reveals to us how God designed

marriage to work. This is really critical to understand if you are going to build a long, happy marriage that will withstand the devil's attacks. A marriage secret is revealed once again in the Hebrew language.

The term helper actually comes from two different words—*ezer* and *neged*. The Hebrew word for “help” is *ezer*. The book of Ezra has *ezer* as its root. *Neged* is very interesting because it is often translated “suitable,” but it can also mean “opposite” or even “over against.” Put the two words together and they are *ezer neged*, which means “a helper opposite” or even “a helper against.”

Every Woman's Unique Gift

The full thought offers a great deal of insight into the kind of helper God was giving Adam. Together, the Hebrew letters that make up *ezer neged* create a word picture that actually means “the strong military ally that sees the enemy.”

The woman was created to be strong. Yes, 1 Peter 3:7 calls woman “the weaker vessel,” and that may be true physically, but when it comes to mental and spiritual strength, women stand toe to toe with men. God has invested a great inner strength in women.

The wife is not just a military ally, but she “sees the enemy.” Women have a God-given ability to see things, both physically and spiritually, that men often don't see. Women just seem to be wired to take in details that men often miss. This is the gift God gave Adam the day He made Eve—a strong military ally, a partner with different gifts than he had. God endowed women with a unique ability to “see the enemy”—to recognize things men don't innately see.

What Men Really Want

Men are headliners. Men like you to get to the point. For the most part, they don't need as many details as the woman. When

discussing something with your husband, try to cut through the clutter. Get to the point of what you want to discuss and don't expect your husband to communicate like a woman.

Men are fixers. When a woman talks, it de-stresses her. When a man hears a problem from his wife, it has the opposite effect. He gets stirred up and goes into "fixer mode." And if his wife starts to cry, which may make her feel better, he really gets worked up. This is because he cares about his wife and doesn't want her to hurt.

If you just need to talk to your husband and you are not looking for him to fix the problem, just tell him up front: "I need to talk to you about something, but I don't want you to fix anything. I just need you to listen." One other critical aspect of good communication is listening well.

Here are a few tips for becoming a better listener.

1. You can't listen and do something else at the same time. Shut out all distractions (TV, computer, phone) and concentrate on your spouse and what that person is saying.

2. Make eye contact. The eyes are the window to the soul. Looking into your spouse's eyes will connect you on a deeper level.

3. Listen to how your spouse feels. For the most part, when men and women communicate, women will often say, "This is how I feel about what you are saying," while men will say, "This is what I think about what you are saying." Women, don't dismiss what your husband says because he doesn't seem to be sharing his feelings.

5 Ways to Fight Fair

No matter how well you master these communication skills, the truth is that there will still be conflict from time to time. Consider these practical tips on how to deal with conflict

when it arises so your passion doesn't burn your house down.

1. Realize that conflict is not bad. Getting things out in the open will bring clarity and understanding to your relationship. Don't allow things to fester and time to pass without communicating about the issues that hurt you. Hurt turns into bitterness that has the power to destroy your life. Ephesians 4:27 says, "Do not give place to the devil." We give the devil a place in our lives when we don't deal with things and instead let them fester and produce death.

2. Don't attack the person; attack the issue. The goal when you disagree is not to determine who is right or wrong. The goal is to resolve the issue. The devil wants to get in the middle of your disagreement and paint your spouse as your enemy. Remember, your spouse is your ally. Deal with the issue you are disagreeing about without turning against your spouse.

3. Discipline the way you disagree. Don't belittle your mate or use cutting remarks, negative body language (rolling eyes), emotional threats or obscenities. The Holy Spirit is there to help you argue without being ugly toward each other. You can stop ugly behavior by the power of the Holy Spirit.

4. Stick to the subject. Keep the past in the past. Avoid phrases like "You always do this." Don't be a history buff. Remember Philippians 3:13, which says, "But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead."

5. When you can't come to a place of resolution, take a time-out. It may take 30 minutes or it may take a few hours, but it can be good to get alone and process. Let God speak to you about the situation. He may cause you to see the situation differently, or He may help you better understand your spouse's point of view. Even if you need some alone time, always come back together. Don't let walls build that separate you.

Even when you've done everything you know to do to argue constructively, some disagreements will leave you feeling hurt and angry. In those times, you must choose to forgive. Jesus forgave us when we didn't deserve it. As Christians, we must do the same. We have to be willing to let things go. Not understanding our differences is probably the core reason the enemy is able to get in our house.

Ken and Trudi Blount have more than 30 years' experience in ministry, traveling and speaking in churches across the country and overseas. They have produced a multitude of resources, including the monthly CD partner resource, *Relative*.

For More Study...

Learn to deflect the spiritual attack against your home with Ken and Trudi Blount's *Devil-Proof Your Family: Exposing the Devil's Strategy Against Your Home* (Charisma House). Find this on [Amazon](#), or anywhere Christian books are sold.

At Least 16 Feared Dead in Texas Hot Air Balloon Accident

Note: This story was updated at 10 a.m. ET Sunday.

Texas Authorities and the Federal Aviation Administration described a scene Saturday morning in the heart of Central

Texas farmland as a “significant loss of life” after a hot air balloon caught on fire and crashed into a pasture, the Associated Press reported.

During a brief press conference Saturday afternoon, National Transportation Safety Board Representative Erik Grosf would not provide the exact number of fatalities, but FAA Representative Lynn Lunsford said earlier Saturday that the balloon carried at least 16 people, none of whom survived. The death toll remained uncertain as of 2:30 p.m local time.

Reports say the Caldwell County Sherriff’s Office received a 911 call around 7:44 a.m. local about a “possible vehicle accident.” The basket portion of the balloon apparently caught fire and broke out during flight near Lockhart, about 30 miles south of Austin, Lunsford said.

The AP reported that NTSB spokesman Eric Weiss said that his agency knew very little else about the accident early Saturday afternoon, but that an NTSB team would arrive later in the day to investigate the crash. Lunsford told the AP that the FAA is also conducting an investigation.

The name of the company involved in the crash is Heart of Texas Hot Air Balloon Rides, an official with direct knowledge of the investigation told CNN’s Rene Marsh Saturday. CNN reported it was unable to reach anyone at the company for comment.

As of 2:30 p.m. local time, the AP reported that authorities have not released where the balloon was located out of or which company flew it. However, Caldwell County Sheriff Daniel C. Law told the AP that it was the “type of situation where people can walk up and buy a ticket,” unlike an airplane, which would have list of names.

Eyewitness Margaret Wiley, who lives a quarter mile from the crash site, was out walking her dog Saturday morning and told the AP that she heard a “pop, pop, pop.”

“I looked around and it was like a fireball going up,” said Wiley, who called 911. Wiley told the AP she frequently sees hot air balloons in the area, and that “the fireball was located under large power lines and almost high enough to reach the bottom of them.”

The land near the crash site is mainly farmland, with corn crops and grazing cattle.

In a released statement, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott asked that “all of Texas join us in praying for those lost.”{eoa}

How the Death of This Pastor’s Son Sparked Personal Revival

Bishop Sam Clements leads the Church of God of Prophecy located in Cleveland, Tennessee. Recently I had the privilege of interviewing him at their International General Assembly, which was held in Orlando. I recorded two podcasts which you can listen to below.

In one, he talks about how God blessed his ministry as he pastored various leading churches in his denomination and came up through the ranks. During this time, he came to a crisis point when realized he needed to surrender to God’s will instead of following his own. In a positive way, that affected the rest of his ministry.

But, also he has had to deal with extraordinary pain—mainly the loss of a son who died unexpectedly in the prime of life while Sam was pastoring. I believe that what Bishop Clements

learned will minister to those who are dealing with pain in their own life.

The second podcast gives an update on what's happening in the Church of God of Prophecy, which continues to grow, particularly internationally. Some of the church's ministers are suffering persecution in various parts of the world, and Bishop Clements gives insight on how God is using that to make the church grow.

I asked him the question I've heard leaders ask over the years: Will the Church of God of Prophecy, founded by A.J. Tomlinson, ever merge with the Church of God (in Cleveland), also founded by Tomlinson?

I know leaders in both denominations. I know they respect each other and work together in many ways. So, I took a chance and posed the question. You'll enjoy listening to his reply. Even though he says that he doesn't see a merger in the future, he does believe that Pentecostal denominations can work together in many ways and each complement the kingdom work of the others.

I hope you enjoy listening to these podcasts. The Charisma Podcast Network just passed one million downloads and I am grateful that my own podcast continues to grow as well. You can sign up to get the podcasts on our regular network or you can download at any time on iTunes or Google Play. It helps when you share my newsletter or the podcast on social media as we try to connect Christians and get out the word about what the Holy Spirit is doing in our day.

Russians Suspected in Cyber Attack on Clinton Campaign

The Kremlin says it had zero involvement in the hacking of Democratic Party emails while U.S. officials say the hack originated in Russia. We may never know who is right, but one thing is for sure—Russia had motive, capability and form.

Seen through Kremlin eyes, Moscow would only be doing what it feels the United States has been doing to it for years anyway—interfering in a geopolitical rival's domestic politics in an attempt to destabilize and shape events.

President Vladimir Putin said in February he had seen specific intelligence suggesting Russia's foreign enemies—code for Washington—were preparing to meddle in Russian parliamentary elections later this year.

And in 2011, Putin accused the U.S. State Department and Hillary Clinton, its then head, of stirring up street protests against his rule.

“We need to head off any external attempts to interfere in the elections, in our domestic political life,” Putin, who is facing re-election in 2018, told officers from Russia's FSB security service in February.

“You know that certain kinds of (political) technologies exist and have already been used in many countries.”

That was shorthand for Ukraine, Libya, Egypt and Syria, which Putin thinks Washington irresponsibly destabilized. People who have studied him for years say he believes the United States is trying to foment the same kind of unrest to oust him.

His credo, set out when talking about Islamic State last year, is to strike first “if a fight is inevitable” and, as Russia

has shown in its reaction to what it sees as NATO's aggressive build-up near its borders, to respond in kind.

"Clearly the Kremlin feels it should and can insert itself into domestic politics in other countries in much the same way it believes the United States and Europe insert themselves into Russian politics," Samuel Greene, the director of the Russia Institute at London's King's College, told Reuters.

"In their view it is fair play. They have seen the West involving itself in politics in Ukraine and other former parts of the Soviet space and feel they should be able to pretty much do the same thing."

He said such disruptive behavior was driven by a calculation: to stir up trouble in other countries so they have less bandwidth to focus on Russia.

Mark Galeotti, senior research fellow at the Institute of International Relations Prague, said he believed another motive for the hack—if Russia was behind it—would be to portray U.S. democracy as venal and chaotic and so take the sting out of Western accusations that Russian elections are corrupt.

Kremlin-backed media has tilted its coverage in favor of Trump over Clinton, and Putin has praised the Republican candidate as "very talented." But Greene said he thought what would matter most to Moscow would simply be to destabilize and to ensure that whoever won on Nov. 8 emerged as a weak figure.

Navigating a grinding economic crisis caused by low oil prices, and at odds with the United States over both Syria and Ukraine, Putin is under pressure.

He needs the West to lift the sanctions it imposed on Russia over its 2014 annexation of Crimea from Ukraine, which have cut off access to Western credit markets and technology imports.

Above all, though, he wants to make sure that external forces do not derail his own push for continued dominance in a political landscape where the liberal opposition is almost completely absent from TV screens and parliament.

Red Web

Nikolai Patrushev, the head of Russia's Security Council, said earlier this year there had been a spike in the number of cyber attacks on Russian government bodies and critical infrastructure by foreign intelligence services.

And Putin, speaking in February, complained about what he said were more than 24 million attacks in the past year.

Andrei Soldatov, an expert on the FSB and co-author of Red Web, a book about the Kremlin's sprawling surveillance machine, told Reuters he thought if Russia had hacked the Democratic Party it would have been to send a signal that it could do the same and wanted U.S. intelligence services to desist.

"This could have been an attempt to deter the United States (from hacking and meddling), to try to shake the U.S. establishment, and to try to weaken Clinton," said Soldatov.

"It's pure politics, it's not about military secrets."

In Moscow, Trump, who has spoken of his desire for better relations with Russia and praised Putin, is seen as far more likely to cut a sanctions deal with Russia, while Clinton is regarded as a hawk on Russia.

"Everyone in Moscow believes that with Clinton in the White House it would be absolutely impossible to get the sanctions lifted," said Soldatov.

Trump has already raised hackles in Ukraine by saying he would be willing to consider lifting sanctions.

Capacity

Experts say the Russian state, via the FSB, has a well developed offensive hacking capability. It has previously been accused of deploying that capability in Estonia, Georgia and Ukraine. Russian military intelligence, GRU, is known to have similar capabilities, Soldatov said.

There are also other non-state hacker groups which experts say sometimes collaborate with the security services, motivated by patriotism or money.

Galeotti said Russia's capacity to mount cyber attacks had increased over the past two years. Previously, Moscow would force amateur hackers into its service, he said, but lately "what we are seeing is much more of a push towards creating professional in-house capacity."

In this case, however, Soldatov said he thought it more likely that amateur hackers would have been responsible for the U.S. hack rather than the FSB or GRU who, if involved at all, would have played only a very minor role.

One reason for reaching that conclusion was how sloppily and hastily prepared the cover-up of the hack looked, he said.

{eoa}

3 Subtle Distinctions Between Demons and Fallen Angels

Through my observation and study of Scripture, I have come to believe, quite confidently, that demons cannot be fallen angels.

Now, I know that idea will be rather jarring for some people. It may seem that I am not only challenging a widely held traditional view but also contradicting very clear teachings of the Bible. Well, the idea that demons are not fallen angels certainly contradicts tradition. But in no way does it contradict Scripture.

The Bible speaks of demons, and it speaks of the fall of Lucifer and the co-rebellion of a third of the angels, but no verses actually link the two and define demons as fallen angels. The idea that demons are fallen angels is simply a long-held tradition. The Bible actually gives three subtle distinctions between demons and fallen angels, and I want to explore each one here.

Demons Need Bodies

Demons seek to possess bodies and seem rather uncomfortable being outside of them. Take for instance the story of a man possessed by an entire legion of demons. While being cast out, the demons in that story begged Jesus to send them into a herd of pigs:

There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding in the distance. So the demons begged, *“If you cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine”* (Matt. 8:30–31, MEV).

Fallen angels, however, can appear in physical form and even interact with mankind. In Genesis fallen angels even procreated with women. The bizarre procreation resulted in the birth of giants.

“There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown” (Gen. 6:4, KJV).

For that procreation, God punished the “sons of God” by binding them in “everlasting chains” until the day of judgment

(Jude 6). Keep in mind that every reference to “sons of God” in the Old Testament was a reference to supernatural beings or angels. Only in the New Testament does “sons of God” refer to the redeemed children of God. So we know that it wasn’t ordinary men, as some might suggest, who procreated with the “daughters of men.” Had those referred to in Genesis 6:4 been mere ordinary men, there would be no clear reason their procreation would produce giants.

Some also suggest that perhaps “sons of God” referred to a select group of people who were forbidden to procreate with a certain other group. Still, that would not explain why their union produced giants or why God punished their actions so harshly.

There are others still who say angels cannot breed, citing Matthew 22:30: *“For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels of God in heaven”* (MEV). But that verse tells us only that angels do not marry. Angels can still have a gender and appear to mankind in earthly bodies. The book of Hebrews tells us that angels can actually walk around among us without being noticed.

“Do not forget to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unknowingly” (Heb. 13:2, MEV).

Consider also the angels at Christ’s empty tomb. *“While they were greatly perplexed concerning this, suddenly two men stood by them in shining garments”* (Luke 24:4, MEV).

Also, the men of Sodom desired to have sex with the angels that appeared to Lot. How could that be unless the angels had bodies and looked like human beings?

“Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting at the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them he rose up to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. ... Before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every

quarter, surrounded the house. 5 They then called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, so that we may have relations with them" (Gen. 19:1, 4-5, MEV).

From Scripture, we see that both fallen angels and holy angels *have* bodies. In contrast, demons greatly *desire* bodies because they do not have them. Demons are clingy, needy, angry, tormented creatures. That is the first distinction between fallen angels and demons.

Demons Wander the Earth

Demons are cursed to wander the earth while fallen angels still have the ability to stand before God in heavenly places. Though they were banished from heaven, the fallen angels still gave an account of their doings.

"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and the Adversary also came among them" (Job 1:6, MEV).

I'll give you a few good reasons to believe fallen angels, and not just heavenly angels, were among those who stood before God in the story recorded in the Book of Job. First, the devil was no longer Lucifer, for the Book of Job refers to him as "Satan." Second, we also know that Satan was in his fallen state because later in the story of Job he sought to steal from, kill and destroy Job. As Jesus said, *"The thief's does not come, except to steal and kill and destroy ... "* (John 10:10, MEV).

Third, we know from the following verse that Job's story took place *after* the great flood, which means it definitely took place after the fall of both man and Satan.

"Will you keep to the old way, that wicked men have trod? They were cut down before their time; their foundations were swept away by a flood" (Job 22:15–16, MEV).

So if Satan in his fallen state was among the angels who had to give an account in Job, it is consistent to believe that other fallen angels were called upon as well. Fallen angels can appear in heavenly places. Therefore, fallen angels are not completely bound to earth. Demons, however, can only wander the earth or live in a body, as Jesus explained:

“When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through dry places seeking rest, but finds none” (Matt. 12:43, MEV).

Nowhere in Scripture do we see demons moving from the earth to God’s presence. Those accounts are always referring to fallen angels.

Demons Are Called ‘Devils’ and ‘Unclean Spirits’

When referring to fallen angels, New Testament scriptures do not use the terms *demons*, *devils* or *unclean spirits*. Instead, the Bible makes reference to fallen angels by simply using a negative description or context. For example, these verses clearly describe fallen angels:

For if God did not spare the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness to be kept for judgment ...” (2 Peter 2:4, MEV).

“Likewise, the angels who did not keep to their first domain, but forsook their own dwelling, He has kept in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day” (Jude 1:6, MEV).

“Then He will say to those at the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his angels’” (Matt. 25:41, MEV).

In these verses there is no mention of demons or devils. Instead, to make a distinction between God’s holy angels and fallen angels, the New Testament simply calls them the angels “that sinned” or “which kept not their first estate.”

Apart from the simple use of negative descriptions, the New Testament also uses context to draw distinctions between fallen angels and holy angels. An example of this is when, in Matthew 25:41, hell is described as a place prepared for the devil and his angels. The angels in that verse were said to belong to the devil, so it is obvious that they were fallen.

Furthermore, in the following verse, while making a strong point about the need to avoid false gospels, Paul the Apostle mentions angels "from heaven."

"Although if we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel to you than the one we have preached to you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8, MEV).

Of course, it's obvious that one should reject the gospel of a fallen angel, but it might not have been as obvious to the Galatians that they should reject a different gospel from even a *holy* angel. To drive his point home, Paul essentially warns, "Even if one of the angels *from heaven* should preach to you another gospel, do not be deceived." In other words, "Don't be swayed even if one of the good guys starts to preach a different gospel."

Paul's warning is an example of how the New Testament contrasts both fallen and holy angels. No special term is used to describe fallen angels; they are simply described in a negative way and/or placed in a negative context. Demons, on the other hand, are referred to as "devils," "unclean spirits" and "demons." {eoa}

Excerpted from Truths About Demons and Spiritual Warfare by David Diga Hernandez (Charisma House, 2016).

David Diga Hernandez (author of Carriers of the Glory) is an evangelist, healing minister, author and TV host. He heads an international healing ministry based in Southern California. David travels both domestically and internationally and his TV show, Encounter TV, is available in millions of homes globally.

His ministry is marked by a distinctive presence of the Holy Spirit, miracles, healing and salvation. David is a unique and emerging spiritual leader, called to take God's saving and healing power to this generation.

End-Times Virus Makes Its Way to Miami

Florida authorities on Friday reported what is believed to be the first evidence of local Zika transmission in the continental United States, concluding that mosquitoes likely infected four people with the virus that can cause a rare but serious birth defect.

Governor Rick Scott said the state believed active transmission of the virus was occurring within an area of Miami about the size of a square mile (2.6 square kms). Testing showed that one woman and three men had been infected, Scott said.

While health officials have yet to identify mosquitoes carrying the virus, the state has ruled out other means of transmission, including travel to another country with a Zika outbreak, and sexual contact.

"We have worked hard to stay ahead of the spread of Zika and prepare for the worst," Scott said in a statement. "We will continue to put every resource available to fighting the spread of Zika in our state."

Zika's greatest risk is believed to be posed by infection in pregnant women, given its ability to cause microcephaly in babies, a condition defined by small head size that can lead

to developmental problems. The current outbreak was first detected in Brazil last year and has since spread rapidly through the Americas.

Florida Surgeon General Celeste Philip said that health officials are not advising pregnant women to move out of the suspected transmission area.

“We do not believe there will be ongoing transmission,” Philip said at a press conference in Orlando, citing daily efforts to control the mosquito population in the area.

The local health department is searching for other potential infections, with more than 2,300 people tested so far in the state, is ramping up mosquito control programs and is distributing Zika protection kits to pregnant women at their doctors’ offices, Florida officials said.

Residents in Miami neighborhoods thought to harbor Zika said the local spread of the virus had been inevitable, given the large numbers of tourists from other countries with outbreaks.

Damian Jose Delgado, a 35-year-old father of two, said news of Zika’s arrival would make him think twice about expanding his family.

“I think I might be done having kids,” Delgado said.

EARLY WARNINGS

U.S. health officials have cautioned for months that the summer mosquito season was likely to bring local outbreaks, with Gulf Coast states such as Florida, Texas and Louisiana, on the frontlines. Some have said Zika’s spread could be more limited than in places like Brazil, given widespread U.S. use of screens on windows, air conditioning and mosquito control programs.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said on Friday it would not recommend limiting travel to Florida. The

agency has recommended that pregnant women not travel to other countries where Zika is active.

“We anticipate that there may be additional cases of ‘homegrown’ Zika in the coming weeks,” said Dr. Lyle Petersen, a CDC official helping lead the agency’s Zika response effort. “Our top priority is to protect pregnant women from the potentially devastating harm caused by Zika.”

Up to 80 percent of people infected with Zika may experience no signs of illness, while those who do generally have relatively mild symptoms, including fever and rash. There are no specific treatments or vaccines for the virus.

The World Health Organization declared a global health emergency in February, reflecting alarm over the discovery that Zika was linked to microcephaly and other severe neurological abnormalities. Brazil has confirmed over 1,700 cases of microcephaly linked to Zika infection in pregnant women.

Public health officials say Zika is also a likely cause of Guillain-Barre syndrome, a rare neurological disorder in adults that can cause temporary paralysis.

Zika’s arrival in the United States comes with Congress in recess after failing to reach agreement over how much funding could be used to fight an outbreak. The Obama administration has requested \$1.9 billion to finance research, mosquito control and other prevention efforts. Scott said he has authorized \$26.2 million to help fight the virus in the state.

President Barack Obama has been briefed on the Florida Zika cases and has directed his team to ensure the state has the support it needs to fight the virus, a White House spokesman said. The new findings should be a “wake-up call” to Congress to provide more funding, spokesman Eric Schultz said.

Until now, the more than 1,600 Zika cases in the United States have stemmed from travel to another country with active transmission, as well as a small number of cases of apparent sexual transmission by a person infected outside of the country.

Puerto Rico is grappling with a Zika outbreak, with more than 4,600 cases of local transmission. U.S. health officials have predicted there will be hundreds of thousands of cases on the island territory before the current outbreak ends due to the prevalence of Zika-carrying mosquitoes and a lack of infrastructure to protect against insect bites. {eoa}

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So-Called ‘Health’ Supplements Can Sicken—Or Kill—You

Herbal viagra could leave your whole body stiff—as in dead.

Yohimbe, which claims to treat erectile dysfunction, depression and obesity, was among 15 supplements that Consumer Reports identified Wednesday as having side effects that can seriously sicken or kill users in gruesome ways, including organ failure, cancer and cardiac arrest.

In terms of yohimbe, an independent panel of doctors and dietary supplement researchers found that it can raise your blood pressure, cause rapid heart rate, as well as increase the risk of seizures, liver and kidney damage, heart problems, panic attacks and death.

More than 90,000 vitamins, probiotics, minerals, herbs, botanicals and a growing list of “natural” substances crowd drugstore shelves today, but there’s little evidence to prove they have any real health benefits.

The Annals of American Medicine even told shoppers to “Stop Wasting Money on Vitamin and Mineral Supplements” in a 2013 report that ruled there is no evidence to support the idea of supplements having positive effects—and in fact, some were harmful.

Click here to read the full story.

Rabid Atheist Group Going After Baptist Convention

An atheist group has sued Kansas City, Missouri, charging that plans to use \$65,000 in tourism tax dollars to assist in an upcoming Baptist convention violates guarantees in the U.S. Constitution separating church and state.

The lawsuit, filed on Friday in U.S. District Court by American Atheists Inc against officials including Kansas City Mayor Sly James, asks a federal judge to block the city from spending taxpayer dollars to support the event.

It contends that using tax dollars to help Modest Miles Ministries Inc, prepare for the National Baptist Convention USA Inc, would advance a religious purpose in violation of American Atheists’ right to be of state-supported religion, as provided for under the “establishment clause of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

In April, the city approved to pay \$65,000 in municipal funds from the Neighborhood Tourist Development Fund to the ministry to help transportation costs, the lawsuit said. The conventions is scheduled to be held Sept. 5-9 in Kansas City.

Kansas City spokesman Chris Hernandez declined to comment on the pending lawsuit. But a contract has not been signed for the funds to be released, and standard contract language excludes religious use of any funding, Hernandez said.

About 10,000 people are expected to attend the convention, which was previously held in the city in 2010, 2003 and 1998, the Kansas City Star reported. {eoa}

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How This Stronghold Can Sabotage Your Weight-Loss Efforts

It comes in all shapes and sizes. It's hidden in small incidents that trigger flashbacks. It grabs hold of you and doesn't seem to want to let go. It stymies any healthy living journey. It's the main tool Satan uses to take you out of the game of life. It's called fear.

Fear Leads to Destruction

I know all about fear. The evil one used it to keep me in line, headed on the path to total destruction. At 430 pounds that's exactly where I was destined.

I could lose weight pretty easily. The problem was I would put

it back on plus more. I'm an educated person with a bachelor's and a master's degree. I felt I should have been able to figure out how to do this. Try as I might, I couldn't get a handle on it.

Fear gripped me when I passed the 300-pound mark. After losing 100 pounds, I once again celebrated with Mamaw's oatmeal cake and put back on the weight plus about 25 more pounds.

It was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back, meaning it was the last action in a long line of cumulative actions. I wanted to break this lose-gain roller coaster because I was afraid of the results of gaining even more weight.

Doing Nothing

It was this fear that drove me to decide to do "nothing". Everything I did seemed to backfire on me, so I decided doing nothing was better than failing. With this definition I continued to gain weight.

Fear is just false evidence appearing real. The evil one is good at making us believe the "evidence" is a solid reason to just give up and surrender to the fear. I didn't have a fear of gaining weight because in some way I felt the weight protected me from men like the one who molested me when I was 11.

For years I muddled through until my fears seemed to come true. What we dwell on, think about and turn over and over in our minds will come true whether that be fears or dreams. It's just one of the reasons we should guard our thoughts.

Fears Become Realities

When I reached 430 pounds and had to be hospitalized with congestive heart failure, a rude cardiac surgeon told me that I needed to lose at least 100 pounds and keep it off or I'd be

dead in five years.

This jump-started my desire to find a solution. You can read all about how I began to be a loser in *Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds*. Suffice it to say, I had to take a risky step of faith.

I had to overcome my fear of doing the wrong thing. For years I wouldn't even weigh when I went to the doctor's office. I didn't have a scale at home that went high enough to weigh me plus I just didn't want to know the truth.

I will admit that I was even afraid of the scale. I wanted to smash it to smithereens because surely it was against me. Getting over that fear was one of the first steps. I began to see the scale as a tool to help me determine if how I was eating and moving was helping me or not.

If the scale showed a weight gain that said to me that I needed to adjust something. If it showed a loss, I noted what I had done differently the day before or the day before that. I didn't let it intimidate me or rule my life. It's nothing more than a piece of machinery which gives me information I can use to help me on my journey.

Just Do It

I joined a weight loss group called "Just do it". Following this motto helped break my "do-nothing-and-no-harm-will-come-to-me" philosophy. I began doing something about my problem, taking small steps towards my goal.

I learned to take steps that would change my habits for good. I changed my mindset from dieting to creating lasting lifestyle changes. Each thing I incorporated I realized this is for the rest of my life, not just until I get to a goal weight. I'm cooperating with God to transform my entire life—body, soul and spirit.

I surrendered my ability or inability to do figure out how to do this weight loss journey. on His altar. I told Him I was weak and that I would do things His way. My watchword became what God told Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."¹

Shattering Fears

When I allowed God to direct me on this journey, things began to change. There is so much more to my story, but the truth is nothing happened until I took a step towards changing my life from the inside out.²

Fear began to shatter when I came out of my self-imposed exile and submitted totally to God in this process.

I realized God only directs moving targets. Sitting and trying to decide what to do doesn't work. I have to be trying things, throwing out what doesn't work and keeping what does.

When I do that, God is right beside me telling me, "No, this is the way, walk here."³ He directs me when I stray off His path. When I'm listening for His still, small voice, I will never go wrong and if I do, I get right back on the path He has for me.

Yes, the evil one will try to convince me I need to do nothing again, but it's difficult for him to do when I'm moving forward. Forward motion dispels fear every time. Forward motion delights God to no end. Forward motion is the only way God can direct us on this path.

What is one step you can take today to move you forward?

¹ 2 Corinthians 12:9

² Romans 12:1-2

³ Isaiah 30:21

Teresa Shields Parker is a wife, mother, business owner, life group leader, speaker and author of Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds and Stopped Trying to Earn God's Favor and Sweet Grace Study Guide: Practical Steps to Lose Weight and Overcome Sugar Addiction and Sweet Freedom. Get a free chapter of her memoir on her blog at [Teresa Shields](#) . Connect with her there or on her [Facebook page](#) or [Twitter](#).

Leadership in times of crisis and tragedy

We must first receive a fresh baptism of the Father's love and compassion for those who have experienced such horrific loss. And as we sit in His Presence let's intercede and pray for the families and friends to have a supernatural encounter with the comfort and compassion of our Lord Jesus. May this be a time for many to turn to the Lord for His help and the doors of our hearts and churches be open to any and all who are brokenhearted.

And while this is certainly not a time for judgement from believers, it is a time for us to come to the scripture to solidify not our opinions, but of His truth. We must remember that His laws are not to harm us but they are to give us life and hope. We are living in tumultuous times in which people are no longer "lovers of Truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:10). Because of these perilous times we are compelled to be filled with His love, mercy and truth.

Ponder deeply the truths and hope expressed in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. We the church are made up of sinners saved by grace and through His power each of us are brought into salvation. And as we continue to intercede for those in Orlando, expect to see that what the enemy meant for evil our ever seeking and loving God will turn around for good!

God loves us and there is hope and joy in the midst of crisis. Access His true comfort today. Subscribe now to receive your FREE gift. Promo code: CHJOD616.

– The Joy of Discovery with Dotty Schmitt

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