

41 Years Prove 4 Essentials Can Divorce-Proof Your Marriage

Don't believe it when people say that in America divorce is declining. The reality is that divorce as a percentage of marriages appears to be less because countless millions are simply living together and not getting married.

A whopping 76 percent of young Americans believe living together before marriage is fine. Sixty-five percent of "altar bound" singles—many of whom identify as "Christians"—live together before marriage, a euphemism for lifestyle fornication.

The latest development is Baby Boomers, 50 and up, cohabiting (an increase of 75 percent since 2007) as splits have doubled since the 1990s. This is being labeled "gray divorce."

What is shameful is that America, supposedly a predominately "Christian" nation places in the top 10 list of countries with the most divorces each year. We actually register having one divorce every six seconds. Understand why we so desperately need a spiritual awakening?

Here's the deal: We need to rediscover and recommit ourselves to the essentials for healthy marriages that glorify God! The battle is raging with cohabitation, rampant divorce and celebration of homosexual "marriage." The good news is the prophetic promise from Psalm 110:3 is resonating with multitudes as God is stirring the hearts of God's people to respond, "Your people will follow you in the day of your battle."

Married 41 Years/15,000 Days

This week we celebrate our 41st wedding anniversary. Fast-forward a few weeks, and we'll commemorate 15,000 days together as husband and wife.

Did we by happenstance come upon our "soulmate?" Was I humming Frank Sinatra's classic, "Luck be a Lady" and poof, Doris miraculously appeared? Are we simply blessed with good genes, something in our DNA that caused us to stay connected?

None of the above.

As we honor God for His faithfulness at this marriage milestone, it provides us with an opportunity to pass along four fundamental keys to inspire others. Like everyone, we've had our difficult times and made many mistakes, but through it all these fundamentals have carried us through to victory.

Four Nonnegotiables

1. Christ

On my right forearm, I have a tattoo that says "Jesus." My wife and I made a total commitment of our lives to Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior before we were married. We pledged to keep Him first in our lives and cultivate an ever-deepening relationship with Him as our Bridegroom and Friend.

Doris and I made a quality decision to "seek first His kingdom" (not the "Magic Kingdom," but the domain of our king) in every area of our lives (Matt. 6:33). We're radicals in devotion, living "for the praise of His glory" (Eph. 1:12), and it pays off rich dividends.

2. Covenant

When we exchanged our marriage vows, we understood they were permanent, binding for life. We said to each other in the presence of 1200 witnesses, "divorce was not an option" and we'd never even use the word (we haven't!).

God's dealings with mankind have always been on the basis of covenant, and that's the way He ordained for us to relate in the marriage relationship. This enables us to reveal God's expressed purpose for a marriage which is a living demonstration of Christ's relationship with His Church before a watching world (Eph. 5:22-28).

While there are three biblical grounds for severing the marriage covenant in divorce, our call is to be faithful to our solemn marriage vows. This is not high-school dating or the modern mentality, "Let's give it a try and see if things work out; if not, we can always get a divorce."

Before my wife's father died, they were weeks away from 70 years of marriage. Among the 24 marriages in our extended family there are no divorces. And among the 140 close couple friends we've known, there's been only one divorce, praise be to God.

Billy Graham's wife, Ruth, was asked if she ever thought about divorce in her relationship with her husband? She replied in a joking manner, "Divorce—no. Murder ... well ..." Her point was obvious: Every marriage has challenges, pressure reveals the person and we don't run home to Mommy but rather to God when the heat is on.

3. Communication

Most problems in marriage, business and ministries come because of failure regarding communication and expectations. This is why communication is not optional but essential and needs to be planned, consistent, unhurried and in-depth.

Setting aside regular times for catching up and meaningful interaction; establishing a consistent date night and sharing special "overnighter" getaways enable us to keep the marriage relationship and romance healthy.

A weekly date night (we've practiced this for decades) is not

an hour at the end of the day, just watching some “flick,” a family night, time with other couples or reading books in separate rooms. It’s time to stay current and draw out one another’s feelings and perspectives plus possibly plan, pray and dream together.

4. Community

The Christian life was never intended to be lived independently in isolation. Involvement meaningfully in a local church provides the relational support, encouragement and accountability we all need. We thank God for many friends who have been there for us in our times of need.

For years, we gathered for a weekend retreat with couples in a similar season of life. We shared meals together and laughter along with transparent discussion about schedules, current challenges, child-rearing, health, romance and the state of our relationship (“Scale of 1-10, where do we think we are?” The men usually offered “Eight, nine or 10.” The wives often said, “Three, four or 5,”—the more realistic ones).

Every couple goes through rough patches and periods of unusual stress and conflict. A marriage is not the absence of conflict but the overcoming of it and we all need help from faithful friends, ideally in a local church community where every Christian should be planted (Acts 2:42-7).

Turning Things Around

We encourage you to reflect upon these four essentials that we transfer to you in these turbulent times. Pass them along to your children and any friends who are married or contemplating this big step in their lives.

Recently one of our family members was aroused in the middle of the night as SWAT teams and a robot surrounded a neighborhood home. For hours, the perilous scene unfolded. When the crisis was resolved, everyone was extremely grateful

for the outstanding police who put into practice fundamentals that turned the situation around.

Multitudes of people in America are tragically living in “silent divorce.” Others are fearful of entering marriage because of what they witness.

People today need hope. They also need both a declaration and demonstration of strong and successful Christian marriages modeling God’s original intent.

Are you a candidate to help turn things around? {eoa}

This Might Be Why Your Healing Hasn’t Come Yet

Father Anthony Messeh, the priest at St. Timothy and St. Athanasius Coptic Orthodox Church, said, “We don’t usually change because we see the light, but rather because we feel the heat.” The heat you may feel might be because you aren’t hearing God or asking the right questions regarding what God is attempting to say to you. God doesn’t make us sick, but acknowledging the need to change may be part of your healing. This was true for me concerning a severe sleep crisis I recently experienced. Nothing I tried worked until I asked the right spiritual questions—until I repented and made the changes I’d been putting off.

Is there anything God may be asking you to do or not do? God asked Jacob what his name was, though He knew the answer. Jacob’s name meant deceiver. He was a dishonest man who used deceit and trickery to get what he wanted even with his brother and his own aging, nearly blind father (Genesis 27).

Jacob encountered God and wrestled all night with him. When morning came, he was ready to change. It was time for Jacob to acknowledge who he was—a deceiver—and receive a name change, which meant a change of heart and a change of ways.

Is there a name you need to change—willful, prideful, disobedient, stubborn, fearful, worrisome, lustful, bitter, unforgiving, procrastinator? Could God be in the tough situations of your life trying to get your attention, asking you what is your name? Could He want to give you a new name as He did Jacob?

Kenneth Hagin told the story of a man who came for healing prayer for painful stomach ulcers. There was demonic influence in his body from which the man needed deliverance. But there was also something God was asking him to do that he hadn't done, which was to tithe. He repented and said he would start tithing. The man was healed.

Maybe God is asking you to change your diet, to stop eating or drinking certain things that are making you sick. Or perhaps he wants you to include more foods that are healing. But maybe it's something else. For me, it was something else. I included all the right foods, juices and supplements. I was doing everything I knew to do, but I was getting worse by the day. For me, it was another key that I needed to unlock the door to healing. It was obedience to what God had been asking me to do and I wasn't doing. My sister-in-law, who recently had foot surgery, got a get-well card that said, "As they say in (doggie) obedience school ... heal." First Samuel 15:22 says, "Obedience is better than sacrifice, a listening ear than the fat of rams."

As I knelt in prayer after I finally heard God, I knew He was saying He's not a doting grandfather who thinks misbehavior is cute. He is God of the universe. He is our Father who loves us. Hebrews 12:6 says, "for whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and scourges every son whom He receives."

When the moment of awakening finally came for me, I was stunned to see how long it had taken me to come to the truth, and the key that would unlock the door to my healing. Isaiah 30:18 says, “Therefore, the Lord longs to be gracious to you, and therefore, He waits on high to have mercy on you; for the Lord is a God of justice; how blessed are all who long for Him.”

What I teach is still true. With any ailment, we must do our part in the healing process, even when it’s something like insomnia where we might think there’s no relationship with diet. But there may be another key that’s even more important to unlock the door to healing. It may start with a question: What am I doing that God has asked me not to do? Or, what am I not doing that God wants me to do? {eoa}

Cherie Calbom, M.S., holds a master of science degree in whole foods nutrition from Bastyr University. Known as “The Juice Lady” for her work with juicing and health, she is the author of 32 books, including her latest book The Juice Lady’s Guide to Fasting. She and her husband offer juice cleanse retreats throughout the year, 30-Day Detox online and Garden’s Best Juice Powder. “What You Can Do When Your Healing Doesn’t Come” is one point from her teaching “7 Keys to Your Supernatural Healing.” You can connect with Cherie at .

Half-Marathon Protesting Inequality by Engaging in Inequality

Guys who want to compete in the Des Moines Women’s Half Marathon will have to pay a 23 percent higher registration fee

than women.

“As a male registering for this event, you recognize that your registration cost will be 23 percent higher to reflect current wage inequality between men and women in the state of Iowa,” **read an explanation on the event website.**

Oh, I see. Race organizers are protesting inequality by engaging in inequality.

RipRoar Events, the Des Moines-based company behind next month’s race, said the 23 percent surcharge for males will be donated to a “Des Moines-based women’s empowerment initiative.”

I was alerted to the gender-based pricing scheme by one of my Iowa readers.

“My wife was going to run the half until she saw this and refused to even sign up for it,” he told me. “This doesn’t do anything for women. They are just discriminating against someone else. It makes them no better.”

And for a race that celebrates female empowerment, their website includes several head-scratching items.

Take for example this item—culled from the “FAQ” section:

“Q. Will there be restrooms on the course? A. There will be a restroom located at each aid station. After all, it is a women’s race.”

And check out this line from the team relay section: “The toughest part of the team relay is determining who gets cut: Carrie, Samantha, Charlotte or Miranda?”

Race organizers also encouraged participants to use the hashtag “I AM MORE.” They said it was a way to connect to “a greater community of empowering, inspiring and label-defying women in our community.”

And what better way to defy labels than by labeling the female runners as a bunch of wine-swilling *Sex and the City* fans who can't control their bladders?

I wonder if the surcharge will apply to transgender runners or gender fluid runners or non-binary runners?

Come to think of it, what would organizers do if a man who identifies as a woman wins the women's half-marathon—or heaven forbid—a man who identifies as a man?

Maybe the race organizers should implement some safeguards—like making the men start the race 23 minutes after the women.

Or better yet—they could just require the men to run 23 steps behind the ladies.

I'm sure that'll put the men in their place. {eoa}

Chuck Schumer Lied, and the Filibuster Died

One could almost sense an audible rumbling sound as the roll was called in the Senate at about half past noon (EDT) last Thursday, with the fate of the filibuster for Supreme Court nominees precariously hanging in the balance.

When the votes were tallied, the infamous “nuclear option” had been triggered; but those expecting a rhetorical mushroom cloud or a lot of fireworks were sorely disappointed. In fact, the moment passed without any kind of fanfare or special notation whatsoever. If one didn't know better you'd think nothing consequential had just happened.

Many pundits have suggested through the years that there isn't much that would unify all Republicans—especially those in the Senate—but as America watched the senators vote on the nomination of Judge Neil Gorsuch for the Supreme Court, it was evident there is at least one issue that brings the GOP together.

First every single Republican voted to end debate on Gorsuch. Then when the Democrats filibustered every Republican voted for the “nuclear option” to bury the practice for future Supreme Court nominees. From here on out it's a straight up-or-down vote for Court appointments. It was a good day for America.

In between the initial cloture vote and the procedural moves to press the nuclear button Minority Leader Chuck Schumer tried several times to stall the Gorsuch train. Every attempt was shot down by the unified Republicans.

It was a beautiful thing to witness, though parliamentary procedure isn't the most entertaining “show” on TV. It's a darn good cure for insomnia, though.

Susan Ferrechio of the *Washington Examiner* described the action:

McConnell started the process by raising a point of order challenging the current process for confirming Supreme Court nominees. That process required 60 votes to end debate on these nominees, although Democrats changed the process in 2013 by allowing just a simple majority vote for all others.

To make the change, McConnell contested the ruling of the Senate parliamentarian. A vote was called on whether to maintain the ruling of the chair, or to change precedent as proposed by McConnell, and the Senate voted 48-52 against keeping the current process in place. With that vote, Republicans won the battle.

Boom. In an instant, the hopes of millions of liberals who believed the delusional Democrats when they swore a sacred oath to stop Gorsuch were incinerated. No more signs. No more slogans. No more crying in safe spaces. It's all gone now.

After the nuclear strike, the rest was really just a formality. The senators voted again to end debate, and Gorsuch prevailed 55-45 with Democrats Joe Manchin (WV), Heide Heitkamp (ND) and Joe Donnelly (IN) voting yes along with all the Republicans.

So in essence the Democrats were fairly united too, though they did "lose" a token three votes to the Republican side (well short of the eight that would have been needed to end debate the old-fashioned way). Before we herald Manchin, Heitkamp and Donnelly too highly, it should be noted they didn't risk a whole lot by voting in the affirmative for Gorsuch. I'm guessing they were all assured well ahead of time by the Democrat leadership that they could feel free to vote with the Republicans because the Democrats already had the necessary votes to try and stop Gorsuch.

If the vote was ever in doubt, Schumer would have sent the leftist shock troops to their homes to browbeat them into submission.

How do I know? Chuck Schumer's behavior gave it away. In the lead-up to the Gorsuch vote, the minority leader predicted the GOP would have to answer for its gross manipulation of the system and historic disregard of Senate tradition. The New York senator also predicted it was only a matter of time until the filibuster rules for legislation go up in smoke as well.

It that's the case, it's because Schumer is perhaps the biggest liar in Washington. He tried to shove the blame for killing the filibuster over to the GOP when he was the one (along with Harry Reid) who devised all the tactics.

As far as the political repercussions from killing the

filibuster for Supreme Court nominees, does Schumer know something we don't? He isn't on the GOP consultant payroll and his counsel has never been useful—why should anyone listen to him?

There's really no way to tell at this point how any of this is going to play out in next year's election. If I had to guess, I doubt anyone will even be talking about this event as an issue in the campaign.

The 2018 midterm elections are still 19 months away. In between now and then any number of big topics will come up: Tax reform, health care (again and again), the border wall, immigration reform, defense budget outlays, trade policy, energy production, infrastructure, raising the debt ceiling—and the federal budget itself.

That's not to mention the possibility of more terrorist attacks around the globe, and a wise man would wager there will still be turmoil in the Middle East and Far East.

There will be a lot to talk about between today and November of next year. For Democrats to predict Republicans will suffer because they exercised the “nuclear” option now is pure stupidity.

Each side will likely continue “threatening” the other with electoral ultimatums, such as “If the Republicans pass this budget, the disadvantaged will lose their shelter and food. Millions will be living on the street. Families will be split up. Armageddon is happening. Republicans will have to answer to the voters.”

Meanwhile, Republicans will offer their own pro bono advice to Democrats, basically claiming “You guys made us do it. Our plan is better. Our people are better. The voters will know what to do.”

In the end, Americans will decide who's right, just as they

did last November when they put Donald Trump in office. The vacant Supreme Court seat was a huge concern for many, and it certainly looks as though Trump voters will be rewarded with a new justice who honors the Constitution just the way Justice Antonin Scalia did for 30 years.

And if it took pushing the “nuclear option” button to get him there, it was well worth it. {eoa}

This is an excerpt from an article that was originally published at . Used with permission.

Should Christians Participate in the Passover Seder?

It is not surprising that two rabbis have argued that Christians should not participate in the Seder, the traditional Jewish Passover meal, although it is mildly surprising that the rabbis expressed their opinion on the pages of *Christianity Today*.

The article, “Jesus Didn’t Eat a Seder Meal,” was written by rabbis Yehiel E. Poupko and David Sandmel, both of whom celebrate Jewish-Christian dialogue and both of whom call for mutual respect between the faiths. It is for that reason—respect—that they urge Christians not to engage in their own version of a Passover Seder, especially if it is led by a Messianic Jew (a Jewish believer in Jesus).

First, they argue, the Seder meal as it is celebrated today contains elements that were not known in Jesus’ day. So, whatever Passover meal Jesus ate at the last supper, it was not the same as the traditional Seder, which was developed in

the following centuries.

Second, the rabbis feel that it is inappropriate and disrespectful for Christians to have their own Passover Seders, since it is taking something that is sacred to Judaism and turning it into a Christian event. Rather, if Christians really want to find out the meaning of the Seder, they should ask one of their Jewish friends for an invitation to a traditional Seder where they can sit and learn as a guest. Or they can ask the local rabbi if he could instruct them about the meaning of the Seder. But this sacred meal must not be co-opted by Christians.

How should we respond?

I would first ask a question: How many Christians are having their own Passover Seders? How many churches are sponsoring these? My guess is that almost all of these are done in conjunction with Messianic Jews. That, I believe, is the real rub for these rabbis.

You see, it is common at this time of the year for Jewish believers in Jesus to host special church events with titles like, "Messiah in the Passover Seder." During these events, which can draw many hundreds of people, there will be teaching through the night that points to Jesus-Yeshua, the Lamb of God, as the centerpiece of the Passover. He is the one who paved the way for a deliverance even greater than the exodus from the Egypt. He is the one whose blood redeems us from God's judgment. He is the Passover Lamb!

So, during the meal, the participants look back to the exodus, they look back to the cross, and they celebrate the Jewish roots of their faith.

"But," someone protests, "that's the whole problem. That's what these rabbis are trying to say. Jesus didn't celebrate this same meal, and it's wrong to take these Jewish traditions and make them into a platform for preaching a Christian

message.”

Actually, as a Messianic Jew myself, and as one who has engaged in serious, academic dialogue with my Jewish community for the last 45 years, I understand this objection. How would we feel if Muslims celebrated Communion but saw in it a prophecy of Muhammad? How would we feel if they co-opted something sacred to us?

But that is where the comparison breaks down.

Muslims do not believe in the crucifixion of Jesus, whereas we do believe in the Passover celebration, beginning with the exodus from Egypt and culminating in the death and resurrection of the Messiah. And Jesus did celebrate a traditional Jewish meal at the last Supper, even if it did not contain all the elements that it contains today. (Remember that Jesus was called *rabbi*, not *reverend*. For more on this, see my book *The Real Kosher Jesus*.) And Paul could write of the Messiah as the Passover Lamb (see 1 Cor. 5:7).

Not only so, but before they believed in Jesus, many Messianic Jews grew up celebrating the Passover Seder. Once they came to faith, the Seder took on much more meaning. That's why they celebrate Passover in their congregations, and that's why they teach on the meaning of the Seder at churches. To them, it's all about redemption, all about deliverance, all about the faithfulness of God, all about His promises to Israel, all about Jesus the Messiah.

Why shouldn't they celebrate it, and why shouldn't they teach other Christians about the beauty and meaning of the Seder from their unique, Messianic Jewish perspective? And why shouldn't Christians learn more about the Jewish roots of their faith?

After all, the stain of anti-Semitism has polluted Church history for centuries, and the more Christians can appreciate the Jewish roots of their faith, the less potential there is

for this ugly plague to raise its head again.

Thankfully, *Christianity Today* posted a response to the rabbis' article entitled, "Why Christians Can Celebrate Passover, Too," written by Mitch Glaser and Darrell Bock, both Jewish believers in Jesus.

They note correctly that, "The question of whether or not Jesus celebrated a Passover Seder as we now know it today is to some degree moot. He observed the Passover in the same way as any other first-century Jew. This event can draw Jews and Christians closer to one another rather than driving an additional wedge between our faith communities."

Thus, what concerns them "is when Christians do not see any identification with the Jewish people and the Jewish backgrounds of their faith. But more to the point, we simply cannot rob Christians of their heritage in Jesus—especially not the events of the Last Supper, which was clearly some type of Passover celebration."

And while it is true that Christians remember this Last Supper every time they take Communion, it is only in the context of the Passover meal that they are reminded of the contextual roots of that momentous meal: Jesus died as our Passover Lamb.

Again, I'm sensitive to the concerns of these rabbis, and their tone is not antagonistic. But as Jews around the world gather in their homes to celebrate Passover they have no reason to be disturbed by Christian celebrations of Passover. Rather, I would encourage them to ask the question: Why is this meal so important to many Christians as well? Could it be that they have some insights too? {eoa}

When an Aircraft Carrier Makes a U-Turn, North Korea Is Sent a Message

Over the weekend, President Donald Trump sent Congress his official notification of the missile strikes he ordered against a Syrian air base, as required by the *War Powers Resolution*.

He wrote:

At approximately 8:40 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on April 6, 2017, at my direction, United States military forces in the Mediterranean Sea, operating beyond the territorial sea of any state, struck the Shayrat military airfield in Syria. United States intelligence indicates that Syrian military forces operating from this airfield were responsible for the chemical weapons attack on Syrian civilians in southern Idlib Province, Syria, that occurred on April 4. I directed this action in order to degrade the Syrian military's ability to conduct further chemical weapons attacks and to dissuade the Syrian regime from using or proliferating chemical weapons, thereby promoting the stability of the region and averting a worsening of the region's current humanitarian catastrophe.

I acted in the vital national security and foreign policy interests of the United States, pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct foreign relations and as commander in chief and chief executive. The United States will take additional action, as necessary and appropriate, to further its important national interests.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93-148). I appreciate the support of

the Congress in this action.

Some may have thought the president was sending a message only to Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad. Others may have thought it was a message to Russia and Iran, as well. But there clearly was a message sent to another despotic world leader:

North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un.

Simultaneous to his letter to Congress, the president directed Navy Adm. Harry Harris, commander of U.S. Pacific Command, to redirect the Carl Vinson Strike Group from Singapore to a position just off the Korean Peninsula. The aircraft carrier . *Carl Vinson* and its support ships, which have been deployed since early January, were originally intended to make a ports-of-call tour of Australia instead.

According to USPACCOM, the Nimitz-class carrier, which currently serves as the seaborne home of Carrier Air Wing 2, is supported by the Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyers . Wayne E. Meyer and . Michael Murphy, and the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser . Lake Champlain. Meyer and Murphy are two of the Navy's most modern guided missile destroyers, capable of providing ballistic missile defense.

The president also spoke with his Japanese and South Korean counterparts over the weekend. The White House provided readouts of those phone calls on Monday.

First, his call to Acting President Hwang Kyo-Ahn of South Korea:

The leaders agreed that the use of chemical weapons, including Bashar al-Assad's April 4 attack on civilians, cannot be tolerated and that the international community should unite in its efforts to prevent further use of such weapons. President Trump thanked Acting President Hwang for his support for the United States strikes. The leaders also

reaffirmed the strength of the United States- Republic of Korea alliance and agreed to stay in close touch regarding North Korea and other issues of mutual concern.

And, in his call with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe:

The leaders agreed that Bashar al-Assad's use of chemical weapons against civilians, including women and children, was abhorrent and warranted a strong response from the international community. President Trump thanked Prime Minister Abe for his support for the United States missile strikes in Syria, and the two leaders pledged to show continued resolve in response to al-Assad's brutal actions. President Trump and Prime Minister Abe also agreed to further cooperation on a range of regional issues, including the threat posed by North Korea. {eoa}

Tragic School Shooting Targets San Bernardino Grade Schoolers

At least four people were hit by gunfire in a classroom shooting on Monday at a Southern California elementary school, police and fire officials said, and a local NBC News television affiliate reported two fatalities.

San Bernardino Police Chief Jarrod Burguan said the shooting at Northpark Elementary School in San Bernardino, east of Los Angeles, was initially believed to be a "murder-suicide" and that two students had been taken to the hospital for treatment.

He added that preliminary information was that there were four victims and that the “suspect is possibly down as well.”

Television station KNBC reported that two people were confirmed killed in the shooting, and that two students and one teacher were among the gunshot victims.

The San Bernardino County Fire Department said in a Twitter post that there were “multiple gunshot victims” from the incident. {eoa}

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Where Was Christ While ISIS Murdered Christians Yesterday?

Suicide bombers attacked two Coptic churches in Egypt yesterday, killing 44 people. It was the deadliest day of violence in the country in decades. ISIS has claimed responsibility for both bombings.

The first attack was in the northern city of Tanta at St. George’s Church. The explosion killed 27 and injured 78 others. The explosive device was planted under a seat in the main prayer hall close to the altar. Shortly afterward, at St. Mark’s Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in Alexandria, 16 people were killed and 41 were wounded in a suicide bomb attack.

Where is God when such atrocity strikes?

An all-knowing, all-loving, all-powerful God would know the attacks would happen before they did. He would have both the

compassion and the power to prevent them. Yet he did not.

We need to remember that God did not cause these attacks—terrorists did. God gave them the same free will he gives to us all. He intends us to use our freedom to love him and each other (Matt. 22:37–39). When we use our freedom for evil instead, he could remove the consequences of our sin. But this would, in effect, remove our freedom. Our purpose as humans made in God's image (Gen. 1:26–27) would be defeated.

Instead of removing our freedom and its consequences, our Lord chose to redeem them.

On Palm Sunday, Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem in direct fulfillment of messianic prophecy (Zech. 9:9), knowing the authorities would respond by seeking his arrest and execution. On Monday, he overturned the money changers' tables, further provoking the wrath of his enemies. On Tuesday, he defeated them again and again in public debate. On Maundy Thursday, he waited in the Garden of Gethsemane as they came to arrest him. On Good Friday, the One whose power calmed raging seas and raised the dead allowed Roman soldiers to nail him to a cross.

Here's the point: our Lord entered our fallen condition and took the consequences of our freedom on himself. He did not remove our freedom—he redeemed it. As a result, by the sanctifying, indwelling power of his Spirit, human free will can be used to advance his kingdom for his eternal glory and our eternal good.

For example: As Jesus grieves with the victims in Egypt and their families, he calls us to grieve. As he ministers to their broken hearts by his Spirit, he calls us to minister to them by our intercession. As he brings spiritual awakening to the Muslim world, he calls us to advance spiritual awakening in their culture and ours through prayer, worship, and witness.

It is human nature to ask why sinful, broken people act in

sinful, broken ways. Such questions are completely understandable and even biblical (Is. 1:18). But our Father then calls us to move from speculation to action, from asking why tragedy strikes to asking how we can help its victims.

When the second ISIS bomber neared St. Mark's Cathedral, a security officer saw him and tried to hug him to shield the crowd moments before the explosion. This brave man gave his life so others could live. He served the victims and emulated Jesus.

How will we do the same today? {eoa}

Prophecy: The 7 Mountains Will Be Conquered

Prophetic author Ben Peters offered a powerful new word from the Lord on Monday to readers of Elijah List, saying the seven mountains will be conquered in America.

"This is what I hear the Father saying: 'Don't miss out! You have asked for help in times of need, but I want to do much more for you than just meet your need,'" he wrote. "'I want to pour out My Spirit upon you and give you a life of great victory. I desire you to enjoy wonderful blessings of an anointed, fruitful and world-changing life. I want to use you to bring about a major shaking to change your world.

'Get ready! I will not tarry any longer. I will pour out the passion of My heart into every willing heart, and you will no longer worry about little things that have occupied your heart and mind. Embrace what I am doing. I will show mercy and favor to all who seek first My kingdom and My righteousness. You

will experience the joys of the harvest and the spoils of victory. Fear not the enemy nor the warfare. This is My battle! I cannot lose.'”

Peters said God “recently downloaded a revelation and passion” concerning the end-times harvest that has him very excited. He said there is no more powerful strategy for bringing it about than by “conquering and ruling” from the following seven mountains of influence in society:

- Religion
- Family
- Education
- Government
- Arts and Entertainment
- Media and Communication
- Business and Finance

Noting that each mountain of influence has its own effects upon all the others, Peters said that whomever sits atop those mountains has control over the society and its culture. He said Romans 8:18-27 has been “coming alive like never before,” adding that if God’s physical creation suffers from corruption, “then surely the seven mountains of culture also suffer under this bondage.”

“Notice that the ‘whole creation’ groans and labors with birth pangs ‘together, ’” he wrote. “I believe that God is in every atom of matter, holding all things together by His Word. Thus, the weight of corruption is on everyone and everything, and the earth and every mountain on it groans. We also groan inwardly.

“This groaning began when God cursed the ground after Adam’s fall. I believe it literally means that every atom of every element has been corrupted. I believe that when the ‘sons of God’ are empowered, they will be restored, and the groaning will cease. Our greatest hope is spiritual wholeness that

comes from a truly intimate Garden of Eden type relationship, reviving our God-nature and removing the sin-nature.”

Peters wrote that God has equipped us with a “secret weapon” that will allow Christians to make the mountains shake and tremble, and to conquer them in order to bring justice and righteousness to all. The victories and miracles we will see in the near future, he added, will far exceed what was seen in the early church.

Click [here](#) to read the entire article at the Elijah List website. {eoa}

Why Your Teen Secretly Craves This Oft-Ignored Study

Should teenagers study theology or is it something only for the scholars? To answer that question, we have to understand the purpose of theology.

Ephesus was one of the greatest churches in the ancient world, and yet Jesus gave it a stunning rebuke in the book of Revelation:

“But I have something against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first” (Rev. 2:4).

The Bible makes it clear that our relationship with God is not a relationship based on agreement to the right religious creeds or following the right codes of behavior. It is a relationship that should be passionate. We receive the love of God and respond to that love with our whole heart. Jesus called this the first commandment:


Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and great commandment" (Matt. 22:37-38).

Fuel for the Relationship

If our relationship with God is to be built on love and passion, how do we fuel our love for Him? One of the key ways to fuel love for God is to study who He is. When we love someone, we naturally begin to study them. We discover what they like and do not like. We notice details about them. We discover subtle aspects of their personality. We become familiar with their family and friends. We learn their story and their history.

Studying someone who we love is never a burden. It is a natural result of love and is deeply enjoyable. We think nothing of investing hours in getting to know someone who we love, and the more that we discover about them, the more pleasure we take in who they are. Growing in knowledge about a person fuels our love for them.

The Bible was given to us to fuel our love for God. In its pages, we find stories of who God is and how He relates us. All of this reveals His person, and the more we learn about His person the more we grow in love for Him. Studying the Word of God in order to more deeply know and love the

person of God is the ultimate goal of theology. 

When many believers think of theology, they tend to think of academic study and books that are difficult to read. There is certainly nothing wrong with academic study, but theology is not primarily an academic study. It is primarily an

exploration of who God is, an exploration that is provoked by our love for God and fuels a deeper and more passionate love of God. Because God is the most beautiful person who exists, the more we know about Him, the more deeply we love Him.

Theology is not ultimately something just for professors and brilliant intellectuals. It is for every believer. It does not require great intellect or years of study. It is simply fuel for experiencing the love of God and loving Him in return.

As a teenager, you face incredible temptations and deep questions. Nothing answers the yearning of your heart more than the knowledge of God. For too long, the church has given teenagers shallow answers to the challenges you face when what you really need is the knowledge of God. He is the ultimate answer your heart is looking for, and you are not too young to explore the depths of the knowledge of God. Theology is for you.

Here's three reasons why you need the study of theology:

Love Provokes Study and Study Provokes Love

When we love someone, we naturally spend time studying them. When we feel deep love for God, studying Him is the natural expression of that love. When we feel like our love is in danger of growing cold, studying theology is fuel for the love of God. Gazing deeply at who He is awakens love for Him.

Understanding God Is Key to Understanding Who We Are

Human beings were made by God. He enjoys us, and we were created to enjoy Him. The more we understand about God, the better we understand ourselves and our purpose. Our identity, basically, is defined by who He says we are, and the study of God leads to profound confidence because it gives us a better understanding of who we are according to Him.

We Love the Truth

Jesus warned us that there would be false Messiahs. In our generation, we are surrounded by false gods, false gospels and rampant confusion on who God is. Truth is often distorted in the name of a false Jesus. God gave us the Bible to help us navigate the murky, confusing waters in our generation. As we study the person of God, it protects our hearts from counterfeit ideas about God. We must know who God is so we can easily reject falsehood and deception in our generation.

So, should teenagers study theology? Absolutely. The true study of theology is the passionate exploration of the most beautiful person in the universe. The reward for that study is more than knowledge. The reward is a greater understanding of God's fiery love for us which fuels our love for Him.

Which stories are you studying to pursue greater love for the Lord? {eoa}

This summer, join thousands of young believers from across the nation for times of corporate worship, powerful teaching and times of ministry during our annual Fascinate conference.

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