

Liberty University: Jim Caviezel Shares His Heart About 'The Apostle Paul'

Popular actor Jim Caviezel took time out recently to speak at Liberty University's Convocation, sharing about his recent movie *The Apostle Paul* and its importance as a vehicle for the gospel.

The Wise Warnings You May Be Tempted to Ignore

Wildlife has been especially wild lately. Although June is barely two weeks old, a decapitated rattlesnake bit a Texas man. An alligator killed a Florida woman. And in Minnesota, an unidentified wild animal killed a 5-year-old boy.

Last month, a hungry cougar killed a mountain biker in Washington state. And the month before saw a man in North Carolina killed by a coyote. In March, a crazed river otter jumped into a kayak and attacked a woman.

Some blame the increased animal attacks on the loss of wildlife habitat due to construction. Still others claim the problem is often due to people who intentionally draw close to wild animals despite clear warnings.

Whatever the reason, wild creatures should be given wide berth. Still, cautious behavior is wisely applied to more than just the animal kingdom.

How many times have you and I flirted with disaster when we ignored warnings in other areas of life?

Warnings from parents to children. Advice from doctors. Cautions from law enforcement officers. Yet too many of us ignore wise counsel in favor of desire or convenience.

Which brings us to the counsel and cautions found in the Bible, many of which we *want* to follow ... until something else distracts us. Consider this sampling from Proverbs:

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight” (Prov. 3:5-6, NIV).

This verse sound terrific, until we get to the word “submit.” Submission is a dirty word in our culture, frequently equated with weakness. We say we trust the Lord, but our actions reveal otherwise. Truth is, we trust ourselves more than we trust Him.

In what area are you claiming to trust God, but are not submitting to Him?

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death” (Prov. 14:12, MEV).

Appearances can be deceiving, or so the adage says. In the moment, a temptation looks good. It looks right. We justify our choices with phrases such as “What’s the harm?” and “It’s only one time.” But sometimes once is all that’s needed to bring irreparable damage.

How can you cultivate discernment in differentiating between what appears right and what is right?

“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Prov. 15:1, NIV).

If you’re like me, guarding your tongue is a full-time job.

When faced with anger, I want to answer gently. Yet a defensive spirit and harsh words seem to rise up before I can stop them. Of course, I know the result will be increased trouble even as I speak, but my desire to defend myself often overrides my desire to de-escalate the situation.

How can you develop a habit of responding with “a gentle answer”?

“He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy” (Prov. 28:13, MEV).

Secrets possess power. What we try to hide ends up controlling us. But when we bring that thing—whatever it is—into the light, it loses its power over us. That *thing* could be shame over abuse committed against us or guilt over behavior that hurt others. It could also be attitudes of bitterness, resentment and unforgiveness that hurt ourselves. The first step is confessing it to God. Sometimes an added step of confession to another person is needed for accountability.

What are you concealing that should be brought into the light? Will you confess it now to God? If accountability is needed, will you find a trusted accountability partner?

Wise warnings encourage us to avoid contact with wild animals for our own safety. Wise warnings also encourage us to seek a close walk with the Lord and to keep our distance from for our own safety.

What warnings will you heed today? {eoa}

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This article originally appeared at .

Pastor's Wife Shares How Porn Impacts Her Church

It's been over five years since we initially launched the Conquer Series to help men find freedom. The impact has been *huge*. Created for men, this series has been helping hundreds of thousands understand why they've remained trapped in sexual sin for a long time and has been providing them with the biblical principles and strategies to completely leave that life behind.

Though KingdomWorks Studios originally created the Conquer Series for men, there is an entirely different group of people who are finding hope, encouragement and a sense of freedom while watching this powerful series. The Conquer Series is becoming a game changer for men *and* their wives.

One woman recently wrote to us:

*I am a pastor's wife and mother of four children. Over the years, I have had the opportunity in joining my husband while doing marriage counseling. When the Lord moved us to North Carolina, I no longer had the thought of, *I wonder if anyone in our church struggles with pornography?* Instead, my thinking was, *I wonder how many men are struggling ... and who are they?**

As my husband began working with one young married couple, my heart was truly broken for the two. Their story was devastating but yet, I honestly struggled with loving this man. I didn't understand why he didn't just *stop* looking at

the garbage.

Around this time, I received an email from the AFA recommending the Conquer Series to help stop pornography addiction. Once it arrived, the two of us would watch the DVDs at night after our children had gone to bed. After watching several, my husband approached the young man from our church, and told him about the program and asked him if he would be interested. Was he ever! They began meeting once a week.

After watching the sessions where they explained exactly what happens to the brain after watching porn, my eyes were truly opened. These men could not just make a decision to “stop” and then be done. They truly had to rewire their thinking/brains through the help of the Holy Spirit. It was then that I realized I could ... and *should* love these men who were struggling. I told my husband how the series was helping me and that I felt that he should consider bringing the men’s wives in with them for the series explaining the brain effects of porn. He took my advice and it was helpful to this couple.

I wholeheartedly recommend this series to the women as well.

My husband also plans to use these DVDs as a one-on-one Bible Study with our boys. If they can see the devastation *before* they are exposed and gripped by the garbage, we will see victory in their lives as well.

Healing for Women

We had the opportunity to meet with a woman named Nancy Houston, who was previously over the Crisis Marriages department in a large church. Upon hearing of the Conquer Series, she introduced it to the church. Not only did she show

it to men, but she also decided to share the series with the wives as well. The results were astounding!

Women devastated by their husband's addiction often find themselves feeling, "There must be something wrong with me."

Nancy reflected on how the Conquer Series helped women deal with this feeling:

It's not my fault; he has a brain problem. Oh, I can partner with him on his brain problem. I can stop being so angry with him and just wanting to hurt him for how he's hurt me!

Currently we are working on a new DVD series. It will be for the wives who are recovering from the trauma of their spouse's sexual addiction. You can sign up for updates on the new series [here](#).

In the meantime, women are using the Conquer Series to bring healing to their marriages. Some churches are even offering it as a separate group for the wives to understand the struggle that the men are facing and begin to demolish the fears that as a wife, you're not enough.

With our 14-day money-back guarantee on the Conquer Series DVD sets, there is nothing to lose!

Order your copy of the series today, and join the women who are beginning to see the light at the end of a very dark tunnel. {eoa}

This article originally appeared at .

Has Satan Hacked Into Your Spiritual Bank Account? Part 3

In Part 1 and Part 2, we discussed how the devil can hack into your spiritual bank account in the areas of forgiveness of iniquities, healing of diseases, redemption from a life of destruction and stealing lovingkindness and tender mercies from your crown. Today we are going to discuss how he fills our mouths with good things. “Who satisfies your mouth with good things” (Ps. 103:5a).

Luke 6:45 says, “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bears what is good, and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bears what is evil. Four of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”

The heart and the mouth are powerful instruments in the realm of faith. The mouth proclaims what is in the depths of the spiritual heart. Romans 10:8-10 confirms this and gives deeper insight to their purpose:

“But what does it say? ‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart.’ This is the word of faith that we preach: that if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved, for with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

According to this portion of Scripture, the heart believes and the mouth confesses. What does the heart believe? It believes unto righteousness—justification or right standing with God. And what does the heart confess? Confession is made unto salvation, and according to our word study in Chapter 2, this word “salvation” is holistic and includes healing of the spirit, soul and body.

In Psalm 103:2-5, one of the benefits we are to remember is that He satisfies our mouths with good things. We are to take these good things and impart them to others, like faith for eternal life with Jesus, faith for deliverance from demonic oppression or possession, or faith for physical healing to name a few of the good things.

Let's focus in on the spiritual purpose of the mouth in regard to physical healing. Now, the devil does not want us to share these good things with others. In fact, he is downright nasty, and he wants us to keep quiet about the glory of our Lord. One way he will try to gag us is with physical weapons of sickness and disease against the mouth. It is a challenge to be a mouthpiece for the Lord when your mouth is swollen or full of sores or inflicted with some other type of illness. It makes it laborious to speak out loud when the mouth is sick.

Last year, a couple of days before I would minister, my tongue would break out with canker sores. At first, I thought it was because I was dehydrated from the plane ride, and from a human standpoint, it was a logical explanation. The second time it happened, I started to wonder if this was spiritual and not physical because I made sure I drank plenty of water before, during and after the flight. The third time it happened, I knew without a doubt I was under attack.

To break this demonic attack against the power of my tongue, my good friend Palma and I entered into a time of prayer and fasting. The stronghold was broken, and I did not have this problem again.

Another minister, Margie from Ocala, Florida, suffered from severe gum disease. She could not eat or even touch her teeth lightly together without serious pain. But the message she heard taught at the healing service resonated deep within her spirit. She put the message of faith to the test and activated her faith. She started to bite down on her teeth. To Margie's delight, her gums and teeth were instantly healed in Jesus'

name.

No matter how we were attacked by the enemy, we continued to confess with our mouths what we believed in our hearts to be true about the goodness of the Lord's salvation to the people. When we were in need, we both received supernatural healing in our mouths as well.

"I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth from the great congregation" (Ps. 40:10). {eoa}

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Anne Graham Lotz: Billy Graham's Simple Yet Soul-Stirring Legacy

This Father's Day, memories were precious. I spent time reflecting, not on the public figure Billy Graham, but on the one I called "Daddy." The one who was always a farmer at heart. Who loved his dogs and his cat. Who followed the weather patterns almost as closely as he did world events. Who wore old blue jeans, comfortable sweaters and a baseball cap. Who loved lukewarm coffee, sweet iced tea, one scoop of ice cream and a plain hamburger from McDonald's. Who was interested in everything and everyone, from the small to the

great. Whose mind remembered details that even a computer would have trouble recalling.

Yet as I remember, I can't help but also think of his message, because he was immersed in it. Saturated in it. He was his message ... a simple man who had responded to God's love by placing his faith in Jesus, receiving the assurance that his sins were forgiven, that he would not perish but would have everlasting life. Simple faith. Faith that now matters more than anything else.

For years, over his head as he preached was the banner that quoted the words of Jesus: *I am the Way, the Truth and the Life*. Jesus completed that sentence by saying that "no one comes to the Father but by Me." Based on what Jesus said, Daddy is safely with the Father. In heaven. Daddy not only claimed Jesus as the only way to God, he lived by the truth publicly on platforms and privately behind closed doors and is now enjoying real life.

I have often stated that I was raised by a single parent because ministry took my father away from our family—for weeks and months at a time. Daddy estimated that he was gone from home approximately 60 percent of his children's growing-up years. Until Daddy started staying home to be with Mother during the last years of her life, I could count on one hand the Father's Days I spent with him. Yet again and again, I've also stated that giving him up was more than worthwhile because I have met people all over the world who have come to faith in Jesus Christ as a result of his ministry.

So, though he may be physically absent and his voice silent, I am confident his message will continue to reverberate throughout the generations to come. I pray that thousands will take up his message like a baton being passed in a relay race and faithfully pass it on to others. Because Daddy's message is God's message. And it's a message of genuine hope for the future, of love for the present, of forgiveness for the past.

It's a message, when received, that brings a fresh beginning, unshakable joy, unexplainable peace, eternal significance, meaning and purpose to life and opens heaven's door.

At Daddy's funeral service, I publicly vowed that I would do my best to faithfully deliver that same message by preaching the Word, doing the work of an evangelist as I share the gospel, and living my life so that five minutes before I see Jesus, I have no regrets. (2 Tim. 4:1-8) My gift to Daddy on this Father's Day is to keep that vow. With that in mind, I recently had the privilege of speaking at the Israeli Knesset and at the Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast. To my knowledge, there were people of other religions who placed their faith in Jesus Christ as their Messiah, Savior and Lord.

So, the message which Daddy carried to the world that penetrated my own heart as a young girl continues to make impact. This Father's Day, while my heart aches for the one I called Daddy, I'm celebrating with triumphant joy as I continue his legacy by passing the baton of truth to as many people as I can. {eoa}

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How This Woman Found God in

Her Impossible Weight Problem, and You Can Do the Same

God is the God of the impossible. He is also the God of grace. I know and have experienced Him in both ways my life. However, it wasn't always that way.

For most of my life, I believed the lie that God couldn't help me lose weight and learn how to live healthy. I also believed it was impossible for me to lose weight because I had failed so many times.

The fact that I'm here today and have lost more than 250 pounds is proof that God can and will help us. He doesn't see our failures as the end but the start of our journeys.

Belief

My belief was really at the core of my problem. I knew the Bible said what is impossible with man is possible with God (Luke 18:27), and I said I believed the Bible.

Even though I said it, I really didn't believe it, because true beliefs are revealed in behaviors. My behavior was saying I believed it was impossible for even God to help me.

I felt I couldn't lose weight so, I'd just do nothing. The problem is that doing nothing gets us deeper into the pit of despair. Nothing is not an option. We will either do what we've always done or we will change our behavior permanently.

I speak from experience. Wanting what I want got me into the biggest mess, the biggest brokenness and despair, the biggest failure of my life.

Grace

If the story ended there, it would be extremely sad. God, though, never gave up on me. His grace never left me, and His grace hasn't left you either. He will keep trying to get us to listen to His voice of freedom.

I can look back over my life and see the times God intervened to try to get me to understand where I was headed and stop me. I can point to the years and times when God tapped me on the shoulder and pointed the way to me, but I refused to listen.

Time and time and time again, He was trying to tell me, but I didn't and still ... His grace never gave up on me.

In 2013, when I reached an impossible goal of losing 250 pounds, it amazed me, because I know it didn't come by my efforts. It hadn't been possible when I had tried in my own way and own strength. It was only possible through the grace and strength of God.

Grace Is Power

Grace is what saves us, but we really don't understand the magnitude of the power it has. What does it take to raise someone from death to life, to change their eternal destiny from the fiery pits of hell to the wonders of living forever in the presence of God? It's not some nice little concept. It's power. It is the power of grace.

We have that same power available to us every day of our lives. It is the power that gives us the emotional stability, inner fortitude and presence of mind to say, "No, I'm not going to eat that. I'm going to eat this." Or, "I'm going for a walk or run instead."

The freedom Christ gives us is the freedom to follow Him. It is the freedom to do what is right instead of what we want in the moment.

I love Kris Vallotton's definition: "Grace is the power to do

what you couldn't do one second before."

It's not physical power, like the ability to lift a car off a dying man. It's the mental, emotional and spiritual strength to do what you know God wants you to do.

Grace is the power that gives me His strength to overcome my weaknesses. In 2 Corinthians 12:10b AMP, it says, "When I am weak [in human strength], then I am strong [truly able, truly powerful, truly drawing from God's strength]."

Then back up a verse. Where does that strength come from? "My grace is enough; it's all you need. My strength comes into its own in your weakness" (2 Cor 12:9, MSG).

Is God powerful all the time? Of course He is. Then why does it take my weakness for His strength to be perfected and show itself most effective?

When I am still trying, trying, trying to do this in my own strength, I will fail. I will eventually come to the end of my resources..

Taming My Monster

In 2009, I finally saw the roadblock that had been in my life for years. There was a visceral feeling in the pit of my stomach when I learned my issue. I am a sugar addict.

I literally felt the depth of what I had done for years and I knew what I needed to give up sugar, but I didn't know how I was going to do it.

A monster I had not been able to control was running amuck in my life. He was like a cancer eating away at my destiny. I had no idea how to contain him or control him.

I knew enough to know that God knew the answer. So I asked Him to lead me to one of his mentors here who could show me how to allow God to tame the monster in me. This time I meant it, and

God knew I finally, really, honest-to-God, no-playing-around meant it.

I joined a group with a coach I trusted who knew what it takes to go on a total lifestyle change journey, and the rest is history.

Coaching

In 2013, I met my goal of losing 250 pounds (which I've kept off) and wrote my first book, *Sweet Grace*. Now, I've written four books and have coached thousands of people through courses and groups to learn how to lose weight and step into healthy lifestyle transformations.

Some have lost a lot and some 10-20 pounds. It doesn't matter what the size of the mountain is you are facing, it still looks like an Impossibility to move. And it is without supernatural intervention.

Lisa, who went through one of my coaching classes, said. "I have always believed the lie that God doesn't care about what I eat. He's too busy for that. Using the tools Teresa has taught me has exposed that lie I was believing.

"Father God does care about me and wants to be a part of my everyday life, including what I eat. I've lost 10 pounds, but the best thing is I have gained trust in God and true freedom."

I've found that as folks lose weight in my programs, they gain so much more. They gain hope, faith, trust, love, joy, emotional freedom, mental clarity, a greater understand of who God is and an even closer walk with Him and probably most important How God sees them and what their destiny is in Him.
{eoa}

Teresa Shields Parker *is the author of seven books, all available on Amazon. Her latest book, Sweet Hunger: Developing*

an Appetite for God, is available now, and Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds is the No. 1 Christian weight-loss memoir. She is also a writing and weight-loss coach, blogger, speaker, wife and mother. Visit her online at to find her books, coaching programs and free gifts.

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Has Satan Hacked Into Your Spiritual Bank Account? Part 2

In Part 1, we discussed how the devil can hack into your spiritual bank account in the areas of forgiveness of iniquities, healing of diseases and redemption from a life of destruction. We are going to continue on in our study from Psalm 103:2-5, starting with verse 4b, "Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies."

How can the enemy steal your crown of lovingkindness and tender mercies? I think we can look at this in a couple of different ways. Lovingkindness and tender mercies are terms of endearment. And lovingkindness means "tenderness and consideration toward others". We would all agree that the enemy does not want us to believe that God holds us dear to His heart. In fact, the enemy works hard to get us to believe that God is harsh, unloving and uncaring toward us. He portrays God as being monstrous towards people, always placing the blame for tragedy upon Him. But what does the Bible say about God's character? Let's look at seven verses concerning who He is:

- “God is faithful” (1 Cor. 10:13b).
- “God *is* merciful, gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy” (Ps. 1-3:8).
- He is patient, not wanting anyone to perish (see 2 Pet. 3:9).
- “for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” (John 3:16a).
- “God is not a man, that He should lie” (Num. 23:19a).
- He is a God of justice (see Ps. 50:6).
- God is gracious, righteous and full of compassion (see Ps. 116:5).

In these seven verses alone, we see that God is faithful, merciful, gracious, slow to get angry, abounds in mercy, is patient and loving to all people, a giver and gives to us His best; He does not lie, He’s just, righteousness and full of compassion. Don’t listen to anyone, especially the devil, try to tell you anything different about Him.

God’s not angry with you. He doesn’t think evil about you. He really cares about you. The Word clearly tells us in Psalm 139:17-18, “How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand; when I awake, I am still with You.” Jeremiah 29:11 tells us how He thinks about us, “For I know the plans that I have for you, says the Lord, plans for peace and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” These Scriptures do not sound as if our God lacks in the area of lovingkindness towards us, in fact they declare the opposite.

What about tender mercies? Exodus 34:6-7 tell us that the Lord is merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth. And it goes on to tell us that He is keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. These are all amazing qualities and He is clearly full of great love and compassion for us.

So the next time Satan tries to steal lovingkindness and tender mercy from your crown—don't let him. Rebuke him, and put him in his place—under your feet in the name of Jesus, and relish in the fact that He thinks good of you and that His good thoughts about you outnumber the sand. That's an amazing fact to meditate upon today.

We will continue with His benefits in the next post. {eoa}

Becky Dvorak is a prophetic healing evangelist and the author of DARE to Believe, Greater Than Magic and The Healing Creed. Visit her at .

This article originally appeared at .

3 Critical Lessons for When You Want to Tell God, 'I Can Do It Myself'

"I did it!!" My grandson exclaimed. He lifted big blue eyes to mine. They glowed with surprise and wonder at his new accomplishment.

He leaned back on the wooden floor, and a huge smile lit his face. He shoved one leg straight in front of my face, his shoe inches from my nose. Maneuvering the correct shoe onto the right foot was a great achievement for a 3-year-old, but an even bigger victory was the tug of war that didn't happen.

Because that cute, scary and downright irritating self-defiant streak of "I can do it by myself" is like a military coup waiting to erupt.

I confess, when my children were little, there were times I looked in the mirror and asked, "Who is the adult here?"

Accomplishing tasks produces satisfaction and confidence. Learning independence is a valuable process. Through it we learn perseverance when a job seems too difficult. We acquire wisdom to know when help is needed and build courage to try new things. These are things we want for our little ones.

But it's a tall order to distinguish between encouraging a spirit of self-sufficiency and giving in to foolish demands. Both child and grown-up can easily find themselves in a frustrating cycle.

Learning skills is fertile ground for acquiring dependence on Christ. The wisdom of Proverbs is a great place to dig into God's direction when things are too hard to accomplish alone.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths" (Prov. 3:5-6).

It is a twisty road at times to transfer "by myself" to a sincere heart of "with God's help." How often I discover my adult self in that same struggle. I want to do things by myself when I have a Heavenly Father who desires me to depend on Him. If our goal is to guide children to greater trust in their heavenly Father, then the most effective way to do that as a parent is to first come under God's chisel ourselves. We need to be parents that grow too.

A learner embraces humility. There are times it is fitting to allow children to "do it by themselves," and other times, it's neither appropriate nor safe. Giving small pieces of a bigger job offers satisfaction and increases ability. Skills developed under the watchful partnership of a loving adult nurture trust. It applies to us as well. As we obey, under the caring eye of Jesus, we learn trust.

Trial and error are great tutors. Both success and failure teach. When we direct with purpose, children's understanding increases, and they grow in knowledge of what they can do and what they should. Patience is a part of the process whether you are big or little. Learning from mistakes increases wisdom whatever age.

Admit when you need help. When we as parents turn to God in our difficulties, we model an example for our children to follow. The quest and realization for independence offers opportunities to learn and teach Christ dependence in tandem.

It's almost always easier to do it yourself rather than wait for a child's "by myself," yet, those moments supply simple lessons that serve throughout their lives. They are reminders of God's infinite patience toward us daily. In the process of learning, we grasp our need for God's help.

My grandson looked expectantly into my eyes, wobbling a little on his haunches with one foot extended. He waited for the approval he was sure would come. I grabbed his little shoe and furrowed my brow over its inspection while he balanced.

I looked up with surprise and cheered. "You did it!" I clapped my hands.

His smile was well worth the wait. {eoa}

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Your Spirit-Filled Response to the Shattering Sting of Betrayal

In Psalm 3 we read these words: “Lord, how my foes have multiplied! Many rise up against me! Many are saying about my life, ‘There is no help for him in God’” (PS. 3:1-2).

David is grieving more than the loss of his son—not that his son had died, but that his son Absalom had turned against him.

Not only had Absalom turned against him, he went behind David’s back and began manipulating the citizens of the nation of Israel.

He had begun to turn the nation against David.

He went on to say: “I will not be afraid of multitudes of people who have set themselves against me all around” (Ps. 3:6), indicating the thousands of Israelites who were revolting with Absalom while betraying David, the king they’d loved and celebrated years earlier after Goliath’s defeat.

What short memories they had.

But rather than sinking into despair and depression ...

Rather than throwing a pity party ...

David did something quite remarkable! Something our generation desperately needs to learn in day when people are routinely offended.

Not a day goes by that some celebrity isn’t called out for some careless thing they said. Their statement is met by hordes of tweets, social media shares, news reports and articles written about what a racist and bigot they are, and

how dare they say such a careless thing!

Not a day goes by that some preacher or denominational leader isn't called out for something they said decades ago, or for a sermon they preached last week that didn't clearly depict something someone feels should have been said.

Their reputation is maligned, the culmination of their work diminished to almost nothing and they are forced to retire in utter disgrace, while the Christian community devours them with social media posts and articles calling them out for whatever it was they did or didn't do.

Our moment in history is volatile and retaliatory, but we don't see David sparring with words or retaliating against Absalom in war.

One Powerful Response to Betrayal

What we see is David battling the human tendency toward self-pity, anger and bitterness—the very emotions that fuel volatility and retaliation.

He wasn't going to give in to the temptation of the flesh.

After his first cry for help in verses one and two, he turns his focus upward and says: "But You, O Lord, are a shield for Me, my glory and the One who raises up my head. I cried to the Lord with my voice, and He answered me from His holy hill. I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the Lord sustained me" (Ps. 3:3-5).

He immediately begins to declare who God is.

- God is a shield
- God is his reputation and source of his dignity (David knew where his identity should be)
- God is the reason he could hold his head high

He went on in verse seven and eight to say:

“Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God! For You have struck all my enemies on the cheek; You have broken the teeth of the wicked. Salvation belongs to the Lord. Your blessing is on Your people. Selah” (Ps. 3:7).

Rather than calling out Absalom publicly, he called out to God for salvation. He didn't rely on his own wit and words to tear Absalom down to size, he saved his words for prayer.

Then he reminded his heart of what God had done in the past.

He went back to his storehouse of testimonies and began to counsel his heart about how God had done great things in the past, and He would come through again/

When we feel betrayed, rejected, disappointed and disillusioned, our response is very important. Will we retaliate, or will we, like David, pray and worship God and His power to save?

Our response will mean the difference between us responding in the flesh and feeding our negative emotions of anger and bitterness, from which only grow more fruit of the flesh, and responding in the spirit and finding the grace and strength to believe that God will be glorified in the end. {eoa}

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Your 1 Corinthians 6:12 Cure for Obesity

No diet ever worked for me to lose weight and keep it off back when I weighed 430 pounds. However, I'm glad it didn't. If it had, I would be sure I had invented the cure for obesity.

Beyond that, though, I would have never learned to how important it is to follow God completely. After losing 250 pounds, I know for sure: God is the inventor of the cure for obesity.

Obesity Is Deadly

We shouldn't pretend overeating and weight gain are OK because we love to eat. These behaviors lead to obesity, which is a serious concern because it is the leading causes of death in the U.S. and worldwide, according to the Center for Disease Control.

Of course, everyone has their opinion on what someone should eat to lose weight. Opinions vary there. However, to avoid obesity or to lose weight, there are some things almost every doctor agrees on we should avoid eating.

This includes sugar, because it increases hunger and is empty calories; processed and junk foods that are designed to be addictive; refined flours, which are also addictive; and sweetened beverages.

There are foods most doctors agree can be consumed to maintain a healthy lifestyle and weight. These include high-fiber foods like vegetables, nuts, seeds and berries and lean protein, at least four ounces per meal.

Eating from this list will help people feel more satisfied and full so that they eat less overall.

Why I Eat

Because I've lost a lot of weight, people want to know what I eat. I follow the eating plan God gave me over 40 years ago but didn't start following until about 10 years ago. I eat meat, fruits and vegetables. I don't eat things made with sugar and flour.

That's my simple plan. God had to make it simple in order for me to follow it. When I understood that things made with sugar and flour were very addictive for me, I made the decision to change how I ate.

I knew it wouldn't come from willpower alone. I knew my own personal willpower had a limit of about six to nine months before I'd cave and need a piece of cake or something sweet. Then, I'd start eating it again nonstop and gain back the weight I'd lost plus more.

How to Stop Cravings

I created my own cravings by eating very addictive things and then allowing them to master me instead of following what I know God wants for me.

1 Corinthians 6:12 (NASB) says, "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything." My cravings for foods I loved mastered me.

To begin to rid myself of cravings, I had to begin to stop eating the foods that were addictive to me and start eating healthy foods in their place.

This is not just a mind or thought change, but it is actually a way to rewire our brains. Scientists have discovered how that is possible. And guess what? It starts with us

identifying what we want in the bigger overall sense of our lives and telling ourselves what negative habits we need to stop and positive ones we need to start.

This is really what helped me stop dieting. When I changed my mind about what I wanted, I realized rebelling against a diet is what kept me bound in the first place. Instead, I just ate according to the plan God and I worked out.

Why Diets Don't Work

A diet is a one-size fits all plan. The problem is, we are not all the same. We must change, and to change, we must listen to God and allow Him to lead us on our healthy lifestyle change.

The reason I'm glad no diet worked for me is that now I finally understand how to allow God to lead me. It really is an obedience journey. Once I surrendered my issue to God and allowed Him to lead me, He can trust me with anything He throws my way.

Until we get this one huge area of our lives under control, it's hard for Him to trust us with world-changing decisions. And friends, we are called to be world changers. We are capable of controlling what we eat, even though many of us have given ourselves over to our own selfish desires so many times that it just comes naturally in this one area of food. It seems it is the one area that we see as free reign.

The Philippians 3:19 Gang

Surely in Luke 9:23a AMP, Jesus didn't mean foods when He said, "If anyone wishes to follow Me [as My disciple], he must deny himself [set aside selfish interests]."

Surely, He meant all that other bad stuff like drinking, gambling, illicit sex and so forth. Eating delicious food can't be on that list, or can it?

I want to tell you friends, that sadly for me it was on that

list. It was my main selfish interest. I lived for the next time I could have one of my favorite meals or desserts. It was everything to me, because I had made it everything.

I was in the Philippians 3:19 gang. Our motto was "Our destiny is destruction, our god is our stomach, and our glory is in our shame. Our minds are set on earthly things, like what's for dinner. There had better be dessert."

How to Get Free

So how do we overcome these issues if we see ourselves living inside this difficulty?

- Stay away from unhealthy addictive foods like sugar, flour, fast foods and sweetened beverages
- Eat healthy things such as vegetables, nuts, seeds, and berries and lean protein.
- Create your own plan with God's help
- Be mindful of what you are eating and why
- Understand that you create your own cravings by what you continually eat.
- Put God first instead of the foods you crave.
- Know that you are just one choice away from stepping into total lifestyle change.

Teresa Shields Parker is the author of seven books, all available on Amazon. Her latest book, Sweet Hunger: Developing an Appetite for God, is available now, and Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds is the No. 1 Christian weight-loss memoir. She is also a writing and weight-loss coach, blogger, speaker, wife and mother. Visit her online at to find her books, coaching programs and free gifts.

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