

Understanding the Connection Between Depression, Osteoporosis and Faith

Osteoporosis is the most widespread degenerative disease in the developed world, afflicting one in three women and one in five men over 50.

Despite the accumulating evidence for a connection between depression and decreased bone density, official authorities, such as the U.S. National Institutes of Health and the World Health Organization, have not yet acknowledged depression as a risk factor for osteoporosis, due to the lack of studies in large samples.

A study of several research efforts, including thousands of people by Hebrew University of Jerusalem researchers, has shown a clear connection between depression and a loss of bone mass, leading to osteoporosis and fractures. The results, say the researchers, show clearly that depressed individuals have a substantially lower bone density than non-depressed people and that depression is associated with a markedly elevated activity of cells that break down bone (osteoclasts).

What the Bible Says

God inspired writers of the Bible to share his truth and principles about the connection between our emotional and spiritual health and our physical health. Take a look at the following verses related to this topic:

“A merry heart does good like a medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones” (Prov. 17:22).

“A sound heart is the life of the flesh, but envy the rottenness of the bones” (Prov. 14:30).

“Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil. It will be health to your body, and strength to your bones” (Prov. 3:7-8).

“For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones waste away” (Ps. 31:10).

What You Can Do

- Seek to have a cheerful heart.
- If you're carrying bitterness towards someone, forgive them.
- Have a reverential fear of God and his principles, and turn away from evil and sin.
- If you're jealous of someone, ask God to take that nature away from you. Be content with what you have, and trust God to provide for your most basic and deepest needs.
- If you are a believer in Christ, turn to God in a more dependent and surrendered way and allow His Spirit to have more influence and control of your thought life and attitude. Ask Him to change you, to transform you from the inside out. (Romans 12:2)

As we walk with God in a personal way, following his commandments and principles out of love, we are able to become more and more like his Son, Jesus. This transformation brings us greater inner peace, gentleness and joy. This often goes hand in hand with good physical health.

God makes it pretty clear in the Bible—the guidebook He has given us to live by. Perhaps this is the best explanation concerning the link between depression and bone health.

Questions to Reflect On

What has your experience been regarding depression and bone health? Can you personally see a link between the Scriptures

listed above and your health? {eoa}

Dale Fletcher is a speaker and wellness coach who lives in Charlotte, North Carolina. He writes and conducts workshops on the link between the Christian faith and health. Connect with Dale at .

For the original article, visit .

This Passage From Joshua Could Turn Your Life Around Dramatically

I woke one morning with the word “fellowship” on my mind along with the following Scripture:

“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? What communion has light with darkness?” (2 Cor. 6:14).

Although this Scripture is often used to warn believers in Christ against marrying unbelievers, I think this principle also applies to fellowship with lawless and dark thoughts.

After all, what closer fellowship do you have than with the thoughts you harbor daily?

I learned about the principle of fellowship many years ago when I struggled with depression. It was like an emotional black hole in my life. Its vortex sucked all my energy, vitality and purpose into it.

To escape those dark feelings, I overate and binged regularly.

Eventually, these habits joined the depression vortex, draining the life out of me day by day.

It took a chest pain and the Lord's kind words of "It is not supposed to be this way" to enlighten me as to what was happening.

I realized that I was accepting and rehearsing the enemy's lies faithfully. In doing so, I was living looking backward. It's hard to walk forward while looking backward.

Those thoughts kept me focused on past mistakes, what I lost and what I lacked. Although those circumstances were true, the conclusion I reached was a lie.

The lying thoughts said my life was bad and it would never get any better.

However, the Lord challenged me to look ahead—to my potential future in Him.

I realized that believing the enemy's lies was stealing my life from me—one depressive day at a time. Because I was so focused on my own pain, I did not have much energy left to help others.

But a major turnaround in my thought life came through following Joshua's example from Joshua 5:13:

"Now when Joshua was by Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him. In His hand was His drawn sword. Joshua went to Him and said, 'Are You for us or for our enemies?'"

This was a time of war, so Joshua was vigilant. He did not assume that every person who showed up on his battlefield was on his side automatically.

As believers in Christ, we are engaged in spiritual warfare. So we too should be vigilant about our thought life.

Do you examine the thoughts with whom you fellowship daily and ask: Are you for me or for my adversary?"

A good clue that a thought or pattern of thought is for your adversary is this: Does this way of thinking steal, kill or destroy me or something good in my life?"

If it does, then you want no fellowship with it. As believers in Christ, we are called to be salt and light in a dark world. But how can we be light when we tolerate darkness and lawlessness in our own hearts and minds?

The Lord knows everything about us. Hebrews 4:13 tells us that someday we will give an account for what we have done in our earthly bodies: "There is no creature that is not revealed in His sight, for all things are bare and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."

If you have emotional issues that are keeping you in darkness, ask the Lord to enlighten you with a new vision of your future freedom in Him.

Next, you need fellowship with those thoughts that bring enlightenment, support right living and strengthen you in the joy of the Lord.

For encouragement in this area, learn how the Lord brought me out of the darkness of depression and binge eating into His marvelous light of freedom and joy in His presence.

Click this link for the full story in my video "**The Supernatural Weight Loss Secret the Enemy Doesn't Want You to Know.**"

Be blessed in health, healing, and wholeness. {eoa}

Once 240 pounds and a size 22, Kimberly Taylor can testify of God's healing power to end binge eating. She is an author and the creator of the Christian weight-loss website . Visit today for inspirational health and weight-loss tips.

For the original article, visit .

The Devastating Effects of Alcoholism Through a Child's Eyes

When I found her body, I was 34 years old. She had been off the grid too long, and I knew something wasn't right.

The lights were all off. The doors were locked, and I had no working key. The policeman standing beside me couldn't legally break in because he had no cause. He handed me the tool he used to smash windows and said, "You didn't get that from me."

I broke in through a side window. Glass shattered on the floor as I climbed in. Thinking to myself, *She's going to kill me if I'm not right.*

I walked very slowly through her condo with a terrible sense of dread calling out her name with no reply. The last space was her bedroom. She had to be there. I hesitated with fear, but also a sense of finality. It was almost over. There she was. It was the last imagery to forever be burned into the memory of her child. Alcohol won.

I was 12 years old when I fully realized what was going on. From then on, my own life became tangled up with the addiction of my parent. While each case is unique, there are three common effects of alcoholism in children of alcoholics.

Gripping Fear

I was very close to my mom as a young boy. She was a

tremendous person. Alcohol wasn't part of her life. She was beautiful, fun, intelligent, hardworking, ambitious and church-going. Those qualities evaporated when she started drinking and were reduced to only glimpses.

It terrified me as both a boy and young adult. I was afraid of divorce (that later came) and for her safety and the toll it took on my dad, and my own security felt like I was in quicksand. I knew by 16 years old that my mom was going to die tragically. It filled me with fear.

Reckless Behavior

As a child, I was unable to process what was happening, so I stopped caring, not about other people but about what happened to me. I stopped studying in school, started smoking and I started drinking.

When I got a car at 16, I used it as my escape tool but in dangerous ways. I received more citations between 16 and 18 than most people get their entire lives. I just didn't care. Nobody stopped me, not my parents or school. The addiction and its ramifications always won.

Feeling Unworthy

Children aren't stupid. They know that the addiction of the parent always comes first. The consequences of that are devastating. If your own parent doesn't love you more than alcohol, then how could anyone else ever care?

This creates a feeling of complete unworthiness of love and success. It will affect everything they go on to do in life. Their relationships, their careers and their own parenting will be impacted; they enter a cycle of self-sabotage. {eoa}

Special Note: Personally, I was able to find healing in my faith in God. He has given me purpose to break the cycle of addiction and brokenness in our family. The death of my mom

was a crossroads for me. To the readers of this article struggling with addiction or as a victim of it, there is a path to recovery. Seek it today.

For the original article, visit .

My Problem With Overeaters Anonymous

“How you see yourself determines what you do.”

I don't remember where I read this quote, but it sums up a problem I have with Overeaters Anonymous (OA).

Why am I writing about OA? I've received emails from readers asking me what I think about the program.

While I am sure the program helps some people, it did not help me when I was a member.

Now I know why.

It violates a key biblical principle at its core. Let me explain.

Many years ago, I participated in Overeaters Anonymous for a while—before I became a believer in Christ.

Each meeting I had to stand up and say, “I'm Kim, and I am a compulsive overeater.” It was fine at first, but then I started to become depressed. Then I also noticed something: In my group were women who had been attending the meetings for seven, nine, 12 years—and they didn't appear to have any healthier relationship with food than I did.

Instead, they were obsessed with food in the opposite direction—overly restrictive, bordering on anorexia.

I asked myself, “Where is the victory, the peace, the praise?” I could not see myself still attending meetings for 10 years, but not getting anywhere.

So I quit going.

Now I know the problem was one of identity.

You see, the Bible says our God is one who calls those things that do not exist as though they did (Rom. 4:17). He declares the end of a thing from the beginning (Is. 46:10).

So by continuing to confess myself as a “compulsive overeater,” all I was doing was reinforcing that oppressed identity in my mind.

Confession means “to say the same.” In confessing myself as a compulsive overeater, with whom was I agreeing, the Lord or the enemy?

Even when I wasn’t bingeing on food, this identity made me fearful of a relapse.

That was bondage—not the freedom Jesus promises.

Now I know that since God declares the end of a thing from the beginning, the biblical way of confession would be to say what God says: “I’m Kim and I’m a recovered overeater.”

So the Lord sees us as complete in Christ, regardless of our current behavior. As we learn to see ourselves through His eyes and through the Holy Spirit working within us, our character becomes conformed to the image of Jesus over time.

God exists in eternity, so time does not limit Him as it limits us. The Lord can see all our days before one of them comes to be (Ps. 139:16).

One of my favorite Scriptures is Jeremiah 29:11: "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."

I see the Bible as full of the Lord's promises for His people. Isn't it wonderful that the Creator of the universe wants us to have a personal relationship with Him?

If we believe Him, His Word has the power to set us free.

My freedom came when I took that step of belief, anchored myself in Jesus and renewed my mind to His Word.

Today, I don't live in fear of a relapse, and I can eat any food I want.

Each person ultimately has to make the decision as to how they will live. I chose to put my trust in the Lord to deliver me from compulsive overeating back in 2003.

Today, I am overjoyed to say that my trust was rewarded!

Be blessed in health, healing and wholeness.

P.S. I receive many emails from people dealing with emotional and binge-eating issues. I once received an email from a lady who saw a video about my weight-loss success story, and she wrote, "I wish I could achieve the victory that you have."

I wrote her back and said, "You can with God's help. What are you afraid of?"

She wrote me back a long letter about her fears and one sentence she wrote is the most honest, raw description of what drives binge-eating behavior:

"I am afraid when I quit eating to numb myself, I will experience the full harshness of reality, and it will be too overpowering."

That's exactly how I felt when I practiced binge-eating

behavior! But the good news is you don't have to keep using food as emotional Novocaine.

I have an online course, *How to Stop Binge Eating*, that provides specialized help with this issue.

The course has had over 1,100 enrollees, with a 4.9 rating out of 5.0. You owe it to yourself to check it out: [Click here](#) to review the *How to Stop Binge Eating* online course. {eoa}

Once 240 pounds and a size 22, Kimberly Taylor can testify of God's healing power to end binge eating. She is an author and the creator of the Christian weight-loss website . Visit today for inspirational health and weight-loss tips.

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8 Ways I Will Worship God Better With My Life in 2017

Heading into a new year, many people, including Christians, boldly make New Year's resolutions and tell themselves, "This is the year I'm going to keep them and make things right with God."

I've done that in the past—and I know many others who have also—only to fall (way) short of our own expectations. For better or worse, I'm through with making New Year's resolutions.

It's time for some real change—covenant change.

Instead of making ridiculously shallow resolutions, I'm going to follow the advice of my good friend, Lee Grady. In

Wednesday's Fire in My Bones column, Lee posted five ways you can grow spiritually in 2017. His advice? "Quit wandering and determine you will move forward in this new year."

That's exactly what I am going to do, and I am going to be intentional about it. I hope and pray you will too. It's what God wants from us.

Here are eight ways I WILL worship God better with my life in 2017. I pray you can draw strength and motivation from these too:

1. I WILL read and study my Bible more diligently than ever.

Second Timothy 3:16 is self-explanatory, "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness." Aren't we all striving for righteousness in Christ?

2. I WILL pray for others much more diligently and trust God that He WILL answer my prayers. "Pray in the Spirit always with all kinds of prayer and supplication. To that end be alert with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints" (Eph. 6:18).

3. I WILL surrender my sinful habits to God. Rick Warren once said, "Aren't you tired of being at war with God? (I am, aren't you?) Wave your white flag. Surrender is the ultimate expression of faith." It's as simple as James 4:7, "Therefore submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

4. I WILL devote myself more to helping others, especially those in need. I've always been told the best way to get your mind off your own problems is to help others with theirs. "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2).

5. I WILL love my wife as God intended and WILL put her needs before mine. I'm ashamed to say, in the 19 years we've been

married, I don't know if I've really done that. "Likewise, you husbands, live considerately with your wives, giving honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they too are also heirs of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered" (1 Pet. 3:7).

Evaluate your marriage. See what you can improve upon and honor your wife in a godly way every day.

6. I WILL give my children my full attention and be a softer and gentler dad. I don't think "soft" and "gentle" are two adjectives my kids would use to describe me. That is going to change. How about you? How would your kids describe you? "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, lest they be discouraged" (Col. 3:21).

7. I WILL call my extended family and talk to them more often. Who knows how much time we have left with our loved ones? I'm in Florida, and the rest of my family is in Illinois, so I hardly ever see them. The least I can do is talk with them on the phone and share my life with them. "Honor your father and your mother, just as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you" (Deut. 5:16).

8. I WILL refuse to rob God of my time. As my wise publisher, Dr. Steve Greene, wrote recently in his Greenelines column, "The lesson of tithing is to give back to God a portion of what He has given to us. Time is certainly a gift worthy of a tithe." For me, it's as simple as severely cutting down on the time I spend watching football on TV.

What about you? What can you do to honor God with your time?

Determine you will move forward in your relationship with the Lord this year. Make covenant change, not empty resolutions.
{eoa}

Why and How a Man Should Keep Himself Pure

When societies lose the directional parameters of purpose, they cast off all restraint.

The 1960s sexual revolution ushered in a degrading of America's young people. Now, the first generation of men who grew up with unlimited access to pornography are suffering unexpected collateral damage—porn-induced erectile dysfunction (PIED).

Put aside the spiritual and moral argument for a moment and simply look at the psychological and emotional effects. Young men are reporting an incredible disconnect with the women with whom they are physically intimate.

Rather than truly experiencing the moment with her, they admit to fantasizing about porn while they're with a young woman in person. They're mixing their virtual reality with reality. The result of such mental and emotional compounding is delusion.

The Max Planck Institute found actual evidence that pornography greatly impacts the brain. The more pornography men consumed, the smaller the brain striatum, which is the reward center of the brain.

Professor and author of *Your Brain on Porn*, Gary Wilson, argues, "The result in some internet porn users is higher brain activation to internet porn and less arousal to sex with a real person."

The evidence is clear. The more exposure to your eyes, the less reaction in your flesh.

Job said, "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look with lust at a young woman" (Job 31:1, NLT). Your relationship with your wife will never flourish if your eyes are not fixed upon her.

With unrestrained access to pornography and semi-pornographic images blasted at us daily, how can a man keep himself pure? What's the answer? Do we put the burden on women? Cover them head to toe in black sheets? Veil their eyes?

A FivestarMan is gallant in his relationships with women. He treats an older woman as his own mother, peers as his own sister and a younger woman as his own daughter.

Solomon, a man who knew women far better than most, gives us powerful principles for keeping one's self pure:

- Pay attention to wisdom (Prov. 7:1-5). Wisdom is like a sister that gives you insider information about women. She says, "Listen, I'll protect you from an affair with an immoral woman and her deceptive flattery."
- Keep your distance from seductive women (Prov. 7:6-8). Sin requires proximity. Create boundaries.
- Don't give an ear to seductive words (Prov. 7:5). Don't allow a woman to whisper in your ear.
- Go home after work (Prov. 7:9). Men make bad decisions when they don't have direction.
- Bounce your eyes from the brazen look (Prov. 7:13). Follow the example of Job. Make a covenant, a spiritual promise, with your eyes to not look lustfully. We've all seen the guy who looks googly-eyed at a woman. Imagine if you saw a man looking that way at your wife or daughter. Don't be that guy.
- Know the difference between lust and love (Prov. 7:23). Lust is a manic, obsessive and uncontrolled desire to take something or someone. Lust takes while love gives. God is love—God is holy; therefore, love must be holy. Contrary to popular culture, love is confined to

- righteousness established by God.
- Honor another man's wife (Prov. 7:19). We should practice a man-code. Job recognized that looking upon a woman lustfully opened the door for his wife to serve another man (Job 31:10).
 - Don't be persuaded (Prov. 7:21). Seduction comes from flattery, a type of witchcraft. It's a manipulation by deception.
 - Understand that impurity is a trap (Prov. 7:22). Men often say, "I'm a grown man, I am free to do what I want." In reality, sexual sin is addictive and is a trap that enslaves men.
 - Remember the immoral woman will embarrass you (Prov. 7:26). You will be victimized. You're better than sexual sin. Your purpose is greater than fantasies.
 - Consider that the immoral woman will escort you to your death (Prov. 7:27). There's nothing to gain in your life in the secret chambers of porn.

A man who stays within the parameters of his purpose doesn't have time for trivial pursuits. Take the energy and time that pornography demands, invest it into a real relationship and fulfill your purposes as an authentic man.

Keeping yourself pure is not easy, but the rewards of doing so are immeasurable. The sexual relationship with your wife will become a celebration of your lives together. Your physical connection will be more enjoyable. Your emotional connection will be passionate. And your spiritual communion will be ecstatic. {eoa}

*FivestarMan was founded in 2008 by **Neil Kennedy**. Kennedy has passionately promoted God's Word for 25-plus years of ministry. He is known for practically applying biblical principles that elevate people to a new level of living. As a business, church, ministry and life consultant, Kennedy has helped others strategize the necessary steps to reach their full potential.*

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

4 Things All Believers Should Do in 2017

With 2016 coming to a close [last] week, we meet the beginning of a new year filled with new opportunities and experiences with high expectations. To meet those expectations, here are four things every Christ-follower should be doing fervently in the upcoming year.

Pray

Prayer is the foundation upon which we are called to lay all things. And as 2016 [came] to a close, the beginning of a new year filled with new opportunities and experiences [was] right around the corner. Let us first pray for safety and guidance as we set off into a new year, and let us also thank God for His goodness and provision for the year prior. Let us pray for our friends, families, our country, our enemies, our allies, our leader, those less fortunate than we and those journeying through trials and tribulations. And although not everything in 2016 may have panned out the way we would have wished, we must realize that God is still in control, and His plan is always in His best interest for our lives.

Reflect

Reflecting on the past is a good thing, but we must also make sure we don't dwell on it. Regardless if things took place this past year that you are not proud of, remember the grace of Jesus covers you like an anchor that has found itself at the bottom of the ocean floor. Take the last year as an

opportunity to reflect on your life, your achievements, your failures, your actions, your experiences and your relationship with God. Spend time evaluating each and every aspect of your life and make decisions on things you wish to change moving forward.

Adjust

Once you've reflected on the last 365 days and evaluated each aspect of your life, it's now time for you to adjust accordingly in order to make things better than they were the year prior. For some, that may mean letting go of a bad habit, a toxic relationship, a friendship or even a job. For others, it may mean spending more time in prayer, in church and reading the Bible. Regardless of what adjustments need to take place in your life, the sooner you can make them, the better. Sometimes, adjusting is the hardest part of the process, so I'd encourage you to gather friends and loved ones you trust to help keep you accountable as you head down new paths.

Forgive

Whether you are learning to forgive yourself or someone who has hurt you dearly, don't go into a new year with resentment and begrudging. I believe forgiveness is one of the hardest things to do as it pertains to our spiritual lives, especially when it comes to family and those you consider closest to you. What we have to understand is that even if we don't think someone deserves it, we are still called to forgive because Jesus first forgave us.

Forgiveness doesn't mean affirmation. And forgiveness does not mean you approve of what someone has done to you. But what forgiveness does mean is that you've handed what has been done to you over to the hands of Jesus, a place where grace overflows and love dwells deeply. {eoa}

Jarrid Wilson is a husband, pastor and author relentlessly sharing the love of Jesus. For the original article, visit .

2017: The Year of the Next Level

When I was driving to Orlando for Christmas, I heard the Lord say, "Next." I started meditating on that word "next." I looked it up on the dictionary. In other words, I pressed into what the Lord was saying. The Lord showed me next-level assignments, next-level warfare and next-level blessings. Our cry this year is going to be "Next!"

Here's what the Lord spoke to my heart: "Those who are seeing first the kingdom of God this year are going to see an acceleration. You are going to advance faster than you've ever advanced. You will find angelic assistance on your journey, and you will need it. One assignment will come after another. At times, you'll have more than one assignment at the same time. The warfare will also be next level but you will defeat one enemy after another after another after another. And the blessings will come in rapid succession. Each time you finish an assignment, each time you conquer your spiritual foe, you will see new-level blessings in your life. You will see it as you stand your ground, as you obey My leading and as you seek My heart."

It's time to step out of the ordinary into the extraordinary. It's time to step out of our comfort zones and into the abundance zone. It's time to step out of the past and into the next! Let's unpack this "next" word so we can cooperate with the grace of God as the Lord releases the angels of abundant harvest.

1. Next-level assignments, David is a great example of next-level assignments. As a teenager, David's first assignment was

to tend to sheep in the field. As he tells the story, “Your servant was a shepherd for my father’s flock, and the lion came and the bear, and took a lamb out of the flock. And I went out after him, and struck him, and delivered it out of his mouth. And when he arose against me, I took hold of his beard, struck him, and killed him. Your servant slew both the lion and the bear” (1 Sam. 17:34-36).

When David heard there was a giant opposing the armies of the living God, I can imagine him saying, “Next!” He didn’t hesitate to step into his next-level assignment. The Bible says he ran to the battle line after prophesying Goliath’s defeat (1 Sam. 17:45-51). David struck down Goliath with a sling and a stone. As you step into the next-level assignments, there will be next-level warfare, but your Goliaths will fall.

This is the time to ask the Lord, “What is my next assignment? What’s next?” People are going to be jealous of you, like Saul was jealous of David. But you will bless and curse not. You will move in the opposite spirit and maintain your authority in the spirit.

2. Next-level warfare. Paul said, “For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries” (1 Cor. 16:9) The Message translation says, “A huge door of opportunity for good work has opened up here. (There is also mushrooming opposition).” In other words, new level, new devil. Sometimes you fight the new devil before you get to the new level.

In the spirit, you are like one of David’s mighty men—even greater! Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4). You are more than a conqueror in Christ Jesus. If one of David’s mighty men, Josheb-Basshebeth, could slay 800 in one occasion, what can you do? One can put 1,000 to flight and two can put 10,000 to flight (Deut. 32:30).

3. Next-level blessings. When we're obedient to accept the assignments of the Lord and we refuse to grow weary in well-doing until the assignment is complete, we're going to tap into next-level blessings. We must finish the assignment to tap into the blessing! If you have half-completed assignments, if you are procrastinating, unlock your blessing by crossing the finish line and start decreeing the blessings in Deuteronomy 28 over your life now with a "next" in your heart.

Matthew 6:33 Is Key

Matthew 6:33 is the key Scripture here to stepping into this prophecy: "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be given to you." The Amplified translation expands on this: "But seek (aim at and strive after) first of all His kingdom and His righteousness (His way of doing and being right), and then all these things taken together will be given you besides."

Make a decision today to seek the Lord first and foremost and listen to His voice. Discipline yourself to rise up early in the morning or cut out unprofitable activities in exchange for eternal rewards. Feed yourself a steady diet of the Word of God, pray, fast and believe. This is the year of the next level. Let's soar like eagles for the glory of God! {eoa}

Real New Year's Resolutions for Godly Men

Forty-five percent of Americans usually make New Year's resolutions. Of those who try to turn over that new leaf, only eight percent of them are successful.

Things like losing weight, getting organized and getting fit are in the top 10 resolutions many people make each new calendar year. In the 10th spot was the generic phrase, "spend more time with family."

How are losing weight and being more organized more of a priority than family time? That should be at the head of the list, shouldn't it?

It is a sincere and aware heart seeking self-improvement that makes a New Year's resolution real. The trouble is, resolutions are often broad and vague promises. In order to get real results, we need to break them down into more specific and measurable goals. That way, we can get a true sense of progress in the changes we are trying to make.

Here are a few New Year's resolutions that will get you real results if your goal is to become a good father and husband:

1. Pledge one-on-one time with each child. Your kids love you and want to spend time with you. They need individual attention in addition to the family setting. Pledge to spend time alone with each child on a regular basis. This can be done by participating in a favorite sport or hobby together or by taking them out to do things they are interested in. You can even just hang at home away from gadgets and media. This will achieve the results of building a closer bond and will enhance your needed influence on their personal growth.

2. Pledge to listen to your family. Regarding family, a lot of men are "Just tell me what I need to know" type people. We don't like getting bogged down in all the particulars. That works well for time efficiency, but it leaves your family feeling misunderstood and ignored. If your goal is to spend more time with them, this is the first place to start: Listen to what both your wife and children need to say.

3. Once-a-month date night. Your spouse also needs your individual attention, and you certainly need hers. The chaos

and busyness of family life can swallow adult relationship time until there's nothing left. This is a common cause of marital affairs. The more designated time the better, but at the minimum, pledge to have at least one date night per month with your wife.

4. Find people that challenge you. Men too often have a lone wolf mentality when it comes to asking for help or sharing their stresses. To significantly increase the odds of success with a resolution, we need to find others who will hold us accountable. In my own life, I often lean on my pastor for mentorship when it comes to family and marriage, and I have a core of men behind me whom I also trust. I know they will shoot straight with me.

Don't go it alone. Seek out those who've done what you're trying to do and ask for their help. {eoa}

For the original article, visit .

Where Your Weight-Loss Journey Is Won or Lost

Where is your weight-loss journey won or lost? It occurs in your ordinary, day-to-day life, the same place the battle is fought!

Step 2 of the Take Back Your Temple (TBYT) program is "renew your mind," because what determines your daily choices are the thoughts you nurture throughout the day.

Many people engage in negative habits because they believe that these habits are necessary to get them through the day

(or evening).

They can't imagine living without them.

The enemy often sows lying thoughts into a person's mind to get them to engage in destructive behavior. Because the person fails to take lying thoughts captive, their imagination gives birth to desire (emotion), then desire to decision and finally, the decision to action.

It all begins with the thought life.

Let's go through "Temptation Anatomy" from an example I received several years ago. A TBYT reader wrote me the following message:

"Yesterday I had the desire to eat some pretzels. I said to myself *No, you had some tortilla chips*. I didn't need to eat the pretzels. At this point, it was like a back-and-forth discussion in my mind about having the pretzels. So I wound up going to the convenience store and getting the pretzels. At that point, I would describe the feeling I had as peace mentally because before I bought them—and I experience this same feeling when I try to say no to sweets—I had no rest in my brain. It's as though my thoughts become consumed with it until I eat it, then afterwards I feel something like a release. I am not sure what to tell myself during this time. Usually I say, *I don't need this* or *Not right now*."

Here was my response to her:

"I am so glad you asked me about this. There is hope because, just like you wired the habit into your brain, you can wire it back out. Let's look at what happened, step by step:

1. You had the thought to eat pretzels. No problem. People have thoughts all the time, don't they? You are at home. The pretzels are at the store. There is distance between you and the temptation.

2. You told yourself, “No, I had some tortilla chips. You don’t need to eat the pretzels.” Still no problem. You are at home and the pretzels are at the store. There is distance between you and the temptation.

3. A back-and-forth discussion starts in your mind. Oh-no! There’s the problem. A crack in the door. You’ve just opened up the possibility of closing the distance between you and the temptation, introducing indecision and uncertainty.

The new question you’ve introduced for debate is, “Should I go get the pretzels?” That is the wrong question. Wrong questions have the ability to lead you in the wrong direction!

This is the point where the battle is won or lost. This is where you engage your imagination, which creates the desire, which leads to the decision, which leads to action.

Have you really made up your mind that you will make no more trips to the convenience store? Or are you leaving the door open for that to be an option for you?

You said there is no rest in your brain if you don’t go. Watch out. I’ve discovered that when you have restlessness in your brain, that can be a sign of the enemy attempting to influence you. Wicked spirits are restless by nature (Luke 11:24).

So the enemy’s fingerprints are all over thoughts such as, “I can’t stand it if I don’t go.”

Also, certain foods can “hijack” your brain. These types of foods use the Dopamine Reward Pathway (DRP) to activate the pleasure centers in your brain. The pretzels do this to you apparently, which is why you have obsessive thoughts about them.

The lying part of your thinking is that pretzels are the only way you can get rest, peace and pleasure at that moment.

One way you know a lying thought is that it makes you believe you have no other options except to do what the thought is driving you to do.

Instead of a discussion with yourself about whether you are going to the convenience store to get pretzels or not, the discussion that really needs to happen is between you and the Lord.

Get honest: "Father, I need rest. I want to feel pleasure. I am used to turning to pretzels and food to meet this need in my life. But I want to do things differently. Send me Your rest, Father. Show me Your joy."

You can ask Him this on the basis of three Scriptures:

- Matthew 11:28 – *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest."*
- Isaiah 26:3 – *"You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You."*
- Psalm 16:11 – *"You will make known to me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand there are pleasures for evermore."*

Take the Lord at His word. Walk around the house, put on some praise music, raise your hands and praise the Lord for 10 minutes, waiting on His rest and His joy to come to you.

Praise, gratitude and worship are several things for which the DRP is designed. So use it to your advantage!

4. When you went to the convenience store, you said, "I wound up going to the convenience store and getting the pretzels."

No. You did not wind up there. That implies you didn't have a choice, like you were magically transported.

You made a conscious decision to go, so please be honest about that. This is important to acknowledge.

Here is what had to happen for you to close the distance

between yourself and the pretzels (if you drove to the pretzels and didn't walk):

1. You got up off the sofa.
2. You walked over to the car keys.
3. You picked up the car keys.
4. You walked out of your house door.
5. You walked over to the car.
6. You opened the car door.
7. You got into the car.
8. You started up the car.
9. You drove to the store.
10. You got out of the car.
11. You closed the car door.
12. You opened the door to the store.
13. You went into the store.
14. You went to the shelf where the pretzels are.
15. You reached and got the pretzels.
16. You went to the counter to pay.
17. You paid for the pretzels.
18. You opened the car door.
19. You got into the car.
20. You opened the pretzels.
21. You ate the pretzels.
22. You felt peace.

I'm just speculating on No. 20 and No. 21 because if you were driven like that to go get pretzels, then I'm thinking you ate them in the car. That's what I would have done when I struggled with emotional eating.

With the steps laid out like this, I hope you see that you always have the ability to choose a different path.

In summary, it is important that you consider what thoughts are supporting the actions that you are taking every day. Eventually, those actions will become your habits and your core habits write your destiny.

Don't let the enemy's lying thoughts write your destiny. Renew your mind through God's Word in every situation so that you can obtain the abundant life Jesus died to give you! {eoa}

*Once 240 pounds and a size 22, **Kimberly Taylor** can testify of God's healing power to end binge eating. She is an author and the creator of the Christian weight-loss website . Visit today for inspirational health and weight-loss tips.*

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