

5 Things Parents Should Quit Doing to Their Children

In a previous post, I listed seven things that **husbands** and **wives** should stop doing, which caused some interesting online conversations. Then I posted "**9 Things Parents Should Never Say to Their Children.**" Today, I am talking about five things that parents should stop doing and here they are:

1. Stop yelling at your kids in public. Every parent has instances of anger that they wish they could take back. But berating your kids in public is a double-edged sword, combining personal attack with public humiliation.

2. Stop trying to be the "cool mom" or "cool dad." Your kids don't need you to be their pal, they need you to be their parent. Don't try to dress like them or "stalk" them and their friends through excessive or awkward use of social media. Guide them through their experiences, but give them room.

3. Stop allowing them to have or do things that are not age-appropriate. Life is hard for our kids today. The media bombards them with pressure to grow up too quickly. The world is trying to strip away their innocence. Don't accelerate them to that point of no return by subjecting them to things they are not ready for, even when they beg you to let them. Just because all the other kids have an iPhone, go to the party or go on a date doesn't mean your child should.

4. Stop shielding them from all the consequences of their mistakes or messes. "How to Guarantee Your Teen Learns Nothing From Bad Decisions" addressed what happens when you remove the consequences of their poor choices and their responsibility for them. Devastation is ahead for those kids who believe they never have to answer for their actions.

5. Stop living vicariously through them. It's hard enough for your kids to figure out what they like and dislike, what they're gifted at and not gifted at. Don't complicate it for them by trying to live your life again through them. Just because you were the star quarterback of your team doesn't mean your child will be or want to be. Just because you were a professional ballet dancer doesn't mean your child will want to follow. Help them to find their dream and pursue it. {eof}

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For the original article, visit .

The Kingdom Attitude That Kills the Urge to Quit Your Diet

Have you ever started something with great enthusiasm—only to get discouraged along the way and just quit?

This one attitude adjustment kills quitting once and for all so that you can finally obtain the results you want.

This is going to save you a lot of time and frustration!

Attitude adjustments come from simply learning to ask yourself the right questions at the right time.

I had to do that just the other day. I was about to do one of my hardest workouts. The urge to skip the workout was strong.

Now it wasn't a recovery day, which is a good reason to take a day off. Those are days in which you don't feel well physically and need to take the day off to recover.

No, I was just feeling lazy.

But I gave myself a reality check with this one question:

"Do you really want to start this all over again or just *continue* what you've already started?"

My mind flashed back to 14 years ago.

Back then, I weighed over 200 pounds and could barely walk to the mailbox. I remember having shortness of breath and feeling as if my muscles were filled with concrete.

I remember the effort it took to get to this point. I feel good, healthy and strong today because of all the workouts I did from that point until now.

Because I *continued*.

So it was no contest. I did my workout.

Haven't you found that it's easier to *continue* something rather than have to start all over again?

The biggest energy you expend is moving from doing nothing to doing something. Even if you can only do a little bit, be faithful to do your bit. Eventually, you will get stronger and can do more.

Even if you stumble in your efforts, that is no excuse to quit.

Proverbs 24:16 says: "*For a just man falls seven times and rises up again.*"

An old Japanese definition of success complements this scripture:

“Fall down seven times, get up eight.”

As long as you get up one more time than you fall down, you are successful. That is the essence of the *continue* mindset.

Here are some tips to follow if you even think about quitting:

Check Your Thoughts

If you are feeling discouraged and want to quit, check out your thoughts. You are probably mentally telling yourself that it is too hard, what you are doing is not working, or else it won't make any difference.

With negative thinking, you always want to ask yourself another good question:

“Where are these thoughts leading me?”

If your thoughts are leading you where you want to go, then keep that thought pattern. But if they are not, take those thoughts captive and replace them with thoughts that take you to your desired destination.

Philippians 4:8 says: *“Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think on these things.”*

Put your mind to work on thoughts that will help you finish strong in Christ, not those that play into the enemy's strategy to steal, kill, and destroy you.

Take Heed Daily

To help yourself continue on your path rather than quitting, keep this Scripture in mind every day:

“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12).

Taking heed is just another way of saying “pay attention.” This is wise advice in your faith and in your weight-loss plan. You must meet each day on its own terms. Each day has its own challenges to meet and problems to solve. That’s what makes the Christian life exciting!

Create systems to keep yourself on track and help yourself remember why it is important to you to live healthy and fit:

- Write your vision of how you want to live as a healthy and fit person. Review your vision in the morning and use it to encourage yourself. The choices you make that day will move you closer or further away.
- Keep healthy foods close to you.
- Keep the foods that tempt you to binge and make you feel bad far away from you.
- Use an app or notebook to write down your food intake and the exercise you did to stay aware of the daily choices you are making.
- If you make a mistake, don’t let the experience go to waste; write down what you learned and what you plan to do differently if that situation occurs again.

Remember that you are living your life, not living a diet.

Your eating and exercise plan should *serve you* so that you can live a fruitful life in Christ—every day.

If you replace a quitting mindset with a “continue” mindset, then you can be confident that you will reap if you don’t give up! {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 .

How You Can Bring the Spark Back to Your Marriage

As a marriage counselor, I've seen marriages get stale.

After nine years of marriage, Janet and Steve felt uneasy. They loved each other but it wasn't the same anymore, the spark was long gone. Arguments were mostly avoided but the same fights about parenting and money seemed to come up over and over.

Janet and Steve didn't need a complete marriage overhaul; they simply needed a jump start. If your marriage feels a bit flat, these five tips will show you how to bring the spark back to your marriage.

1. Remember the good times. Conflict and tension can cloud your vision until it feels like your entire relationship is terrible. Identify the best parts of your relationship. It will remind you of the foundation of love from which you can rebuild a solid relationship. Simply acknowledging the good in your marriage will rocket your connection. Stop and remember when your relationship was awesome. Find pictures of you and your spouse having fun and remember the good times you've experienced together.

2. Turn down the noise. The busyness and noise of life often drown out communication in marriage. It's not that your communication is so terrible; it's the noisy distractions that cause your communication attempts to fail. Keep your schedule from getting overbooked by saying no to nearly all weekday activities. Every day when you come home from work leave your phone in another room and talk to your wife face-to-face.

3. Focus on connection. Successful marriages consist of couples who show up each day and focus on each other. Improving communication skills, learning conflict resolution techniques, or developing a good financial strategy are all helpful but never last without focusing on connection first. Take a minute right now to think about your wife. The next time you see her, give her a long hug and tell her how much you love her. All the other tasks of life will work out better after you're well-connected.

4. Dig deeper. It's not enough to simply hear the words your spouse is saying. If your wife asks, "Are you even listening to me?" and you respond by repeating the exact words she said, you're missing the point. The point of listening is to understand her more. Listen for her heart. Hear the vulnerable emotion and desire for connection in her communication. Take turns expressing your emotions including your desires and fears. Risking vulnerability allows for deeper intimacy.

5. Celebrate success. Connect well with your wife and the sparks will fly again. Excitement and passion will return like wildfire. Make sure you celebrate your success. If you're not intentional, the improvement won't last. Avoid the roller coaster of amazing closeness followed by the same old conflicts and tension. A weekly date night is a great way to continue celebrating your relationship. Find another happily married couple and go on a double date together. {eoa}

For the original article, visit .

Willpower Means Nothing in

Your Weight-Loss Journey Without This

Jane Brody, a health columnist at the *New York Times*, once wrote an article titled, “**Many Fronts in Fighting Obesity.**” She addressed many issues that in fact play a role in one’s ability to win the battle with weight loss:

- Caloric consumption
- Portion control
- The use of sugar and high-fructose corn syrup
- Eating home-cooked meals less frequently
- A misunderstanding of fat, sugar and caloric content of foods
- Evolution’s impact on caloric consumption
- The impact of one’s willpower on weight loss

Concerning the last bullet, Brody writes the following: “Willpower rarely helps people who struggle with their weight. With constant temptations to eat more, and especially more high-calorie foods, our society must change.”

Her comment about willpower in regards to weight loss is what prompted me to write this post. I agree with her comment about willpower. Our society must change if we are going to beat the obesity epidemic. But the changes we need to make to help with weight loss should not be in our own strength.

More people in our society could benefit from turning to our Creator, God, for the help they need in their challenge with eating and physical activity issues as it regards weight loss.

If you’re very overweight and have been unsuccessful in losing weight and keeping it off, have you been attempting to win this weight-loss battle in your own strength and with your own “willpower”? God designed you—no, He wired you—to need Him and to be surrendered to and dependent on Himself. This is one of

the biblical principles we teach in our PathWay 2 Wholeness Bible Study in regards to making behavior and lifestyle changes.

“Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts” (Zech. 4:6).

So if you’ve been fighting an obesity and weight-loss battle in your own willpower, I encourage you to be surrendered more deeply to God. Be dependent on Him at a greater level. Humble yourself more completely. Then trust that God will help you by the power of His Holy Spirit, who lives in you. {eoa}

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For the original article, visit .

4 Scriptures That Will Help You Cast Out Fear

Is fear bullying you? Many people don’t know that the Bible is prescriptive for fear and other negative emotions.

Think about this—when people are sick, they seek a doctor because they believe the medication he or she prescribes will make them well.

The enemy uses fear to bully Christians. Stop the bullying through the truth in God’s Word.

We should have even more confidence in the Holy Scriptures,

the Bible. God's Word is His written prescription for His children not only to be well but to *do well* in Him.

The main benefit of obedience to His Word is that we come to know His character better day by day.

One of the main areas in which God's children need His prescription is in the area of fear.

The enemy uses fear to bully many of God's children. Spiritually, I see him as standing in the way of God's blessings for us.

The enemy says (metaphorically speaking), "If you want to get to God's blessings, you've got to get past me!"

Fear may mask itself as anxiety, worry, apprehension or concern, but these are still fear-based emotions.

The cause of fear is found in its definition: "An emotion experienced in anticipation of pain or danger."

The operative word here is "anticipation." The enemy tries to get you to imagine the worst possible outcome so that you become fearful.

However, God's Word gives us prescriptions to stop fear at the source. My go-to prescription when fear tries to come upon me is 1 John 4:18: "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. Whoever fears is not perfect in love."

God does not want His children to live in torment, victims of the enemy's bullying. Jesus came to set us free and destroy the works of the enemy through the power of His Word!

God is our source of perfect love. First John 4:8 tells us: "Anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love."

Here are three additional Scriptures (prescriptions) about God

to memorize and meditate upon when you are afraid:

- *“Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, yes, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand” (Is. 41:10).*
- *“Have not I commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go” (Josh. 1:9).*
- *“The Lord, He goes before you. He will be with you. He will not fail you nor forsake you. Do not fear, nor be dismayed” (Deut. 31:8).*

In all these Scriptures, the Lord assures His children “I am with you.” That is a statement that you need to lay upon your heart when fear tries to seize it. You are never alone; the Lord is with you.

In addition, the Lord tells His people not to be dismayed. The word origin of “dismay” means “not to be able.”

When you are fearful or dismayed, that means you are meditating upon thoughts of “I am not able.”

However, during those times, you need to remind yourself that the Lord is with you—and He is able.

Here is one of thing you need to decide upon to cast out fear: Refuse to anticipate pain and danger in your imagination. Second Corinthians 10:5 advises: “(Cast) down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”

According to this Scripture, you can take the self-defeating thoughts the enemy has planted in your mind captive. You don’t let them run rampant in your mind, destroying everything!

Instead, you take fearful thoughts prisoner by focusing on

what you know about God through His Word. God's Word says:

- The Lord has already been where you are going! He is omnipresent, which means He can go before you and be with you at the same time.
- The Lord is there to strengthen you.
- The Lord is there to give you wisdom when you don't know what to do. He only asks that you ask Him for wisdom (James 1:5).

When you meditate upon and believe God's truth, is there any reason to be anxious about anything?

I recommend you meditate upon these scriptures throughout your day. They will be like your fire drill so that when fear tries to bully you again, you are ready to combat it.

According to Romans 8:37, we don't fight for victory but from victory: *"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."* {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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Men, 'Meat Up' This Thanksgiving With the True

Intent of the Holiday

Holiday cheer can be hard to muster when there's chaos in the air; with more tasks and less time, 'tis the season that puts a squeeze on our emotions, priorities and finances.

Some men paint on a grin and roll through the routine with low expectations. Others face demons from the past, broken families, pressures and circumstances that bring up pain. For many, it's not survival of the fittest; it's just a matter of survival.

Holidays can be so much more. Allow me to tweak your perspective this year, starting with T-Day.

Typically, we go into Thanksgiving with hunger in mind, an appetite for turkey, stuffing, all the fix-ins and a football game, all in the name of gratefulness—just like the pilgrims celebrated the harvest, right?

Wrong. Did you know Thanksgiving was the original men's "meat-up" dinner that started with a prayer? Thanksgiving was actually evangelism in action, introducing other men—in the Pilgrim's case, Native Americans—to God. It was a gathering of men to thank God for the harvest. Not just a time to be thankful. It was a time to address the person behind the provision, not randomly recite positive thoughts.

The Pilgrim's purpose for leaving England in 1620 was to find a new world where they could worship God freely and govern themselves. After arriving, the Pilgrims signed the "Mayflower Compact" in December, outlining America's first document of civil and religious freedom. After a prayer service, they began settling in. Faced with hardships like starvation, sickness and a harsh New England winter, they persevered through prayer and with the help of Indians.

The following summer, the survivors reaped a harvest, and

declared a three-day feast to thank God. And they invited the Indians to celebrate with them.

Pilgrim Edward Winslow wrote about the first Thanksgiving saying, "By the goodness of God, we are ... far from want."

Fast-forward to 1789, following a proclamation issued by President George Washington, America celebrated its first Day of "Thanksgiving to God" under its new constitution.

In 1863, President Lincoln set aside the last Thursday of November as a national Day of Thanksgiving. But for Lincoln, it marked a celebration of his freedom from sin. In July earlier that year, while walking among the graves of Gettysburg, and suffering from his son's death, he realized the need for a savior and committed his life to Christ.

Is it coincidence, that on Nov. 19, President Lincoln delivered perhaps the most revered speech of all time, the "Gettysburg Address," injecting his newfound faith in God and the nation which brought the American Civil War to an end?

It seems the intent of our Thanksgiving national holiday is to acknowledge God, pray, be inspired to invite others and share a meal to reflect on the founding fathers great faith, courage and God's provision. It's a freedom we should not take lightly, one we should celebrate with integrity. Be filled with gratitude for what God has done, not just gratitude for the sake of gratitude.

Maybe we should be more like our forefathers, who survived hard times with prayer, and were filled with Thanksgiving that overflowed with welcoming strangers to share a meal and prayer.

This Thanksgiving, I challenge you to celebrate with the original intent of our founding fathers. Invite some unbelievers over, cook up some meat, start with a prayer and lead a conversation about the true meaning of Thanksgiving.

{eoa}

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

Your Victory in Christ Requires This One Essential Element

When Shammah made his stand in the middle of that pea patch, he was not hanging around just to get a few licks in before making an exit. For Shammah there were only two options: win or die!

He stood his ground, he defended that pea patch, and 2 Samuel 23:12 tells us about the happy ending: "The Lord wrought a great victory."

We all want to discover God's will for our lives, but once we discover it, that is not the end; it is only the beginning! Once you have your assignment from God, then you have to stand in your field and fight until God gives the

victory. This requires a quality that few seem to possess—perseverance.

In Ephesians 6 we are commanded to “put on the whole armor of God” (v. 11). But verses 13 and 14 say something important: “And having done all, to stand. Stand therefore.” In other words, after you have made all the preparation to stand, now there is one thing left to do—stand! This is where many people miss it. They go to great lengths to discover God’s will for their lives. They go to Bible college; they read books; they receive prophetic words; they prepare themselves in every way possible. But when their skin begins to burn with the heat of the battle, they drop their weapons and retreat. I am aware that this is not a “feel-good” message.

We are always looking for shortcuts, tips and tricks, but I’m afraid there is no way around this principle. You can be extraordinarily gifted, talented, anointed and blessed, but without persistence you will have little impact because the great victories are always on the other side of great battles. The word *persevere* is made of the prefix *per*, which means “through” and *severe*. Victory comes to those who press through severe battles to the other side without quitting.

R. Alec Mackenzie, who wrote extensively on the subject of time management, said, “The ability to concentrate—to persevere on a course without distraction or diversion—is a power that has enabled men of moderate capability to reach heights of attainment that have eluded the genius. They have no secret formula other than to persevere.”

Helen Hayes won many prestigious awards during her acting career, which spanned nearly 70 years. But she attributed her success not to talent or ability: “Nothing is any good without endurance.” Chemist Louis Pasteur, who developed the disease preventing process that came to be called pasteurization, said, “My strength lies solely in my tenacity.”

Apparently Shammah was not the only one of David's mighty men who knew what it meant to be persistent. The Bible says Eleazar fought so long and so hard in one battle that his hand froze to the sword (2 Sam. 23:10). When it comes to fulfilling God's will for your life, perseverance is not an option; it is an imperative. If Eleazar or Shammah would have let go of their swords or stopped fighting, the enemy would have killed them. If you let go of God's calling, you will never fulfill it.

What do you do when the going gets tough? Stand firm and don't let go! What do you do when the enemy begins to assail from all directions? Stand firm and don't let go! What do you do when you face financial difficulty, health problems, betrayal, abandonment, rejection and pain? Stand firm and don't let go! My friend, the battle belongs to the Lord, and He will win it in His time. Our part is not to question; our part is to obey and stand firm until God gives the victory.

May we stand in our respective fields as David's mighty men did, prepared to fight to the death for God's kingdom. And when the day comes for us to leave this world, I pray that the sword will have to be pried out of our lifeless fingers. At the end may we not be found sitting in front of a television, but may we be found with our boots strapped on in the field where God has assigned us. Never give up! Never retreat! Never surrender to the enemy! Your fulfillment of God's will for your life is not only about you. It's about your children and your grandchildren and the future of God's eternal kingdom. So stand! Fight! And endure until the end. And God will give you the victory in Jesus' name! {eoa}

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Corrie ten Boom: A Life Worth Emulating

I often ask myself, "Where are the heroes and heroines of our faith today?"

It is deeply important to remember that there are people who have lived wholeheartedly for Christ at every historical juncture. What we see in today in the lives of compromising politicians, seductive entertainers, self-centered athletes and even religious leaders leaves little for the common person to emulate.

I am on a mission to remember those who have lived with lives of virtue and integrity regardless of their circumstances and fame. My prayer is that you will join me in honoring these men and women who honored God and use their lives as the goal for which to reach.

There is an extraordinary historical account of a woman who was overweight her entire adult life and never married, although she longed for a home, a husband and children of her own. She lived at home with her parents and older sister while working in the family business.

The one bright spot in an otherwise mundane week was teaching the special needs Sunday school class at church. Although this spinster never gave birth to children of her own, her delight was to teach these little ones who were never able to sit still and would never be accepted into a university.

She taught these children how to worship like David with their hands high in the air, dancing erratically around the cramped Sunday school classroom, and singing off-key at the top of

their small, but very loud, lungs. This enthusiastic teacher taught the children how to be brave like Daniel and to look for angels rather than at lions.

Corrie taught these sweet little minds and hearts that God always takes care of His children and that, like Moses, when others are unkind to God's people, God will lead them into His promised land.

This courageous middle-aged woman of the 20th Century found delight in entertaining missionaries and other friends from church in her parents' simple home. They often enjoyed sharing a meal and then entering into a raucous evening of playing games followed by a reverent time of singing hymns and reading the Bible together.

Although never a mother, this woman had deep maternal longings and thus her favorite person in life was her nephew, Peter, named after the bold fisherman who loved Jesus without reserve.

The dear, special-needs children, whom Corrie loved ferociously, began to disappear out of her weekly Sunday school class. One by one they ceased to show up for their favorite hour of the week. They were being taken by the government from their parents and placed in state institutions.

Shortly after the children began to disappear, Corrie's father gathered the family around the table and informed them that the ten Boom family would be making some serious changes. They were going to build a hidden room upstairs in their home and would be having some visitors who would be living in this hiding place. The ten Boom family was joining the ranks of hundreds of others who were assisting the Jews who were being sent to concentrations camps under one of the most evil regimes of all time.

By the end of World War II, this one family had saved over 800

Jews, as well as hundreds of Dutch underground workers.

The ten Boom family was betrayed, and on Feb. 28, 1944, the Gestapo arrived and took six members of Corrie's family to prison. Although the violent Gestapo ransacked the entire home and systematically searched everywhere, they never found the secret room where six Jews remained in hiding. These Jews were rescued by the Dutch Resistance nearly 47 hours later.

Everyone in Corrie's family, except Corrie herself, died in the concentration camps. She was the sole ten Boom survivor of this horrific injustice, and she came home alone to live again. Thus began Corrie's life-long ministry around the world. Corrie testified everywhere she traveled:

"There is no pit that God is not deeper still."

"God gives us the love to forgive our enemies."

"Jesus always wins the final victory!"

Corrie ten Boom tramped for the Lord for 33 years until she was 88. She only retired after a stroke that took her speech. Corrie could no longer speak in English or in Dutch, but could still pray out loud in her prayer language.

Corrie died on her 91st birthday on April 15, 1983. Although Corrie was not Jewish by birth, she protected and cared for the ancient people of God. The Jews embrace a long-held belief that only truly blessed people die on the day of their birth.

Corrie knew how to embrace the life Jesus promised in John 10:10. She could have been a depressed, lonely woman lacking any true purpose in life. But instead Corrie gave all she had to give, loved when others hated, and gave cup after cup of cold water in His name to the children under her charge and a war-torn world. {eoa}

Carol McLeod is an author and popular speaker at women's conferences and retreats, where she teaches the Word of God

with great joy and enthusiasm. Carol encourages and empowers women with passionate and practical biblical messages mixed with her own special brand of hope and humor. She has written five books, including No More Ordinary, Holy Estrogen!, The Rooms of a Woman's Heart and Defiant Joy! Her most recent book, Refined: Finding Joy in the Midst of the Fire, was released last August. Her teaching DVD, The Rooms of a Woman's Heart, won the Telly Award, a prestigious industry award for excellence in religious programming. You can also listen to Carol's "A Jolt of Joy" program daily on the Charisma Podcast Network. Connect with Carol or inquire about her speaking to your group at .

4 Ways Your Children Can Avoid Worldly Conformity

Private Desmond T. Doss was an unlikely hero. He was a man compelled to serve his country during World War II, while also objecting to taking human life.

As a Seventh-day Adventist, Doss believed that it was sinful to kill, even in war. Doss faced repeated harassment at basic training, including a court martial hearing, for refusing to even hold a weapon. Most mistook his religious conviction for cowardice and his refusal to work on the Sabbath for laziness. Serving as a medic, his battalion was part of the invasion of Okinawa and was ordered to take a heavily fortified, 400-foot jagged ridge.

After initially taking the ridge, the Americans were pushed off, leaving behind many wounded. Forsaking his own safety, Doss stayed on the ridge and worked prayerfully, tending the

wounded. All night he dragged men to the edge of the cliff and lowered them to safety. By day's end, he had saved 75 wounded comrades.

The story of Desmond Doss' heroism is told in a new movie called *Hacksaw Ridge*. I was inspired by how he was able to stay faithful to his beliefs under heavy criticism. Doss' conviction led to him being faithful to his fellow soldiers in the fire of war.

How do we raise our kids to have the same strength of moral foundation? Cultural interpretations of right and wrong shift with the sand. With more and more pressure being brought to bear for people to bend convictions and beliefs to fit into the current cultural norm, it is vital to develop a moral foundation.

Here are four ways to develop your child's moral backbone in a world pressuring them to conform:

1. Develop their core identity. One of the biggest contributing factors to a well-founded moral center is to have a strong sense of identity. Knowing who they are will give their stature a sense of gravity. I have found that the strongest identity we can give kids is that they are loved regardless of performance, attractiveness or accomplishments. If they don't know they are loved they will search endlessly for it like a feather floating aimlessly in the breeze. My kids are taught that their identity is the love of the God that made them. That love makes their lives eternally significant and valuable. Where are your kids finding their identity?

2. Root them firmly in God's truth. If someone is to have a firm moral backbone, they need to have a life marked by truth. In a Harvard commencement address, Nobel Laureate Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn said, "Many of you have already found out, and others will find out in the course of their lives,

that truth eludes us if we do not concentrate our attention totally on its pursuit.” We must teach them to pursue God’s truth and His Word daily. Otherwise, they will never attain Christlike character.

3. Let them fight their own battles. Nothing teaches a person how to stand their ground more than personal experience. We all want to protect our kids, but fighting their battles for them sends the message that they are weak. The famous story of David slaying Goliath didn’t just magically happen. David grew the moral courage, determination and resolve during his days as a shepherd defending his flock against lions and bears. When the day came to take on Goliath he was ready. Give advice, but let your kids fight their battles.

4. Determining right and wrong. Too many people determine what is right and wrong by how they feel. Feelings change constantly over time and they are usually based on limited information. Kids need to learn to think critically and develop a measuring stick for what is right beyond their own limited narrative. Right and wrong must be determined from a source greater than our own perspective and that of the crowd or culture. As Ravi Zacharias says, “In order to have a moral law, you have to have a moral law giver.”

Desmond Doss’ moral lawgiver was God, and that gave him the conviction to stand apart. What is your kids’ source or measuring stick for right and wrong?

Hacksaw Ridge opened in theaters last Friday and is an incredibly inspiring movie. I highly recommend it with one note, it shows the reality of war in vivid detail. It’s not suitable for children and may even be difficult to watch for some adults. Watch the trailer above. {eoa}

For the original article, visit .

Identifying Deceptive Foods That Hijack Your Brain

“When you sit to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before you; and put a knife to your throat if you are a man given to appetite. Be not desirous of his delicacies, for they are deceptive food” (Prov. 23:1-3, MEV).

Many people are overweight today because they do not know about the warning in Proverbs 23:1-3 to consider carefully what they eat.

It applies to us too because we are the rulers; we control what we put in our mouths.

Our grocery stores are filled with deceptive foods—processed foods that appear nourishing to our bodies but are not.

Instead, these foods hijack our brain’s reward and calming systems (Dopamine, Serotonin, Beta Endorphin primarily), and we become addicted to them.

These foods interfere with our ability to eat with self-control. Self-control is a fruit of God’s Spirit.

One additional fact complicates the issue: Some people who are suffering from emotional issues want food to hijack them!

To quote an old commercial, it is their “Calgon, take me away!” substance. Food becomes their escape from emotional pain.

As a result, part of them wants to continue eating deceptive foods, even though the overeating they cause is ruining their health and quality of life.

I know this issue well. Deceptive foods hijacked my life for over 20 years!

But Proverbs 4:23 says, “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life” (MEV).

God showed me that my heart issue needed addressing first. If I did not allow God to heal the emotional issues in my life, I would always be tempted to run back to deceptive foods as a means of escape.

The enemy could continue to deceive me in thinking:

- I can't live without certain foods in my life.
- I'll die if I don't have certain foods.
- I can't handle it if I don't eat a particular food.

The primary method the enemy uses to control God's people is fear. Just like with Eve, the first woman, he uses the “fear of missing out” to keep you in bondage.

He had her focus on the one tree that would hurt her versus the hundreds, maybe thousands of trees that would help her.

His strategy is the same; he uses whatever means necessary to take God's people out of their purpose. He doesn't want us fulfilling the Great Commission.

But we have the power to stop this.

1 Corinthians 6:12 says, *“All things are lawful to me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of anything”* (MEV).

While we can eat anything, we shouldn't eat everything. Each of us is unique.

It is wise to focus on the foods that are truthful with us rather than deceive us: Helpful foods look good, taste good and help us to feel good so that we can go out and do

good works with energy and vitality.

We were created to do good works to glorify God!

Here are some five tips to identify deceptive foods that have hijacked your brain. By the way, I can write about this because I fell for every single one of these deceptions:

1. After you eat it, your mind becomes obsessed with it. It tasted good, but now your thoughts keep drifting back to where that food is. You keep thinking about when you are going to eat it again.

2. You have difficulty controlling the amount you eat of it. You aren't satisfied with one serving; you must have several in one sitting. You may tell yourself that you are only going to have a little, but you find yourself eating a lot and are unable to stop.

3. You fear giving it up. Feelings of deprivation are just fear in disguise. Here is an easy way to tell if a food has hijacked your brain: Imagine yourself never buying that food again. What feelings come up? If you don't have an emotional attachment to it, then you are fine. But if you feel a sense of loss and can't imagine life without that food, it has likely hijacked your brain.

4. You say that you are buying the food for others, but you are the one who eats it. You may have feelings of guilt buying the food, so you tell yourself that you are buying it for the kids, for your spouse or for guests who happen to stop by. But the truth is that you are buying it for yourself because you are the one who eats most of it.

5. You got the food from the center aisles of the grocery store, in the freezer case, at the cash register, the convenience store or at the fast food restaurant. While not every deceptive food lives in these areas, most of them do.

In summary, each of us must decide how we are going to show up for life. Do we really want to live our whole lives in a brain fog, and miss the abundant opportunities the Lord gives us to experience daily peace and joy?

I pray starting today you decide to stop falling for the deception and eat nourishing foods that help you reach your best weight and feel good as you are doing good. {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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